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# Social Media Use During The College Transition

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Social Media Use During The College Transition

by

Kevin J. Yurasek

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
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## ABSTRACT

Starting college is an exciting and pivotal time for students. During this time, the student will be faced with challenges of his or her social identity and will need to develop or modify identities based on new social situations. Previous research shows that social media play a role in identity development, but there is little information regarding the extent. Are new college students using Facebook during their transition to communicate their new identity/social group to new peers? Are they using Facebook to maintain nostalgia for previous identities/social groups? This information will be valuable to higher education professionals working with these populations – particularly in determining the most effective methods to communicate support during their transition. Using a phenomenological, qualitative approach with individual interviews of new college students in their first semester of college, this study seeks to clarify the college transition and identify what ways new college students are using Facebook during their transition. Participants identified three key themes of their college transition: a fear of not fitting in, wanting a sense of belonging, and wanting to stay connected with high school friends. Overall, the students interviewed had a successful transition and utilized Facebook to assist in each of the three themes they identified. Specifically, though, new college students are using the Group feature of Facebook to create a community of peers. The use of Facebook and Groups leads to a more successful student with a quicker and stronger adjustment to college. Higher education administrators can take advantage of this data to enhance existing strategies to increase student success.

## **CHAPTER ONE:**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Starting college is an exciting and pivotal time for students. During this time, the student will be faced with challenges of his or her social identity and will need to develop or modify identities based on new social situations. When an individual joins a group, he or she must work to understand and accommodate the norms and value systems of the collective group (Tasdemir, 2011). The degree to which this is a smooth and successful transition depends upon the amount of social support provided by the group.

Many students starting college now are using social networking sites, such as Facebook, to receive some form of social support (Domonell, 2012). In fact, the Maguire Associates 2011 College Decision Impact Survey shows that 93 percent of U.S. high school seniors are using at least one of three major networking sites – Facebook, Twitter or YouTube – at least a couple of times per week. Additionally, 58 percent of those students report that they are viewing Facebook at least several times a day (Domonell, 2012). Facebook reached one billion users monthly active users in September 2012 (Zuckerberg, 2012). Since the launch of Facebook, users have made over 140 billion friend connections and shared 219 billion photos (Zuckerberg, 2012).

University admissions administrators know that getting a student to apply is only one piece of the enrollment equation (Domonell, 2012). Students who apply need to be encouraged to enroll. At the University of South Florida, over 9,000 students were accepted for the fall 2013

semester and only about 30 percent (n = 2,888) actually enrolled (USF InfoCenter, 2013). Michael Staton, who develops private social networks for higher education institutions, says the students' needs become less about information and more about fit – or a sense of belonging (Domonell, 2012). Staton also says that if students are “choosing between three comparable schools and they have already made a lot of friends at one particular school, we believe that gives that school just a slight edge” (Domonell, 2012, p. 34). Tinto (1993) has developed a framework for colleges and universities to adopt in order to increase student retention and reduce the number of students who leave an institution prior to degree completion. In this framework, Tinto (1993) creates an argument that institutional impacts have a greater influence on the decision to leave than do student characteristics. Tinto (1993) posits that academic and social integration creates a sense of belonging.

In the fall 2013 semester, the University of South Florida had an enrollment of 30,000 degree-seeking undergraduate students (USF InfoCenter, 2013). First time in college students, the focus of this study, had a total of 2,888 degree-seeking students (USF InfoCenter, 2013). These students can choose from one of ninety majors at “one of only forty public research universities nationwide with very high research activity that is designated as community engaged by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching” (USF System Facts, 2013, p. 30).

This paper will utilize qualitative, in-depth student interviews to focus on if, how, and when the needs of transitioning college students are met through Facebook.



## **CHAPTER TWO:**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **Social Identity Theory**

A social identity is a person's understanding of who he or she is based on self-categorization into a social category or group (Hogg & Abrams, 1988; Tajfel, 1981). As Tajfel (1981) explains, membership in a social group has value and emotional significance for the individual. In social identity, an individual identifies with categories and groups within a structured society with contrasting groups (Hogg & Abrams, 1988). For example, college students may define themselves as a student of their university. This categorization exists in contrast to members of their peer group who did not choose to go to college, and to the members of their peer group who chose to go to other colleges. An individual who chooses membership in a particular group is also committing to abide by the norms and viewpoints of this group. It should be noted, though, that individuals will identify with any group on a scale (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). Given that individuals often have many group memberships, each one is given its own degree of membership that will define the mental involvement of the individual, sometimes referred to as activation.

Research has shown that group memberships can create both positive and negative consequences, which vary based on the degree of membership or activation. A consequence is the creation of in-group and out-group biases and designations (Stets & Burke, 2000). Tajfel

(1979) explains that these designations divide the world into a ‘them and us mentality’. Tajfel (1979) posits that the in-group membership will actively seek to find faults with the out-group to enhance the self-image of the in-group. A negative consequence of this categorization is that it is human nature to oversimplify this process by overestimating the differences between groups (social comparison) and over-identifying the similarities of members of the same group (social identification) (Tajfel, 1979). An additional consequence is groupthink, which has symptoms of overestimation of the ingroup with negative stereotypes of the outgroup, close-mindedness, and a need for uniformity (Stets & Burke, 2000). Positive consequences include a strong attraction to the group as a whole, a reduced stress level, increased personal motivation, and a strong commitment to the group (Amiot & Sansfacon, 2011; Hogg & Hardie, 1992; Haslam, 2004; Stets & Burke, 2000). Vignoles, Chrysochoou and Breakweel (2002) proposed six motives for social identification: esteem enhancement, identity continuity, self-efficacy, meaning, distinctiveness, and belonging.

### **Sense of Belonging**

Related to social identity theory is optimal distinctiveness theory, which states that group identification is based on the opposing needs of assimilation and differentiation (Badea, Jetten, Czukor, Askevis-Leherpeux, 2010). Groups are balanced according to optimal distinctiveness theory when the need for assimilation is satisfied and the need for differentiation is optimal (Badea et al., 2010). Small and large groups have difficulty in offering optimal distinctiveness and personal identification; additionally, finding a group of the right size can vary based on personal needs. Badea et al. (2010) found that individuals who scored in the “just right” size had a stronger sense of identification than other members. Easterbrook & Vignoles (2013) look at the distinct difference between social categories and social networks. Social identity theory states

that social categories are formed by shared characteristics of members (Easterbrook & Vignoles, 2013). Social network groups, on the other hand, are formed by sets of relationships between individuals rather than a focus on the collective group. In a social network, feelings of belonging are more often based on relationships with members; as opposed to social categories where that belonging more often is derived from homogeneity (Easterbrook & Vignoles, 2013). An important outcome of the research done by Easterbrook and Vignoles (2013) is a confirmation that the feeling of belonging has different antecedents for groups defined as categories or networks.

While much of this research is based on offline groups, the research can be applied to online social networks, as Gangadharbatla (2007) finds: “Social networking sites offer a space in which people can address this need to belong by using services provided by the sites that enable conversations and information gathering, along with the possibility of gaining social approval, expressing opinions, and influencing others. Therefore, people’s attitudes and behavior with regard to SNS may stem from their need to belong” (p. 11). Gangadharbatla’s (2007) research of undergraduate students indicates that the students’ need for self-efficacy, self-esteem, and belonging all impact their attitude toward the social networking site. Essentially, then, students have a more positive attitude toward the site when they feel these needs are being fulfilled on the site.

### **Adolescent Transition to College**

For the purposes of this paper, it will be important to understand the adolescent mindset and the college transition experience. Tanti, Stukas, Halloran and Foddy (2011) explain that during adolescence the young individual is going through significant changes to his or her

personal and social identities. This paper will focus mainly on late-adolescents in looking at the transition to college from secondary school. This period of development, beginning around age 18 and continuing through age 25, is also beginning to be referred to as emerging adulthood (Stephenson-Abetz & Holman, 2012). Erikson (1968) explains that, in this period of development, the adolescent has an obsession with the question ‘Who am I?’.

Additionally, Pittman & Richmond (2008) explain the concept of school belonging, which can be seen as highly important when analyzing the college transition from the social identity perspective:

A construct rarely studied in college students is a sense of school belonging, which is also referred to as connectedness to one’s school or perceived school membership. ... Thus, this sense of belonging goes beyond the relationships with individuals in the school to a more global sense of belonging and feeling connected to a larger community.

The transition to college can include changes in living arrangements, academic environment and pace, friendships, and social networks, emotional support systems, freedom, and personal responsibility (Ranney & Troop-Gordon, 2012). All this change in one short period can create a stressful situation.

As previously explained, social identity theory is an individual’s understanding of his or her identity based on self-identified group memberships. Many authors seem to agree with Tasdemir’s (2011) assessment that identity development is a multidimensional construct (Bliuc, Ellis, Goodyear & Hendres, 2011; Iyer et al., 2009; Pelling & White, 2009). In addition to acknowledging that it takes more than a social approach to create identity, it seems reckless not to acknowledge a multidimensional approach to social identity for the purposes of this study. Both Jackson (2002) and Ellemers, Kortekaas, and Ouwerkerk (1999) create a construction of social identity on three dimensions: cognitive, emotional, and evaluative. The cognitive

component is awareness of a membership in a particular group, “I am a member of Group F” (Ellemers et al., 1999; Jackson, 2002). The emotional component entails a sense of satisfaction and belonging with the group, “I am happy to be a member of Group F” (Ellemers et al., 1999). Finally, the evaluative component is the positive or negative value associated with the group compared to other groups, “I wish I were a member of Group G” (Ellemers et al., 1999; Jackson, 2002). Inherent in social identity theory is the cognitive aspect, or the acknowledgement of membership in the group. However, social identity theory tends to look at this aspect one dimensionally. Specifically, that a member either places a positive or negative value on a group membership, or if negative, will take action to create positive group memberships and subsequently higher self-esteem (Tasdemir, 2011).

Why then is a social approach not more widely analyzed for transitioning college students? Indeed, college students are leaving their current social groups and finding new ones on their college campus, as Stephenson-Abetz and Holman (2012) researched. However, universities go one step further and encourage membership in a group that represents students of the institution – often epitomized by the school’s mascot. While institutions encourage membership in their larger community; Pittman and Richmond (2008) distinguish the connections to the student body from the feeling of connection to the community as a whole. The Pittman and Richmond (2008) study utilizes two surveys, one in each of the first two semesters in college. The results show modest increases in friendship quality and university belonging between the first and second semesters (Pittman & Richmond, 2008). While these results help to show the importance of these qualities, 163 participants dropped out after the first semester leaving only 79 students to make conclusions (Pittman & Richmond, 2008). Bliuc et al. (2011) add additional dimensions to social identity by looking at the way students learn and how

that impacts their identity development, namely the individual's self-efficacy in terms of his or her academic achievement. This study surveyed psychology students at a university in Romania to analyze these factors. The study shows that there is a relationship between academic achievement and social identity; however, a student's personal approach to learning must be considered as a moderating variable (Bliuc et al., 2011).

Pelling and White (2009) use the theory of planned behavior to understand an individual's use of a social networking site. The theory of planned behavior states that behavior is determined by an individual's intent to perform such behavior, as influenced by mediating variables such as attitude or subjective norms (Pelling & White, 2009). Their study identifies a sense of belonging as a motivator for the use of social networking sites and couples that with the addictive tendencies of such sites. Again, this study utilizes a survey of undergraduate students for measurement. Pelling and White (2009) found that the desire for belonging did not influence the usage level of social networking sites, but did influence the intensity associated with usage. Namely, individuals with a strong desire for belonging were more likely to exhibit addictive tendencies toward usage of social networking sites (Pelling & White, 2009).

Iyer et al. (2009) also examine at the transition in identities in terms of new college students. They reaffirm that the loss of an existing identity is a struggle, particularly if the identity was important to the individual (Iyer et al., 2009). Individuals making this transition may resist identification with the group if their old identity was a strong part of their identity, or they have not completely moved on from that identification (Iyer et al., 2009). The authors utilized two different longitudinal studies to test this identity-coping process. In the study, they posited that students who identified with the university more were also more likely to view attendance at the university as a means of upward mobility in socioeconomic status (Iyer et al.,

2009). Using the uncertainty reduction model, the authors expected that student uncertainty about attending a university should motivate them to form the new identity since membership in that group mitigates the uncertainty (Iyer et al. 2009). Another important factor that Iyer et al. (2009) considered was the effects of interpersonal support. The researchers suspect that the more interpersonal support an individual receives will have an influence on the likelihood of joining the group. The two studies at different universities resulted in similar findings (Iyer et al., 2009). First, the higher the level of identification with the university leads to a higher overall well being (Iyer et al., 2009). In addition, the studies found that individuals with more group memberships before the transition were more likely to identify with the university (Iyer et al., 2009). Iyer et al. (2009) propose that these individuals recognize the importance of group memberships and the value they offer.

In considering group memberships, previous authors have identified that Facebook allows individuals to connect with both new and old social groups (Gangadharbatla, 2007; Iyer et al., 2009; Stephenson-Abetz & Holman, 2012; Tanti et al., 2011). Research by Amiot, Terry, Wirawan, and Grice (2010) looks at this issue among students who are transitioning into a university. Based on social identity theory, Amiot et al. (2010) look at this transition in terms of the amount of social support, the degree to which their psychological needs are fulfilled, the degree to which they identify with their new university and their sense of wellbeing through two surveys – one before the transition and one after. The second survey also analyzed the coping mechanisms used in the transition process. Indeed, the findings were that in terms of success in college, students must feel connected to their community (Pittman & Richmond, 2008).

DeAndrea, Ellison, LaRose, Steinfield, and Fiore (2012) consider the viewpoint of social capital, or the social resources a person develops through interpersonal relationships. Connecting

on social media allows these new students to create a more expansive network with higher social capital (DeAndrea et al., 2012). The DeAndrea et al. (2012) study focused on an exclusive social networking site created by a university for its new students. The site was created with a goal of reducing uncertainty and creating positive expectations to create a healthy transition through connections with peers and the university (DeAndrea et al., 2012).

Similarly, Yu, Tian, Vogel, & Kwok (2010) investigate the impact and implications on learning styles from the use of social networking sites. Yu et al., (2010) indicate that young people's use of online social networking can bring them "physical and psychological well-being". Yu et al.'s (2010) results from interviews of students in China affirm this statement:

"Online social networking not only expands individuals' large-scale networking capacity but also enables individuals to maintain close relationships with a small group of friends. Such results imply the possibility of online social networking to integrate the values derived from both bridging social network and bonding social network, which were previously assumed irreconcilable (p. 1500)."

Social media's role as a means of maintaining relationships with close friends will certainly be a factor for new college students, who are balancing existing relationships from home with new relationships at college.

## **Research Questions**

The previous research tends to agree that transitions are stressful, and the transition to college is important to adolescent development requiring support and assistance (Tanti et al., 2011). Additionally, previous research indicates that social media play a role in identity development (Stephenson-Abetz & Holman, 2012). There is little information on how these aspects work together in a transition. Are new college students using Facebook during their transition to communicate their new identity/social group to new peers? Are they using Facebook



to maintain nostalgia for previous identities/social groups? This information will be valuable to higher education professionals working with these populations – particularly in determining the most effective methods to communicate support during their transition.

*RQ<sub>1</sub>: In what ways are new college students using Facebook during their transition to communicate their new identity?*

*RQ<sub>2</sub>: How does the level of activity with friends from previous social groups change as the student begins the college transition?*

## **CHAPTER THREE:**

### **METHODOLOGY**

Creswell (2013) explains that phenomenology attempts to interpret an experience through the stories of those who shared the experience. This qualitative study will employ the phenomenological approach to shed light on the role that Facebook plays in the transition to college. Through the course of the research, the researcher must also gather data regarding the participant's usage of Facebook and the intensity therein. This usage information will be critical when reviewing the data.

Participants will be limited to first time in college students in their first semester at the University of South Florida. Participants will be identified by recommendations from instructors of the University Experience course. This course is designed for this population of students to provide information on adjusting to college and to allow the students to learn about university resources. In attempting to mirror the student profile of the University of South Florida, participants will include men and women, Florida residents, at least one domestic out-of-state student and at least one international student.

The researcher will set aside all opinion and assumptions regarding the new student transition to allow for a thorough and unbiased description from the participants. For each interview, the researcher will present a brief overview of the academic project and explain the purpose of the research and the interview. Participants will then be given an opportunity to ask

any questions before signing an Informed Consent Form. Participants will be informed that they can, at any time, stop answering questions and end the interview. All interviews will be audio recorded, and the audio recording and related transcriptions will be stored in an encrypted folder on the cloud storage service, Dropbox.

### **Phase One: Description of Phenomenon by Researcher**

The literature review examines the body of work relating to social identity development, social media and college transition to provide context for conducting the research. This study seeks to identify the ways in which new college students are using Facebook during their transition to then inform college and universities' strategies for achieving student success. Interest in the subject was sparked through the observed use of social media by incoming college students to make connections with fellow students.

### **Phase Two: Collection of the Participant's Description of Phenomenon**

The researcher will conduct face-to-face interviews with the participants to gain an understanding of their perspective on the experience. Interviews will be voluntary and responses will be confidential. Any responses shared will not be personally identifiable. At the date of the interview, participants will likely be at different points in their transition. The timeframe of this project requires that interviews be spread over two semesters; some students will be in the first weeks of their transition while others will have already taken their first midterms. While there is no anticipated skewing of results due to this fact, the researcher should be cognizant of this fact during data analysis.

The interviews will begin with broad questions or statements intended to gain insight into the participant's perception of the experience:

- Tell me about your first few weeks in college.
- Were you worried about anything?
- Tell me about leaving your high school friends.
- What types of things did you do on Facebook during this time?

After the initial questions, the researcher will continue the interview by asking questions relating to a pre-determined list of topics (see Table 3.1). This method allows maximum flexibility between the researcher and the participant. The researcher anticipates that the stories from the participant will likely include several topics, so the probing questions allow for a natural flow of the interview while still gaining the necessary insight. See Appendix A for a full facilitation guide for the interview. This is congruent with the goals of phenomenological research, which seeks to fully understand the phenomenon from the participant's viewpoint (Creswell, 2013). In addition to the questions in Table 3.1, the researcher must insure that the participants share information about his or her identity development transition. Information about this process should be information about perceived identity before and after the transition as well as the role that Facebook played in creating and communicating those identities.

**Table 3.1.** Topics for Probing Interview Questions.

Establishment of expectations – met or unmet, source of expectations
Impact of close friends or family sharing their experience
Facebook activity habits – what types of activities, with whom
Items participant would change if experiencing again
Description of experiences during the first days/weeks
Self-perceived high school identity
Self-perceived college identity
Identity comfort level
Level and displays of school pride

### **Phase Three: Analysis of Participant’s Facebook Activity**

In addition to the participant’s descriptions of Facebook activity, the researcher will ask the participant to show his or her Facebook presence and further explain his or her activity. This phase will allow the researcher to ask further questions about the participant’s Facebook usage and gain some insight into the communications taking place. This phase will not require the researcher to become “friends” with the participant on Facebook nor will any information from the timeline to be printed or saved.

### **Phase Four: Data Analysis**

Data analysis will first consist of transcribing the interviews and reading the transcripts along with any accompanying notes. This will allow the researcher to begin to identify common themes, key words or correlations along with important quotes from participants to exemplify these themes. After identifying the themes, the researcher will begin to create a concrete

understanding of the phenomenon to transform it into broad concepts. Within these concepts, the research will identify learned outcomes through a thorough description of the phenomenon. Finally, the researcher will utilize this information to make suggestions on how higher education practitioners could utilize this research and/or identify opportunities for further research.

## CHAPTER FOUR:

### RESULTS

In-depth interviews were conducted with seven first-time-in-college students with demographics available in Table 4.1. Six of these interviews occurred in the fall semester of 2013, and one occurred in the spring 2014 semester. Each student has a unique set of experiences; however, common themes emerge from the research that seems to cross these differences. These themes included self-perceived identities, level of school pride, Facebook activity habits and with whom interactions take place, description of experiences with likes and dislikes, impact of sharing their experience with high school friends and family, and the information reviewed on other's Facebook profiles.

**Table 4.1.** Research Participant Demographics.

5 female students <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Andrea – Mixed Race</li><li>• Melanie &amp; Stephanie – White</li><li>• Tiffany &amp; Susan – African American</li></ul>
2 male students <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Victor – Hispanic</li><li>• Ricky – Asian</li></ul>
Ricky is an international student
Melanie and Stephanie are both first generation college students (neither parent went to college)
Susan entered college in Spring 2014 semester

## Not Fitting in At College

All of the participants expressed some form of concern relating to their ability to fit in socially or academically at college. Contributing to this stress, all participants seemed to agree that coming to college was an opportunity to expand one's horizon and meet new people. Andrea compared high school and college, illustrating the added necessity for being outgoing:

I only had like 2 like really, really close friends [in high school]. We were kind of in our own little group, we always hung out with each other. We didn't really interact with other people. But like now, I used to be really shy when talking to other people. Now [in college] I have a best friend her name is Becky. She just goes up to anybody, shameless. So she like really got me out of my shell. Especially being around everyone here.

Meeting new people. You have to be sociable.

Melanie expected college to have a stronger balance between classes and social life. "A place of learning and a lot of partying. And that's pretty much exactly what I'm doing," she explains. Both of these sets of expectations came from close relatives who had recently gone through college. Melanie uses Facebook to facilitate her social life. "The USF page is where I met most of the people I talk to. ... That's where I met most of friends. I was just like, 'does anyone want to hookah tonight?' and got a bunch of responses." She explains that her decision to begin posting to the Class of 2017 group was very intentional,

I was in band. I really didn't talk to anybody because band just took up all that time. I went to classes. I really didn't talk to people. It wasn't until like maybe I think like a month ago. It wasn't Halloween, but around the second football game, I was just like, I wasn't meeting any people - I should meet more people.



Ricky expressed concerns because of his English language competency as an international student. Additionally, he didn't know how he would fit in with domestic students (students who are U.S. citizens). He indicates that he “made a lot of international friends, but to be honest I wanted more American friends.” His goals of finding domestic student friends were accomplished in the residence hall, where he formed close friendships with students living in close proximity with him. These students became his close friends and they spent time hanging out or going out to eat.

Additionally, Facebook played a role in the social transition of participants. Stephanie joined the hall council for her residence hall (a governing body of students) and utilizes the council's Facebook group frequently. She sees Facebook groups as a “tool for communication with people [who] aren't necessarily my best friends”. This is an indication that she's increasing her social capital by involvement in these groups. Much like Stephanie and Ricky, Victor joined a Facebook group for the “pod” of suites on his floor allowing him to interact with his neighbors. Additionally, Ricky is a member of a tennis club with a Facebook group used to disseminate information about practices and matches and to make a record of who is able to participate. Similarly, Susan joined the Facebook group of several cultural organizations that she wanted to participate in. She used Facebook to gain more information about organization meetings.

This theme became clear as the students discussed steps they took avoid this becoming a problem. The participants took specific steps to begin building their networks and developing relationships with their peers. On Facebook, the students were expressing their new USF identity by interacting with other USF students through friend requests, status updates and groups. Stephanie finds Facebook “easier and quicker to connect”. “It's the fastest, quickest way. It's not even ‘Hey, can I get your number?’ It's, ‘hey, do you have a Facebook?’ That's always the

question now.” Victor, on the other hand, is choosier with who becomes his Facebook friends. “So, what is the point of having a friend that I’ll never see again? ... So I mean, I only friend new people who I’m actually going to see. I might even know the person in my building but I will friend them because I’ll see them every day.” Susan prefers to let others find her on Facebook, since she “doesn’t remember names very well”. Susan isn’t looking for anything in particular, only that she knows the person: “I just like scroll and look at the information. Look at the pictures. Oh yeah, I remember you. You're cute. Ok, you can be my friend.”

### **Sense of Belonging**

A sense of belonging became an overarching theme that many of the students introduced. The results indicate that students are finding this sense of belonging from three main places: residence halls, student organizations, and Facebook.

#### **Residence halls.**

Victor’s sense of belonging seems to be strongly tied to his residence hall. As previously mentioned, he is willing to become Facebook friends with any fellow resident of his building, but he also chose which welcome event activities to attend based on their proximity to his residence hall. He also described the laidback environment of his pod [lounge],

The first few weeks... I live in Juniper, so we have the pod thing. It's very open. Anybody goes in and watches TV or that kind of thing. ... Watch movies in the pod. We didn't have homework or anything to worry about. Just getting to know each other. And then that's pretty much what we did. Play video games all day. Didn't really go out. We were in our room or the pod.

Similarly, Tiffany and Stephanie are both members of the hall council for their residence hall. This residence hall council is a community and social-based group where students collaborate on events and advocate for their peers. Involvement in this group presented Tiffany with an opportunity to attend a campus leadership retreat that she described as her favorite college experience and that changed her outlook on her school year,

I would probably have to say a leadership retreat that I went on. It was actually for the Beta Programming Council. After the council members have been selected, the ones from all residence halls come together for a big retreat. Just to express. I was extremely tired and kind of annoyed. At the end of the day, I figured out it was kind of good for me and what I needed. The people that I was with are awesome and I figured out that this was maybe not going to be a horrible year.

Stephanie has found that she is less likely to spend time alone in her room and spends time with her neighbors. “You’re more likely to chill at your in room [alone], watch Netflix and whatever. Now I’m way less likely to do that. I’m going to text people, ‘hey let’s go to the dining hall, let’s watch a movie tonight’ or stuff like that. I’m way more social.” Ricky has had a similar experience with his roommates and neighbors. He used Facebook to find students who lived close to him and sent them a friend request. He found that by interacting on Facebook, such as by sharing pictures, he was able to become closer to them. Eventually, as he got closer with these friends, they would start going to the dining hall together, or going off campus to hang out. When Susan moved into her residence hall, she didn’t have a roommate. However, like some of her peers, she built connections in her residence hall. “My floor mates are awesome and make up for my loss of roommate.”

### **Student organizations.**

Student organizations were important to these students' sense of belonging. Ricky brought his interest in tennis from home and joined a tennis club on campus. He uses the club's Facebook group to stay connected with members and learn about upcoming events or tournaments. Tiffany is also a member of student organizations such as the residence hall association and a living-learning community. She was a member of these organizations before joining their corresponding Facebook group. Susan found student organizations she was interested in joining through Facebook. She uses the organization's group to find information about meetings or other events. These groups allow the students to enhance the experience of being in the group by providing additional information.

### **Class of 2017 Facebook group.**

To this point, the participants have shared their experiences and provided insight into their transition experience. Throughout these conversations, one topic came up repeatedly that seemed to have a significant impact on their sense of belonging and ultimately their sense of belonging to their new university – the Class of 2017 Facebook Group. Many of the participant's comments related to the theme of shared experiences with their peers, as Stephanie explains,

I lived for that Class of 2017 page. I mean, I even like to read it just to see what other people are thinking and their questions. If I had a question, I would go there. That was super useful because a lot of people had the same questions. So it wasn't like I was the only one. That was really nice. A lot of times, one thing, I didn't even or wouldn't even think. I have this issue. And then I would see it, and good thing that person brought it up! So that definitely was really nice to use.

Similarly, Ricky defines his role in the Class of 2017 Facebook group as an observer. He uses the group to reaffirm that he's not alone in situations, but also to learn valuable information on social activities. "There was a football game and I didn't know what time the buses left, but I read on my phone and someone else had posted the question and there was an answer."

Previously mentioned was Melanie's use of the group to increase her social circle by posting invites on the group. Tiffany, who had been reluctant to join any Facebook groups, was compelled to join, "As far as the USF Class of 2017, I didn't want to join the group; I hate joining groups. But I had to because it was very beneficial." Tiffany also explains how the group helped her adjust to college: "Even though I said I don't like seeing the squirrel pictures. Every now and then it's ok to see something like that and have a laugh. We're all going through that - believe it or not - we're all on the same campus."

### **Staying Connected with High School Friends**

The transition from high school to college places these participants into a new social category as a university student, thus changing the dynamic of the relationship with high school friends. Each participant mentioned staying in touch with high school friends or friends from home. Many of them felt that Facebook was the easiest way to keep in touch to see what they're doing and vice versa. For example, Andrea shares photos on Facebook to show her high school friends how much she's enjoying college,

We have a lot of pictures already. This one is from Halloween [points to Facebook profile]. Sharing that with other people helps me show that I'm doing ok. That I'm doing great - having fun with my friends. This is one of many of me and my friends. That's my best friend right there [points girl out] and he's one of my really good friends too. Just to show that I'm making friends and I'm not going to be alone. That really helps.

Similarly, Victor stays up to date with his high school friends who have gone to other colleges. He shared the story that he recently saw that one of his friends was being inducted into a fraternity. For this reason, Victor feels that “[Facebook] is good to have, but it’s not good to have for people that you can just walk down [the hall] and see.” Tiffany has several friends from her hometown that she keeps in touch with. “For the most part, I scroll through my News Feed to see what they’ve been up to. As far as, if I were to make a post or post a picture, they normally comment on it. There’s these things called Bitstrips, I make those with them.” Ricky left his friends in Pakistan when he came to this university. He shared that he posted status updates each step of the way on his trip to the United States. “Before boarding the plane to come to the U.S., I updated a status. ... When I was leaving the airport, I posted a status. When I came to USF, I checked in that I’m at the University of South Florida.”

Susan seemed to have the strongest bond with the high school friends after coming to USF. Susan started her USF experience in the spring semester. For that reason, the dynamic in the relationship had already changed since her friends were already developing a new identity at their respective university. Her high school friends, who started college in the fall semester, offered her suggestions and information to create her expectations for starting college. This provided Susan with a more realistic and timely expectation of college as she followed their experiences through the fall semester. She keeps in touch with these friends every day: “They understand because they’re going through the same thing.” Aside from having fun with the students in her residence hall, she doesn’t mention any close connections with students at USF.

While the amount of time spent talking to high school friends or college friends is hard to quantify, the participants seem to communicate less often with their high school friends as they spend more time in college. Their usage is focused on meeting new people, joining college-

related groups and sharing photos of their college experience. Susan shares the same sentiments of meeting new people and increasing her involvement in student life as the others, but her interactions don't mirror this as much as the other students. All of this is not to say, however, that the individuals from high school are any less important to these students. Both Melanie and Tiffany said that this year is a waiting period until younger friends from high school came to college.

## CHAPTER FIVE:

### CONCLUSION

While creating and embracing a new social identity during the college transition is important, this research shows that developing a strong sense of belonging is more important to this transition. The sense of belonging can motivate students to get and stay involved, stay enrolled, and graduate with strong grades. Facebook offers a unique method for communication and interaction unprecedented in previous generations. Specifically, new college students are using the Groups feature of Facebook to create a community of peers. A popular “USF Class of 2017” group allows the students to meet their classmates, ask and answer questions, as well as, generate their shared experience. Given the research into transition theory, these benefits from Facebook Groups all lead to a more successful student with a quicker and stronger adjustment to college. Their individual stories are important examples for higher education administrators who can take advantage of this data to enhance existing strategies to increase student success. Many of the students indicated the value of photos and would check out a person’s photos before accepting a friend request. The adage that a picture is worth a thousand words is true for these students, who share their own photos to relay their experiences back to high school friends and family. Additionally, the striking benefit of the “USF Class of 2017” group was how it could be different things to different students. Each student interacted with the group differently, but found value in this interactions – from Amy who was posting to find friends to hang out with to Stephanie who would rather read others comments and interactions to find that she’s not the only



worried about particular things. Since we know that students who transition both socially and academically to a university are more likely to be successful, admissions, retention, and transition professionals should make these online interactions a priority, in line with university strategic initiatives. This group is something that will grow and progress with the student through their career at the university. The group will facilitate introductions and coordinate events in the first semester, and can later be used by students to offer recommendations on classes or answer timely questions in the student's life. By promoting the "Class of" groups at the University level and allowing for organic growth and interaction, the university will provide students with a forum for social networking and transition assistance, while accomplishing a longer term goal of retaining students after their first year.

### **Future Research**

Future research could look to include students who have little to no involvement or engagement in the university community to assess their transition and the support received from social media. The theories would suggest that these students will be more likely to interact with their high schools and have limited connections or relationships within the new community (Pittman & Richmond, 2008). In looking to increase student retention and success, these would likely be the best students to target. From a communications perspective, further research could be done on the use and effectiveness of messages within the "Class of" groups on Facebook. Additionally, based on the information provided by Susan in her interview, future research could look to identify any differences between students who start college in the fall semester and the spring semester.

## Limitations

The small group of students in this study is a limitation in its viability as this group is not a representative sample of the new student population. Additionally, students were recruited through the University Experience course and volunteered to participate. The University Experience course has been shown to assist students with their transition to college and motivate them to be a successful, involved and engagement member of the community. Their willingness to volunteer is reflective of this interest and engagement to the community.

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## APPENDIX A

### Individual Interview Discussion Guide

#### Introduction

Thank you for being here today. My name is Kevin Yurasek and I am a graduate student in the Mass Communications department here at USF. I am conducting research on how new college students use Facebook during the transition process from high school to college. Before we get started, I want to go over a few things with you:

- This interview will last about 45 minutes.
- This interview is for academic research. All of your personal and identifiable information will be kept confidential. Stories that you share may be included in the report, but your name and any other items specific to your situation (high school name, friend's names, student organization name, etc.) will not appear. I ask that you are as open and honest as possible in answering each question.
- During the course of the interview, we may review your Facebook profile and activity. The goal behind using your profile is to allow you to provide more detail to your answers. I will not be saving any specific information from your profile.
- For research analysis, this interview is being audio recorded. The recording will be used only to create a transcription of this interview. I am also taking notes that will be typed and stored with the transcription. The recording, notes and transcriptions will be stored electronically and encrypted.

Do you have any questions for me?

Knowing this information, are you willing to participate in the study? You are able to change your mind and stop at any time.

*Willing participants will then sign an Informed Consent form and interview will begin.*



## **Interview**

So, let's get started!

Let's review the survey about your Facebook usage – how much time do you spend on there and what types of things are you doing? Who are you talking to? On mobile versus web?

Tell me about your first few weeks of college. What did you do? What were you thinking about? Any fun or interesting stories to share?

Follow-up questions to begin gaining an understanding of the interview

- Were you worried about anything?
- Tell me about leaving your high school friends.
- What types of things did you do on Facebook during this time?
- Did you join any groups?
- How many friend requests did you send and/or receive?
- Did you participate in Week of Welcome?
- How is your roommate situation?

## **Additional probing questions for continuing the interview**

- Can you describe yourself in high school?
  - Tell me about your friends.
  - Were you involved in anything?
- What were you expecting starting college to be like?
  - Was it? Why or why not?
  - Where did you get these expectations?
  - Did any close friends or family tell you stories about starting college?
- What activities did you go to or participate in during the first couple weeks?
- Tell me about the first day (or week) of class.
- Tell me about yourself now.
  - How have you changed since high school?
  - What do you think caused these changes (or didn't)?

- What types of activities are you involved in?
- Think back again to those first few weeks of being in school here. How were you using Facebook?
  - Who were you talking to?
  - What were you talking about?
  - Were you doing anything else like finding events, participating in groups or playing games?
  - Any particular groups or pages you found helpful?
  - *The participant will be reminded of the opportunity to show their Facebook profile at this time for additional detail and support into their answers.*
- When you're looking at a new friend's profile, what types of things are you looking for and looking at? Do you look through photos? About? Previous posts? Friends? Etc.
  - What are qualities that you look for?
  - Do you friend USF students you haven't met in person? How did you find them?
- What were some of your worries this semester? Anything that stressed you out? Who did you talk to about this? How did you talk to this person(s)?
- Looking back, is there anything that you would change about your transition?
  - What were your favorite experiences?
  - What didn't you like?
- Tell me about next semester – what are you expecting? What are you looking forward to? Any concerns?

## APPENDIX B

### Transcription of Interview with Participant 1 – Andrea

- Researcher Before we get started, I want to go over some things with you. My name is Kevin Yurasek and I am a graduate student in the Mass Communications department here at USF. I am conducting research on how new college students use Facebook during the transition process from high school to college. This interview is for academic research. All of your personal and identifiable information will be kept confidential.
- Participant 1 Okay.
- Researcher Stories that you share may be included in the research project but items specific to your situation will not appear. During the interview, we may review your Facebook profile or activity but that information won't be collected or saved.
- Participant 1 Okay.
- Researcher So nothing will be able to be traced back to you. Knowing that I hope that it means you will be as open and honest with me as you can during this interview. The interview will be audio recorded and a transcription of this interview will be kept. The recording, any notes I take and the transcription will be kept electronically and encrypted.
- Participant 1 Okay. Sounds good.
- Researcher Do you have any questions for me?
- Participant 1 No. I'm good.

*(Participant 1 signs Informed Consent)*

R So, let's get started. Can you just tell me a little bit about your first few weeks in college?

P1 Okay. Well they were very stressful because I didn't know where I was or where I was going. But the, ... what is that week called?

R Week of Welcome?

P1 Yes! That really helped. Because I actually met, like my best friend that I have now at a sexual harassment meeting. (laughs). The Jackson Katz thing. That really helped me with the first week. I wasn't homesick until later...

R So kind of during that first week you weren't?

P1 No, that's when I made all of my friends that I have now.

R When was that later that you started feeling homesick? How long into the semester?

P1 Um, probably about a month. I would say.

R Were there specific things that you were worried about?

P1 Yeah, I was worried about what I was missing at home because I have little siblings there. I was afraid I was missing out on them.

R Ok. Um, so did you have any feelings or did you miss your high school friends or friends from high school?

P1 Mhmm. I have one really really best friend and of course nobody here that's my friend is like here. So it was really hard to figure out, you know, how i was going to survive college without her. Because we were together through high school and probably wouldn't have gotten through it without each other.

R Did you use Facebook during this time to help you with any of those feelings?

P1 Yeah. Friend requesting, of course. Uh, with the new people that I met her. So I got to kind of know them by facebook stalking them. (laughs) Make sure that they're sane.

R Did you keep in touch with your high school friends as well?

P1 Yes.

- R Over Facebook?
- P1 Kind of. Like, pictures. But mostly texts and stuff.
- R So, during that first week and that first month, what were you expecting that to be like? Before you started school. What were you expecting?
- P1 I was expecting it to be a lot harder than it was. It actually was a lot easier than I thought it would be. I was expecting it to be super hard, never having a social life, staying in my dorm, studying all the time. But it's nothing like that. And having friends makes it that much better.
- R Did anyone tell you any stories about their start of college? Did you have friends or family set those expectations.
- P1 Well Kevin [cousin and USF employee]. Kevin told me a lot about what's happening and what I needed to do. The classes, he actually helped me with my schedule. I took a senior class by accident so him reviewing that really helped me.
- R Ok. Other than the Jackson Katz, what other activities did you participate in during the first few weeks?
- P1 We did the Round Up. We went to a volleyball game. We did almost everything that they had on Week of Welcome. A comedy show. Mostly everything. Just to meet new people.
- R Can you tell me a little about yourself in high school. Who you were? Maybe a little bit about your friends and what you were involved in?
- P1 I only had like 2 like really really close friends. We were kind of in our own little group, we always hung out with each other. We didn't really interact with other people. But like now, I used to be really shy when talking to other people. Now I have a best friend her name is Becky. She just goes up to anybody, shameless. So she like really got me out of my shell. Especially being around everyone here. Meeting new people. You have to be sociable.
- R Do you think that having coming to college you've changed? How?

- P1 With the shyness thing, of course. I am a lot more focused. I feel like the goal that I'm trying to reach is actually my goal. In high school, it's basically someone else's. Besides the fact that I want to graduate, I am a lot more determined to get there. Get to graduate school.
- R During those first few weeks, you mentioned that you were friend requesting people and then "stalking" them. Can you show me what that would look like?
- P1 So, let me go to my friend Becky. I always go through the pictures and see what that was about. Then I would go to About. And mostly look if they're in a relationship or not because I'm not in a relationship and it helps to have friends who aren't. She's not in a relationship but it doesn't really say it here. I just know. But yeah, I would see where she's from. They have their interests and where she's worked. She really smarts [points at membership in a MENSA group], so that helped me. Yeah, I would just go through that.
- R Is there anything else that you did during those first couple weeks on Facebook that were helpful to you?
- P1 I went through the University of South Florida and looked through the people there and who was in my classes and stuff like that.
- R Did you participate in that group at all?
- P1 I think so. I don't remember the specific name. I started right before I came here so that I could find my roommate.
- R Did you find your roommate?
- P1 No, I didn't. She found me. It was hard because she didn't use her last name, she used her middle name. So, I could not find her. (laughs) And it just was not... yeah...
- R Did you go to the event pages on Facebook for any of the events in week of welcome?
- P1 The schedule that they gave you? I used that.
- R Thinking about that first week, first couple weeks, is there anything you would change about that? Anything you would use differently?

- P1 Um, I think I would try to broaden myself to other people. I met a lot of people and got a lot of numbers but I didn't actually contact them. So I wish that I had more people to hang out with in a sense. This weekend all of my really good friends left and I was by myself. I have some guy friends but its not the same because they're guys and I'm a girl. It's hard to hang out with them by myself.
- R What were some of your favorite experiences, aside from finding your best friend at Jackson Katz?
- P1 I really enjoyed the football game, actually. Because I love football, even though we lost. It's ok. (laughs) I like walking around campus and seeing different stuff. It's really a pretty campus and it's really big. Homecoming Week is probably one of the best weeks. In high school, you have that spirit week - each day is something different. It gets old, after the fourth year. (laughs) This week, I mean that week, was different like they had the concert, the fair, the carnival. That was a really fun time. Especially the concert.
- R Did you use Facebook at all throughout that experience?
- P1 I don't think so. If I did, it would be to see who was going, like the friends that I knew. We posted pictures, actually, of the concert on Facebook.
- R Is there anything about your transition that you didn't really like?
- P1 I didn't like the room situation. (laughs) Just because you're going into such a tight space and meeting a new person at the same time. One room should actually be for one person but they crammed two people in there. That was hard for me because I've never had to share a room, ever.
- R How did that end up going?
- P1 Well, we have some problems. Me and my roommate. She probably isn't aware of them like I am. She's very naive and obvlious to situations. A lot of times, I end up going to my best friend's house. She has an apartment style and there's so much more space over there. We study a lot and I can't study in my room. So yeah, we have our issues.

- R Is there anything else that you think on Facebook that has been extremely helpful to your first semester?
- P1 We have a lot of pictures already. This one is from Halloween. Sharing that with other people helps me show that I'm doing ok. That I'm doing great - having fun with my friends. This is one of many of me and my friends. That's my best friend right there [points girl out] and he's one of my really good friends too. Just to show that I'm making friends and I'm not going to be alone. That really helps.
- R The people who commented or interacted - was that college friends or high school friends? Or both?
- P1 I think it was high school. Yeah, this was high school. .... Yeah, they're all high school.
- R So this is kind of a way for you to keep in touch?
- P1 With high school, yeah. Exactly. We all like to see each other's pictures from how school's going.
- R Knowing that everyone is ok.
- P1 Exactly.
- R Anything else you would like to add?
- P1 No.
- R Okay, well that is all the questions I have for you. Thank you.



## APPENDIX C

### Transcription of Interview with Participant 2 – Melanie

Researcher Before we get started, I want to go over some things with you. My name is Kevin Yurasek and I am a graduate student in the Mass Communications department here at USF. I am conducting research on how new college students use Facebook during the transition process from high school to college. This interview is for academic research. All of your personal and identifiable information will be kept confidential.

Stories that you share may be included in the research project but items specific to your situation will not appear. During the interview, we may review your Facebook profile or activity but that information won't be collected or saved.

So nothing will be able to be traced back to you. Knowing that I hope that it means you will be as open and honest with me as you can during this interview. The interview will be audio recorded and a transcription of this interview will be kept. The recording, any notes I take and the transcription will be kept electronically and encrypted.

Participant 2 Alright.

R Do you have any questions for me?

P2 No.

*(Participant 2 signs Informed Consent)*

P2 And today is the 11th?

R Yep.

P2 That's my full name [points to form] but on Facebook it's just Amy.

R Ok. So to get started if you can start off by telling me a little bit about how you use Facebook.

P2 Oh, I'm always on Facebook. It's how I talk to people. (laughs)

R Ok.

P2 I have a phone but I usually just Facebook message people.

R So you're messaging and chatting?

P2 Yeah, I rarely text message.

R Do you participate in groups and those type of things?

P2 Um, do you mean like clubs?

R Groups on Facebook.

P2 Yeah, I'm on the USF Facebook. Should I log in to show you this or just on my phone?

R Whichever is easier for you.

P2 Like, I'm in the marching band so I'm on that page. There's my dorm room page. The free and for sale thing I just bought a long board off that page. The humans vs zombies page. The Project Mayhem thing, I don't know. I was just added to it. Paintball. I don't know what this is. If it's USF, I just join it because it looks official.

R So you have a lot of groups?

P2 The USF page is where I met most of the people I talk to. I don't know how to search it on my cell phone. That's where I met most of friends. I was just like, 'does anyone want to hookah tonight?' and got a bunch of responses. They were just like, everybody gets on.

R So let's think about last summer when you were coming to college. What were some things, if anything, that you were worried about?

P2 Not meeting people. Not fitting in.

R Were you concerned about leaving any high school friends behind?

P2 Only a few but they're coming next year.

R So this year is filling in a gap?

P2 Yeah, just like, waiting.

R Ok. Can you describe yourself to me in high school? Your high school self.

P2 Me? Mm. Very naive. Uh, kinda quiet. Wasn't very outgoing. Um, yeah. That's pretty much it. I did band a lot. I was a band geek.

R And when you were coming to college, what did you expect it to be like?

P2 Hmm. A place of learning and a lot of partying. And that's pretty much exactly what I'm doing. (laughs)

R Did that expectation come from movies, friend, family, Facebook?

P2 My brother and sister.

R So let's talk about the first couple weeks when you got here. Moving in, week of welcome, all that. What kind of things did you do during that time?

P2 I was in band. I really didn't talk to anybody because band just took up all that time. I went to classes. I really didn't talk to people. It wasn't until like maybe I think like a month ago. It wasn't Halloween, around the second football game, I was just like, I wasn't meeting any people - I should meet more people. (pause) And then I started talking to people. It was the hookah post! The hookah post was the tipping point.

R So you decided that you wanted to start talking to people and you used the Facebook group?

P2 Yeah.

R Great. During that first week, there wasn't any particular activities that you participated in?

P2 The band camp thing. I had to come that early Sunday and then the whole week was 12 hours a day. I didn't talk to anybody but band kids.

- R Ok. So now that you've been at USF for almost a full semester now, can you describe yourself now?
- P2 I feel like I'm more outgoing. I've done more things my whole life - more things now than I have in my whole life. I don't know. I feel like I've learned more stuff. Have more friends. More meaningful friends, I should say.
- R And then, so you keep in touch with them mostly via Facebook?
- P2 Yeah.
- R So during those first few weeks on Facebook, who were you talking to?
- P2 Probably friends from high school. Maybe one or two people from here. That's pretty much it. Just to keep in touch with people from high school.
- R What kinds of things were you talking about with your high school friends?
- P2 Just talking about like stories we had together, band, wanting to see each other again, can't wait until next year when you're here, just not really important things.
- R So not really sharing much about what was going on now?
- P2 Oh yeah. They asked about how's college? Is it really as bad as people talk about? Are the parties awesome? I'm just like, it's college.
- R So thinking about, what are some of your favorite experiences this semester?
- P2 This isn't named right?
- R No.
- P2 Got wasted for the first time. That was exciting. Uh, learning how to long board. I liked that. New skills. Learning more about computers and more about cars. Meeting more friends. I don't know what else. Going to Ybor that was fun. I discovered I liked Ybor. Maybe learning how to smoke a cigar because I've never done that before. But my dad has always done it. He's like, you can't do it! You're a girl! I'm like, ok.
- R Did you learn that in Ybor?

- P2 Yeah, I did learn that in Ybor actually. (laughs) I discovered I didn't really like band. I don't like it anymore. It was kind of a high school thing. Uh, that maybe I should change my major because I like math more than just engineering. Yeah. Ok. I forgot the question. I was talking too much.
- R You actually went into the next question. So what are some things you didn't like.
- P2 Oh, maybe I don't like that I'm sharing spaces with people. Yeah, I kind of miss having my own room. My brothers are both 4 or 5 years older than me. So I've pretty much had the house to myself for the past four year. And now it's like, all of a sudden, I have no space. I don't like how some of the teachers are. Like, I had to drop a class because a teacher... I did the quiz right but she didn't like the way I did it. She marked me off a lot. So I dropped the class. Um. (pause) Now that I'm thinking about it, I can't think of a lot. Maybe just living on campus has its ups and downs. It's kinda my favorite part and my least favorite part.
- R Makes you miss having your own room?
- P2 Yeah. But no, it's like I'm by the dining hall. I'm by Kosove. So of course you're going to hear people yelling and screaming all the time. Especially at night.
- R Were there things, when you were talking about your favorite things... let's think like when you discovered you like math more than engineering in general. Did any of your Facebook conversations help play a part in that? Did you have conversations with people to help solidify that decision?
- P2 I don't know, right now, I'm still kind of wishy washy if I should just stay in Engineering. Some of my friends are like, I need help in math. I like helping them and teaching them and then people are like, 'You're so good at math! You should be doing this!' And so then, I'm kind of like, you can't make money with math (chuckling).
- R So, how about, thinking back to your expectations of what college was - basically learning and partying were your two expectations.
- P2 Yes (hearty laughter).

R That's essentially the simple way of putting that. Do you use Facebook to achieve both of those?

P2 Yeah, I use Facebook to make study and also to say 'Hey, where's the party at tonight?'

R Is the way you're doing that through the 2017 group?

P2 There are friends that I met through the group and then friends that I talk to in private messages. Because I don't want to put all over Facebook that I'm going to get wasted or something stupid.

R So it kind of starts in the main group and then branches out to private chats in Messenger?

P2 Yeah.

R Is that where you would say you spend most of your Facebook time, on Messenger?

P2 Probably on Messenger, yeah. Sometimes I scroll through the wall when I have no one to talk to. When I'm by myself or doing homework. (laughs)

R On Messenger, is it always you and another person or is it groups or multiple people?

P2 Very rarely is it multiple people. Sometimes we don't do the group thing, there's just like 4 people at a time and we're all just talking to each other individual. And then just say, 'Hey! He said something funny!' We're just too lazy to make a group?

R Too much reading? (laughing)

P2 No, it's just too much togetherness.

R (pause) We kind of talked about this. You talked about how you're a little bit of a different person now than when you were in high school. What kinds of things do you think pushed you to make those changes?

P2 I just remember in high school when I was sitting by myself on Friday. Everybody else would be going out to do stuff. And it made me kind of depressed. So, I was just like, I don't want to be like that the rest of my life. I wished I was a more talkative person in high school. Like I was talkative to maybe like a select few people but besides that I was just always quiet.

- R So you just decided that you wanted to make a change? This isn't who I wanted to be forever.
- P2 Yeah. Just put myself out there.
- R Is there anything else that you do on Facebook now that's USF that's really interesting or may be helpful for me to understand what's it's like coming to college.
- P2 I'm mostly just on my pages or my wall and chats. And just hang out. It's like internet hanging out. Internet cafe.
- R As my final question, for you, and I already asked, but can you pick one thing that's your favorite experience this semester?
- P2 Maybe just meeting new people. Is that too general?
- R No, if that's your answer.
- P2 Ok.
- R Ok, that wraps it up. Thanks for your participation.

## APPENDIX D

### Transcription of Interview with Participant 3 – Victor

Researcher Before we get started, I want to go over some things with you. My name is Kevin Yurasek and I am a graduate student in the Mass Communications department here at USF. I am conducting research on how new college students use Facebook during the transition process from high school to college. This interview is for academic research. All of your personal and identifiable information will be kept confidential.

Stories that you share may be included in the research project but items specific to your situation will not appear. During the interview, we may review your Facebook profile or activity but that information won't be collected or saved.

So nothing will be able to be traced back to you. Knowing that I hope that it means you will be as open and honest with me as you can during this interview. The interview will be audio recorded and a transcription of this interview will be kept. The recording, any notes I take and the transcription will be kept electronically and encrypted.

Do you have any questions for me?

Participant 3 No.

*(Participant 3 signs informed consent)*

R So you're not using Facebook a lot?

P3 No. Mostly Twitter.

P When you are on Facebook are you mostly chatting? The Messenger type thing?



- P3 Yes
- R Everything else is just a little bit.
- P3 Yeah if it's something like this girl is in Hawaii. I'll like it or comment on it. If it catches the eye, then I'll totally read it.
- R But you're not spending a ton of time going through the feed?
- P3 I'm not going to. I don't care about 'I ate spaghetti today'
- R Tell me about what your first few weeks of college were like, when you first got to USF.
- P3 I moved in with my friends. We agreed to be roommates. The first few weeks... I live in Juniper, so we have the pod thing. It's very open. Anybody goes in and watches tv or that kind of thing. I would really like got together. Watch movies in the pod. We didn't have homework or anything to worry about. Just getting to know each other. And then that's pretty much what we did. Play video games all day. Didn't really go out. We were in our room or the pod.
- R When you say we, is that your friends from home or other people in the pod?
- P3 That's my friends that are my roommates. ... It also includes the other people in the pod because we got to know them and talk and stuff.
- R It sounds pretty laidback, but is there anything in particular that you were worried about with starting school?
- P3 Um, I was pretty confident about what I was taking. I've had IB. I was taking Chemistry 1, not intro but Chemistry 1, and that seemed pretty easy. And then I was taking Bio and some IDH class, like Philosophy. I wasn't that impacted by the fact that I was in new classes. I felt that the material was going to be new but not like totally new. And that's the case. I'm doing good.

- R Did you join any groups or organizations?
- P3 Oh yeah. I started to go and, I didn't stay in my pod. Our RA told us about the club fairs in the MSC. I went there and got involved kind of. Not that much. Like I mean, I go to meetings and stuff but it's like PAMSA. I don't go anymore. All they do are do things that I don't think are useful. The Red Cross does stuff that matters. And also like the latino one. That one too.
- R Do any of those groups use Facebook to have a group?
- P3 All 3.
- R What type of things happen on the groups?
- P3 Events and announcements. They just remind us of stuff.
- R Can you describe yourself in high school. Tell me about what you were like then.
- P3 I was an all around kid pretty much. I was on the football team and I had straight As. I was in IB. I don't call myself popular because my IB friends are like my friends. But I was pretty well known. I threw parties and stuff in high school. My house was always filled with kids. I considered myself with friends I was ok. I wasn't the most outgoing person but I had fun.
- R Other than staying busy with IB and football, did you participate in anything else?
- P3 Clubs. Mostly just fun stuff with friends. I was in NHS. They didn't do much at our school. They just said to themselves that we're awesome because we're in NHS. But they didn't do anything - not 1 service project at all. They sucked at that. I like to do stuff that actually matters. I volunteer a lot. I feed a lot of homeless people or read to blind kids. My neighbor, her nephew just became blind because of a horrible car accident. He couldn't see. His parents were really injured in the crash, so the mom and the kid moved in with my neighbor. The kid was starting to learn Braille. I read along and the kid was learning the braille. It was .... That was actually doing

something. That's actually doing stuff. That's why I don't like PAMSA anymore. They don't have an impact that much. I also volunteer with immigrant kids at the church. I live in Brandon, it's very close about 20 miles away. The Sunday School also had Friday schools which were the spanish ones. We taught immigrant kids to speak spanish. I mean english.

R So you taught spanish speaking kids to speak english?

P3 Yes. Using the bible, it was hosted by a church.

R What were you expecting college to be like before you got here?

P3 Seriously. I thought it was going to be way more wild parties. I got here and I was Wow. I thought this was going to be something you see in movies - 21 and over. That kind of stuff. But it's really cool like how you could find a party if you want to off campus. But it's more of a community rather than high school with little cliques. I'm in Honors College. I thought it was going to be like IB where I would only talk to kids in the Honors Colleges. But I actually have a lot of friends in the regular.

R Did you have any friends or family members that set expectations for you?

P3 My dad wants me to be a doctor. I'm in the 7 year program. I don't know... I mean... He expects me to be a doctor. Right now, I have a good GPA even though I haven't finished the semester. I'm going to get an A- in Calculus. My GPA is going to be high. I'm ok with that and helping stuff. Doctors nowadays don't do much. I don't know.

R Did you go to any of the welcome week activities?

P3 All of them pretty much... that were near Juniper. The first week I stayed near Juniper.

R Is that because you were comfortable there? You wanted to stay with what you knew?

P3 I didn't like walking. It was too hot. They should make a covered walkway from Juniper to the MSC. I was about to have a heat stroke.

- R Tell me what that first day of class was like.
- P3 I walked into the class. It was Chemistry. I walked in like 20 minutes early. The class started at 8:35, I got there at 8:15. It was empty. I took a picture of it and posted on Instagram. "First day of class. First day here. Hashtag teacher's pet." I don't even go to Chemistry anymore. I'm still getting A's. The curve is really weird. You can miss 5 questions and still get 100. I got a 28 or 29 on the last tests and I don't really study that much. I was going in the beginning of the year because I wanted to be serious.
- R Do you study or do you teach yourself?
- P3 I already know it. I got like a 5 in IB and 4 in AP. I'm in the 7 year, so I can't skip this chemistry class. It's awesome because I'm getting A's without even trying. Getting my GPA up there. I like that. Calculus is a pain in the butt. It's really hard to get an A plus in that one. I mean the tests are easy ... the quizzes are easy... it's just like the questions. There's some questions that you get wrong and it's over. That ruins your 100.
- R You were describing yourself in high school earlier. How would you describe yourself now. Have you changed?
- P3 I'm not that sporty anymore. I was thinking when I first got here - I want to do something sporty. I'm going to join rugby or something. Then I heard rugby trains 3 hours a night and it's just exhausting. I went to a practice but I didn't participate. I just went and observed. I went to that thing - remember that fair - and the captain wanted me to come by. Like I signed up and was like, dude this is going to be cool. I might have actually played and been on the first team. There were small people there; they don't have enough big guys. I mean, like, I learned that there's a front line, back line and runningbacks and stuff. They didn't have that much front line and the guy was asking me to go. And I went. The practice is so grueling. It just drains you probably. And they train for three hours. And the guy came up to me again. I see you didn't join, what about next semester? I was thinking I was going to do that but didn't. And then I also... grades. Grades in the Honors College. I'm going to put myself... I'm probably

in the 60th percentile. 40% of the Honors College is probably smarter than me. I see people coming in with Calc 2 already done and doing Calculus 3. Engineers, mostly. I know I'm not like the the top top top person but I mean, I'm still smart compared to the whole population.

R Thinking about your first few weeks here. Who were you talking to? Were you meeting new people? Sticking with people you knew?

P3 At our IB school, one-fourth came to USF. Ten percent of the people went to Harvard, John Hopkins whatever. And then, you've got the UF people, FSU and then the small colleges all over the world. The people I chose to stay with are my really close friends and we're doing pre-med. And I get to have people in the same classes as me. The problem is that they're not doing the 7-year. They're not taking 1 single science class this semester. I'm studying for Biology and I don't know what they're doing. It's kind of frustrating. I don't want to say that I'm trying to not hang out with them anymore, but like I kind of need to find my own space. I go into the pod to do my homework because they're playing video games in the room. But that's when I'm doing homework. But when I'm doing active stuff, I'm always hanging out with them. I go to parties with them. I go to events with them. I went to the two USF football games with them. And everything that was active, it was involved with USF. Now, with the academic side, I don't have as much in common with them. I started talking with new people in my classes, hanging out with new people.

R Were you interacting with them on Facebook at all?

P3 Who?

R The new people from the classes you were meeting.

P3 No. I would just call them and say 'hey, do you want to hang out?' I mean, most people live in Juniper or Poplar. I mean, if I used Facebook. I'm going to be like, I know this person on Facebook. I'm going to message them and tell them what's up. And then, go meet up. After that time, I won't need to use Facebook anymore. I'll have their phone number when I meet them. I'm going back to using cell phones.

R So you're going back to getting cell phone numbers and less connecting on Facebook?

P3 Yeah... Facebook has been losing its shine. ... I do use Facebook, though, to check on my friends from other colleges. Like I saw that my friend is being inducted into a fraternity or sorority and seeing pictures of them. It's good to have, but it's not good to have for people that you can just walk down and see. My roommates? I've never been on their Facebook. Ever.

R So you're using it more to keep in touch with people who aren't near to you physically?

P3 Yeah. And even then. I have times. I had this complicated relationship with this girl. We were on and off again. We always talk on the phone. We never like really IM anymore. So yeah. So we talk on the phone and Skype. We don't really use the Facebook video thing. Have you ever tried that?

R Facebook video chat? No.

P3 (laughs) I was wondering if it did work or not.

R Were you posting anything to show to your other friends?

P3 Snapchat. (laughs) I don't want to post things that I do in college because my parents might see. You know, I think Snapchat is beautiful. You see it and then it's gone. I heard Facebook tried to buy it for like 3 billion dollars and were rejected. They probably would have ruined it.

R What about Instagram? Didn't Facebook buy them?

P3 It's losing its glam. It's Snapchat nowadays. I mean, they have like a thing. Twitter. For Twitter, I do use Twitter but only for news. I don't really follow, I mean I follow my friends. Yeah sure, I'll follow you because you're following me. But I don't post anything. I follow Cristiano Ronaldo. I love Real Madrid. I follow Real Madrid. I can't see a game, so I'm like using... reloading. Seeing updates of the game. I use it

for news, New York Times and all that stuff. I'm really big into video games so like IGN.

R So that's where you get news to stay up on the world? On Twitter?

P3 Yeah. I read New York Times. They have the link to the page on Twitter.

R When you go to friend someone on Facebook, that you didn't know.

P3 I was very naive at first. I met this person today and I'm looking on Facebook to find. And I find them. And then I never see them again. So what is the point of having a friend that I'll never see again? And it's just taking space. Sometimes they end up being the type of person that posts all the time - what they're eating, what they're doing, what they're thinking about. Blah blah blah. That happened to me like twice already. So I mean, I only friend now people who I'm actually going to see. I might not know the person in my building but I will friend them because I'll see them every day.

R So when you're looking at the criteria to friend someone - it's not necessarily what's on their profile but their proximity?

P3 Also like, again, if like a hot girl. If I meet a hot girl, of course I'm going to friend her. Because I want to see the pictures. (laughs) That's why like Justin Bieber has a million followers on Twitter because girls want to see pictures.

R Looking back, you're most of the way through the semester. Is there something you would change about your transition to college?

P3 Um. Oh. Okay. I mean... like a specific thing? Yes. Because, um... cause, there was this time that I did something... I had sex with a girl. And the girl lives in my building and I see her everyday. And I regret that so much. Without even talking, it's just weird. So that's another thing about college. If you're going to do it, do it with someone that you care about. So, I regret that. It's weird seeing that girl.

R Do you still talk to her?

P3 It was the second night of move in. I got here the opening day for bull haul. And this girl lives in our pod. And I was hanging out with her and stuff. And then we really got into this really complicated conversation about what we wanted to do with our lives and talked for like five hours straight. And then the next night, her roommate hadn't come yet. And it just happened. And I regret that. Later, we still talked for like a week. And then like, um... what happened was... that her boyfriend came. And she didn't have Facebook, so... she had a boyfriend. And I was like... She's from Jacksonville and nobody knew her. Her boyfriend came to visit and I was like, 'what the heck?' He's in the Army - that's the worst part of it all. Like, serving our country. I feel awful. Anyway, that happened and it was pretty bad. It's now just awkward.

R If you're going to friend the hot girl, what else would you like on her profile.

P3 Of course the pictures. We have our own page for the pod. I was looking at everybody. I did look at their past and stuff like that. I was going to be living next to them so I wanted to know a little bit about them. So I mean, and I did, on girls, I did notice if they were in a relationship or not. I find that important to know. For example, that girl I don't talk to anymore, I really like her. I thought we were going to have a relationship or something. But she could do the same thing to me and I'm not interested.

R Would you consider that a benefit of Facebook that you could go through the history and learn more about them?

P3 Yeah, I use SnapChat more with people I already know. I'm not going to Snapchat a random person.

R What I hear you saying is that you would use Facebook to build a friendship and then use other items to maintain it?

P3 I mean, not build the friendship. Get to know the person before. Not stalking them. Some people I know, I've never been on their Facebook profile. One thing my mom told me



about was to be careful that you don't have any serial killers in your dorm because of Virginia Tech. For kind of a safety reason, I just wanted to know their background. For example, this guy his name it Matt. And in his Facebook profile, he has pictures of himself doing drugs. And I mean, I'm not really into that. Just to have like, you know, a foundation of knowing that kid does drugs. I know what to expect. Not to say that I wouldn't go party with him but I want to know what to expect of the person.

R I think as my last question for you. Think about next semester. What are things that you're looking forward to or do you have any concerns about anything.

P3 Physics (laughs) I never took Physics in IB. (laughs)

R Is that a concern or is that good?

P3 It's a concern. Biology and Chemistry I took them in IB. So I'm pretty familiar with the topics. Physics is something I never really got into. And it's required. Also, there's new people coming in. This person failed out of calculus. And he's from Virginia and has to leave. I don't really care. That kid was pretty mean to some people. So I'm like, really. There's new people coming in. I'm just wondering how they're going to be. Hopefully they'll be cooler than the kid that was there. Also, mostly just... you know... I'm also interested in what's going to happen with the basketball team. I'm into basketball. They've won two games straight right? Undefeated. Also, like, I'm applying to be an RA. Hopefully that goes good to me. The whole process is coming up next semester. I was going to be an OTL but I need to go to school in the summer for the 7 year program. I need to go in the summer for Bio 2 and Physics 2 in summer. It's fun to go to lab in the summer. You have to do more. That's going to be fun, I guess. I was thinking about being an OTL. I mean, Dom was so cool. He's a good kid. Overall, just coming here was pretty much... some people were shocked because they're living in their own bubble. But I'm more multicultural than most people. But I was shocked too. The Honors LLC is mostly white people and some Asians. I'm the only kid that doesn't fit that profile in my pod. It's hard because I'm used to talking spanish to my parents. I wish I had some friends to talk spanish to. I do have like, a new love interest though for the next semester. She's from France. I

took French in high school. So I've been spending a lot of time with her. And she doesn't have a boyfriend. I checked!

R On Facebook?

P3 Yeah, on Facebook! There's another girl. I like this girl and then I found out that she was engaged. Wow. So it's pretty good to check.

R Okay, this was great. Thank you so much.

## APPENDIX E

### Transcription of Interview with Participant 4 – Stephanie

Researcher Before we get started, I want to go over some things with you. My name is Kevin Yurasek and I am a graduate student in the Mass Communications department here at USF. I am conducting research on how new college students use Facebook during the transition process from high school to college. This interview is for academic research. All of your personal and identifiable information will be kept confidential.

Stories that you share may be included in the research project but items specific to your situation will not appear. During the interview, we may review your Facebook profile or activity but that information won't be collected or saved.

So nothing will be able to be traced back to you. Knowing that I hope that it means you will be as open and honest with me as you can during this interview. The interview will be audio recorded and a transcription of this interview will be kept. The recording, any notes I take and the transcription will be kept electronically and encrypted.

Do you have any questions for me?

Participant 4 No.

*(Participant 4 signs informed consent)*

R So let's just start off by talking about your Facebook usage.

P4 Ok.

R It looks like that you're checking it and spending some time on there. Talk to me about how you're spending your time and what the process looks like.

P4 I'm definitely more of a lurker. I'm not really inclined to every post anything unless I feel really strongly about it. Not like strongly like "look what this guy said about Obama!" it's more like "Wow, this video is hilarious. Everybody needs to watch it!" Something light. I'm not going to go stuff what I believe down people's throats. I definitely look to see what people post. Also, I have family on there. So I'm not going to go post things with language on it. I try not to do that. My mom would be scarred for life, I think. A lot of times I use it, like right now I'm in hall council so I go on there to check up on that to see if we posted anything. Get in touch with those. Or just like other groups. I'm less likely to go and go on somebody's profile to see how someone's been doing. It's more of a tool for communication for people who aren't necessarily my best friends. That's kind of how I view it.

R Are you spending that time on the News Feed or Group pages? Or both?

P4 If I open up with something to check it. Boom. Checked it. Done. But if I'm bored and not really anything else is going on. Then I'll scroll on the feed until I get bored with it.

R You're not necessarily then interacting with a lot of people?

P4 I definitely would comment and like more so than be the person to reach out. If somebody posted something that I thought was funny or if I feel like I have a really witty comeback to say, I'll say it. That sort of interaction. Not necessarily, 'hey! long time no see! miss you so much!'

R So the people that you're commenting on, is that USF friends or friends from home?

P4 Whatever is interesting to me. It's not that I feel obligated to comment because I haven't talked to someone in a long time. I think I'm more likely to comment on someone that I just met at USF because I just met them and wanting to keep the friendship alive.

R Can you tell me about your first few weeks of college. What were you thinking? Feeling?

P4            When I first got here I didn't feel like I knew the campus at all. I was terrified. I didn't feel like I was going to be able to find anything. The day before a friend of mine who I met at Orientation, we got together and looked up our classes. Got a map to see where everything. And then walked around to find the exact room. That was really cool and super helpful. And then after that, I was fine. It actually wasn't that bad. As you do it more, you get more comfortable. At first you don't really know people so you're trying to be outgoing but then you're like, I don't want to be that weird person that just goes and sits next to people. You're trying to balance that and meet new people. I really try to meet people in my building and make friends there. Luckily, my roommate is an RA so that's super awesome because she knows everything already. And she would get people together to try to hang out. And I automatically "had" to go. That was awesome. It was a really great way to meet new people because of her.

R            Were there things that you were worried about?

P4            Other than getting lost and being late to all of my classes, I wasn't really worried about anything. Yeah, I think that was really like the only big concern. I didn't want to have to ask people for directions.

R            Are you from around Tampa?

P4            I'm from Orlando.

R            What was it like leaving friends from high school and coming to USF?

P4            I was definitely a social person in high school but I didn't make a lot of deep friendships. So that really wasn't that bad. One of the reasons I wanted to come here was that I only knew two people from my high school going here and I wasn't really close with either of them. I really only am missing like my best friend from high school. That hasn't really been like a whole, I'm not like heartbroken. I'm not wishing I was hanging out with so-and-so.

R            What types of things were you doing on Facebook during those first couple of weeks?

- P4 I lived for that Class of 2017 page. I mean, I even like to read it just to see what other people are thinking and their questions. If I had a question, I would go there. That was super useful because a lot of people had the same questions. So it wasn't like I was the only one. That was really nice. A lot of times, one thing, I didn't even or wouldn't even think. I have this issue. And then I would see it, and good thing that person brought it up! So that definitely was really nice to use.
- R Did you do anything with Week of Welcome?
- P4 I went to the big first thingy where they released the balloons.
- R Kickoff?
- P4 Yes, kickoff. I went to the... pancake midnight thing. I went to the sexism talk, I forget what his name was. Those three are what's sticking out to me. I'm sure I did more but I can't remember. ... Oh! I went to the Network social in the Ballroom.
- R Did any of those activities spur any Facebook activity for you?
- P4 No, I don't think so. Not off the bat. But then I joined a network. And that kind of caused it.
- R Let's think about yourself in high school. Describe yourself.
- P4 I was involved in theater. So I was in the drama department. Thespians and stuff like that. I was in the Honors Society. I was the Secretary so I was always at the meetings and involved in that. I worked a lot though so a lot of times. I worked a lot. It was like after school, boom. Driving to work. My time was moreso involved with work than anything else. Obviously I spent time at school. Yeah, I mean, I had friends but I didn't have best friends. Not that I... they just weren't my type. I was closer with the people I worked with. I had a steady boyfriend for junior and senior year. I was really into that. I went to his track meets and stuff. I took AP classes for the most part. And I didn't buy school lunches; I packed my lunch. I drove to school, I lived

like 20 minutes away. I was close with some of the teachers. More of just, hey, I know her. Nothing like, best friend ever oh my gosh!

R This may be too personal, but was the break-up related to leaving to college?

P4 No, he's just stupid and wanted to break up with me. ... Even after the break up, he was trying to get back together with me at the beginning of this semester. And... no.

R So what were you expecting college to be like?

P4 Um, I was expecting more people to be less friendly. And I was expecting it to be like, 'oh we're college students and we know so much'. I definitely haven't seen any of that, really. Everybody seems really, everyone that I've met is friendly. Definitely at this campus, there's so much diversity. And I love that. There's like... you're way more likely to see someone that doesn't look like you. It's really nice meeting someone from a different culture. And seeing how they are as people. Where I went to school in the boonies, it wasn't very ethnically diverse. So that's definitely something about coming to college that I really liked. Wait, was it what I did expect or what I did not expect?

R You can go either way.

P4 (pause) Hmm. I didn't expect for everybody to already have friends. Like right off the bat. People were already traveling in groups Everybody already made all their friends. This is it. It's a done deal. That was silly and I've obviously already made friends. I didn't expect to get along with my roommate as well as I did. I was expecting it to be more awkward.

R Did anybody tell you stories about college to set those expectations?

P4 No. I'm the first person in my family to go to a state college. Nobody in family really said what to expect. Everything that I was expecting or not expecting came from Orientation, talking to people there, seeing the campus, talking to the OTLs and stuff like that.

R Tell me about that first day of class and what you were feeling.

P4 I was so excited and my outfit was so cool. I had on a button that said "I have a feeling we're not in Kansas anymore". I thought that was the perfect button for the experience. It was really like... well... my first day of classes were my two smaller size classes. I have Spanish, that's my first class. I have it four days. It's smaller, maybe 20 people. So that was kind of like, this isn't that bad. The biggest thing was that there's some old, not like old but older. I'm the youngest person in the class. It was just kind of like, there's a lot of older people. This is definitely weird. I definitely felt like a little quiet. I wasn't talking to a lot of people obviously. And my other classes was my Honors humanities class. That's another small class and it was a little different too. So the first day of classes was just kind of like... "Oh, I did it" Afterward, it was very exciting. My roommate, the RA, we went to breakfast together and talked about it. I was super excited and took a picture! I went and bought my humanities book and was so excited to be on top of it the whole year... not on top of it anymore. (laughs) The next day was my larger lecture classes. And that was just... this is college. My big physics class with 250 people in it. Luckily, I knew someone in it - a friend of mine from Orientation. So that was just awesome. I would have probably still been sitting alone not talking to anyone. It was weird just seeing everybody and the mixture of people. It was exciting though.

R Tell me about yourself and how you think you've changed since high school.

P4 Hmm.. I'm definitely hanging out with people more. Cause it's just one of those things. You're not just going to sit in your room alone. That's one of the biggest differences from living at home in your house with your family and everything. You're more likely to chill at your house in room, watch Netflix, whatever. Now I'm way less likely to do that. I'm going to text people, hey let's go to the dining hall, let's watch a movie tonight, stuff like that. I'm WAY more social. More just like friends I'm going to sit around and hang around with. I don't have to hang out with people but I see myself doing that more. Probably the biggest difference is that I'm still very academically driven and wanting to do well on my classes. And I just feel like...



because I'm not at home or relying on my parents, I feel more adult like. I have to do my own shopping, buy my own milk now. Which is nice.

R Let's talk about Facebook a little bit more specifically. You talked about the different type of people you would meet. In terms of a USF student stranger, you said you probably wouldn't browse their profile?

P4 Not unless I friended them first. I would be more likely to just say "Hey let's be friends". And then do the obligatory stalk of the page.

R When you do that, what are you looking for?

P4 I guess I'm just looking to find out more about them. Find out what kind of stuff they do. What they're involved in. If they seem like somebody I would really like to get to know more. Are they my type of person?

R Let's say for instance that there's someone in the 2017 facebook group that you haven't met but you saw they commented. Would you browse and stalk them prior to friending? Or just friend them?

P4 I don't think I... I think I would just friend them first. ... There's always the unfriend button.

R During the first couple weeks that you were, who were you communicating on Facebook with? Home people? USF people? Both?

P4 Let's see. I was definitely looking at the USF page (2017) seeing people's questions. So I was definitely there. I feel like as time goes on, the less I would check it. A lot of times, I was interested in questions "Hey is there anywhere around to go do X or see Y?" Stuff like that is what I was looking for. Let's see. I probably didn't really talk as much with people from home that much. Yeah, it was definitely more of a lurker thing.

R You joined the Hall Council group?

P4 Yes.

R Were there any other groups?

P4 From USF. There was the Hall Council and the Magnolia page where I live. And the free and for sale page, that's a great page. I actually bought something - a sweater from there. And the textbook exchange one but I haven't used it yet.

R Can you show me on the 2017 page some posts that you found that were interesting?

P4 Sure. *(logs in to Facebook)* I saw the Tunnel of Oppression post first. When I saw it go up, I watched the video and tried to learn about it. I like the post about the funny stuff. The squirrels and stuff. Always amusing to see when people post about that. "Does anybody know of a gas station?" I would try to look and remember. That's how I heard about Taco Bus. Stuff around the area.

R Did you post anything?

P4 I actually posted a question about tattoo shops. *(laughs)* Got some good replies, but can't really remember what they were. ... Looking to see what people are taking. It's interesting. So many of us are taking the same things. If I saw someone asking about Conceptual Physics I would be like boom! telling you... now you know. So anything where's there's any advice. I try. I'm always interested in. Even if it's something I don't know anything about, it's always something I want to look into. I took the survey about USF Dining, but I found out about that through RHA. Let's see... I remember that somebody commented about stuff to expect because they were coming later. I saw that somebody had commented about bikers being really rude. And I was like, hold up! I biked to my first. Not that I started an argument, but I was trying to give a biker's perspective. Try to move out of the way - people walk in this wall. Like, excuse me, can I get through? I always try to be polite. Is somebody slandering the name of the biker? I had to stick up for bikers everywhere. Stuff like this... the schedules for finals week. I wouldn't have even thought about that. Oh, I should totally know about finals week and when I have to take my finals. Something that I

didn't think about. It's great that someone else thought about it for me. But sometimes, people are silly. What time does Fresh Food close? Can't you just look it up. Sometimes people are lazy. So I will say that one thing this has taught me is that I get frustrated. C'mon! Look it up! It's definitely made me think... let me look online first to find the answer before bothering someone else.

R Is it reassuring to you to see that others have those questions?

P4 Yes, definitely. I definitely don't feel alone. I don't want to be the only person thinking something silly.

R Let's think about when you friend somebody and look through their profile. What types of things are you looking for to see? How you do determine if they're worthy of being your friend not being unfriended?

P4 I would look to see what they post. Just like I said, I'll post a funny video that's hilarious. So if they posted something like that, I would watch it. And if it wasn't that funny, I would be disappointed that they could do better. I like to see the content that they feel is important enough to post. There are some people who post 24/7 and it's like the more you post, the less likely I'm going to read your posts. It's like, everything deserves your attention but not everything is quite that important. It's not that I would unfriend them, but it's something that I would notice. So what type of activities they're partaking. If they're going out and partying every night, I'm less likely to hang out with them. That's just not my thing. I'm not going to go to a club. Not interesting to me at all. Just look through their pictures. How many pictures do they post? Some people post a ton and some people post none. And it's just interesting, like "why are you not posting anything bro? c'mon! don't you do anything?" Something that would make me not want to be their friend. Is if they tried to get political without knowing what they're talking about or saying something small minded. Just, I mean... I'm definitely open to other people's opinions. But if it's a terrible opinion like gay people are terrible people. Ok, bye. (laughs) I would definitely. You have to be open to everybody and I know I'm not being open to you because you said that. Still. Bigoted remarks would totally be a turn off. Ok maybe we won't be hanging out.

- R Thinking back throughout the whole semester, what are particular things that stressed you out the most? After the initial concerns.
- P4 Seeing that the only, literally the only things that ever counted in my classes were tests. Well crap. Now I have to do stellar on all my tests. There's no way around that. That's all there is to see how great of a student you are. That has always been my biggest stress to make sure that I take the time out to study and study well. Doing well on the tests is now my biggest freak out. And then, in my honors class we always have a short response paper due every week. That's always on the back of my mind. As soon as I finish, I remember I have to start working on the next one in two days. It's always in the back of my mind as a silent stressor.
- R Do you look for people to study with or do you study on your own?
- P4 I study alone for my Statistics class. Simply because I don't know anybody. My Physics class I know a couple people and we tend to study together. But we're studying together but alone. We're doing our own thing. If we have a question, then we'll work together. And then, in my Spanish class, I do both. I study alone but maybe we'll get together the day before the test.
- R Thinking of the whole experience, is there anything you could change or do differently?
- P4 I think I would have liked to do the Bull Haul. I think that's why people already seemed to know each other. They came early and met people through that. So that, I kind was like dang, I wish I had done that. One of the guys in my building, that's how he met a lot of people. He came early and he was doing that. Every time I asked him, how do you know that person? We hang out a lot and I've never met that person. Every time it was I met them at the Bull Haul thing.
- R So what are you expecting for next semester.
- P4 Next semester I know it's going to be different because everyone is going to have new classes. All the friends you made are going to disperse. Go everywhere. So that's the biggest thing I'm thinking of is meeting new people in my classes. It's going to get

harder, I assume. It's going to be a little more difficult and I'll have to step up my game. I'm hoping that it stays the same fun and I'm able to balance everything that I want to do.

R Is there anything else that you think Facebook-wise has really been helpful to you?

P4 Just the fact that since people have Facebook, it's easier and quicker to connect. That's the biggest thing. It's the fastest, quickest way. It's not even, hey can I get your number. It's, hey, do you have a Facebook? That's always the question now. And yeah, let me look you up. That's the biggest that.

R Ok, great. That's all the questions I have for you.

## APPENDIX F

### Transcription of Interview with Participant 5 – Tiffany

Researcher Before we get started, I want to go over some things with you. My name is Kevin Yurasek and I am a graduate student in the Mass Communications department here at USF. I am conducting research on how new college students use Facebook during the transition process from high school to college. This interview is for academic research. All of your personal and identifiable information will be kept confidential.

Stories that you share may be included in the research project but items specific to your situation will not appear. During the interview, we may review your Facebook profile or activity but that information won't be collected or saved.

So nothing will be able to be traced back to you. Knowing that I hope that it means you will be as open and honest with me as you can during this interview. The interview will be audio recorded and a transcription of this interview will be kept. The recording, any notes I take and the transcription will be kept electronically and encrypted.

Do you have any questions for me?

Participant 5 No, I don't.

*(Participant 5 signs informed consent)*

R Tell me about what your relationship with Facebook is like. I see that you're checking it a lot but not spending a lot of time there.

P5 I'm typically... looking for updates. I'm part of a lot of different groups. Some on campus, some off campus. I try to connect with that. Plus people from high school who don't

get the chance to talk to me as much. They're normally on Facebook so if I'm looking at like my high school babies, that's where I go look at them.

R Ok. So almost reviewing notifications when you log on Facebook? See what's new?

P5 Yeah, making sure I'm not missing anything.

R Tell me about your first few weeks in college and what that was like.

P5 Pretty hectic. I had financial problems. I also had a job. Transitioning from my high school mentality into the mentality I need for college was a struggle. Also, I joined a couple of groups as far as leadership groups and activities. I wasn't too prepared for all that went into it, but I really had to adjust. Basically the first three weeks were a bit hectic but I rode into it.

R Was your job here?

P5 Yes, the USF Bookstore.

R Most of your adjustment was going to group meetings or other activities? What would your day look like?

P5 (laughs) My residence hall is Beta. I'm in the Beta Hall programming council. I'm a Senator for that meaning I have to be a part of two other organizations. So basically, it was wake up, not eat breakfast, go to class, go study for class, go to other class, go to job, go to meeting, go shower, go to sleep. That was a basic overall day. I ate once or twice in there somewhere.

R So what kind of things were thinking about? What was on your mind? Anything stressing you out?

P5 A bit of a lot. Sometimes I couldn't reach for my planner and so I tried my hardest to keep my priorities and tasks I needed to complete in my mind. I was all over the place. Still is.

R You mentioned that you have some high school friends that you keep in touch with on Facebook. Tell me what it was like leaving them. How far away is your hometown?

P5 I live in West Palm Beach, so four or five hours.

R So you kind of left them and are here now. What was that like having to leave them behind?

P5 At first I was glad to... I had problems there and I was so ready to leave. At first, my connection with them, my bonds with them wasn't a problem. I was like "Guys, I'll be back. I'll see you later." Now that we are kind of far apart, it's a bit sad. Did that answer your question?

R Yes. And it leads me to a follow up question. So you say it's sad now because you miss them. Are you using Facebook now to keep in touch with them?

P5 Yes, that's my primary networking site.

R What type of things are you... how are you keeping in touch with them?

P5 For the most part, I scroll through my news feed to see what they've been up to. As far as... If I were to make a post or post a picture, they normally comment on it. There's these things, Bitstrips. I'd make those with them. They're cute.

R You mentioned that you joined some activities. Did you join the Facebook groups associated with those? If there are Facebook groups?

P5 Yes. (loads Facebook page) I have the... of course there's the USF Class of 2017. My Beta Hall doesn't have one yet, we're posting on. But I'm part of the RHA USF page. I don't know why I can't find it right now.

R Did you join those groups before you joined the actual organization?



- P5 No, after.
- R When you started at USF I assume you met some new people?
- P5 Yes.
- R Did you friend request them immediately or just interact in the groups?
- P5 Not immediately. For the most part, they friend requested me. I just accepted.
- R Did you do anything with Week of Welcome?
- P5 I think I did. I'm pretty sure I did. I'm in the Education LLC.
- R Do you remember anything in particular? Anything stand out?
- P5 I can not remember. ... Sorry.
- R How about your roommate situation. How's that going?
- P5 My roommate is awesome! At first, it was a little rocky. We were just getting there and getting used to difference. We've kind of came to a chill common ground. As far as... living peacefully.
- R Tell me about yourself in high school. Describe yourself.
- P5 In high school, I think I was pretty much how I am now. I was part of a lot of groups, president of a couple of groups. Very well known by some people. I had a pretty outgoing attitude. I'm a very big procrastinator. I can't seem to shake it. I cannot stop procrastinating. All in all, I was always able to get my goals accomplished. Anything I need. Also, I've been told I'm pretty funny. If I'm not smiling for some reason, I've been told on several occasions that people think something is wrong with me. Pretty happy, pretty lazy, pretty smart I guess.

- R Tell me a little bit about your friends from high school.
- P5 What about them?
- R I'm assuming they're younger than you? The same age? Are they just as involved as you were?
- P5 Well, I was in chorus in high school. Most of my friends were in chorus and all the AP classes I was in. For the most part, we're all around the same age. I have one friend that just turned 17. We've all pretty much clicked since the 10th grade. ... Well... in the mental sense... aside from me leaving them.
- R What were you expecting college to be like when you were graduating high school?
- P5 My initial thought was that I would be able to be my own person. I am my own person but there are several factor like parents and my career path. I felt when I got here I would have many resources to help me with what I wanted to do. Aside from what my parents were telling me. And that was true, so yay.
- R Did anyone - close friends or family - tell you what college was like or did you just make your own way? Did you have anyone telling their story?
- P5 I'm the first generation. The first female of my family to go to college. I've been told from several different people and... I guess you can't really call them colleagues. Old friends. Acquaintances. I've been told by them that there's no sleep. A lot of papers. A lot of scheduling. You need a planner. It's so true.
- R Tell me about your first day of class. Your mindset and what you were feeling when you walked into that first college class.
- P5 I was so nervous! I went to... I came for Summer B. I only had two classes. The first was classical mythology. I was basically scared for the fact that I'm in a college class. Whoa. As we started and got into it, I started realizing that I could not connect with

the material. I was very nervous on how I was going to be able to pass this class, let alone college. So... yeah.

R You mentioned that you wanted to come to college to be your own person. And you had those expectations. What kind of changes have you made to meet that goal?

P5 When I got here, I laid it all out as far as who I am. I didn't necessarily broadcast my opinions or what defined me. I wasn't willing to let any one take any thunder away from me. If that makes sense.

R How would you say you, or have you, changed since high school?

P5 I'm more productive with my time. The time I had to procrastinate, I'm usually doing something in college now. That leaves me less time to procrastinate. Ok this might sound bad. I procrastinate but productively. Like I'll do my laundry instead of homework. (laughs)

R Now let's jump into a little bit of looking at Facebook. Let's think about those first couple weeks of school. Who were you talking to at that time? High school friends or anyone at USF?

P5 I met an OTL, her name was Stephanie. But, I was also talking to the advisor that I met over the course of Orientation. Her name was Lindsey. She's very helpful and she kind of helped me jump into the whole USF Facebook college thing. As far as the Class of 2017 group, I did not want to join the group. I hate joining groups. But I had to just because it's very beneficial. Pretty much talking to people on the USF Class of 2017 group and people in my Education LLC and my advisor basically.

R Can I see some examples of the conversations you were having with the 2017 folks?

P5 I wonder if I can find it... Oh! My roommate actually... This is my roommate (points on screen). That's not what I'm looking for.

R Ok, well. Jumping ahead. You just met your roommate?

P5 Yeah, this semester.

R When you are looking at her profile or a new friend's profile. What types of things are you looking at?

P5 Um. I'm not really looking for anything much. I just scan through their pictures. Not necessarily to judge but to say "oh, they take really pretty pictures". As far as statuses and the news feeds, I'm not very concerns with what they have to say. As far as judgement wise. If they say, "oh it's a pretty day", I might as well like it.

R Do you like at that About section?

P5 No I don't. (surprised) There's an About section?

R So I hear you saying that you look at the photos to see what story those are telling?

P5 Yeah.

R And then maybe reviewing the first couple statuses?

P5 Yeah, yeah.

R Would you say that's pretty typical of, forgive the term, Facebook stalking someone.

P5 No.

R Ok. So let's say you were looking at a stranger on Facebook.

P5 Let's go look at some strangers. I'm just scrolling. Someone named Devon. Oh, he's my friend. He doesn't count. Sara someone. What I would typically do is normally, go straight to the first 2 or 3 pictures that they posted. Normally, you can't see their statuses if they're not your friend. So I just scroll through their pictures to see if they're really cute. And once I'm done with that I would probably go through their timeline pictures. That's cool (points at a photo). And then I'm done. That's about it.

... Oh, so I guess it is kind of the same. If I am Facebook stalking someone, I don't do much.

R For you, then, it's about what story they're telling through photos?

P5 Yes.

R On the groups, going back to the groups. What kind of things were you talking about or reading about on the group?

P5 I try to stay away from... for some reason. Can I just specify for the USF Class of 2017?

R Ok.

P5 I try to stay away from the basic comments and try to read the comments that ask for help. I feel like that's what the group is mainly for. I understand that some people want to post pictures of the squirrels. There's a lot of pictures of the squirrels. But if something is really important... Most of like my friends who are at USF. They are on the group. It lets me know if they say something they want to say. Or if someone else commented on something. That would draw me to look at it. I can't remember what your question was.

R I hear you saying that you're looking for other people needing advice or having a question about something?

P5 Yes.

R Did you post any questions of something that you needed?

P5 No.

R On Facebook at all? Or on the group?

- P5 Oh. No. Normally if I'm posting a status, it's not serious. Not necessarily sarcastic but something like "Oh, who wants to write my paper?"
- R Just fun stuff?
- P5 Right.
- R You said you were reluctant to join the 2017 group?
- P5 Yes.
- R Do you think joining it helped you feel more adjusted and more like a USF student?
- P5 Yeah. Yeah. Even though I said I don't like seeing the squirrel pictures. Every now and then it's ok to see something like that and have a laugh. We're all going through that - believe it or not - we're all on the same campus.
- R What were some of the things that you were worried about this semester? You mentioned a couple, the job...
- P5 Work in general. Time management. Yeah.
- R Did you have anything else? Big worries that stressed you out?
- P5 Besides finding out about my job... Ok. I was kind of stressed out by my family issues. A couple family issues with my mom. We're not really seeing eye to eye these days. We never really were. It's just now that I'm out of her house, I can combat her, I guess. As far as like problems with my Mom and Dad. They're still there but becoming more prominent. I'm just out of the house and I'm an adult to them. But other than finances and my job, which are both attributed to my parents. Those stresses are kind of their fault. So yeah, those.
- R Who did you talk to about those things?

- P5 Technically I have spoken to my RA. She's caught me like, really depressed, a couple time. She's more of my friend now. Which is really what you want in an RA. I've been talking to her and she's been trying to get me to go counseling. I just don't think I'm ready for that. I'd rather just sleep.
- R In terms of those things that worry you, you haven't taken that to Facebook to talk to anyone?
- P5 No.
- R Thinking about the whole experience, coming here, and the whole transition, would you change anything?
- P5 Yes. I would most definitely get on top of my things as quickly as I could. As far as some of the stresses, those could be lessened through the simple fact of explaining and trying to communicate. I don't know how much help it would have been but it would have been less stress on me. As far as planning and time management goes.
- R What was your favorite experience so far?
- P5 Favorite experience of college so far... (thinking) ... I would probably have to say a leadership retreat that I went on. It was actually for the Beta Programming Council. After the council members have been selected, the ones from all residence halls come together for a big retreat. Just to express. I was extremely tired and kind of annoyed. At the end of the day, I figured out it was kind of good for me and what I needed. The people that I was with are awesome and I figured out that this was maybe not going to be a horrible year.
- R How do you think your experience would have been different if you didn't have Facebook? Or do you think?
- P5 I don't think it would have been much different. I have other sites I can go to when I need to. Just to comment or look at random stuff. As far as friends, I can talk to them, email them, if I want to. It's just easier with Facebook. I don't think it would have been much of a difference. ... Sorry.

- R No, that's ok. Thanks for being honest. To wrap up, tell me what you're thinking about for next semester. What are some things you're thinking about, worrying about, looking forward to?
- P5 As far as classes go, I'm trying to set a schedule that's not so... chaotic as my schedule this semester as far as classes go. They're going to be a little more organized. Efficient. Basically, I'm just going to... trying to make the best of out my time next semester and make it as successful as possible.
- R That's all the questions I have. Do you have anything to add about Facebook and your first semester? Anything that's really important to you?
- P5 Though I do have other outlets, I feel as though Facebook was a way to kind of stay home. Most of my Facebook friends are people who I've known for a while or throughout high school. I'm friends with some of my high school teachers. It's kind of a safe way to keep me from being homesick.
- R Awesome, thanks. Do you have any questions for me?
- P5 No.



## APPENDIX G

### Transcription of Interview with Participant 6 – Ricky

Researcher Before we get started, I want to go over some things with you. My name is Kevin Yurasek and I am a graduate student in the Mass Communications department here at USF. I am conducting research on how new college students use Facebook during the transition process from high school to college. This interview is for academic research. All of your personal and identifiable information will be kept confidential.

Stories that you share may be included in the research project but items specific to your situation will not appear. During the interview, we may review your Facebook profile or activity but that information won't be collected or saved.

So nothing will be able to be traced back to you. Knowing that I hope that it means you will be as open and honest with me as you can during this interview. The interview will be audio recorded and a transcription of this interview will be kept. The recording, any notes I take and the transcription will be kept electronically and encrypted.

Do you have any questions for me?

Participant 6 No, I don't.

*(Participant 6 signs informed consent)*

R Tell me about your updates and photos. What kind of things are most interesting to you on the Facebook feed and who's creating that content?

P6 I'm from Pakistan and I just moved here about three months ago. So I really look at my friends to see what's happening there. I don't have a lot of friends here on Facebook, maybe 20 or 25 American and 1,000 plus are from my country. So I usually see what

they're up to and look at their pictures and stuff. Any my ex-girlfriend's pictures and stuff.

R Did you have anyone else who left Pakistan with you to study?

P6 My friend is coming next semester.

R Most of your interaction is coming from friends in Pakistan?

P6 My peers, yeah. Some of them is from here. I used to live in Juniper Hall and had a group of the 7200 pod. And over there, our RA would post funny stuff and I would comment on it. I'm very sarcastic about things. People usually like my comments a lot.

R Thinking about what your first few weeks of college were like, what was your experience. What were you feeling? What were you worried about?

P6 The distance to classes. I've never walked so much in my life. Never seen such a huge university in my life. My high school was not even one-tenth the size of this university. It's different. To make new friends, when I came here. I wasn't as comfortable talking English. I'm a bit more fluent now. It was difficult talking to Americans. I made a lot of International friends, but to be honest I wanted more American friends. So that I mean, I needed to be more diverse. I tried making friends in the dorms, added them on Facebook, they added me on Facebook. We shared pictures and stuff. I got closer to them.

R So, you said you were worried - concerned - about making friends. Were you concerned about starting classes?

P6 Not really. My classes for this semester were really easy. Basically I started all of this in high school except for American culture. The history of America, I didn't know that.

R During that first week you said you were friending people that you lived with? What types of other interactions were you having? Is this when you were on the group page for the pod?

P6 Yeah, I met all of them. Every day I used to meet someone new. I got to be friends with them. They started to be really good friends. We started going out to Chipotle and stuff, going out to eat. Go to the dining halls together. And then we just got closer. But then I moved out of Juniper due to some reason. Now I'm in Epsilon and I have new friends. I know a lot of people on campus now.

R Did you participate in the Week of Welcome events at all?

P6 Yeah. On those days, we were having the international orientation. So I just go to see the main event, the kickoff I guess. It was full of people. It was pretty exciting to see so many people in the Marshall Center.

R Can you describe yourself in high school?

P6 The high school was much smaller. Studies were more difficult than here. It's a totally different way of studying. We don't have everything online. You have 5 or 6 sheets and you have to memorize everything. It's more logical. You just keep on studying a bit every day and process it. Over there, you just study on the last day and memorize it. That's the main difference.

R How about your personality?

P6 I make friends but then I... I like very few people who I tend to get close to. Really few. Maybe out of 20 friends, maybe only 1 I would be close with. I'll be good to them but I won't let them be close to me. I tend to make a lot of friends. I really like that about me. At times, I'm so sarcastic people find it nice and they like my comments. I'm from Pakistan and that country is very dramatic. I'm used to the drama and I create that as humor. They like it.

R When you were coming to college. What were your expectations of starting school here?

- P6 I didn't expect it to be this huge. I thought it was going to be that small. I thought I would interact with a lot of people - more Americans than international students. I interact with more international students because of my classes. This is making me learn new things like I'm interested in learning now. I'm going to take classes next semester. My suitemates are Spanish and I'm learning it. I didn't know about it before here. I told my family that I have to learn Spanish. (laughs) I really like it.
- R Did anyone set those expectations for you? Tell your stories about what it..
- P6 (interrupts) I had no idea. I had no idea what was going to be there. It was totally new for me.
- R Did you join any clubs or organizations? Or have you?
- P6 Not yet. I tried joining a fraternity but then people warned me. It's your first semester, don't go for it. Your grades are really important. I just opted out. I'm still in talks with the frat people. I'm really close to them. They're still trying to get me but I'm waiting for one more semester.
- R Tell me what it was like going to your first class at USF. Describe what you were thinking and what happened.
- P6 My first class I was just observing everything. Everything was new. I had an American teacher, which was new. I had never had one before in my life. And like different new students and just looking at them and seeing how they are. It was really weird for me at first not knowing anyone. I was anxious. I was curious to know more. Then my University Experience class, at the start I thought it was going to be a useless class. It really helped me. They were really simple projects like making a photo collage or describing ourselves. But that helped me talk to everyone that this is me and this is what I did in my country. It gave me confidence to talk to 20 people in front of me, which I never did. People said that it was useless, but I don't think so.
- R You started to touch on this, do you think that since coming to school you've changed at all? Your personality?

P6 I'm feeling that I'm more mature than I was back in my country. I'm getting serious toward my studies for the first time in my life. I've never given as much as time as now. Before I would know every day I have 1 assignment and I would have study for it regardless and finish it by 12:00 at night. I have to, there's no other way. I have a condition for scholarship that I have to get a 3.3 GPA to keep it for the next year. So that's motivation.

R Let's talk about Facebook during those first couple weeks. Who were the people you were interacting with the most?

P6 Before coming up, I would update with statuses about everything. Before boarding the plane to come to US, I updated a status. I mean, I like that. Getting likes and comments on my statuses. When I was leaving the airport, I posted a status. When I reached, I posted a status. I posted a picture maybe. When I came to USF, I checked in that I'm at University of South Florida. I felt proud that out of so many people that I made it out of my country to study. And with my scholarship. Everyone was happy about me.

R You were posting the status updates detailing your arrival here. During that first week, what kind of statuses were you posting? Once you started class.

P6 I posted a status that I'm with my new friends so that people wouldn't think I'm lonely here. I added new people and then I didn't make any status updates. When I went to Busch Gardens, I made a status for that.

R Would you say that a lot of your updates are for your friends and family back home?

P6 Yes. ... But now I'm in the transition from that. It's going towards friends here.

R Were there any particular groups or pages that were helpful to you starting school here?

P6 Yes. I joined a tennis club here. It's basically not intramural and not USF club. It's by the student government. They have a page. Whenever there is a tournament or

something, they post it on Facebook and we can go play for them. They tell us the timing on Facebook. Then there's another group. USF class of 2017 that I joined. And that all the freshman are added. Gregory Bowers, I don't know if I'm pronouncing the names right. He kept on updating it at the start of the semester with events and stuff. Then there was a game of football. It was USF. I don't remember what time the buses were going to leave. But then someone posted on there and I saw it on my phone. And I went to the buses for the game. Then I thought I'm never going to watch a USF game again (laughs) It was really bad.

R On the 2017 page, would you say you participate or read through the comments?

P6 I just read the comments. I don't participate that much. Maybe because I feel weird talking in front of 2,000 people.

R Ok, so it's more just seeing what they're talking about.

P6 Yeah, learning from their experiences.

R If you wouldn't mind logging into Facebook...

*(Participant 6 logs into Facebook)*

R If you can go to the...

P6 (interrupts) USF Class of 2017?

R Yes. So let's say. Are you friends on Facebook with him?

P6 I don't think so.

R Ok let's load his profile. Say this was someone that you met in a class or something.

Would you look at his profile to decide before friending him?

P6 If I knew him, I would just send a friend request.

R After that would you look at anything on his page?

P6 No, not really.

R Not even the pictures or anything?

P6 No.

R What if someone sends you a friend request?

P6 If I know them, I'll accept it. If not, I won't even decline it.

R You'll just look to see if you recognize the face.

P6 Well, maybe after a couple weeks if I'm free. Then, basically stalking.

R Ok. For lack of a better term, the "facebook stalking". Is that something you would do if you found someone who posted interesting things?

P6 Yeah, I would definitely read their post.

R Would you go to their profile?

P6 Yeah. Oh. No. I won't go to their profile. I'm not used to it. I don't use Facebook a lot. But then when I'm free and I don't have a lot going on, I'm tired of watching of movies and I don't have homework. Then I go on my friends who are really close to me and I see what they've been up to.

R So you would say that you spend most of your Facebook time going through the news feed?

P6 Yes.

R Do you use the chat?

- P6 Yeah, only a couple people. I talk to them a lot.
- R Would that be your two main activities?
- P6 Yeah, if I start scrolling, I'll just keep scrolling all the way through to the end. Just keep on going until I get really tired.
- R Would you say that your behavior on the tennis group is the same as others? Just reading the posts?
- P6 Yeah. But I do comment because we are required to do so. They'll ask us if we're going to come for the next tournament and people will start commenting. Then they'll make matches for the people who have signed up and the people who are ranked better will go to the tournament.
- R Thinking back to the entire semester, what would you say were your top worries?
- P6 My top worries were failing a test and making bad friends.
- R Ok.
- P6 And not getting involved in events. Like, I really want to get involved. Like with OTLs and stuff like that. But then I feel more degraded because I'm international. I just don't feel up to the level. Then I get de-motivated and lazy and I end up doing nothing. But I really try getting involved. I get to the point where I open up the form and I'm getting involved. I need some motivation and and I can't get that.
- R Is there anyone that you talked to about that? Like a friend or someone that you shared those concerns?
- P6 This is just me. My friends are all really lazy. They just want to stay home and play PS3. I want to get involved, they don't share that. ... Actually, it is a big fear. I don't have a proper person to share that with. I went to therapy, but it wasn't a long session. It was



just 20 minutes. The next session is going to be a long session and I'm going to talk to her.

R Ok.

R Thinking about your transition. Is there anything you would change if you could you do it again?

P6 Yes. I wouldn't be going to parties for the first three weeks. I shouldn't have. That's it.  
(laughs)

R How about next semester? What are you looking forward to?

P6 For Christmas break, I'm going back to my country for 25 days. Relax there and come back and stay the same. Work harder than I worked this semester. Canvas and everything is totally new and now I'm used to it. So I think I can do better next semester.

R Is there anything else on Facebook that has really helped you? Or anything that has been very beneficial?

P6 Not really. Facebook is just for interacting with friends. I made new friends on Facebook. I didn't know anyone when I came here. I already had friends on Facebook before I got here. I was already talking to them before I came here. When I got here on the first day, someone came up from Castor and walked all the way from Juniper just to meet me. And I made friends with her without knowing who she was.

R Was that someone you met on the group?

P6 Yeah, on the group. She made a post and I commented on it. And then we just started talking. That's the only Facebook thing with making new friends.

R Is that how your friends that you met that you have now. Did you meet them on Facebook?

P6 No.

R So you met them and then connected with them after?

P6 Yeah.

R That's all the questions I have for you. Thank you.

## APPENDIX H

### Transcription of Interview with Participant 7 – Susan

Researcher Before we get started, I want to go over some things with you. My name is Kevin Yurasek and I am a graduate student in the Mass Communications department here at USF. I am conducting research on how new college students use Facebook during the transition process from high school to college. This interview is for academic research. All of your personal and identifiable information will be kept confidential.

Stories that you share may be included in the research project but items specific to your situation will not appear. During the interview, we may review your Facebook profile or activity but that information won't be collected or saved.

So nothing will be able to be traced back to you. Knowing that I hope that it means you will be as open and honest with me as you can during this interview. The interview will be audio recorded and a transcription of this interview will be kept. The recording, any notes I take and the transcription will be kept electronically and encrypted.

Do you have any questions for me?

Participant 7 No, I don't.

*(Participant 7 signs informed consent)*

R Just to get started, can you tell me a little bit about your Facebook usage and what kind of things you do on Facebook?

P7 I use Facebook... well I don't usually post statuses on Facebook. I usually just scroll and like things and sometimes to communicate with other people.

R What kind of people are you talking to?

P7 Friends from the past. Sometimes teachers from like middle school.

R Is that typically from your phone or laptop?

P7 Mostly phone; I don't usually use my computer.

R You started this semester?

P7 Yes.

R Thinking about last November/December, what were your thoughts about college? Nervous? Excited?

P7 I was nervous and excited. And a little anxious. Basically, I was like ready to go. But I was also scared of being alone. But it's fine now. I like it. (laughs)

R What kind of things were you doing online to help ease your anxiety?

P7 Yeah, actually, I was talking to Kevin [current USF student] before I came here and he was telling me 'yeah, you're going to do fine'. So I was like communicating with him through Facebook and getting to know like certain people that came to USF and ask them questions about the school.

R Did you and him go to high school together?

P7 I met him at RILA - Rotary International Leadership conference in 2012. I was going here and I knew he went here so I was like, let me hit up Kevin and see what he's doing!

R What specifically were you worried about?

P7 The classes and the hard work... all the work that would have to be put into it. I hate studying but I have to do it. Not studying.

R You say that on Facebook you talk to a lot of high school friends.

P7 Yes.

R Tell me what it was like leaving them to come here.

- P7 It was a different experience. I knew I was going to leave them, but since I wasn't as close to them I felt like our connection wouldn't be as strong. But because of social media and texting, the bond is still there.
- R Were you communicating with them on Facebook before coming to USF?
- P7 Yes, some of them.
- R Are you a member of any groups on Facebook?
- P7 Yes but they're groups from high school. RILA 2012, 2013. This debutant group I did in high school. AVID this group I was in in high school. Criminal Justice. All the groups I was in in high school had groups.
- R Are those still active?
- P7 They're there but the only ones I visit are the RILA pages if someone posts something new.
- R Did you do any of the Week of Welcome activities?
- P7 Yes I did! They were pretty good. It was a good way to get to know the campus and meet some of the people that attend the school.
- R Did you friend any of those people on Facebook?
- P7 Um, maybe like 2 or 3. But they probably friended me because I don't remember names very well (laughs).
- R I assume you live on campus?
- P7 Yes, I do.
- R How's your roommate situation?
- P7 I actually don't have a roommate. (laughs) Funny story. I applied to stay in suite style but I got put in traditional because they ran out of suites. And I don't have a roommate so I'm like 'oh maybe this won't be so bad". But I love it. My floor mates are awesome and make up for my loss of roommate.
- R Awesome. Tell me a little bit about yourself in high school. It sounds like you were really involved.

- P7 Yes (laughs).
- R How would you describe yourself?
- P7 I was kind of an all-around student. I participated in sports, activities, clubs, kept my GPA up... high school was the total package for me. I loved high school.
- R Tell me about your friends. Were they similar to you?
- P7 Yeah, I hung out with 3 other girls and 2 of them we cheered on the same team and the other one we did other clubs together. We are all in college and have the same mindset. I try to keep myself around people who act and think like me.
- R When you decided you were going to come to college, what were you expecting college to be like? What was the perception?
- P7 I think it's the same thing as I perceived. Going to classes. All the new people. A bunch of new people. USF is big! Being on my own. Having to do everything. And just being my own person. It met my expectation.
- R Did you get that expectation from talking to other people?
- P7 Yeah, my most of my friends started in the fall so they were telling me. This is what you're going to be doing. Giving me advice on what not to do. So I kind of had a heads up before I got here.
- R Are any of those friends here or at other schools?
- P7 They're at other schools but I do have one friend here.
- R From the Week of Welcome, is there any particular activity that sticks out in your mind? That was really memorable?
- P7 The Welcome Back jam was memorable, because I met a lot of people and I got to see the fraternities and sororities on campus. I was like 'oh, this is pretty cool' so that's something that stuck out.
- R Ok. Tell me about that first day of class. You're going to walk into your first college class - what was that like?

- P7 Oh my gosh! It was freezing outside! I'm from Palm Beach and it's usually hot. So I was thinking 'why is it so hot?' I had to wear boots and everything. So my first class was finite math and it was in a lecture hall and there were so many other students. I was like 'oh my gosh, why is this class so big?' Back home, I was taking classes at a community college and the most amount of kids were like 36. Here it was 170. How am I ever going to learn? So I sat in the front seat of the front row. They're not going to distract me! It was just really big, it was a shock.
- R You've been here a couple weeks now, started to adjust. Do you think you've changed at all since coming to college. Thinking about that high school self that you described.
- P7 A little bit more determined. And a little more focused. Back in high school I used to slack all the time. I would do my homework in class. But now I can't do that. So I've got to get my studying done prior to going to class.
- R Makes sense. That's a good way to do it. Are you involved in any organizations now?
- P7 I've been going to a couple of Club Creole meetings and CCE, Caribbean Cultural Exchange. I'm waiting for the next semester to get more involved in the leadership activities and hopefully student involvement and hopefully Orientation too. ... I don't want to rush into things and not be able to balance it all.
- R So you were on Facebook talking to high school friends?
- P7 Yes.
- R Did you have any interaction with USF folks or was it just the friending?
- P7 Just mainly the friending. Not like big interactions.
- R When people friend you do you look at their profile and information?
- P7 (laughs) No! ... I just like scroll and look at the information. Look at the pictures. Oh yeah, I remember you. You're cute. Ok, you can be my friend.
- R So there's nothing you would go through their profile to look for?
- P7 Nah. Not really. Unless it's Kevin's page to see what's going on around campus. (laughs)
- R What kind of things were you talking to those people about?

P7 Some of them were still in high school and asking how college was going. And I'm telling them what I'm going through.

R So essentially the same thing that others did for you?

P7 Yeah, pretty much.

R Did you do anything like finding events?

P7 Yes! If I knew that CCE was having a meeting but I didn't know anything about it. I could go to Facebook and type in CCE to find the event. And again, Kevin's page was useful for those kind of things too.

R So it sounds like CCE is pretty active on Facebook?

P7 Yeah.

R So that's helpful?

P7 Yeah, it was. Trying to figure out what they were doing and what they're about.

R Did you look on their page and go back and see other posts?

P7 I was just browsing to see what's going on and see when their meetings were. I also looked up my major on Facebook and they don't have that much posted yet. I think they're working on.

R So you found a group for your major?

P7 Yeah.

R What's your major?

P7 Criminology.

R Ok. So if you go look at someone's page. What kind of things would you look at on their profile?

P7 Their education. Oh, I wonder who goes to school in Tampa or what school they go to. Um. Maybe like where they're from - they're hometown. Some of the stuff they post, if it's relevant or useful.

R Alright, let's do a hypothetical activity. Since you seem to let people Facebook friend you more?



- P7 Yeah. (laughs)
- R Let's say that you received a Facebook request from a name that you didn't recognize. What is the likelihood that you would accept that request?
- P7 I would scroll through the pictures to see if I've seen you somewhere before in my lifetime. If I have then, sure. If not, no. Then I would look at the mutual friends, and if it's only 1 friend. Then, no. Yeah... I don't need a stalker.
- R So there's almost tiers that they have to pass?
- P7 Yeah, I have to have friends in common or have seen you somewhere.
- R So let's say that there is somebody that you met at Welcome Back jam. You've seen them once. What's the likelihood that you would connect with them on Facebook and go do something else with them. Would you or have you done that?
- P7 Yeah, I mean if it's someone I met and had a really good conversation with them. I'm like 'oh let me see what they're up to' and probably write them on Facebook or get their number. Especially if it's someone I really connected with. If not... then...
- R Would you say that you do more of your interactions off of Facebook, such as texting?
- P7 Yeah, most of my interactions are on texting. I use Twitter more than I use Facebook. Sorry.
- R Ok. So, what are some things that worry you this semester? What stresses you out?
- P7 School stresses me out. The classes. And just trying to maintain a high GPA. And getting all my studying done.
- R So the work load?
- P7 Yeah, the work load stresses me out.
- R Did you vent to anyone about that?
- P7 Yeah, my friends. (laughs) I tell them all the time.
- R Is that friends here at USF or home friends?

- P7 Here friends and home friends. Mainly home friends because we talk every day. They know and they understand because they're going through the same thing.
- R Where would the majority of those conversations happen?
- P7 Um, through Kik. (laughs)
- R Ok.
- P7 It's an app and we're in a group kik. And we tell each other and we all get to see what we're saying. And sometimes over the phone.
- R So thinking about your first couple weeks, is there anything you would change about the first few weeks of your college experience?
- P7 I probably look around or look for more of the organizations on campus. I would look to find a way to attend more meetings or get more involved on campus. I've been a little set back trying to get my life together.
- R What would you say is your favorite experience so far. If you had to pick one.
- P7 Just one? I went to this poetry slam. I want to say the second week of school. It was pretty good. I was amazed to see how many kids were actually there and all the people doing poetry. I was like, 'oh these people are pretty talented.' It was an awesome experience. Mind-blowing, I guess.
- R On the opposite side, what would be your least favorite thing?
- P7 Do I have to pick?
- R No.
- P7 I don't think I've experienced...
- R Maybe something you just don't like?
- P7 This is awkward but I don't like going to the Library. I think it's like loud and a little rowdy for me. So I prefer studying in other places. If everybody is at the library, it defeats the purpose. It's like a hangout spot. That's one thing I like. But everything has been really good so far.

- R So we talked about this a little bit, thinking about next semester. You talked about that you want to get involved in more leadership opportunities. What else are your expectations for that semester?
- P7 Be more well-rounded student and maintain that GPA. Get more involved in campus. Get some more time at the gym, I've been slacking. To make this an experience to remember. I don't want to be so focused on studying that I miss out on everything that's going on around campus.
- R So your focus would be on the whole experience?
- P7 Yeah, the student life and the classes.
- R Ok, I think that is all the questions I have for you. Thank you.



RESEARCH INTEGRITY AND COMPLIANCE  
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February 6, 2014

Kevin Yurasek  
Mass Communication  
4202 E Fowler Ave SVC2049\  
Tampa, FL 33620

RE: **Expedited Approval for Initial Review**  
IRB#: Pro00015354  
Title: Social Media Use During the College Transition

**Study Approval Period: 2/5/2014 to 2/5/2015**

Dear Mr. Yurasek:

On 2/5/2014, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviewed and **APPROVED** the above application and all documents outlined below.

**Approved Item(s):**

**Protocol Document(s):**

[Thesis Protocol Ver1 02.02.14](#)

**Consent/Assent Document(s)\*:**

[Informed Consent ver1 02.02.14.pdf](#)

\*Please use only the official IRB stamped informed consent/assent document(s) found under the "Attachments" tab. Please note, these consent/assent document(s) are only valid during the approval period indicated at the top of the form(s).

It was the determination of the IRB that your study qualified for expedited review which includes activities that (1) present no more than minimal risk to human subjects, and (2) involve only procedures listed in one or more of the categories outlined below. The IRB may review research through the expedited review procedure authorized by 45CFR46.110 and 21 CFR 56.110. The research proposed in this study is categorized under the following expedited review category:

(6) Collection of data from voice, video, digital, or image recordings made for research purposes.

(7) Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

As the principal investigator of this study, it is your responsibility to conduct this study in accordance with IRB policies and procedures and as approved by the IRB. Any changes to the approved research must be submitted to the IRB for review and approval by an amendment.

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

Sincerely,



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