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**SUPPORTING STUDENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION THROUGH
RELATIONAL AUGMENTATION**

by
Tyrone R. Taylor

A Dissertation

Submitted to the
Department of Educational Leadership
College of Education
In partial fulfillment of the requirement
For the Degree of
Doctor of Education
at
Rowan University
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Dissertation Chair: Robert B. Campbell, Ed. D.

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to the many friendships and memories of all those students who worked through the dissertation process with me. We worked, learned, and ultimately excelled together. Completing the doctoral program would not have been possible without their ideas, support, and friendships.

I dedicate this work and give special thanks to my children who somehow understood my situation and were willing to tolerate my inattentiveness and general absence from my usual parental shenanigans.

Finally, I dedicate this dissertation to the students and staff who volunteered their time and energy to assist me with this project. They continuously went out of their way to assist me and actually became an active and productive part of my study. I wish them all success in all of their future endeavors and I thank them for their support and their friendship.

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Abstract

Tyrone R. Taylor
SUPPORTING STUDENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION THROUGH
RELATIONAL AUGMENTATION
2012

Robert B. Campbell, Ed.D.
Doctorate in Educational Leadership

The present research was done to study the results of interactions among students at Rowan University and Rowan University's police and security personnel. This study demonstrates how students experiencing difficulty with their educational endeavors can enhance their educational status by establishing relationships with members of the Rowan University Department of Public Safety. For this purpose, seven students and seven police and security officers were selected to participate in the study. Information gathering techniques included a focus group, a two phase individual interview process, a two phase individual survey completion process, document reviews, and individual observations.

During Cycle 3 as part of an action research project I implemented the student/staff community process, which encouraged student study participants and staff study participants to connect and establish relationships. The idea for these student/staff communities evolved out of literature that involved the interaction of students and a staff or faculty member who were linked in intergroup dialogue (Zuniga, Nagda, Chesler, & Cytron-Walker 2007). I modified Zuniga, & etc.'s Intergroup Dialogue Groups by merely exploiting the community components of the Intergroup Dialogue Groups and eliminating the leader element.

The obtained data were analyzed and revealed positive gains in the established relationships between student study participants and staff study participants.

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Chapter I

Introduction

Historically, representatives of the Department of Public Safety have shared a strained and sometimes adversarial relationship with members of the Rowan University student community. Sometimes when students, police, and security come together there are not many positive outcomes for the students. These strained relationships are historically driven by the Rowan University students' perceptions of Department of Public Safety representatives as, "out to get them." Unfortunately, Department of Public Safety representatives often counter this hypothesis with their own perceptions, which suggests that the students they encounter have the propensity to consistently violate university policy and state laws. Fortunately, through repeated lengthy interactions between students and members of the university's Department of Public Safety, on occasion a trust has developed, presenting the Public Safety representatives with scattered and uncommon opportunities to work with some of the students experiencing difficulty with their educational endeavors.

Currently, I am the director of Security & Student Security Programs at Rowan University. My work presents many opportunities for me to work with our students. I often oversee many of the students' events, which can range from a regular student dance to the university's week-long Homecoming events. This contact with the members of the student community at Rowan University has afforded me some leverage in maintaining workable relationships with many of the students. These relationships enrich the students' contact with Public Safety and provide them with the access needed to utilize the resources offered by the department.

Generally, in the Department of Public Safety's effort to manage crime on the campus of Rowan University, the types of crimes committed often govern how the officers choose to adjudicate and resolve the complaints. There are formal means of assessing the seriousness of a complaint. Because of the physical designation of Rowan University's Department of Public Safety as a Police Department, we are required to list the behaviors resulting in a police response from department personnel based on the State of New Jersey's statutory complaint system. For example, the more serious crimes are listed as Type #1 crimes, which consist of events such as murder, theft, and assault. The less serious crimes are listed as Type #2 crimes. They consist of events such as disorderly conduct, alcohol violations, and drug violations.

The officers' responses to the Type #2 crimes provided the motivating circumstances fueling the controversy between the students charged with the Type #2 crimes and any officer wearing a uniform. As a result, the students frequently pose questions about the true purpose of some of the behaviors of some of the department's officers who are the authors of the Type #2 crime complaints.

There is clearly some ambiguity causing the students to voice their uncertainty about their trust in the officers and the process. All of the crimes occurring on the Rowan University campus are managed by representatives of Rowan's Department of Public Safety. The less serious crimes are adjudicated by the Rowan University's Campus Hearing Board. Crimes of a more serious nature are adjudicated in the local municipal courts. At the forefront of the students' concerns involves their being referred to the Dean of Student's office for these offenses. The students have commented that the officers do not have to report these minor offenses. Students are convinced that crimes

not warranting an arrest should be resolved with a warning, not a referral to the Dean of Student's office or the Campus Hearing Board.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this mixed methods participatory action research project was to establish and maintain positive relational contact between police, security, and students on the Rowan University campus. Additionally, the study provided new research in order to bridge the gap in the current literature on the management of police, security, and student relationships.

Difficult Student Criterion

Throughout this document I have referenced the term, difficult students. I used this term to identify those students who are visiting the offices of the Department of Public Safety in response to some policy or procedural infraction. Many of the behaviors exhibited by this particular group of students can lead to poor grades and also places members of this student group at-risk for eventual termination of their educational experience at Rowan University.

Research Questions

A distinct set of questions were developed to use in the study during both Cycle 1 and Cycle 2. By using the same questions for Cycle 1 and Cycle 2, I was able to reveal any discernable differences in study participant responses after planned interventions.

The following research questions guided this study:

1. What are the methods and programs used by Department of Public Safety representatives at a higher education institution to motivate difficult students' academic and social achievement?

2. What are the actions that can be taken by a representative of the Department of Public Safety to enhance support for difficult student programs?
3. What will be the result of including members of difficult student populations in Department of Public Safety sponsored programs?
4. Are the Student/Staff communities important in enhancing the relationship between students and Department of Public Safety members?
5. How will this research project impact my leadership theory in use?

Description of the Action Research Cycles

During Cycle 1 of the study I began with a focus group. The focus group activity served as a probing and information gathering tool to assemble information on student and staff views on the topic of relational and academic benefits of working with Department of Public Safety personnel. I used the information gathered during the focus group activities to assist in assembling survey documents for both student study participants and staff study participants.

Once the data gleaned from the focus group activities was introduced into the survey instruments, the newly developed documents were distributed to the study participants for completion. Dispensing and the completion of the newly developed survey documents to the study participants provided an additional opportunity to establish data to support or reject the research hypothesis. Upon completion of the survey documents and subsequent coding of the data gathered during the survey completion process, I engaged the study participants in individual interviews.

Observations of study participants occurred during each of the three cycles, and continued throughout the study whenever an opportunity presented itself. During the

observation process I looked for changes in behaviors of the various study participants and changes in the individual and collective opinions of the study participants.

I used an action research model, which allowed me to directly observe the impact of connecting the students and Department of Public Safety representatives in role modeling and relational contacts. The newly established student/staff communities provided a venue for the students and staff members to interact and explore the benefits of these newly established relationships. Student/Staff communities were fashioned after Zuniga, Nagda, Chesler, and Cytron-Walker's (2007) Intergroup Dialogue groups. The Intergroup Dialogue groups are a face-to-face, interactive, and facilitated learning experience that brings members from two or more social identity groups together over a sustained period time to explore commonalities and differences, examine the nature and consequences of systems of power and privilege, and find ways to work together to promote social justice. The Intergroup Dialogue groups (Zuniga et al., 2007) are assigned a trained co-facilitators, one from each group participating in the dialogue, facilitating dialogic engagement and providing a model for working across differences.

To successfully meet the goals of intergroup dialogue, participants must gain knowledge about intergroup issues and conflicts, critically reflect on their own social identities and locations, and actively engage in honest and fruitful dialogue (Zuniga et al., 2007). For my purposes I chose to leave out some of the Intergroup Dialogue elements. First I eliminated the facilitators from my planned Student/Staff Communities to allow for member of the groups to collectively determine the structure of their group environment. I encouraged the group members to interact and to communicate their

needs to the other group members in their individual groups. This pattern of relational parity, collective compassion, and building of community serves to strengthen the group process and leadership direction.

During Cycle 2 I distributed a second survey document to student study participants and staff study participants. This document contained the same information that was included in the first survey document. This allowed for a comparison of Survey 1 and Survey 2 to assess the deficit or gain in those behaviors related to student persistence. (Cronk 2008).

Upon completion of the second survey document, I engaged the study participants in individual interviews. The interview questions presented mirrored those used during the individual interviews administered during Cycle 1. Upon completion of the second phase of the individual interview process I entered into individual observations and reviewed any relevant documents associated with the study. Observations during Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 were as discreet as possible to avoid detection or cause any of the study participants to become self-conscious, generating anxiety.

During Cycle 3 I reviewed all of the data accumulated during the study. I then completed an assessment of the compilation of findings resulting from the data collected during this mixed methods study. I then reported the findings from each section of the triangulated data mix.

Conclusion to Chapter One

All study participants engaged each other in various projects throughout the study. During each phase of the study the group members grew closer validating the benefit of increased relational contact.

Chapter II

Leadership Theory

Servant Leadership

My leadership approach demonstrates my willingness to listen, establishes my general commitment to the growth of my workers, and emphasizes foresight directed toward their growth. I take interest in the wellbeing of each of my workers and work to motivate my staff and lead them with steadfast motivation. I am guided by a need to care for my workers. Its important to me that the workers understand their responsibilities and share in leading the way to completion of assignments.

Caring is a powerful emotion that I refuse to push to the side. I find joy in helping other people gain a foothold on growth and success. Many of the components of the servant leadership theory emphasize the caring behaviors indicative of helping others move forward in life. I do embrace caring as the focus of my being. What I think distinguishes me from other supervisors in my area is my willingness to talk and listen to my workers and my peers. In particular, I think I spend twice as much time listening very carefully and paying attention to my officers' stories. Often, with the detailed information gathered during these encounters, I am usually able to tailor a response protocol for an officer in such a manner that our relationship is actually enhanced.

I have worked with many different students and staff while at Rowan University and have found enjoyment in knowing that many of those students I encountered may have been inspired by their brief encounter with me. I realize that establishing relationships established with students is important to the students feeling comfortable talking with me. I have worked hard to avoid exhibiting that aggressive or arrogant behavior that the

students consistently relate to members of the Department of Public Safety when interacting with campus community members. I have worked to build and maintain a conscious connection and even partnership with other individuals and groups on our campus, who share this intention for transforming the at-risk students' experience of failure, to that of success.

Overall, my intentions are to provide a helpful, caring, and memorable exchange with everyone I encounter. Rarely am I successful. On occasion my work forbids me the opportunity to reach out in a positive, gregarious manner. Unfortunately, my work can be challenging. Often I am confronted with individuals who are the victims of a complaint or the perpetrations of a particular complaint. All of the individuals involved are upset and often express their feelings openly. However, I try to work to enhance the lives of everyone I encounter in some way in hopes of leaving them with some positive and memorable moment. If I am successful in helping the student or staff member, any future contact with these individuals will most likely build onto the relationship.

Transactional Leadership

Due to the type of work in which I am often engaged, there are occasions when I am encouraged to use some of the components that are found in the transactional leadership style. Transactional leadership is based on defining needs, assigning clear tasks, rewarding congruent behavior, and having an overt command-and control mentality. I find myself giving specific directions to my staff. Many of the events I manage have the propensity to turn from a quiet, well managed event, into a disruptive, out of control event. It sometimes becomes important to approach these events with clear policies and

procedures. Followers are normally willing to trust the leader because of their need to have problems solved, and these followers believe the leader can solve them. The transactional leader will barter or trade one thing for another, as I sometimes find myself doing, to assure the completion of a task in a timely manner. Jobs for votes, or subsidies for securing campaign contributions are all examples of the transactional mentality.

James McGregor Burns (1978) indicated that, “the relations of most leaders and followers are transactional, leaders approach followers with an eye to exchanging one thing for another” (p. 4). This is important because it provides clear parameters for what is expected of the officers working for me. The structure of my department’s command system is designed with a response for most behaviors. Effective performance of a task generates a complementary response. Ineffective performance of a task generates an opposite response, usually a negative response. Most tasks we respond to are important to the effective completion of policies and procedures.

Democratic Leadership

I have also found myself working to build a positive group climate with my staff, valuing the input from my staff, and securing commitment through participation. I do work hard at building positive relationships with my staff to make working together easier. The close relationships that evolve out of these efforts help to build buy-in or consensus, and often work to secure valuable input from employees. Often the department provides input into how to manage a situation. I often encourage teamwork, collaboration, conflict management, and the tone to influence the manner in which the officers respond to a situation. I still reserve the right to make the final decision on how best to manage an event.

When possible, I share measured levels of power with my staff. This allows the officers to gain valuable experience managing an event. Authority and responsibility are delegated permitting my staff to function within defined limits (Burns, 1978). If a weapon is involved, I will intervene and request that a police officer respond and manage the incident. The type of activity occurring at an event is normally the deciding factor in determining how I choose to respond to the event.

I am often moving from one leadership style to another in my effort to perform my job. My work can be complex and in constant flux. I am moving continuously from the high relationship, low task. Leadership through participation; to a high relationship, high task. Leadership through selling; to a low relationship, low task. Leadership through delegation; and on to a low relationship, high task. Leadership through telling (Bolman, & Deal, 2003). It is often very important for me to interact with members of many of the groups I encounter in an effort to assist them with their particular situations. These groups can vary in size, demographic composition, and purpose. I have to determine the quickest and most efficient way to assist the members of the particular group.

My approach to leadership often elicits some interesting responses. I work to be as supportive as possible. Often, many of the workers accept my style and its supportive features and try working to build on it. Some of the workers doubt my obvious intent to support them. These workers are often able to eventually realize my true intentions, to work with them and to support them completely in assuring a safe and vibrant environment in which to work and learn (Glick, 1994).

I am in constant pursuit of a tipping point for effective leadership and effective incident management (Gladwell, 2002). Dealing with so many different groups of people

in so many different campus venues can be difficult for my staff and I to use any one leadership style in hopes of managing all of the events effectively. The tipping point may have much to do with the type of event held and even the time of the school year, given that some of our major events occur during specific times of the school year. As a result of encountering so many people in so many different situations during the course of a day, I have, over time, developed a repertoire of leadership approaches to manage my day effectively.

Servant leadership, particularly the caring aspect, guides and influences my use of the transactional and democratic leadership actions in this study and beyond. Thus, my study brings two agents of the university, students and members of the Department of Public Safety together in a manner that is seldom experienced, sharing and caring about each other and their shared environment.

My interactions with the study participants quickly revealed that I was exhibiting a fourth leadership style during the study, relational leadership. Relational leadership includes five tenets: being inclusive of people and diverse points of view; empowering others who are involved in a process; being purposeful by possessing commitment to a goal or activity; being ethical, in that this leader is driven by values and standards, and leadership which is good or moral in nature; and lastly, being process oriented in how the group goes about being a group, remaining a group, and accomplishing the groups purposes (Komives, Lucas, & McMahon, 2006).

Chapter III

Literature Review

Factors Influencing the Problem

Often, students that are at-risk share a number of characteristics. According to Rozycki, E. G. (as cited in Druian & Butler, 1987), there are a number of correlates that are directly linked to a student's risk level in the higher education environment. These elements of risk include:

- Living in high-growth states
- Living in unstable school districts
- Being a member of a low-income family
- Having low academic skills (though not necessarily low intelligence)
- Having parents who are not high school graduates
- Speaking English as a second language
- Being single-parent children
- Having negative self-perceptions; being bored and alienated; having low self-esteem
- Pursuing alternatives to higher education; males tend to seek paid work as an alternative; females leave to have children or get married. (Rozycki, 2004)

Living in high growth states. Living in high-growth states is felt to contribute to a student's resilience and decision to leave their higher education experience. New Jersey is a densely populated state and currently does have a strained economy. Glassboro is a microcosm of the state of New Jersey and currently endures an economy similar to that of the state. The literature reviewed did not designate New Jersey as a high-growth state.

Living in unstable school districts. The second risk factor is residing in unstable school districts. The area schools attended while preparing to enter college will determine the students' readiness for college life. The more unstable the school district, the more likely the students will need additional remedial services when they enter college. Abbott school districts are one of New Jersey's responses to the unstable school districts in the state (Abbott District, 2009). According to a Star-Ledger editorial (Star Ledger Editorial Board, 2009), state education officials were said to have a plan to narrow the achievement gap by identifying and helping struggling students at the middle school level. This was thought to assure that students reaching the next level of education would not be marginally literate or not adequately prepared to succeed.

Be a member of a low-income family. Being a member of a low-income family is also important as a risk factor forcing some students to drop-out of college. Resources are not always available for educational pursuits of some students. For beginning students from high-income backgrounds with dependent family incomes of \$70,000 or greater, 65 percent earned some type of college degree within six years, with 56 percent earning a bachelor's degree (Tinto, 2004). In comparison, only about 50 percent of youth with dependent family incomes of less than \$25,000 earned some type of college degree within six years, with 26 percent earning a bachelor's degree, 14 percent earning an associate's degree, and slightly over 10 percent less than a two-year certificate (Tinto, 2004).

Having low academic skills, though not necessarily low intelligence. Another correlate contributing to students' risk of dropping out of their higher education programs is having low academic skills, though not necessarily low intelligence. Rowan provides

an assortment of professional staff and programs through various offices on campus directed toward providing academic support to struggling students, including the university's Career & Academic Planning Center, CAP Center.

Having parents who are not high school graduates. York-Anderson and Bowman (1991) found differences between first-generation students and traditional students with respect to their basic knowledge of college, personal commitment, and the level of family support, with first-generation students being at a disadvantage in most cases.

Speaking English as a second language. Speaking English as a second language is also an important contributor to students leaving their college programs before completion. Data on student language related behaviors in a study by Carmen Arreaga-Mayer and Claudia Perdomo-Rivera (1996) revealed that in the regular classroom the most frequently coded student behaviors for students with English as a second language were no talk (96%) and use of no language oral or written (82%). Both behaviors can hinder the acquisition of knowledge while in the classroom. Many of the students who have difficulty with English are coached by fellow students from their respective countries. Some students work with faculty from the Foreign Language department.

Being single-parent children. An important contributor to a student being at-risk is being a single-parent child or being students whose parents/parent have attained no more than a high school diploma (Horn & Bobbitt, 2000). Students whose parent/parents have attained no more than a high school diploma are less likely to aspire to a bachelor's degree, and are less likely to aspire to a graduate degree (Horn & Bobbitt, 2000).

Having negative self-perceptions; being bored and alienated; having low self-esteem. Fleming's (1984) student developmental model indicated that exposure to a

climate of prejudice on campus is one of the most important factors impinging on the cognitive growth, (i.e., academic achievement, critical thinking) and the affective development of minority students attending predominantly white institutions.

Pursuing alternatives to higher education. Some students have opted to pursue different ventures, such as male students who seek employment as an alternative to college. Some female students leave their educational experience to have a child or to marry and begin a life with their partners. These students may choose or may be forced by circumstances to pursue alternatives while attending higher education. Often these are the students who experience the most difficulty financing their education and eventually choose to acquire and maintain some type of employment while enrolled in college.

Gose (1998), in Nonis & Hudson, (2006) found that, 39% of college freshmen work 16 or more hours per week, an increase of 4% since 1993. According to Orszag, Orszag, and Whitmore (2001), since 1984, the number of college students ranging from age 16 to 24 who work full-time or part-time jobs increased from 49% to 57%, and students are much more likely to work full-time. The proportion of college students working full-time while attending college full-time has doubled. The figures changed from 5.6 percent in 1985 to 10.4 percent in 2000. In the year 2000, 828,000 full-time students worked full-time, compared to 366, 000 in 1985 (Orszag et al., 2001).

Evidence suggests that the effects of working while in college varies by the type of job held, (e.g., full-time vs. part-time work) and its relationship to the academic environment (e.g., an on-campus vs. an off-campus job). Part-time work related to the students'

program of study can be beneficial. Full-time employment can damage the performance of the students (Orszag et al., 2001).

Many of the elements of risk mentioned above are not unique to any particular group. In many instances, any student could experience problems with their education if they are confronted by one or more of the risk factors mentioned. Some of the most important interventions used in combating the risks some students face include:

- Having high expectations for the students
- Having clear, achievable goals
- Having clear rules for behavior, fairly enforced
- Having effective instruction and classroom management
- Maintaining careful attention to student progress
- Emphasis on school as primarily a place for learning. (Rozycki, 2004)

Having high expectations for the students. Parent and peer engagement indicators are especially strong influences on postsecondary enrollment. Moderate- to high-risk youth whose parents frequently discuss school-related matters with them in high school have much higher odds of both 4-year college enrollment and enrollment in any postsecondary education, compared with their peers whose parents had no discussions with them. Parents' educational expectations also exert a strong influence on whether or not moderate-to-high-risk teens enroll in any postsecondary education (Horn, Chen, & Adelman, 1997).

Having clear rules for behavior, fairly enforced. Aspiring college students can move forward with the help of community involvement, assistance from mentors and role models, and campus community members. Having clear goals and rules for behavior

enhance the likelihood that the students participating in university programs will have a positive educational experience.

Having effective instruction and classroom management. Workshops and courses teach how to take notes, study, and complete homework assignments (Oesterreich, 2000). Students attending classes need only to apply themselves and actively participate in their classes.

Maintaining careful attention to student progress. Students need to master strategies to excel in their courses. Workshops and courses teach how to take notes, study, and complete homework assignments. Supportive networks, such as peer study groups and one-on-one tutoring, provide additional learning opportunities. Supplemental coursework adapted to students' particular learning needs augments existing curricula (Fashola & Slavin, 1997).

Emphasis on school as primarily a place for learning. Many students are away from home for the first time and are excited about the new freedom. Between the robust list of new activities available to the students and the complexity of some of the newly established relationships the students can occasionally forget why they came to the university. It is important that students are aware that if they apply themselves the likelihood that they will graduate is very possible.

Ancillary factors associated with students failing to complete their college and university programs. Some of the other perceived contributing factors that seem to fuel the erosion of at-risk student populations at institutions of higher learning are found to be working at full-time jobs, students maintaining lower than required grade-point averages, and students being members of an ethnic minority group other than

Asian. Other causes found to contribute to students not completing their programs are family obligations, financial concerns of the students and their families, and students being of the female gender (Brawer, 1996).

Ancillary factors mentioned are important variables for assuring preferred outcomes for study participants. These variables are explored throughout the study to help in determining the most effective and beneficial outcomes for participants during this study.

Problem Solution for Some of the Issues Contributing to College Student Attrition

According to Fries-Britt and Turner (2001), and Torres (2003), students with personal characteristics that may place the student at-risk for not succeeding in college are identified as those features that locate the student in a population without a long or necessarily successful history in higher education. Strayhorn (1998) found evidence that supportive relationships are positively related to satisfaction with college. The findings suggest that African American men who reported having frequent and varied supportive relationships with faculty, staff, and peers were more likely than other African American males to be highly satisfied with college (Strayhorn, 1998). Similar studies found that some evidence exists suggesting student-faculty non-class contact is positively associated with students' educational aspirations (Thistlethwaite, 1959, 1960, 1962).

Cole (2010) studied the differential effects of student-faculty interactions on minority students' academic achievement as measured by GPA. The study found that there were two types of student-faculty contact. The first type of contact consisted of course-related faculty contact and the second form of contact involved criticism from faculty. A third form of contact was evident in the form of mentoring and impacted all of the groups participating in the study. The research study found that the quality of the study

participants' college experiences were the most significant factor influencing the students' academic performance.

Helping Gifted At-Risk Students

There has been a long and pervasive under-representation of racially and culturally diverse students in programs that are designed primarily for the gifted students from at-risk populations (Ford, Baytops, & Harmon, 1997). According to the authors, there is not much literature on the topics that address the needs of gifted minority student groups. Data gathered by the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) database search performed for the period 1966 to 1996, generated 9,801 articles focused on gifted students. Of the 9,801 articles, only 795 of them, or 8%, focus on gifted minority students (Ford et al., 1997). National concerns about the importunate under-representation of minority students in gifted education programs were partly responsible for the advent of the Javits Act (Elementary and Secondary Act of 1988). The objective of the act was to provide access to financial assistance for state and local educational agencies to initiate a coordinated program of research, designed to build a nationwide capability in elementary and secondary schools to meet the special educational needs of gifted and talented students. The Javits Act also gives the highest precedence to students who are economically disadvantaged, have limited English proficiency, or have disabilities or handicapping conditions (Ford et al., 1997).

The U.S. Department of Education defines giftedness as children and youth with outstanding talent who perform, or show the potential for performing, at remarkably high levels of accomplishment when compared with others of their age, experience, or environment. Outstanding talents are present in children and youth from all cultural

groups, across all economic strata, and in all areas of human endeavor (Ford et al., 1997).

TRIO Students' Success at Independent Colleges and Universities

TRIO is an acronym for the nation's TRIO programs, Upward Bound (1964), Talent Search (1965), and Student Support Services (1968), which were all created by the federal government in the 1960s, to ensure equal educational opportunity for all students regardless of their race, ethnic background, or their economic status. Additional programs added under the rubric of TRIO programs are the Educational Opportunity Centers (1972), the Training Program for Federal TRIO Programs (1976), the Ronald E. McNair Post Baccalaureate Achievement Program (1986), the Upward Bound Math/Science Program (1990), and the TRIO Dissemination Partnership Program (1998).

Congress mandated that at least two-thirds of all TRIO program participants be low-income, first-generation college students. These are students from families that have annual incomes below the amount of \$24, 000, and in which neither of the parents had attended college for any period of time. The TRIO program participants often vary from grades 6 through grades 12, to adult students. The TRIO program has been established at a number of institutions throughout the country to assist students who might not be able to participate in educational programs (Balz & Esten, 1998).

Improving Higher Education Access and Persistence

In determining how best to make colleges and universities more accessible to a broader range of students and at the same time determine how best to guarantee these students persist in their studies and eventually graduate, it was suggested that the Qualitative Function Deployment approach be explored. Quality Function Deployment

(QFD) involves the literal sifting through of the potential solutions for complex educational problems in an attempt to locate and identify those specific actions that will do more than other possible actions to help achieve the overall aims of the system (Stampen & Hansen, 1999). The process works similarly to the coding of a series of interview questions. For example, if I want to compare themes for a particular question, the first thing I would do is compare responses to the question and place the response with similar themes or responses, to narrow the number of themes until I had defined all of the stronger themes.

Assessment programs that reach beyond the standardized tests to yield profiles of students' development over time and which provide students early, on-going academic and personal support, will increase the likelihood that minority college students will persist and graduate (Kameen, & Justiz, 1988). Many institutions of higher learning have officially responded to the assessment issue. The success of assessment rests on institutions' ability to view the process as an internal mechanism for improving instruction (Kameen & Justiz, 1988).

Emanating from this study were the results of the test bias component. The research showed that compared to non-minority students, minority groups score lower on all forms of standardized tests. These results suggest that rigid adherence to test scores as the single indicator of a student's potential or achievement can, therefore, hurt minority students by labeling them failures (Kameen & Justiz, 1988).

College Student Persistence

According to the 1998 National Center for Education Statistics, 30 percent of the 1989-1990 students beginning college left their postsecondary education endeavor prior

to the start of their second year. Statistics are consistent as they relate to students leaving higher education programs. Approximately 50 percent of the freshmen enrolled in colleges and universities exited their college programs prior to completion (Brawer, 1996).

Vincent Tinto (1993) recognized students leave college for two reasons, academic dismissal and their voluntary withdrawal (Tinto, 1993, p. 81). However, the literature indicates that only about 15 to 25 percent of all higher education institutional departures are those resulting from academic failures. The remaining 75 to 85 percent of students leaving higher education programs are considered to be the direct result of their voluntary withdrawal.

Ely (1997) indicated that older students and non-traditional students are the current new student majority in our higher education institutions. According to Culross (1996), 45% of all college students were 25 years of age or older. These students have returned to school as fulltime or part-time students. According the U. S. Department of Education in 1995, 44% of all college students were over the age of 25, 54% were working, 56% were female, and 43% were attending a post-secondary institution part-time (Levine, 1998; Whiteman, 2002).

Law Enforcement Mentoring Theme

In developing a law enforcement mentoring theme, I looked at the traditional role of the law enforcement officer. Behavioral terms usually associated with a law enforcement officer are: *policy enforcer*-to ensure that the Department of Public Safety provides the Rowan University community with continuous police and security protection in accordance with written department policies and procedures and or departmental goals

and objectives. Department of Public Safety personnel are also perceived as: *helping agents*-the officers are tasked with responding to the needs of the Rowan University community and visitors in need of a helping hand. Department of Public Safety personnel are also: *protectors of life*-the environment in which members of the community work and live. Finally, members of the Department of Public Safety often serve as *guides*: for individuals visiting the campus of Rowan University. These terms will serve as indicators for identifying behaviors that fall under the rubric of law enforcement mentoring theme.

According to C. S. Johnson (1989), mentoring involves dealing with the totality of an individual's personality in order to provide the student advising services, counseling services, and provide the student with adequate guidance. Researchers have indicated that mentoring extends from peer mentoring to colleges and universities (Queen, 1994; Wilde & Schau, 1991).

Chapter IV

Methodology

Focal Point of My Study

Currently there continues to be a strain on the relationship between the Rowan University students and Rowan University Police and Security officers. The focal point of this study was to enhance and build on the current working connection between Rowan University students and Department of Public Safety representatives. One anticipated outcome of this action research study is to encourage a healthier relationship between the Rowan University student community and members of the Department of Public Safety.

Rowan University Public Safety officers assist in managing a comprehensive public safety program for the university community. This includes providing the following service sections: Police, Security, Crime Prevention, Parking, Fire Safety, and Emergency Medical Services. Public safety officers focus on preventive patrols, crime prevention programming, and the physical establishment of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design standards throughout our campus. Rowan University's Department of Public Safety is fully accredited through the Commission of Accreditation of Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA), which administers a rigorous accreditation process, whereby law enforcement agencies must adhere to over 464 standards, codes, and state-of-the-art practices (Rowan University Public Safety, 2011).

The following research questions guided the study.

1. What were the methods and programs used by Department of Public Safety representatives at a higher education institution to motivate difficult students' academic and social achievement?
2. What were the actions that were taken by a representative of the Department of Public Safety to enhance support for difficult student programs?
3. What was the result of including members of at-risk student populations in Department of Public Safety sponsored programs?
4. Were the Student/Staff communities important in enhancing the relationship between students and Department of Public Safety members?
5. How did this research project impact my leadership theory in use?

Problem Formulation

The literature establishes the existence of the problems experienced by many students. The literature also suggests that there seems to be a glimmer of hope for these troubled students. There were many references to benefits associated with connecting these at-risk students to helping agents. According to some authors, nearly 50% of freshmen who are enrolled in many universities and colleges leave these institutions prior to completion of their programs (Brawer, 1996). Brawer also reports that the average age of students leaving higher educational institutions varies depending on the study reviewed. Contrary to common belief, the students who are the most difficult students, and most likely to leave a higher education experience, are the older students who find themselves leaving these institutions of higher learning for an assortment of reasons (Brawer, 1996). The attrition rates for students after the completion of one year is much higher for students in

the age range of 23-35 and 45-50 (Brawer, 1996). Moore's (1995) study and Windham's (1994) study (as cited in Brawer, 1996) found that full-time attendance at college is the most prevalent characteristic of those students who persist and complete their college programs. It was found by Moore (1995) and Windham (as cited in Brewer, 1994) found that students who continued their education were also more often the full-time students. Students in the age ranges mentioned above are charged with other obligations such as managing young families of their own and managing full-time jobs.

The Rowan University Common Data Set for 2010-2011 contains the enrollment and persistence data for the Fall 2004 Cohort, which indicates that 1,254 students entered Rowan University. The total number of these students who graduated within a four year period, a five year period, and a six year period from the Fall 2004 Cohort was a total of 906, which is 72% of the initial 2004 Cohort (Rowan University, 2011).

The Educational Opportunity Fund Maximizing Academic Potential Program at Rowan University is a program that is designed to provide access, preparation, and academic support programming for students who are the first in their family to attend a college or university. The program also provides assistance for students who, under normal circumstances, would experience some difficulty with their college experiences due to economic, cultural, or educational circumstances.

The Department of Public Safety recognizes the unique public safety needs of the campus community and responds by providing a 24 hour protective presence, presenting proactive educational programs of safety and crime prevention, and by providing for the special service and security needs within the university. Taking steps to prevent crime on campus is part of the responsibilities of members of the Rowan University Department

of Public Safety.

Crime prevention can be defined as the anticipation, recognition, and appraisal of a crime risk, and the initiation of some action to remove or reduce that risk. When students and Department of Public Safety representatives meet it is always a perfect time for the officer to start a new relationship or build on an existing relationship. By establishing positive relationships with students, officers create opportunities to circumvent some unwanted behaviors in the future.

Research Design

This participative action research project was designed to become part of a change process for the Department of Public Safety's officers, to enlighten them to the treasures that lie beyond the disruptive behaviors exhibited by some of the at-risk students they encounter during the course of their day. Often the students encountered are members of low-income families. Some of the students are members of groups who speak English as a second language, and some of the students are commuters who commute to and from campus. Some of the student groups encountered also have jobs off campus. Many of these students can be helped by connecting them to many of the resources currently available on campus. All of the Department of Public Safety representatives are quite familiar with campus services and fully aware of where to send a student experiencing difficulty with their college learning experience. The study also draws attention to how the continuing interactions between Rowan University's at-risk students and Department of Public Safety representatives can be viewed as learning opportunities for both the student and the officers. Information from the study also provided a more lucid understanding of the methods the Rowan University Department of Public Safety

personnel can use in the implementation of the initiatives designed specifically to enable them to assist members of student at-risk populations (Glesne, 2006).

During Cycle 1 of the study I began with a focus group. The focus group activity served as a probing and information gathering tool to assemble information on student and staff views on the topic of relational and academic benefits of working with Department of Public Safety personnel. I used the information gathered during the focus group activities to assist in assembling survey documents for both student study participants and staff study participants.

Observations of study participants occurred during each of the three cycles, and continued throughout the study whenever an opportunity presented itself. During the observation process I looked for changes in behaviors of the various study participants and changes in the individual and collective opinions of the study participants.

I used an action research model, which allowed me to directly observe the impact of connecting the students and Department of Public Safety representatives in role modeling and relational contacts. The newly established student/staff communities provided a venue for the students and staff members to interact and explore the benefits of these newly established relationships. Student/Staff communities were fashioned after Zuniga, Nagda, Chesler, and Cytron-Walker's (2007) Intergroup Dialogue groups.

During Cycle 2 I distributed a second survey document to student study participants and staff study participants. This document contained the same information that was included in the first survey document. This allowed for a comparison of Survey 1 and

Survey 2 to assess the deficit or gain in those behaviors related to student persistence. (Cronk 2008).

Upon completion of the second survey document, I engaged the study participants in individual interviews. The interview questions presented mirrored those used during the individual interviews administered during Cycle 1. Upon completion of the second phase of the individual interview process I entered into individual observations and reviewed any relevant documents associated with the study. Observations during Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 were as discreet as possible to avoid detection or cause any of the study participants to become self-conscious, generating anxiety.

During Cycle 3 I reviewed all of the data accumulated during the study. I then completed an assessment of the compilation of findings resulting from the data collected during this mixed methods study. I then reported the findings from each section of the triangulated data mix.

The current study is similar to previous studies involving at-risk populations in that it addresses some of the needs of the at-risk populations, and utilizes responses designed to help members of the at-risk populations succeed. Department of Public Safety participants were encouraged to develop relational contact with the students participating in the study. The intent was that the relational contact between the student study participants and staff study participants would evolve into a mentoring relationship. As indicated in Stromei's study (Szelenyi, 2000), the Department of Public Safety Personnel engage in some career-related discussions with many of the students who frequent their work areas and, on occasion, provide some level of psychosocial assistance and referrals,

which can provide the individualized attention some of the at-risk students need in dealing with the everyday problems they encounter in the college environment.

I selected a mixed methods research model to evaluate the problem. The study provided information on active problems and opportunities to monitor the effect of any interventions.

Limitation of the Study

A limitation of the study was that some of the participants were Rowan University Students and graduated prior to the completion of the study. Another limitation was the small sample size and my inability to obtain a random sample, which affected the diversity of the study subjects.

Another limitation was that the student and staff schedules were so different it was difficult to schedule meetings to work on the different aspects of the study. We met and engaged in the interview process at various locations and times throughout the campus. The method used when engaging the students during the interview stage was sufficient in that it allowed me to gather notes and other information without delay. Time was of the essence; all of the students except one were graduating. In most instances my schedule clashed with the student's schedule, which forced us to miss scheduled meetings and end up working on elements of the study during chance meetings. This process of trying to track each other down was very awkward and limiting in providing me with the opportunity to work effectively with the study participants.

Utilizing paper and pencil afforded me an immediate means of gathering data and responses needed to clarify confusing responses, regardless of where the student and I met. The interviews were completed after the focus group session and again after the

student/staff communities process concluded. All of the study participants were interviewed and their responses were recorded. After I reviewed the acquired data I began to develop themes that were supported by the data gathered from each interview.

Site Description

Rowan University. Rowan University is a public university located in Gloucester County in Glassboro, New Jersey. Rowan University has two satellite campuses, one 2.5 miles west of the main campus in Harrison Township, and a second campus located in Camden, New Jersey. The school was founded in 1923 as a teaching school or normal school. The school was called the Glassboro Normal School and was located on a 25 acre piece of land that was donated by the town of Glassboro.

Rowan University began its ascent in 1923 as a teachers' school or normal school. The institution's primary goal then was to educate teachers to work in the local area. Rowan University quickly moved to a comprehensive university with a potential for prosperity (Rowan University, 2009).

In the early 1900s, many New Jersey teachers lacked proper training because of a shortage of schools in the state that provided training. To counter that trend, the state chose to build a two-year training school for teachers, known then as a normal school, in southern New Jersey (Rowan University, 2009).

The town of Glassboro was an early favorite because of its excellent rail system, harmonious blend of industry and agriculture, natural beauty, and location in the heart of South Jersey. Several southern New Jersey towns competed to host the new school because of the economic benefit and prestige such an institution would bring. In 1917, to sway the decision in their favor, 107 Glassboro residents raised more than \$7,000 to

purchase 25 acres, which they offered to the state for free if they selected Glassboro as the site. Before the purchase, the entire tract, including a mansion and carriage house belonged to the Whitney family, the prominent owners of the Whitney Glass Works during the 1800s. The residents' show of support, along with the site's natural beauty, convinced the selection committee that Glassboro was the perfect location (Rowan University, 2009).

In September 1923, Glassboro Normal School opened with 236 young women who arrived by train to convene in the school's first building, now called Bunce Hall. Dr. Jerohn Savitz, the school's first president, expanded the curriculum as the training of teachers became more sophisticated. Despite the rigors of the depression, the program was expanded to four years in 1934, and in 1937 the school changed its name to New Jersey State Teachers College at Glassboro.

The college gained a national reputation as a leader in reading education and physical therapy when it opened a clinic for children with reading disabilities in 1935 and added physical therapy for the handicapped in 1944. The college was one of the first in the country to recognize these needs and established itself early at the forefront of the special education movement.

Rowan's second president, Dr. Edgar Bunce, created a junior college program in 1946 to serve World War II veterans taking advantage of the GI Bill (Rowan University, 2009). In the 1950s, Dr. Thomas Robinson, the University's third president, expanded the curriculum, increased enrollment, and added several buildings to the campus. In 1958, the school's name was changed to Glassboro State College to better reflect its mission.

The college received worldwide attention when it hosted a historic summit conference between President Lyndon Johnson and Soviet Premier Aleksei Kosygin in Hollybush, the former Whitney Mansion in 1967. The University was chosen because of its strategic location midway between Washington, D.C. and New York. The meetings between the two leaders on June 23 through June 25, led to a thaw in the Cold War and eased world tensions (Rowan University, 2009).

Rowan's fourth president, Dr. Mark Chamberlain, guided the college through its next phase of growth as enrollment doubled and Glassboro State became a multi-purpose institution. As new majors and a Business Administration Division were added, the four divisions grew into schools, a board of trustees was formed, and a branch campus was added in Camden, New Jersey. With a 1978 Division III National Championship in baseball, the first of 11 national championships, the athletic program established itself as one of the premiere athletic programs in the country.

The institution's fifth president, Dr. Herman James, was appointed in 1984. Under his direction Rowan established the first doctorate program among the state's public institutions and added the colleges of engineering and communication. Dr. James also was responsible for construction of Campbell Library, the Student Recreation Center and Rowan Hall (Rowan University, 2009).

In July 1992, industrialist Henry Rowan and his wife, Betty, donated \$100 million to the institution, then the largest gift ever given to a public college or university in the history of higher education. Later that year, the school changed its name to Rowan College of New Jersey. The college achieved university status in 1997 and changed its name to Rowan University (Rowan University, 2009).

The Board of Trustees named Dr. Donald J. Farish as the sixth president in July 1998. Under Dr. Farish's leadership, the University is working on an aggressive improvement plan that will give the university a national reputation for excellence and innovation and will make it the public university of choice in the region. The plan calls for a greater campus-wide focus on academic and student support initiatives as well as more than \$500 million in campus construction and renovation projects (Rowan University, 2009).

Recent campus improvements include the construction of the University townhouses, Science Hall, Education Hall, and the Samuel H. Jones Innovation Center, the first building within the South Jersey Technology Park at Rowan University. The University also has seen a marked increase in private and alumni gift giving, as well as its student and institutional profile (Rowan University, 2009).

These efforts have caught the attention of national organizations that evaluate colleges and universities. *US News & World Report* ranks Rowan University in the "Top Tier" of Northern Regional Universities. *Kaplan* included the University in "The Unofficial, Biased Insider's Guide to the 320 Most Interesting Colleges." Also, *Kiplinger's* named Rowan University one of the "100 Best Buys in Public Colleges and Universities" and the *Princeton Review* included Rowan in the latest edition of "The Best Northeastern Colleges" (Rowan University, 2009).

Rowan University is divided into seven academic colleges: Business, Communication, Education, Engineering, Fine & Performing Arts, Liberal Arts & Sciences, the College of Professional and Continuing Education, and a Graduate School. Rowan's 10,000 students may pursue degrees in 36 undergraduate majors, seven teacher

certification programs, 26 master's degree programs, and a doctorate in educational leadership (Rowan University, 2009).

From the modest normal school begun more than 80 years ago, Rowan University has become an extraordinary comprehensive institution that has improved the quality of life for the citizens of New Jersey and the surrounding states (Rowan University, 2009).

Department of Public Safety Description. There are 61 employees assigned to the Public Safety Department, plus 75 student workers, including 45 student Community Policing Program students, 5 student ticket writers, and 25 student volunteer ambulance squad members. In addition to the regular student workers, there is an additional one to three student interns per year. The department has acquired additional personnel and established a K-9 unit with two patrol teams trained at the Police Academy in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Some of the services provided by the department include Police student community policing programs, investigations, crime prevention presentations, oversight of a large dispatching process, and operation of a communications center. The Security section provides general patrol activities for the campus, assists with special events, training, and education of the campus community. The department provides resources and training for student volunteers for the university's emergency squad. The department provides safety inspections to assure that the standards established by the department of Occupational Safety and Health Administration are met.

The department maintains oversight of the university's parking operation. This includes management of all parking facilities, the assignment of staff to control parking activities, and the enforcement of department parking regulations.

Emergency communication is managed by the department by use of emergency telephones placed throughout the campus. The emergency telephones allow students and guest visiting our campus a direct link with an assisting agent.

Most of the research occurred at the Department of Public Safety's buildings to assure continual access to relevant study materials and observations directly linked to members of the department. During the course of any given day the department's officer duty activities include spending a portion of his or her shift in the office interviewing suspects, reviewing incident evidence, servicing equipment, or any host of things which are necessary to maintain effective operation of the shift. This close proximity to the action afforded me quite a lot of leverage in my efforts to gather relevant information from observations of the various events taking place within the department, my study site.

Timeline for Data Collection and Analysis

Engaging in a study of any substance or magnitude would be best planned for a period during a regular semester. This particular study was carried out during the fall semester of 2009, spring semester of 2010 and fall semester of 2010. I completed the focus groups, observations, and interviews during February, March, April, and May. I performed the coding of the data during the month of April. I then developed Student/Staff Communities to enable the study participants a venue to connect with each other and establish healthy working relationships. Analysis of the data took place during the spring semester 2011, and fall semester of 2011.

Observations and Participant Contacts

I observed department personnel disseminating information on the practice of

productive behaviors leading to successful overall college experiences. This involved observing planned safety presentations, officer responses to incidents occurring throughout the Rowan University campus, and interviewing department personnel involved in these events. Participants of the observations consisted primarily of members of the Department of Public Safety and student study participants. These officers were observed on patrol and while interacting with members of the student community.

Interviews involve two line-officers, those responding to incidents, two supervisors responsible for overseeing the operations of a particular shift, and two officers who work often as direct liaisons between students and Department of Public Safety members. Due to the nature of the types of incidents, it was important that I reviewed and screened out any information not relevant to the study.

Study Participants

Participant criteria. When selecting individuals to participate in my research study I looked first at the availability of the subjects. Due to incidents on the campus, most of the members in my department were very busy. It was necessary to use discretion when selecting the officers to participate in the study. I felt that the younger officers were not very familiar with all aspects of the campus and might not be familiar with all that the department offered. As a result, I chose to use the officers who possessed a substantial amount of experience working with students at Rowan University. Fortunately, all of the officers selected were very familiar with general student behavior and most had experienced the college environment as a student.

Study admittance descriptors. The students in the study were selected randomly with diversity in mind. Those Department of Public Safety staff members participating in

the study were also selected for their experience working with students. Lastly, I considered diversity when selecting the staff for the study participant pool.

After securing the study participants I used a two digit identifier to distinguish a particular study participant during the study. I used a capital E to signify employee and a capital S to signify student. I then attached a single digit number to help narrow the connection to a particular employee or particular student within the study.

Staff.

E-1

E-1 is a Caucasian male who has worked at Rowan University for more than 3 years and serves in a supervisory capacity in a very active area of the department. E-1 is nearing retirement and questions whether research related to student and police interactions are evolving and adapting fast enough to help either side of the quagmire between campus Police Officers and students. E-1 also has concerns about some of the changes taking place in the work environment and wonders what the impact will be on general student-police officer contacts in the future. E-1 and I have worked together for quite sometime and have developed a healthy and very productive relationship. E-1 clearly recognizes how important helping the students succeed is to the Department of Public Safety in particular, and the Rowan University community in general. Students failing their classes and opting to engaging in unfavorable behavior directly impact the level of Public Safety response and the outcome for the students participating in the unfavorable behavior. E-1 is aware of the possible student outcome and works with the students to encourage a more positive and fruitful outcome.

E-2

E-2 is a Caucasian male who has worked with the Department of Public Safety for more than 4 years. He often reflects on the significant changes that have taken place on the campus of Rowan University and how these changes have impacted the relationships between the students and members of the Department of Public Safety.

E-2 has worked his way up through the ranks to a supervisory position in the police section. E-2 often contributes much insight in the effective management of student issues and student concerns.

E-3

E-3 is a Caucasian female who has worked extensively with the student community over the past 5 years. E-3 has contributed much to the wellbeing of campus life at Rowan University. E-3 was instrumental in the development and expansion of popular student programs such as the RAD program, or Rape Aggression Defense program. E-3 possesses a broad understanding of the decision-making processes and organizational structure of the Department of Public Safety. E-3 supports the idea of strong relationships between the student community and university professional staff and emphasizes the benefits of this relationship. E-3 has been a member of the department of Public Safety for 4 years.

E-4

E-4 is an African American male who has been with the department for 6 years. E-4 finds effective communication skills and teamwork very important to his success as a law enforcement officer and feels that these same skills will enhance the effectiveness of a student's success in higher education. E-4 often searches for opportunities to work with

students at the Rowan University campus. E-4 has often worked with students, guiding them to areas on campus that provide remedial services, and social connections.

E-5

E-5 is a Caucasian male with a strong sense of duty. E-5 is highly motivated and thrives on responding to the needs of the Department of Public Safety and members of the Rowan University community. E-5 enjoys working with students on different levels. E-5 has worked with students on many occasions as a peer, as subordinate, and as a supervisor. The relationships that have developed from these contacts have instilled in E-5 a desire to help members of the student community when ever possible. E-5 began a career with Rowan University as a security officer and quickly moved into the ranks of the Police Section of the department. E-5 has been with the Department of Public Safety for 4 years. E-5 continues to be a productive member of the department and an effective ally for the students he encounters.

E-6

E-6 is a supervisor responsible for some of the department's student details. E-6 is a Caucasian male who has been with the department for seven years and has been instrumental in the development of a program designed to assist students pursuing Law & Justice majors. E-6 has always served as an active advocate for the students encountered during the course of the day. E-6 often spends free time working on programs designed to support student growth and success. E-6 is an enabler, an agent of support, and a model for the students and staff in his area to move forward after he is gone. E-6 can be difficult to work with when things are not going quite the way they are expected. E-6's

intent is good, I am sure, and as our relationship matures I look forward to many healthy and positive encounters with E-6.

E-7

E-7 is a Caucasian male who has been with the department for seven years. E-7 is a supervisor who often works directly with members of Rowan University student populations. E-7 received his undergraduate degree from Rowan University and is currently a graduate student attending another institution. He enjoys working with students at Rowan University.

Student participants. The students who participated in the study were with the university for a substantial period of time. They were familiar with the campus offerings and were genuinely motivated to assist with the study. The students, though randomly selected, were actually chosen based on gender, race, and their status with the institution. All of the students were upper-classman and the group was extremely diverse, consisting of members of five countries. This participant pool assured that the information gleaned from the study would be disseminated quickly throughout the ranks of the department and the campus. Information clarifying the actual demographics for the group members participating in the study is displayed in Table 1.

Table 1

Actual Demographic Description for Study Sample Group (n=11)

Gender	Count	% Within Group	Mean
Male	7	64.0%	
Female	4	36.0%	
Age			20
Ethnicity			
Asian	2	18.0%	
African American	1	09.0%	
Caucasian	6	54.5%	
Hispanic	1	09.0%	
Arabic	1	09.0%	

Description of students.

S-1

S-1 has come to America from Arabia to acquire an education. S-1 has worked some part-time positions at the university to secure funds to support his educational adventure. S-1 plans to return to Arabia upon completion of all of his degree program requirements. S-1 feels that some Americans do not do all that they can do to sustain themselves and also feels confident that many of the Americans struggling to succeed need only to put forth a more genuine effort. S-1 found it difficult to meet with me for the interview portions of the study. S-1 seemed irritated whenever I would attempt to interact with him, and at one point advised me that there would not be time to sit and engage in an

interview. I was able to locate a telephone number for S-1 and we spoke for a brief period on the telephone. It was clear that S-1 was having difficulty interacting with some of the study participants.

S-2

S-2 is a Peruvian male who resides in America. S-2 is an acknowledged homosexual and feels strongly that some of his peers are afraid to acknowledge their status as it relates to their sexual orientation. Initially, S-2 had an enormous amount of difficulty participating in the study. From the start of the study, S-2 wanted to know why he was selected to participate in the study. He felt that there was some ulterior motive for his inclusion in the study. I assured him that the selection process for most of the student participants was random.

S-2 has a strong desire to focus on his competencies in the workplace and learn new skills. S-2 is currently a senior majoring in psychology. S-2 was raised in Peru and immigrated to the United States at the age of 10. He aspires to become a psychologist.

S-2 defines himself as an openly gay male interested in working with the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning (LGBTQ) awareness program. S-2 has been on the Dean's list at Rowan University for the past 4 semesters. S-2 is a very confident and determined, intellectual, and open-minded person. S-2 is a practicing vegetarian who was driven to participate in the practice of living as a vegetarian for moral reasons. I enjoyed working with S-2 during the study.

S-3

S-3 is a Caucasian female from America who is a 2009 graduate of Rowan University.

S-3 worked as a part-time employee for the university, during which time S-3 worked part-time as a ticket writer and member of a First Responder Squad/Emergency Medical Squad and is currently pursuing a career in the judicial system of New Jersey. S-3 was very helpful during the study and continued to help out where ever possible. I really enjoyed working with S-3. S-3 worked hard at any assignment offered during the study. S-3 is very intelligent, very caring, and worked hard to help coworkers and the Rowan community while a student.

S-4

S-4 is an Asian female from a southern province in China. S-4 speaks a number of different languages and was impressed with my awareness of the practice of Ti Chi. S-4 informed me that her grandmother taught her siblings and her Ti Chi when they were very young. S-4 indicated that they do not practice as much as they should here in America. S-4 was very interested in the learning process in America and seemed to have a thirst for knowledge in general.

S-5

S-5 is an Asian female who resides in Beijing, China. S-5 came to America to go to school. Once she arrived in America she began to develop other interests in the many different cultures within the America society.

S-6

S-6 is an African American male. S-6 is a current student of Rowan University and eager to delve into his educational experience. S-6 is deeply committed to his educational mission and meeting positive people who he hopes will guide him toward some sustained positive professional growth.

S-7

S-7 is an Asian female from the southern province of China. S-7 has difficulty communicating in English. S-7 is currently receiving language instruction to help her with her English deficit. S-7 enjoys working with math and science class work. S-7 is eager to graduate and hopes to return home soon.

Study Participants Leaving Study

Of the seven students who initially agreed to participate in the study, one student chose to withdraw immediately after the Focus Group meeting. One additional student chose to drop out of the study during Cycle 1. The reasons for the exodus from the study for the students varied from discomfort with participating in a process that might depict the students as deficient or lacking in some way, to the claims of insufficient time to participate effectively in the study.

Of the seven officers who initially agreed to participate in the study, one officer chose to withdraw from the study. The reason that the officer chose to leave the study was work related.

My Role in the Study

Due to my role in the Department of Public Safety, I served in a participant-observer role. Action research allowed me the freedom to interact with the staff and really experience the process in real-time. It also allowed the individuals observed to respond to me as the need arose for general or specific advice and other job related information relating to the performance of their individual jobs.

Data Collection Strategies

In a review of the programs offered by the Department of Public Safety as helping

initiatives, members of the department are normally proactive in their response to the needs of the campus community in general. It is not often that we have the opportunity to direct our attention to the specific needs of a designated group within our community. To respond effectively to this challenge, the seven officers selected to participate in the unstructured interviews, observations, and survey completion were senior officers with much more experience than many of the younger officers.

At the start of the study I sponsored a focus group to gather information for a survey. The survey questions gathered demographic data and data relating to the study participants' perceptions of risk. All study participants received and completed a survey developed from information gleaned during the focus group activity and the observation phase of the study. Once completed, I provided the survey to each of the 14 participants to determine if the programs offered by the department and the interventions currently in existence were providing any benefits for those participating in the study. The survey also gathered information about the participants' status with the university and their expected goals. Data from the surveys were collected and coded.

Data Collection and Analysis Process

During Cycle 1, I arranged the Focus Group meeting and presented my plan for the study to a mixed group of students and Department of Public Safety personnel. During the Focus Group activity, I gathered data to assemble the initial survey document. I then engaged the study participants in individual interviews.

Upon completion of the interviews, I met with each study participant and dispensed the survey document. This process was repeated after the data from each phase of the study was scrutinized. I engaged in the observation phase of the study at a number of

different locations on the campus of Rowan University. The locations included Savitz Hall, Wilson Hall, and the Department of Public Safety space in the Bole Annex building. These areas were selected as study sites because they allowed for the discreet observation of study participants and members from the student populations they encountered during the course of their work day (Glesne, 2006).

The observations provided information to assist in the development of an assessment of the interactions shared by Rowan students and other campus community members. Upon completion of the observations of study participants, an analysis of the information gathered was compiled and reviewed. Throughout the observation phase of the study, I functioned as an observer-participant. Everyone in the study was informed of my status as a researcher and I did not actively or consistently take on any of the roles of the participants. During the observation phase of the study, I looked for helping behaviors, behaviors that connect the students to campus resources, and general caring behaviors.

During Cycle 2, I engaged in the coding process of the information gathered during Cycle 1. Also during Cycle 2, I developed the survey instrument to be used during Cycle 2 using the information gathered during Cycle 1. The surveys were identical to the document used during Cycle 1 to allow for a comparison between the initial survey document and the second survey document.

During Cycle 3, I implemented the student-staff community process, encouraging study participants to connect and establish mentoring relationships. The idea for the student-staff communities evolved out of literature that involved the interaction of groups in intergroup dialogue (Zuniga et al., 2007).

Significance of Study

Research from the study may prove to be a useful guide for future training opportunities for department staff as well as a useful resource for students experiencing difficulty adjusting to the college experience. Providing information on areas within the department that actually contributed to the students' growth is information that should be shared with the entire campus community. This information includes an assortment of training opportunities ranging from crime prevention information, to mentoring relationships. Personnel affiliated with the Department of Public Safety will be briefed on the pertinent findings from the study and provided with instructions that would govern the practice of replication of key outcome events found to be beneficial in fostering effective student behaviors. Also, there will be a protocol for study related information to be fully disseminated throughout the Department of Public Safety and made available to any department that felt their operation might benefit from the use of the materials.

Study Participant Associative Behavior Results

Data resulting from the connection of study participants revealed that all five of the students participating in the study and all six of the officers participating in the study experienced sufficient favorable interactions that encouraged the study participants to seek out additional opportunities for future contact. Of the seven students who initially agreed to participate in the study, five of these students, or 71%, felt comfortable continuing with the student communities. These five students voiced their support for establishing and maintaining healthy relationships with members of the Department of Public Safety, as well as other members of the faculty and staff communities on the Rowan University campus.

The basic interaction of students with Department of Public Safety staff and scholarly members of the campus community was seen as a benefit for the students at Rowan University. Staff members participating in this study also commented on the benefits of the interconnectedness and student success.

Chapter V

Findings and Analysis

I explored qualitative methods of analysis to assess the complete experience of the student study participants and their staff counterparts who chose to be study participants. I used mixed methods to retrieve data. I began with individual interviews then moved to surveys, which were developed using blocks of data acquired from the interviews held with the study participants. I found that many of the causes for a student to be at-risk were mentioned in the literature review.

One thing that was mentioned throughout the Literature Review was student awareness of and access to available resources. The interview methods were explored at length during the study and results were displayed in individual transcripts to illuminate the findings. The student study participants were paired with staff study participants whenever possible to encourage general and study related contact throughout the study.

Interviews

Interview of student study participants and staff study participants. I first interviewed five Rowan University students during the month of February 2009. I interviewed the same five students a second time during April, May, and October of 2009. My first interviews of the six staff members occurred during the month of March 2009. I interviewed the same six staff members a second time during September, October, and November.

First interview regarding “Methods and Programs.” Students and staff study participants were asked the question: What are the methods and programs used by

Department of Public Safety representatives at a higher education institution to motivate at-risk students' academic and social achievement?

Study participants from both of the groups answered this question in basically the same way. In the first interview, they gave responses such as these offered by staff participants: "You know, I tell them to get with some of the other students on campus, you know like study groups. Working with other people always helped me when I was having trouble with an assignment;" "Get them to work with other students on our campus. You know, study groups. They really helped me when I was taking classes;" "Helping them get involved in the programs that are on campus. Meeting other students helps and gives the student other people to talk to about the stuff that they are having some problems with;" "Telling them about some of the areas on campus that has counseling for students having problems getting their school work done and areas on campus that work with the students to help them get the tuition they need to stay in school;" "I tell the students to make friends and move in groups when they are on campus. You know, for safety."

There were similar responses offered by the student study participants such as: "They gave tutoring programs that students can get into to help them with their work. Some of the fraternities have some mentoring programs that help the students. I like these programs as long as most of the people leading you are teachers or counselors;" "I like to schedule work time with my friends to study. I don't learn anything when I work by myself;" "I think that your programs can help students not use alcohol and other stuff. I believe they can have a positive impact on some of the students not doing well in school;" "If a student comes to them for help they should tell them where they can go for

help. I don't think they should try to help the students unless the student's problems are covered by their jobs. They should just send the student to an office that handles the students problems;" "I see counselors helping to give students a chance to learn their class-work. They counsel the students with their studies and help them understand the work."

First interview "Methods and Programs" themes. All themes exposed in responses to the first question are supported by the literature associated with responding to the needs of the at-risk college student. In the first interview, all students and staff expressed feelings that incorporated: reaching out to various sources on our campus for assistance; referring students to various locations on our campus; encouraging students to connect with other students, staff, and faculty to assure they receive the information and resources needed to support their efforts to complete their studies at Rowan University.

Both the students and staff participants of the study openly encouraged connecting to resources prevalent at the university, other people, and related resources. There was a sense that some of the officers were taking up an advisory position in some aspects of their relationships with the student study participants.

Second interview regarding "Methods and Programs." During the second interview, student study participants and staff study participants appeared to be more comfortable with each other, which allowed for them to work closely as the study proceeded. Some of the comments from the student participants were as follow.

"I think they should tell all of the officers to send the students having problems to some office on campus for help, not just to the dean's office for some kind of

punishment;” “They protect the students and classroom area to make sure students can study and learn;” “Some of the students need to use the places on campus that help the students with their studies. You know, like the Academic Success Center. They even show you how to study there;” “I believe so, but they all don’t necessarily need to be from that department. Other departments have things to offer students too. Public Safety is alright, but there is not a lot that you can learn from them unless you want to be a police officer;” and “A lot of work! You can start by providing some safe zones around campus where they would feel welcome and safe.”

Responses from the staff participants were similar: “Every opportunity I get I find myself advising students I work with to interact with their teachers. I tell them all of the time that working with the professors is a win-win situation;” “They could spend more time talking to counselors and advisors about their concerns;” “Any student who asks me about school I try to suggest that go to one of the labs on campus and work with the other students. Get all of them together they can do all of that stuff. I like working with other students when I study. Believe me, that is the way to go;” “Most of the programs I see are the ones that use groups to encourage students’ interactions. It’s getting the people together to share ideas about problems with a class or problems with college life;” ”There are a number of programs offered by the Academic Success Center. They work with the students having trouble;” “The remedial stuff. I guess if a student has a good understanding of the materials they can do much better than a lot of them now.”

Second interview “Methods and Programs” themes. Both the students and the staff study participants seemed to be excited about the semester nearing its end. They were

stopping in my office throughout the day and calling me on the telephone with information and questions. Most of the inquiries were related to the timeframe for the end of the study.

Participants in the study were maintaining contact with each other. The themes presented during the second interview seemed to be similar to those offered during the first interview: connecting to campus resources, people and literature; developing. There were genuine moments of compassion, and a clear effort to maintain some type of incessant mentoring contact.

First interview regarding “What are the Actions.” Students and staff were asked: What are the actions that can be taken by a representative of the Department of Public Safety to enhance support for at-risk student programs?

Student responses to the second questions included: “They can send students to other offices on campus like the counseling center;” “I think they should talk to the students as soon as they get here to see what type of help they may need. You know, as soon as they get here because when we start we won’t have time to go back to fix any problems;” “I think they should let these students have time to talk to the professors and work with them to help the students understand the work better so they can graduate;” and, “If a student comes to them for help they should tell them where they can go for help. I don’t think they should try to help the students unless the students’ problems are covered by their jobs. They should just send the student to an office that handles the student’s problems.”

Staff responses to the second questions are as follow: “I would probably help them find someone on campus that could help them with their problem;” “The at-risk students I

know do well when they get involved in programs on campus. These groups do well when included in some of the campus programs. I think they develop an interest in the campus when they get involved in campus organizations. They just seem to have more confidence in their abilities. I guess, if you can get the at-risk students involved with other students and faculty and some of the programs on our campus they will really do better with their school work;” “We can encourage the students we see who are having trouble go to areas on campus that have programs to help the students;” “I guess listening to them. Some of this group will tell you if they need help and why they feel that they need the help;” “These groups do well when included in some of the campus programs. I think they develop an interest in the campus when they are participants. They begin asking questions and providing answers for some of the questions that we have. I think that is a good thing. So, I guess getting the at-risk students involved in some of these programs on our campus will really help them to build the confidence they need;” and “Well, just show the statistics from any university that provides this type of information to their students and you will see that these programs really do help keep the students safe.”

First interview “What are the Actions” themes. The common themes observed during the first interview continue to support helping the students or showing varying levels of compassion. There also is an unyielding effort to connect the students to other campus resources and other campus staff in their pursuit of a viable solution to the students problems.

Second Interview regarding “What are the Actions.” The second interview near the end of the semester yielded similar answers to those received during the first

interview. “I think they can work harder to use the campus resources available to students having trouble with their classes. They can try working with members of the counseling center if the students are drinking or using some type of drug;” “I think that Public Safety people are no different than any of the other people on campus who refer students to places. They send the students for different kinds of problems to places on their campus in the hope that the people there can find the source of the students’ problems. Once they find out what the problem is they can help the student be part of a successful college experience;” and, “They can advertise their safety programs to the campus letting them know that they can get help on campus.”

Staff study participants stated: “We can help the student find an office on campus that can help them with their problem. There are places on campus that have all kinds of resources to help the students;” “I think that the students struggling should be sent to the Counseling Center or the Academic Success Center. They know how to work with these guys;” “I really believe that listening is important. You never know that there is a problem unless you are paying attention to the students. They are not going to come to you on their own, they need a little incentive;” “Let them know about the places on our campus that have counseling and mentoring programs. They should get this information as soon as they get here not after they run into a problem;” “I can only imagine that it would take some kind of special attention to these students. It is clear that some of these students do really need help to get through college;” and, “I like to send them to the counselor’s office. They can detect if they need something else.”

Second interview “What are the Actions” themes. The second interview continues to support the caring and connecting themes. There was a continuous effort to exhibit

compassion and a comparable suggestive effort to guide students experiencing difficulty in college to other resources on campus, and connect the students to these resources.

There were some advising themes in the first and second interview. This third theme was displayed throughout the first and second interviews in a supportive context.

First interview regarding “What are the Results of Including Members.” The staff and students were asked: What will be the result of including members of at-risk student populations in Department of Public Safety sponsored programs?

Student responses to the third questions included: “I think they will be safe and understand how to stay out of trouble so they can finish college;” “It will help them understand Security. I think they need to know about other programs in other departments too;” “I think the students feel safe when they participate in Public Safety programs;” and, “It helps the students working with Public Safety. They can help you a lot with not just security stuff. If you need other help they can tell you where you can go to get that help too.”

Staff responses to the third question were as follow: “The students will be smarter when it comes to safety issues on our campus. They will know how to protect themselves and how to get help when they need it;” “The students learn a lot of things from the Public Safety sponsored programs. Most important, they learn how to be safe on campus. We talk about alcohol, drugs and property theft. They learn how to take care of themselves;” “When we get together the students really work well. Including them in our department programs is good for them and I think even helps some of them with their class work;” “Normally, this type action helps the student work with us better. They get to know us and trust us more;” “It will surely make the students feel safe and probably

more confident in their activities on our campus;” and, “We have a lot of students in some of our programs. Some of them probably are the students you are talking about. They do alright. I think it helps them working so closely with Public Safety.”

First interview “What are the Results of Including Members” themes.

The students and staff both again exhibited a compelling effort to connect with existing staff and existing resources on our campus in an effort to provide tools to contribute to the enhanced educational efforts of the at-risk students at Rowan University.

Some of the themes presented by the students included: motivational issues; substance issues; financial concerns; and poor study habits as indicated by: “Yes, I know a lot of female students who end up leaving the college they have the same problems the male students have.”

Second interview regarding “What are the Results of Including Members.”

The student response to the second interview responding to question three are as follow: “Students will feel safety and work without problems;” “I believe they can have a positive impact on the students when they pair up with any mentor;” “I think that your programs can help students not use alcohol and other stuff. I believe they can have a positive impact on some of the students not doing well in school;” and, “Some of the programs are great. I work with the Public Safety EMS Squad and I see a lot of the programs they have. They also tell you where you can go to get help.”

Second interview “What are the Results of Including Members” themes. The responses from both the student participants and the staff participants in general leave me with a sense of hope that the future can be brighter for members of the at-risk populations if they are connected with those resources necessary to achieve their goals. The themes

presented included: connecting to campus resources including faculty and Staff and caring about the importance of the eventual outcome.

First interview regarding “Student/Staff Communities.” The students and staff were asked: Do you think the Student/Staff communities were important in Enhancing the Relationship between Students and Department of Public Safety members?

Student participants’ comments included: “I don’t know. I guess it will be all right. I never worked with Police before;” “These guys seem like they are okay;” “I’m not sure. Some of the officers work well with the students and some of them don’t;” “It may work, everyone is not the same.”

Staff study participants were a little apprehensive about the process of working with the students as follow: “Some of these students are hard to work with. Maybe some of it will work;” “Yes, I think it is a good idea. It really gets the students to talk with us more. Sometimes we could even develop friendships;” “Yeah, they will probably help the students. I am looking forward to working with the students in my group;” “Yes, I do. The more they trust us the easier it will be to help them find help if they need it;” “Yes, it will give all of us a chance to get to know each other better. They’re not so bad. I enjoyed working with students. I think they enjoyed working with us too;” and, “I hope for the best, but some of the students can be difficult. I guess we will see.”

First interview “Student/Staff Communities” themes. Student study participants seemed to agree that the Student/Staff communities would be helpful in building a sense of community between the two study group communities. The theme that stood out was the uncertainty of the ability of the two groups to work together, however, without any major problems.

First interview regarding “My Leadership.” The fifth interview question addressed my leadership. Students and staff responded to the question: How will this research project impact my leadership theory in use?

Student responses to the fifth question included: “You are telling us what we need to know to work with you in the study. You are telling us, leading us. Some of the things we will be doing and I guess what will happen during the study. You’re out front;” “I guess you are teaching us what is going to happen in the study. Oh, and what you want me to do in the study;” “You will teach us what the study is, showing us what to do, showing us how to help in the study, you learn how to help students;” and, “You are out front, showing us what you want us to do and what you will be doing.”

The comments from staff study participants were similar to student comments and consistent with my perception of the change in my behavior as we advanced through the study such as: “You will get a lot of experience leading the students and us;” “That I don’t really know. I guess you will be doing a lot of planning.” “A lot of explaining;” “All of this should change the way we do things. I know you are expecting a lot from us now;” “I just noticed that you are providing a lot of information about the study and about what we will be doing in the study;” “I guess managing this type of project will really sharpen your skills. This is a lot of work;” and, “I am not sure right now.”

First interview “My Leadership” themes. The most prolific theme seemed to be centered on being lead or being guided through a process. Both student study participants and staff study participants revealed feelings of being guided or lead through a process.

Second interview regarding “My Leadership.” Responses during the second interview revealed some variations to the first interview responses. General answers from those students who participated in the study included: “We all work together now;” “I see now! You are not saying that much now. I remember when we started you were telling us everything about the study. Now you are not saying anything and we are running our mouths;” “We are working together now. Sometimes we even tell you what is going to happen next. You are showing us how to lead the group, the study;” and, “We started with you leading the group then we were leading the community groups on our own. Now you are in charge of the group again, leading us.”

Second interview “My Leadership” themes. The most revealing theme during the second interview was participant awareness. Both groups seemed to understand that my leadership changed and they understood the manner in which it changed. Both groups also were relieved that they understood what was going on in the study.

Survey Research Analysis

My hypothesis for the quantitative phase of this study was, that by connecting the at-risk students to other campus community members and available campus resources there would be a positive impact on the students’ overall academic and social outcomes. Data from the survey research analysis provided support for the hypothesis that by connecting students to campus community members and campus resources there would be a positive impact on the students resulting from the access to those resources and information needed to enhance the students’ overall academic and social outcomes during their stay at Rowan University. When students have access to the resources they need they often experience a more positive university experience (Cronk 2008).

Survey results. After review of the results from the first survey completions there was some evidence of a benefit to the students and staff who were connected at this point in the study as indicated in Tables 2, 3, 4, and 5.

Table 2

First Student Survey Results

Item #	Strongly Agree		Agree		Don't Know		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
1. I met and got to know other students and staff at Rowan University.	2	40%	3	60%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
2. I know how to connect with various Rowan University staff (e.g., faculty, staff, administrators) if I need academic or other help.	1	20%	2	40%	2	40%	0	0%	0	0%
3. I know how to seek out peer support resources (e.g., PROs, friends) if I need help with academic or other problems	0	0%	3	60%	1	20%	1	20%	0	0%
4. I know what is expected of me as an adult learner at Rowan University.	0	0%	5	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
5. I feel confident and secure that I can effectively make the transition from high school to college.	1	20%	4	80%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
6. I am confident that I will enjoy college life at Rowan University.	1	20%	1	20%	3	60%	0	0%	0	0%
7. I know generally how to make my way around the Rowan University campus.	1	20%	4	80%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
8. I am confident that I will be able to take responsibility for my own learning at Rowan University.	2	40%	3	60%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
9. I enjoy working with other student study groups and interacting with faculty/staff at Rowan University.	1	20%	1	20%	1	20%	2	40%	0	0%
10. I am confident that I can develop a plan to succeed in college.	1	20%	3	60%	1	20%	0	0%	0	0%
11. I know how to get the resources that I need to succeed.	2	40%	1	20%	0	0%	2	40%	0	0%
12. I am looking forward to working with other students.	1	20%	4	80%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
13. I know what to do to ensure my own academic success.	1	20%	4	80%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
14. I am confident that I will be able to make wise decisions about leading a healthy lifestyle (e.g., diet/exercise/making friends).	1	20%	2	40%	1	20%	1	20%	0	0%

Table 2 *First Student Survey Results* (Continued)

Item #	Strongly Agree		Agree		Don't Know		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
15. I am confident that I will be able to make wise decisions about avoiding substance (e.g., alcohol, drugs) abuse.	2	40%	3	60%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
16. I am confident that I will be able to balance my academic and social life in College.	1	20%	2	40%	0	0%	2	40%	0	0%
17. I gained valuable knowledge from working with other students and staff sharing ideas and problem solving methods.	2	40%	1	20%	1	20%	1	20%	0	0%
18. I recognize the value of getting involved in study groups on our campus and interacting with my professors.	0	0%	3	60%	1	20%	1	20%	0	0%

Table 3

Second Student Survey Results

Item #	Strongly Agree		Agree		Don't Know		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
1. I met and got to know other students and staff at Rowan University.	2	40%	3	60%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
2. I know how to connect with various Rowan University staff (e.g., faculty, staff, administrators) if I need academic or other help.	1	20%	4	80%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
3. I know how to seek out peer support resources (e.g., PROs, friends) if I need help with academic or other problems	1	20%	4	80%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
4. I know what is expected of me as an adult learner at Rowan University.	0	0%	5	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
5. I feel confident and secure that I can effectively make the transition from high school to college.	1	20%	4	80%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
6. I am confident that I will enjoy college life at Rowan University.	1	20%	4	80%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
7. I know generally how to make my way around the Rowan University campus.	1	20%	4	80%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
8. I am confident that I will be able to take responsibility for my own learning at Rowan University.	3	60%	2	40%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
9. I enjoy working with other student study groups and interacting with faculty/staff at Rowan University.	1	20%	2	40%	2	40%	0	0%	0	0%

Table 3 *Second Student Survey Results* (Continued)

Item #	Strongly Agree		Agree		Don't Know		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
10. I am confident that I can develop a plan to succeed in college.	1	20%	3	60%	1	20%	0	0%	0	0%
11. I know how to get the resources that I need to succeed.	2	40%	2	40%	1	20%	0	0%	0	0%
12. I am looking forward to working with other students.	1	20%	4	80%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
13. I know what to do to ensure my own academic success.	1	20%	4	80%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
14. I am confident that I will be able to make wise decisions about leading a healthy lifestyle (e.g., diet/exercise/making friends).	1	20%	4	80%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
15. I am confident that I will be able to make wise decisions about avoiding substance (e.g., alcohol, drugs) abuse.	2	40%	3	60%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
16. I am confident that I will be able to balance my academic and social life in college.	1	20%	2	40%	2	40%	0	0%	0	0%
17. I gained valuable knowledge from working with other students and staff sharing ideas and problem solving methods.	2	40%	1	20%	2	40%	0	0%	0	0%
18. I recognize the value of getting involved in study groups on our campus and interacting with my professors.	1	20%	4	80%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%

Table 4

First Staff Survey Results

Item #	Strongly Agree		Agree		Don't Know		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
1. I met and got to know other students looking to staff at Rowan University for help.	0	0%	6	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
2. I know how to connect with students on an educational level (e.g., class-work, time management, problem solving techniques) if I see a need to provide assistance.	1	17%	2	33%	2	33%	1	17%	0	0%
3. I know how to encourage students to seek out peer support resources (e.g., PROs, friends) if I think it would benefit the student.	2	33%	3	50%	0	0%	1	17%	0	0%
4. I know what is expected of me as a helping agent at Rowan University.	2	33%	4	67%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%

Table 4 *First Staff Survey Results* (Continued)

Item #	Strongly Agree		Agree		Don't Know		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
5. I feel confident and secure that I can help a student effectively make the transition from high school to college.	2	33%	3	50%	1	17%	0	0%	0	0%
6. I feel confident that I will enjoy helping students succeed at Rowan University.	4	67%	0	0%	1	17%	1	17%	0	0%
7. I know generally what a student needs to make their way around the Rowan University campus.	4	67%	2	33%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
8. I am confident that I can help students to be able to take responsibility for my own learning at Rowan University.	1	17%	3	50%	1	17%	1	17%	0	0%
9. I enjoy working with students and connecting them with the resources they need to prevail at Rowan University.	1	17%	4	67%	0	0%	1	17%	0	0%
10. I am confident that I can help a student develop a plan to succeed academically at Rowan University.	1	17%	1	17%	2	33%	2	33%	0	0%
11. I can guide a student toward the resources that they will need to succeed at Rowan University.	1	17%	4	67%	1	17%	0	0%	0	0%
12. I look forward to working with Rowan University students.	3	50%	2	33%	0	0%	1	17%	0	0%
13. I know what to do to ensure a student's academic success.	0	0%	2	33%	2	33%	2	33%	0	0%
14. I am confident that I can help students make wise decisions about leading a healthy lifestyle (e.g., diet/exercise/making friends).	3	50%	1	17%	1	17%	0	0%	1	17%
15. I can encourage students to make wise decisions about avoiding substance (e.g., alcohol, drugs) abuse.	5	83%	1	17%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
16. I am confident that by modeling the balancing of task I can have a strong influence on a student's ability to balance their academic and social life at the university.	1	17%	3	50%	1	17%	1	17%	0	0%
17. There are immense benefits gained during mentoring.	3	50%	2	33%	0	0%	1	17%	0	0%
18. I recognize the value of getting students involved in campus and community activities.	2	33%	3	50%	0	0%	1	17%	0	0%

Table 5

Second Staff Survey Results

Item #	Strongly Agree		Agree		Don't Know		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
1. I met and got to know other students looking to staff at Rowan University for help.	1	17%	3	50%	1	17%	1	17%	0	0%
2. I know how to connect with students on an educational level (e.g., class-work, time management, problem solving techniques) if I see a need to provide assistance.	1	17%	5	83%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
3. I know how to encourage students to seek out peer support resources (e.g., PROs, friends) if I think it would benefit the student.	4	67%	2	33%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
4. I know what is expected of me as a helping agent at Rowan University.	3	50%	3	50%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
5. I feel confident and secure that I can help a student effectively make the transition from high school to college.	3	50%	2	33%	0	0%	1	17%	0	0%
6. I feel confident that I will enjoy helping students succeed at Rowan University.	4	67%	1	17%	0	0%	1	17%	0	0%
7. I know generally what a student needs to make their way around the Rowan University campus.	4	67%	2	33%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
8. I am confident that I can help students to be able to take responsibility for my own learning at Rowan University.	1	17%	3	50%	1	17%	1	17%	0	0%
9. I enjoy working with students and connecting them with the resources they need to prevail at Rowan University.	3	50%	2	33%	0	0%	1	17%	0	0%
10. I am confident that I can help a student develop a plan to succeed academically at Rowan University.	1	17%	2	33%	2	33%	1	17%	0	0%
11. I can guide a student toward the resources that they will need to succeed at Rowan University.	2	33%	4	67%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
12. I look forward to working with Rowan University students.	4	67%	1	17%	0	0%	1	17%	0	0%
13. I know what to do to ensure a student's academic success.	0	0%	3	50%	3	50%	0	0%	0	0%
14. I am confident that I can help students make wise decisions about leading a healthy lifestyle (e.g., diet/exercise/making friends).	1	17%	4	67%	0	0%	1	17%	0	0%
15. I can encourage students to make wise decisions about avoiding substance (e.g., alcohol, drugs) abuse.	3	50%	3	50%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%

Table 5 *Second Staff Survey Results* (Continued)

Item #	Strongly Agree		Agree		Don't Know		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
16. I am confident that by modeling the balancing of task I can have a strong influence on a student's ability to balance their academic and social life at the university.	1	17%	3	50%	1	17%	1	17%	0	0%
17. There are immense benefits gained during mentoring.	1	17%	3	50%	1	17%	1	17%	0	0%
18. I recognize the value of getting students involved in campus and community activities.	2	33%	3	50%	0	0%	1	17%	0	0%

Impact of Poverty on College Students in New Jersey

Education funding. According to Devin Sikorski (2010), acting associate news editor for the Daily Targum, the State of New Jersey's budget plan will slash \$3,600,000 from those funds earmarked for one area of funding for those students in desperate need of financial support. This particular budget adjustment will impact the Educational Opportunity Fund, which will reduce the amount of funding for EOF programs statewide to \$37.6 million from \$41.2 million (Sikorski, 2010).

There are those who are clearly aware of the dismal implications of the decision to cut funding to the Educational Opportunity Fund. For example, according to the Vice President of University Budgeting, Nancy S. Winterbauer, EOF is a program that is critical in providing access to students who might otherwise not be able to attend college. Winterbauer further stated, "We hope that as the budget season progresses, Trenton policymakers will realize that Education Opportunity Fund funding is a very important and wise investment in the access to higher education" (Sikorski, 2010).

Teacher retention. According to Theresa Capra (2009), teacher quality is paramount to student achievement, the revolving door of teachers in poverty-stricken areas exacerbates the inferior education and also discourages pursuit of higher education.

Qualitative Research Data Analysis and Survey Research Data Analysis

Qualitative themes and quantitative data. The themes that emerged in the qualitative portion of the study are supported by the literature review and the qualitative data. Students struggling with financial issues and poor grades experience difficulty transitioning to campuses like that of Rowan University.

Data gathered from the survey phase of the study and its research analysis of the completed surveys provided support for my initial hypothesis. I began this theoretical study with the belief that by connecting students who were experiencing difficulty with their studies and campus life to other campus community members and relevant campus resources, there would be an increase exponentially in the support available for those students experiencing difficulty at Rowan University. Results of the study surveys completed support that hypothesis. Table 7, displays the original demographics of the study participants. Table 8 , displays 2008, demographics for the Rowan University campus and Table 9, display 2005, demographics of enrollment.

Table 6

Initial Demographic Description for Sample Group (n=14)

Gender	Count	% Within Group	Mean
Male	9	64.0%	
Female	5	36.0%	
Age			20
Ethnicity			
Asian	3	21.4%	
African American	2	14.2%	
Caucasian	7	50.0%	
Hispanic	1	07.1%	
Arabic	1	07.1%	

Table 7

Spring 2008 Enrollment Demographic Data

<u>Course Load</u>		<u>Semester Hours</u>	<u>Head Count</u>
Undergraduate	Full-time	107,309	7,292
	Part-time	8,412	1,362
	Total	115,721	8,654
Graduate	Full-time	2,892	264
	Part-time	3,847	922
	Total	6,939	1,186
University Total	Full-time	110,201	7,556
	Part-time	12,259	2,284
	Total	122,460	9,840
Gender	Female	5,427	55.15%
	Male	4,413	44.85%
	Total	9,840	100.00%
Ethnicity	Asian	326	3.31%
	Black	845	8.59%
	Hispanic	725	7.37%
	Native American	33	0.34%
	Unknown	221	2.25%
	White	7,690	78.15%
	Total	9,840	100.00%

Table 8

Fall 2005 Enrollment Demographic Data

<u>Course Load</u>		<u>Semester Hours</u>	<u>Head Count</u>
Undergraduate	Full-time	108,208.0	7,283

	Part-time	7,428.0	1,201
	Total	115,636.5	8,484
Graduate			
	Full-time	2,265.0	204
	Part-time	4,454.5	1,074
	Total	6,719.5	1,278
University Total			
	Full-time	122,356.0	9,762
	Part-time	12,259.0	2,284
	Total	122,460.0	9,840
Gender			
	Female	5,591	57.30%
	Male	4,170	42.70%
	Not Reported	1	0.00%
	Total	9,762	100.00%
Ethnicity			
	Asian	292	3.00%
	Black	871	8.90%
	Hispanic	595	6.10%
	Native American	35	0.40%
	Unknown	204	2.10%
	White	7,765	79.50%
	Total	9,762	100.00%

Chapter VI

Analysis of Theoretical Study

Study Participants

Upon deciding on a topic for my study, I began the search for participants to aid me in my search for answers. Initially, I began my study with the intent of pursuing solutions

designed to help students at-risk of dropping out of higher education prior to completion of their programs.

I began this project by selecting seven Rowan University Public Safety officers to participate in the study. I recruited five Rowan University police officers and two Rowan University security officers to assist me with the study. I also selected seven Rowan University students to work in conjunction with the officers.

Staff Study Participant Criterion

When selecting individuals to participate in my research study, I looked first at the availability of the subjects. Due to recent incidents on our campus, most of the members in my department were very busy. It was necessary to use discretion when selecting the officers to participate in the study. I felt that the younger officers were not very familiar with all aspects of the campus and may not be familiar with all that the department offered. As a result, I chose to use the officers who possessed a substantial amount of experience working with students at Rowan University. Fortunately, all of the officers selected were very familiar with general student behavior. Also, I looked for officers who had experienced the college environment as students. All of the officers selected were provided with identifiers in the form of acronyms, that would be used throughout the study to identify a particular staff study participant.

My first choice of officers to participate in my study was E-1. I am quite familiar with this officer and have worked with this officer in the past. I approached E-1 as we were leaving work. We discussed some job related issues and then we began to discuss my study and his possible participation in the study. I then began to explain my basic plan for the study to E-1. As expected, E-1 agreed to participate in the study. E-1 is very

conscientious and will normally jump at the opportunity to participate in any program designed to help the students. “Yes, I will help you with your study. Will the students be able come to some of our safety training sessions in the dorms? They will learn a lot.”

E-1 is a Caucasian male who has worked at Rowan University for more than three years and now serves in a supervisory capacity in a very active area of the department. E-1 is nearing retirement and questions whether research related to student and police interactions are evolving and adapting fast enough to help either side of the quagmire between campus Police Officers and students. E-1 also has concerns about some of the changes taking place in the work environment and wonders what the impact will be on general student, police officer contacts in the future. E-1 and I have worked together for a number of years and have developed a healthy and very productive relationship. E-1 clearly recognizes how important helping the students succeed is to the Department of Public Safety in particular, and the Rowan University community in general. Students failing their classes and opting to engage in unfavorable behavior directly impact the level of Public Safety response and the outcome for the students participating in the unfavorable behavior. E-1 is aware of some of the possible student outcomes and works with the students to encourage a more positive and fruitful outcome.

The second officer selected to participate in my study was E-5. In my quest for additional officers to participate in my study, I entered the Police Services section of my department. As I wandered through the area I noticed E-5 cleaning his service weapon. I confronted E-5 and asked if he would be interested in participating in my study. E-5 was initially apprehensive about participating in the study and actually stated that, “I am real busy now. Maybe later on in the semester after I finish

at the range I might have some time to help you.” I then continued to explain my project and its potential impact on representatives of the Department of Public Safety. I also wanted it to be clear that participation in the study was strictly voluntary and that he could drop out of the study whenever he felt the need to leave the study. E-5 eventually agreed to participate in the study.

E-5 is a Caucasian male who has worked with the Department of Public Safety for more than 4 years. He often reflects on the significant changes that have taken place on the campus of Rowan University and how these changes have impacted the relationships between the students and members of the Department of Public Safety. E-5 has worked his way up through the ranks to a supervisory position in the police section. E-5 often contributes much insight in the effective management of student issues and student concerns.

E-3 was the third officer asked to participate in the study. I confronted E-3 in the university’s Student Center shortly after the completion of a RAD class sponsored by the Department of Public Safety. E-3 is a certified RAD class instructor and often participates in safety presentations for members of the student community at Rowan University’s Glassboro campus. E-3 was instrumental in the development and expansion of popular student programs such as the RAD program, or Rape Aggression Defense program.

E-3 is a Caucasian female who has worked extensively with members of Rowan University’s student community over the past five years. E-3 has contributed much to the wellbeing of campus life at Rowan University. E-3 does possess a broad understanding of the decision-making processes and organizational structure of the Department of

Public Safety. E-3 supports the idea of strong relationships between the student community and university professional staff and emphasizes the benefits of this relationship. “I enjoy working with students. I work mostly with the female students and a few guys. We get along good. They like some of the safety programs we have.”

While interviewing a student I was confronted by E-4, the fourth officer to agree to participate in the study, in reference to a previous incident. After the discussion with the student, I thought I would mention my project to see if E-4 would be interested in participating. We discussed my project and E-4 agreed to participate. “Yeah, I can work with you on that.” “Who are the kids?” I advised E-4 that the students would all be college students currently enrolled at Rowan University’s Glassboro, New Jersey campus.

E-4 is an African American male who has been with the department for six years. E-4 finds effective communication skills and team work very important to his success as a law enforcement officer and feels that these same skills will enhance the effectiveness of a student’s success in higher education. E-4 often searches for opportunities to work with students at the Rowan University campus. E-4 has often worked with students, guiding them to areas on campus that provide remedial services, and social connections.

“Teamwork is really important for the students to get through the college work. Some of them just can’t do it alone, but most of them need help.”

Shortly after a department meeting I engaged E-2 in general conversation while exiting the department conference room. During the conversation I inquired about the possibility of E-2 becoming the fifth staff member to participate in my study. E-2 agreed to participate in my study. At the time of this conversation E-2, who is a police sergeant,

was involved in weapons training. E-2 assured me that the time frame for the training should not impede his full participation in the study. “I can help you with this. I’m on the second shift now. Just call me or email me if you need something from me.”

E-2 is a Caucasian male with a strong sense of duty. E-2 is highly motivated and thrives on responding to the needs of the Department of Public Safety and members of the Rowan University community. E-2 enjoys working with students on different levels. E-2 has worked with students on many occasions as a peer, as subordinate, and as a supervisor. The relationships that have developed from these contacts have instilled in E-2 a desire to help members of the student community whenever possible. E-2 began a career with Rowan University as a security officer and quickly moved into the ranks of the Police Section of the department. E-2 has been with the Department of Public Safety for four years. E-2 continues to be a productive member of the Department of Public Safety and an effective ally for both resident students and commuting students.

While interacting with students assigned to the department’s Student Patrol program, I had the opportunity to speak with some of the department’s officers who work closely with the students assigned to this program about their possible participation in my study. E-6, one of the officers overseeing the program, agreed to work with me on the study as the sixth staff study participant. E-6 works closely with the students in the Department of Public Safety’s Student Patrol program and assists with the general operation of other security programs on the Rowan University campus.

E-6 is a supervisor responsible for some of the department’s student details. E-6 is a Caucasian male who has been with the department for seven years and has been instrumental in the development of a program designed to assist students pursuing Law

and Justice majors. E-6 has always served as an active advocate for those students encountered during the course of the day. E-6 often spends free time working on programs designed to support student growth and success. E-6 is an enabler, an agent of support, and a model for the students and staff in his area to move forward after he is gone. E-6 can be difficult to work with when things are not going quite the way they are expected. E-6's intent is good I am sure, and as our relationship matures I look forward to many healthy and positive encounters with E-6.

After resolution of a parking grievance with two students and E-7, I began to discuss my study with E-7. My goal was to determine if it would be possible for E-7 to participate in my study. After explaining some of the study goals and activities planned for the study, E-7 agreed to participate in my study as the seventh staff member.

E-7 is a Caucasian male who has been with the department for seven years. E-7 is a supervisor who often works directly with members of Rowan University student populations. E-7 received his undergraduate degree from Rowan University and is currently, a graduate student attending another institution. He enjoys working with the students at Rowan University.

Once I had the approval of the officers for their participation in the study, I explained to each officer that prior to their participation I would present each of them with a study consent form for their review and signature. I explained the contents of the consent form to each officer, the title of study, the name of project director, the purpose of study, the potential risk to participants associated with the study, the potential benefits, any

alternative procedures occurring during the study, the protection of all study participants' confidentiality and the need for their signatures acknowledging acceptance of the terms.

All of the officers participating in the study were advised of their right to walk away from the study at anytime if needed. I assured the officers if they chose to leave the study there would be no retaliation of any form, and that I would honor their signed consent pledge at any time throughout the study.

Student Study Participant Criterion

After the officers were familiarized with the study and had signed the consent form, I asked each of the officers to reach out to a student and solicit their help with the study. I thought it would be important for the officers to be involved in the process of selecting the students that would work with them during the study. For the study process to run smoothly, I felt that it would be extremely important for each officer to be paired with a student that he could work with continuously and comfortably. I did not want to pair a student with an officer he might have difficulty communicating with, or had possibly shared in an adversarial event at some point in the past. Fortunately, the officers were able to find seven students who they were comfortable with, and who were comfortable working with them, who were willing to meet with me during the focus group meeting.

The students who participated in the study have been with the university for a substantial period of time. They were familiar with the campus offerings and were all genuinely motivated to assist with the study. The students, though randomly selected, were actually chosen based on gender, race, and their status with the institution. All of the students were upper-classman. The group was also quite diverse, consisting of members from countries such as China, Peru, Saudi Arabia, and America.

S-1 was participating in a study group in the Student Center when confronted by E-3. At the conclusion of the study group, S-1 and E-3 talked briefly about my study and the Department of Public Safety officers' efforts with the recruitment process of study participants. S-1 agreed to be the first student to participate in the study.

S-1 has come to America from Saudi Arabia to acquire an education. S-1 has worked some part-time positions at the university to secure funds to support his educational adventure. S-1 plans to return to Saudi Arabia upon completion of all of his degree program requirements. S-1 has been with the university for five years. S-1 feels that, "Some Americans do not do all that they can do to sustain themselves, and that many of the Americans struggling to succeed need only to put forth a more genuine effort." S-1 found it difficult meeting with me for the interview portions of the study. S-1 also seemed quite irritated whenever I attempted to interact with him, and at one point advised me that, "there would not be time to sit and engage in an interview." I was able to locate a telephone number for S-1 and we did speak for a brief period on the telephone. It is clear that S-1 was having difficulty interacting with me and some of the other study participants.

The current relationship between some of the Arab nations and the United States are somewhat strained. The bond between America and many of the Arab countries was weakened by allegations of inappropriate behavior by some of the Arab countries. Possibly, this aura of instability between the United States and some of the Arab countries weighs on S-1's mind, and is clearly the driving force in S-1's behavior and incensed comments during the study.

According to Pavel (2006), members of the international student populations are not homogeneous. According to Pavel although the international student population is not a homogeneous group, its members do share some particularly common challenges. International students should expect some academic and social challenges when beginning their college experience. Pavel felt these challenges were exacerbated for international students, who leave the familiarity of their homeland and must acclimate to both a new culture and a new academic world. These international students were also considered at risk of being confronted with social and culture confusion (Pavel, 2006).

S-2 was the second student to agree to participate in the study. S-2 arrived at the Department of Public Safety's primary office complex seeking assistance with a minor issue. Upon completion of their business at the Public Safety complex, S-2 was confronted by E-7 and asked if he would be interested in participating in the research study. Initially, S-2 indicated that he was in a hurry and did not have the time to discuss the study. E-7 provided S-2 with the department telephone contact number and asked S-2 to contact him when time allowed. The following day, S-2 called E-7 and after a brief overview of the planned study, agreed to participate.

S-2 is a Peruvian male who resides in America. S-2 is an acknowledged homosexual and feels strongly that some of his peers are afraid to acknowledge their status as it relates to their sexual orientation. Initially, S-2 had an enormous amount of difficulty participating in the study and commented, "Why did you select me?" From the start of the focus group, S-2 wanted to know why he was selected to participate in the study. S-2 felt that there was some ulterior motive for his inclusion in the study.

I assured S-2 that the selection process for most of the student participants was random and had nothing to do with the candidate's personal characteristics.

S-2 has a strong desire to focus on his competencies in the workplace and learn new skills. S-2 is currently a senior majoring in psychology. S-2 was raised in Peru and immigrated to the United States at the age of 10. S-2 aspires to become a psychologist. S-2 defines himself as an openly gay male interested in working with the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning, LGBTQ awareness program.

S-2 has been on the Dean's list at Rowan University for the past 4 semesters. S-2 is a very confident and determined, intellectual, and open-minded person. S-2 is a practicing vegetarian who was driven to participate in the practice of living as a vegetarian for moral reasons. I enjoyed working with S-2 during the study. S-2 has been with the university for five years.

S-3, as a Department of Public Safety student worker, was an easy target for the officers' recruiting efforts. E-1 spoke with S-3 in reference to participating in the study. S-3 agreed to participate in the study as the third student participant.

S-3 is a Caucasian female from America who is a 2009 graduate of Rowan University. S-3 worked as a part-time employee for the university, during which time S-3 worked part-time as a ticket writer and member of a First Responder Squad/Emergency Medical Squad, and is currently pursuing a career in the judicial system of New Jersey. S-3 has been with the university for five years. S-3 was very helpful during the study and continued to help out where ever possible. I really enjoyed working with S-3. S-3 worked hard at any assignment offered during the study. S-3 is

very intelligent, very caring, and worked hard to help coworkers and the Rowan University community while a student at Rowan University.

E-3, while attending a meeting in the Student Center, noticed three Asian female students, S-4, S-5, and S-7 sitting at a table studying. E-3 had talked with S-4 previously and felt the conversation went well, so E-3 decided to ask S-4 if she would like to participate in the study. Once the conversation started between E-3 and S-4, the other two females joined in the conversation. E-3 then decided to ask the other two females if they wanted to join their friend in the study. All three of the women eventually agreed to work with E-3 in the study.

S-4 is an Asian female from a southern province in China. S-4 speaks a number of different languages, and was impressed with my awareness of the practice of Ti Chi. S-4 informed me that her grandmother taught her siblings and her Ti Chi when they were very young. S-4 indicated that they do not practice as much as they should here in America. S-4 was very interested in the learning process in America and seemed to have a thirst for knowledge in general. S-4 has been with the university for five years.

S-5 is an Asian female who resides in Beijing, China. S-5 came to America to go to school. Once she arrived in America she began to develop other interests in the many different cultures within the America society. S-5 has been with the university for five years. S-5 eventually dropped out of the study.

S-7 is an Asian female from the southern province of China. S-7 has difficulty communicating in English. S-7 is currently receiving language instruction to help her with her English deficit. S-7 enjoys working with math and science class work. S-7 is

eager to graduate and hopes to return home soon. S-7 has been with the university for five years.

E-6 recruited S-6 to participate in the study during the recruitment of students for the Student Patrol Program. After the Student Patrol Program presentation, E-6 made an announcement for any students who were interested in participating in my study. Two of the students volunteered. One of the students was a commuter and felt that the project might be difficult to accomplish with his current schedule. The second student, S-6, is an African American male.

S-6 is a current student of Rowan University and eager to delve into any educational experience. S-6 has been with the university for five years. S-6 is deeply committed to his educational mission and meeting positive people who it is hoped will guide him toward some sustained positive professional growth. S-6 dropped out of the study abruptly after the focus group.

Chapter VII

Focus Group Meeting

Organization of Event

As I waited for the Department of Public Safety officers participating in my study to seek out students willing to assist with my project, I began to organize the Focus Group meeting. I chose to use a focus group because I could not find much literature on my topic. I also felt that the dynamics of the two groups I was dealing with might generate sufficient responses to my questions. I also wanted to develop a survey document for subsequent quantitative research data collection.

When I initially reached out for officers and students to participate in my study, I explained the focus group process to each officer and each student. When explaining the focus group to the study participants, I indicated that the focus group was basically a way to reach out to the study participants for their feedback and comments on the subject of the study. I felt that the focus group could also be useful in assisting me in the planning of the study as well as generating more information about the issues associated with my topic.

I first reserved a large meeting room in the Rowan University Chamberlain Student Center for the Focus Group meeting. I wanted to secure an area large enough to house the potential study group members, and any resources used to accommodate these individuals during the meeting. These resources included chairs, tables, food, and to record materials. I contacted the university's food service vendor and ordered food and drink for the study participants to consume during our meeting. When ordering the food I tried to imagine the possible differences in the personal preferences for food of

the group members attending the meeting. Fortunately, I was oblivious to the actual diversity of the group as I ordered the food. If I had known that there would be so many different groups participating in my event, I would not have ordered any food for the event, which I think would have been a huge mistake.

Shortly after reserving the meeting room and ordering the food, I began receiving information from the Department of Public Safety officers concerning the students they were able to encourage to participate in my study. As the officers proceeded to identify the students by name, I was concerned that the food selection ordered may not be appropriate for all of the study participants. I was not sure what the reaction would be when I removed the covers from the vessels containing the food.

Connecting Focus Group Participants

On the evening of the event, promptly at 6 p.m., the study participants began to file into the meeting room. I was amazed at how comfortable the study participants were with the food selection. I did not notice any significant concerns about the food I had chosen for the meeting. Everyone was generally satisfied with both the room arrangement and the food selection. S-3 opened the door at the northwest corner of the room and entered the reserved conference room.

S-3 quickly stated, “Oh, this is nice, you have food too!” Researcher: “Enjoy yourself.” S-3: “We get to eat first?” Researcher: “Oh, you can talk if you want. I just thought it would be nice if we socialized over some food for a few minutes and get to know each other before we get started.”

S-4, S-7, and S-5 entered the room through the door at the opposite end of the meeting room. All three of the women sat at a table close to the door. I walked over to their table

and introduced myself, explaining briefly what I had planned for the meeting. I then encouraged the three women to partake in the consumption of the food and encouraged them to also participate in the conversations taking place in the meeting room. S-4 seemed to have the best grasp of English, and responded to my questions for all three women.

Researcher: “Hello, how are you?” S-4: “We are okay.” Researcher: “Why don’t you and your friends try some of the food.” S-4: “Okay, we will eat.”

The three young ladies went over to the table holding the food and began to take a little of a variety of different foods from the table. I thought this was great. So far, everyone was enjoying the food choices.

A short while later, S-1 and S-2 arrived at the meeting room. I introduced myself and again explained succinctly what I had planned for the meeting. S-1 and S-2 took a seat at a table adjacent to the table holding the food. I encouraged both S-1 and S-2 to engage the other study participants and also enjoy the food. Both S-1 and S-2 went to the food table, grabbed a plate, and began to place an assortment of items on their plates. Both S-1 and S-2 were engaged in conversation throughout their meal with each other, and with some of the other study participants.

Approximately 6:15 p.m., S-6 entered the room and began to talk to S-3. I went over to S-6 and introduced myself. I explained briefly who I was and what activities I had planned for the evening. I then encouraged S-6 to introduce himself to the other members of the group participating in the study and to try some of the food. S-6 seemed to know S-2 and S-1 from the school, and began to interact with them. I continued to move around the room interacting with the students.

Shortly after S-6 arrived, all seven of the Department of Public Safety officers participating in the study entered the meeting room. S-6 was surprised and not sure how to respond when the seven officers walked through the door adjacent to where S-6 was standing. Six of the officers were in uniform and five of the officers were carrying a weapon. I do not think that S-6 was aware that the officers were going to participate in the study until they entered the room. S-6 was quite shaken by the officers' arrival. I walked over to the officers and engaged them in dialog. I explained to the officers briefly that one of the goals of the focus group was to allow all of the study participants to become familiar with each other, and also to provide information on the procedures we would be following during the study. I then encouraged the officers to circulate through the meeting room and introduce themselves to the students, and enjoy the foods available to the study participants.

The researcher asked that one of the officers go over to the table with S-6 and assure him that everything was alright. E-5 walked over to S-6 and began to engage him in conversation. E-5 asked S-6 his name. S-6 responded to the request. E-5 told S-6 his name and began to discuss the different food arrangements on the table, which were thought to be somewhat impressive. E-2: "Did you have any of this stuff yet? S-6: "Not yet. Do you work for the college?" E-2: "Yes, I have not seen you before." S-6: "I live off campus. I am real busy now, I don't have a lot of time to come on campus unless I have a class." E-2: "You looked startled when we came in the room. You ok?" S-6: "Yeah, you guys surprised me. I wasn't sure what was happening at first. I thought it was some kind of raid, [there was a combined brief period of laughter between S-6 and E-2]."

Then E-2 explained the officers' purpose at the event: "No, we are just part of the event too. Come on, lets get some food before its all gone." E-2: "How long have you been here at Rowan?" S-6: "I am almost done. I've been here almost 5 years." E-2: "What are you going to do when you graduate from here?" S-6: "I don't know, I guess get a job. I think I have to take a course this summer. I'm almost done." E-2: "That's good."

Focus Group Activities

At the beginning of the Focus Group, I encouraged all of the group members who had not already introduced themselves, to do so and to tell the group members a little about themselves. After the group introductions, the group members were invited to join me in the consumption of the dinner that was ordered for the Focus Group event. As the study participants and I shared in the meal, I realized that my food selection was not too bad, everyone was able to find something that they enjoyed eating. As we ate, we continued to build on the dialogue, enhancing the relationships between the various members.

S-4 indicated that, "I do not know much about the United States and how the practices are here. I work with my friends and try not to worry about things I do not understand." E-3's response to S-4 was, "I can give you my phone number and you can call me if you have a problem." S-4 asked, "When I have a problem?" E-3 replied, "You have my number. You can call me anytime you want. You don't have to wait until there is a problem. If you just feel like talking, call me."

As we completed the meal, both the students and the officers were resolved to continue with the study. I directed all of the study group participants to an elongated table at the southeast corner of our meeting room. During the Focus Group activity, the

group members and I were able to begin to talk about some of the concerns each group shared concerning the other group's behavior.

During the Focus Group activity, I was able to encourage continuous dialog between the members of the two groups. The students began by discussing the threatening behavior exhibited by the officers, and the officers countered with a discussion about how the students did everything they could to antagonize the officers. Most of the comments by the students seemed to suggest that they felt the officers were not very friendly. On the other hand, the officers felt the students were disruptive and prone to creating problems for them.

During the Focus Group, I began to explain what my study entailed and how I planned to use the study participants to effect change during the study project. I continued by explaining to the students and staff study participants that I would perform two sets of individual interviews and two sets of survey completions.

I began to present some questions that I felt important to the study. I wanted to use information from the responses to develop survey documents for the next phase of my study. Both student and staff study participants seemed to be comfortable working together. There were some comments that were confusing, but I attributed this to the possibility of communication limitations of the group members. Some of the questions presented to the study participants during the focus group meeting, were designed to generate some active discussion on the topic of supporting students in higher education environments. I started with the idea of beginning the Focus Group by just explaining to the participants that I was in the planning phase of my study and was looking for ideas for my project. I explained to the students and staff present that my current interest was

in developing ideas to support students experiencing difficulty with their higher education experience. I referred to this group of students experiencing difficulty with their higher education experience as at-risk.

The questions used to guide the Focus Group are included in Table 10.

Table 9

Focus Group Questions

Question #1: Who are the at-risk students at Rowan University?

Question #2: What methods are used to guide at-risk students toward success?

Question #3: In what activities do you participate that help you gain confidence in your ability to make informed choices about the use of drugs, alcohol, and your success in educational pursuits?

Question #4: Who, or where do you go when you are looking for support with problems relating to educational matters?

Question #5: During your experiences at Rowan University, did you get a clear sense of what it takes to be a responsible and successful adult learner?

Summary of Focus Group Questions and Responses

First question. Who are the at-risk students at Rowan University? The study participants cited a number of groups they felt may contribute to the university's at-risk populations' numbers:

S-3: "Could be any student depending on the change in their circumstance, they could automatically become at-risk."

S-6: "If there are problems at home anyone can be at risk."

E-3: “Things are moving so fast that some students just can’t keep up with their studies.”

E-4: “I don’t know. Lack of self-control. First year struggled, second year did better, nothing changed I guess. Just had better self-control. I can’t describe it.”

Second question. What methods are used to guide at-risk students toward success? The study participants referenced a number of areas that they felt connecting to university representatives in various areas of the campus community would enhance their learning experience and subsequent growth and eventual success.

S-7: ”I search out a professor for help or talk to friends who I know are doing well in class.”

S-4: “Some of my classmates are better at some subjects and others are better at other subjects. We help each other with class materials and with understanding class projects.”

Third question. In what activities do you participate that help you gain confidence in your ability to make informed choices about use of drugs, alcohol and your success in educational pursuits? Most students in the focus group responded that being able to connect with other students in class, resident halls, or Recreation Center played an important role in any success they experienced. These positive experiences manifested in the participants’ comments, such as:

S-3: “We share ideas on how to avoid problems with alcohol or drugs.”

S-2: “When we break from our class is always a good time to talk to the professor or a classmate.”

S-2: “Staying in the dorms was good practice because you always can talk to the other students.”

Study participants talked about their link to faculty and staff members who, provided them with a concrete support system that afforded them help in a number of areas necessary to support the struggling students:

S-1: “In terms of mentoring though, I believe I heard one of the students say that, when you think in terms of mentoring you are not thinking of peer mentoring. You are thinking in terms of someone who is experienced, not a peer with the same background as yourself.”

S-6: “Yes, I am in a fraternity and the first thing you do when you pledge is get a big brother that is your mentor. They are not older than you. It does not work-out well.”

Fourth Question. Who, or where do you go when you are looking for support with problems relating to educational matters? Study participants included a number of processes that provided areas and contact persons to assist students in need of support:

S-3: “Some of the students referenced self-reflection, becoming more vocal and verbalizing their need for information, seeking out a professional, faculty/staff person, and seeking out and connecting with other students with similar interest.”

S-1: “I am still looking for the staff member to provide guidance when I need help. They know what I need and how I can get it.”

S-4/S-5: “When the students leave high school and come to college that first year is especially difficult for those students. The student coming straight from high school seemed to want to belong to one of the groups on campus. What most of them seem to do is to pursue or establish relationships with other students. Their pursuit of education was not about passing the courses. It was about getting to know the people in the community.”

Fifth question: During your experiences at Rowan University, did you get a clear sense of what it takes to be a responsible and successful adult learner? Many students suggested that the mentoring process was very helpful to them in providing a sense of being responsible and successful adult learners. Other students referenced peer interactions, and the Academic Advising services offered by the university.

S-6: “Yes, as a male one of my biggest issues was lack of a mentor and I noticed that once I had a mentor it really changed for me a lot.”

S-1: “So, one question is having to answer to someone. Your parents aren’t there, but if you have to look for someone, not the mentoring of a peer, but a professional that you have a good relationship with them and you have to answer to them, that changes everything. Because now if I do something good or bad I have to answer to somebody on this campus. I feel once you have a legitimate mentor everything that happens is changing your risk level. Our risk becomes lower.

As the study participants and I moved toward the end the Focus Group phase of the study, the participants were given instructions to engage each other in dialog regularly. I then introduced the study participants to the concept of the Student/Staff communities. Initially, the concept of bringing the student and staff study participants together was not well received. Member of both groups were really apprehensive at the thought of being in the same space on a regular basis, much less connecting with each other in a relational capacity. Eventually, the counterparts of the study agreed to try to work with each other in a relational capacity.

Preparing For the Interviews

Once the Student/Staff communities were buoyant, and accepted by members of both the student and staff study groups, I began to engage the student and staff study participants in individual interviews. I initially had planned to interview the student study participants first. However, some of the student study participants were difficult to pin down for an interview, so I decided to interview any study participant I could reach, in the order I reached them. Some of the interviews were impromptu. The students would confront me wherever they would see me. I found myself engaging the students in individual interviews throughout the campus and at the most inopportune times. Fortunately, I was able to interview all students and staff study participants twice.

Securing an interview with some of the students was only possible by telephone. Almost all of the students were seniors and expecting to graduate. Many of our meetings were, for the most part, impromptu, spur-of-the-moment, and leaving me unprepared to gather the data properly. We were able to work things out. I would just grab a piece of paper and start writing whenever I would run into one of the students.

During the first interviews with the students, most of them seemed to be physically and emotionally distanced from the Department of Public Safety officers. One of the students mentioned his concern about his ability to trust the officers in any kind of relationship and justified his comments with, “You don’t know what they are doing. Their job is different” (S-1). When asked what was meant by his comments, the student declined to comment. S-1 seemed to want his feelings clear about pursuing support from representatives from the university and commented,

I don’t mind working with an employee of the college. They are all adults and

most of them have completed college or are in the process of finishing college. They know what we are confronted with each day. I think that the students/employee communities could be helpful. I got to see Public Safety differently during our talk today. They are like any other employee here at the university. Some of them probably feel the same way I do about the students who aren't really trying to graduate.

These types of comments were provided by some of the officers also. Most of the first interviews with the staff members also showed an aversion toward working with the students. Some of the staff members were spending large blocks of time demonstrating their positions or their authority. Some of the students seemed agitated and not interested in working so closely with the Department of Public Safety representatives. Members of both groups seemed to be paused awaiting some sort of negative response from their group counter parts. I thought it would be a good time to ask the student group members about the benefits they would receive from working with representatives of the Department of Public Safety. The responses were mixed:

S-1: "It will help them understand Security. I think they need to know about other programs in other departments too. Yes, someone actually working as a counselor or professor at Rowan."

S-3: "I'm not sure. Some of the officers work well with the students and some of them don't."

Chapter VIII

Individual Interviews

Student Response First Interviews First Question

What are the methods and programs used by Department of Public Safety representatives at a higher education institution to motivate at-risk students' academic and social achievement?

S-1: "There are a lot of counseling programs and there are tutoring programs that the students use to help them with their class work. These programs can help the students if they want help." *Theme: Caring*

S-3: "They have RAD program that shows females how to look out for trouble and how to get away if they have to." *Theme: Law Enforcement Theme*

S-5: "They help us get to areas on campus when it is late. They do tell some of the students were to go for help. They help the students get to the other offices for help with their studies, and they make sure the students are safe when they leave the buildings."

Theme: Caring

S-4: "I see them helping students find someone to give students a chance to learn their class work. They send the students to other offices for help with their studies and help them understand the work." *Theme: Caring*

S-2: "They talk to you to see what your problem is and then they usually send you some place to get help. I have only seen one or two of them giving a student some kind of help. I guess you can call it mentoring. This type of help is alright. Some of the fraternities have some mentoring programs that help the students. I like these programs as long as most of the people leading you are teachers,

advisors or counselors.” *Theme: Connecting*

Student Response First Interviews Second Question

What are the actions that can be taken by a representative of the Department of Public Safety to enhance support for at-risk student programs?

S-1: “If a student comes to them for help they should tell them where they can go for help. I don’t think they should try to help the students unless the students’ problems are covered by their jobs. They should just send the student to an office that handles the students’ problems.” *Theme: Connecting*

S-3: “They can send students to other offices on campus like the counseling center. *Theme: Connecting*

S-5: “I think they should send them to the counseling center for help. They know how to help the students there.” *Theme: Connecting*

S-4: “I think they should let these students have time to talk to the professors and work with them to help the students understand the work better so they can graduate.

The officer can only send them to the professor or send them to the counselor.”

Theme: Connecting

S-2: “I think they should talk to the students as soon as they get here to see what type of help they may need. You know, as soon as they get there because when we start we won’t have time to go back to fix any problems.” *Theme: Caring*

Student Response First Interviews Third Question

What will be the result of including members of at-risk student populations in Department of Public Safety sponsored programs?

S-1: “It will help them understand Security. I think they need to know about other programs in other departments too.” *Theme: Connecting*

S-3: “I think the students feel safe when they participate in Public Safety programs.”
Theme: Law Enforcement Theme

S-5: “They will have a safe program and they will know how to keep safe while at the college.” *Theme: Law Enforcement Theme*

S-4: “I think they will be safe and understand how to stay out of trouble so they can finish college.” *Theme: Law Enforcement Theme*

S-2: “It helps the students working with Public Safety. They can help you a lot with not just security stuff. If you need other help they can tell you where you can go to get that help too.” *Theme: Caring*

Student Response First Interviews Fourth Question

Do you think the Student/Staff communities will be important in enhancing the relationship between students and Department of Public Safety members?

S-1: “It may work, everyone is not the same.” *Theme: Connecting*

S-3: “I’m not sure. Some of the officers work well with the students and some of them don’t.” *Theme: Connecting*

S-5: “I do not know. It will probably help the officers understand the students better than they do now.” *Theme: Connecting*

S-4: “Yes, it will help us to talk to the officers and learn to work with them on your project.” *Theme: Connecting*

S-2: “I don’t know. I guess it will be alright. I never worked with police before.”
Theme: Connecting

Student Response First Interview Fifth Question

How will this research project impact my leadership theory in use?

S-1: “You’re out front, showing us what you want us to do and what you will be doing.”

Theme: Channeling/Guiding

S-3: “You are telling us what we need to know to work with you in the study. You are telling us, leading us. Some of the things we will be doing and I guess what will happen during the study. You’re out front.” *Theme: Channeling/Guiding*

S-5: “You are leading us, telling us what the study is about and what you want us to do. You are in charge.” *Theme: Channeling/Guiding*

S-4: “You will teach us what the study is. Showing us what to do. Showing us how to help in the study.” *Theme: Channeling/Guiding*

S-2: “I guess you are teaching us what is going to happen in the study. Oh, and what you want me to do in the study.” *Theme: Channeling/Guiding*

Staff Response First Interviews First Question

What are the methods and programs used by Department of Public Safety representatives at a higher education institution to motivate at-risk students’ academic and social achievement?

E-1: “We use safety programs to keep the students interested. These programs do provide the students with confidence, information on the safe ways of living on a campus like ours.” *Theme: Law Enforcement Theme*

E-2: “We have a couple of programs that the students participate in. Practitioner program, the Student Patrol program, and the Safe Walk and Ride program. These programs keep the students busy and give us lots of help during the times that we really

need it. *Theme: Law Enforcement Theme*

E-5: “We have a number of safety programs to help the students be safe. These programs help the students protect their property, and their individual safety.” *Theme: Caring*

E-4: “We have student programs that give the students the opportunity to work helping other students. The students seem to like these jobs. These jobs include working in the dormitories where the students actually live. They are a lot of help working with the other students. We send them to the counseling center or the dean’s office to.”

Theme: Connecting

E-3: “Helping them get involved in the programs that are on campus. Meeting other students helps and gives the student other people to talk to about the stuff that they are having some problems with.” *Theme: Connecting*

E-6: “Get them to work with other students on our campus. You know, study groups. They really helped me when I was taking classes.” *Theme: Connecting*

Staff Response First Interviews Second Question

What are the actions that can be taken by a representative of the Department of Public Safety to enhance support for at-risk student programs?

E-1: “Well, just show the statistics from any university that provides this type of information to their students and you will see that these programs really do help keep the students safe.” *Theme: Law Enforcement Theme*

E-2: “I guess listening to them. Some of the students will tell you if they need help and why they feel that they need the help.” *Theme: Caring*

E-5: “We can send them to the Dean of Students when they have problems. They can also be sent to the counseling center or the health center.” *Theme: Connecting*

E-4: “Again, send them to the counselor’s office or the Dean’s office.”

Theme: Connecting

E-3: “The at-risk students I know do well when they get involved in programs on campus. Theme groups do well when included in some of the campus programs. Think they develop an interest in the campus when they get involved in campus organizations. They just seem to have more confidence in their abilities. I guess if you can get the at-risk students involved with other students and faculty and some of the programs on our campus they will really do better with their school work.” *Theme: Connecting*

E-6: “I would probably help them find someone on campus that could help them with their problem.” *Theme: Connecting*

Staff Response First Interviews Third Question

What will be the result of including members of at-risk student populations in Department of Public Safety sponsored programs?

E-1: “The students will be smarter when it comes to safety issues on our campus. They will know how to protect themselves and how to get help when they need it.” *Theme: Law Enforcement Theme*

E-2: “When we get together with the students they really work well. Including them in our department programs is good for them and I think even helps some of them with their classwork.” *Theme: Connecting*

E-5: “The students learn a lot of things from the Public Safety sponsored programs. Most important, they learn how to be safe on campus. We talk about alcohol, drugs and property theft. They learn how to take care of themselves.”

Theme: Law Enforcement Theme

E-4: “Normally, this type of action helps the student work with us better. They get to know us and trust us more.” *Theme:* Connecting

E-3: “It will surely make the students feel safe and more confident in their activities on our campus.” *Theme:* Connecting

E-6: “We have a lot of students in some of our programs. Some of them probably are the students you are talking about. They do alright. I think it helps them working so closely with Public Safety.” *Theme:* Connecting

Staff Response First Interviews Fourth Question

Do you think the Student/Staff communities will be important in enhancing the relationship between students and Department of Public Safety members?

E-1: “Yes, I think it is a good idea. It really gets the students to talk with us more. Sometimes we could even develop friendships.” *Theme:* Connecting

E-2: “Yes, I do. The more they trust us the easier it will be to help them find help if they need it.” *Theme:* Connecting

E-5: “Yeah, they will probably help the students. I am looking forward to working with the students in my group.” *Theme:* Connecting

E-4: “Yes. It will give all of us a chance to get to know each other better. They’re not so bad. I enjoy working with students. I think they enjoyed working with us too.” *Theme:* Connecting

E-3: "I hope for the best, but some of the students can be difficult. I guess we will see."

Theme: Caring

E-6: "Some of these students are hard to work with. Maybe some of it will work."

Theme: Caring

Staff Response First Interviews Fifth Question

How will this research project impact my leadership theory in use?

E-1: "All of this should change the way we do things. I know you are expecting a lot from us now." *Theme: Caring*

E-2: "I guess managing this type of project will really sharpen your skills. This is a lot of work." *Theme: Law Enforcement Theme*

E-5: "I am not sure right now." *Theme: Open*

E-4: "I just noticed that you are providing a lot of information about the study and about what we will be doing in the study. Is that what you mean?"

Theme: Channeling/Guiding

E-3: "You will get a lot of experience leading the students and us."

Theme: Channeling/Guiding

E-6: "That I don't really know. I guess you will be doing a lot of planning. A lot of explaining." *Theme: Connecting*

First Observations

Most of the initial observations were unplanned and provided immense information relating to the current relationships between the student study participants and staff study participants. I concentrated my observations solely on the social interactions between students and staff study participants. I wanted to see first hand the quality of the current

relationships shared by the students and staff study participants. I was amazed at the distance maintained between the students and staff study participants. Most of the student study participants did not know how to interact with the officers and chose to stay away from the officers. When asked about interacting with the Department of Public Safety officers, S-6 indicated that, “They’re just like my parents, you know, typical adults.”

First Surveys

The first survey documents were developed using information from the focus group activities. The study participants seemed much more relaxed during the survey process than they did during the initial individual interview phase of the study (Cronk, 2008). The interview phase of the study surely had a more personal element for the study participants than the surveys did. Sitting with a representative of the Department of Public Safety for a one-on-one interview was different for the students.

Second Interviews

I entered into the second phase of the interviews struggling to find a time that was convenient to the study participants and I to engage each other in individual interviews. We were continually crossing paths, the students on their way to class, and me on the way to department related meetings. We were able to make very good use of the time that we did have. Again, I was able to meet with most of the student and staff study participants and engage each of them in an individual interview. The few study participants who were not available to actually sit and talk with me, I was able to engage in a telephone interview. The interviews were revealing. I discovered that there were some shallow bonds established, which allowed some of the study participants to develop

some genuine relational contact. These contacts were mostly positive and showed potential for expansion, or increased relational contact between the parties. When I asked E-1 his opinion of the possible benefits of working so closely with the students, his response was refreshing, “It will help all of us in some way.”

Student Response Second Interviews First Question

What are the methods and programs used by Department of Public Safety representatives at a higher education institution to motivate at-risk students’ academic and social achievement?

S-1: “I think they send the students to the counseling center and other officers on campus that deal with their problem.” *Theme: Connecting*

S-3: “The officers give safety presentations to help the students know what to do when they are confronted with some kind of problem.” *Theme: Caring*

S-5: “They give the students rides to class when it gets dark. They show the students how to be safe on our campus while they go to school.”

Theme: Law Enforcement Theme

S-4: “They protect the students and classroom area to make sure students can study and learn.” *Theme: Law Enforcement Theme*

S-2: “They talk to us and tell us where to go for help with our problems. They do help us with safety problems.” *Theme: Caring*

Student Response Second Interviews Second Question

What are the actions that can be taken by a representative of the Department of Public Safety to enhance support for at-risk student programs?

S-1: “Well, those students may have to learn to help themselves. It just takes some initiative by the students to do it on their own, or they can go to the counseling center.”

Theme: Connecting

S-3: “They can advertise their safety programs to the campus letting them know that they can get help on campus.” *Theme: Connecting*

S-5: “We talk to them. They give us rides to our apartment after class is over. Some of them are friendly to us when we talk to them. I know one officer showed us where to go for help with classwork.” *Theme: Law Enforcement Theme*

S-4: “I think that Public Safety people are not any different than any of the other people on campus who refer students to places. They send the students for different kinds of problems to places on the campus in the hope that the people there can find the source of the student’s problems. Once they find out what the problem is they can help the student be part of a successful college experience.” *Theme: Connecting*

S-2: “I think that they can use their resources on our campus such as the help hot line, the counseling center and certain campus organizations that provide help for their members. You know, like fraternities and sororities.” *Theme: Connecting*

Student Response Second Interviews Third Question

What will be the result of including members of at-risk student populations in Department of Public Safety sponsored programs?

S-1: “I think that your programs can help students not use alcohol and other stuff. I believe they can have a positive impact on some of the students not doing well in school.” *Theme: Connecting*

S-3: “Some of the programs are great. I work with the Public Safety EMS Squad and I see a lot of the programs they have. They also tell you where you can go to get help.”

Theme: Connecting

S-5: “Students will understand the officers better. They will have a safe program and learn from working with the officers.” *Theme: Connecting*

S-4: “Students will feel safe and work without problems.”

Theme: Connecting

S-2: “I believe they can have a positive impact on the students when they pair up with them.” *Theme: Connecting*

Student Response Second Interviews - Fourth Question

Do you think the Student/Staff communities were important in enhancing the relationship between students and Department of Public Safety members?

S-1: “I don’t mind working with an employee of the college. They are all adults and most of them have completed college or are in the process of finishing college. They know what we are confronted with each day. I think that the student, employee communities could be helpful. I got to see Public Safety differently. They are like any other employee here at the university. Some of them probably feel the same way I do about the students who aren’t really trying to graduate.” *Theme: Connecting*

S-3: “I got to know the officer. He was great. He is also a student. We were able to talk a few times. He seemed really interested in helping the students on our campus.”

Theme: Connecting

S-5: “We talked and talked again. It helped us when we wanted to talk to the officers because the officers know who we were.” *Theme: Connecting*

S-4: “I know about this. We talked about alcohol and drugs in my dormitory when Security Officer come to our building. The officer talked about safety and classwork when we talked. I know students who get to know campus police staff, they are ok. I can work with them.” *Theme: Connecting*

S-2: “I do believe that the idea about the communities was important and should be something that continues in the future. It did help me better understand Public Safety’s job more after talking with him. It’s probably just as hard for them to deal with us sometimes as it is for us to deal with them. *Theme: Connecting*

Student Response Second Interviews Fifth Question

How will this research project impact my leadership theory in use?

S-1: “We started with you leading the group then we were leading the community groups on our own. Now you are in charge of the group again, leading us. Showing us how to work together to finish our work.” *Theme: Connecting*

S-3: “I see now! You are not saying that much now. I remember when we started you were telling us everything about the study. Now you are not saying anything and we are running our mouths.” *Theme: Connecting*

S-5: “We are telling you what we did and you are listening to us tell you this. We are telling you our ideas.” *Theme: Connecting*

S-4: “We all work together now.” *Theme: Connecting*

S-2: “We are working together now. Sometimes we even tell you what is going to happen next. You are showing us how to lead the group, the study.”

Theme: Connecting

Staff Response Second Interviews First Question

What are the methods and programs used by Department of Public Safety representatives at a higher education institution to motivate at-risk students' academic and social achievement?

E-1: "Like I mentioned, the R.A.D. program is one that I think is great for the female students. It gives them the confidence that they need to get away from trouble."

Theme: Law Enforcement Theme

E-2: "Most of the programs I see are the ones that use groups to encourage students to work together. It's getting the people together I guess to share ideas about problems with a class or problems with college life." *Theme:* Connecting

E-5: "I think the safety programs are what makes us important. The presentations, the contact, and knowing that the department is here to help is all important to making the campus safe." *Theme:* Law Enforcement Theme

E-4: "These are the programs that the students get that are I think designed to save money. They also help us to build better relationships with the students. They get to know us better than they would if they were not working with us." *Theme:* Connecting

E-3: "I concentrate on the students' safety. If the student feels safe they will find it easier to work on classwork and their relationships."

Theme: Law Enforcement Theme

E-6: "The remedial stuff. I guess if a student has a good understanding of the materials they can do much better than a lot of them are now." *Theme:* Connecting

Staff Response Second Interviews Second Question

What are the actions that can be taken by a representative of Department of Public Safety to enhance support for at-risk student programs?

E-1: "I like to send them to the counselor's office. They can detect if they need something else. I can only help them with safety concerns." *Theme: Connecting*

E-2: "Encourage the students to work with their professors more. Encourage the students to work with each other on classwork more." *Theme: Connecting*

E-5: "We can help the student find an office on campus that can help them with their problem. There are places on campus that have all kinds of resources to help the students." *Theme: Connecting*

E-4: "I think that the students struggling should be sent to the Counseling Center or the Academic Success Center. They know how to work with these guys."

Theme: Connecting

E-3: "I can only imagine that it would take some kind of special attention to these students and the program. It is clear that some of the students do really need help to get through college. They just need the help." *Theme: Connecting*

E-6: "Let them know about the places on our campus that have counseling and mentoring programs. They should get this information as soon as they get here not after they run into problems." *Theme: Connecting*

Staff Response Second Interviews Third Question

What will be the result of including members of at-risk student populations in Department of Public Safety sponsored programs?

E-1: "They do alright and sometimes we actually hire some of the students when they

graduate from Rowan. These are the students who are working with us as Law and Justice interns and who have exhibited a continuous interest in the Department of Public Safety.” *Theme: Connecting*

E-2: “This is when we really get to know the students and know when something is going on with them. If you work with them you are bound to notice if they have been drinking or smoking.” *Theme: Connecting*

E-5: “The students always benefit when they work with faculty and staff at the university. They are young and any real life stuff is good experience.”

Theme: Connecting

E-4: “Well, they get to know us and some of them get to trust us. I think we get to trust them also.” *Theme: Connecting*

E-3: “They can get involved in activities in the department and use some of what they learn on campus to stay out of trouble.” *Theme: Connecting*

E-6: “If they agree to work with you they will benefit. If we can’t help them we can send them to some one who can help them.” *Theme: Connecting*

Staff Response Second Interviews Fourth Question

Do you think the Student/Staff Communities were important in enhancing the relationship between students and Department of Public Safety members?

E-1: “The students I talked with seemed to enjoy working together with the officers. The officers also enjoyed working with the students. Some of them are good students and good people. I learned a lot working with them.” *Theme: Connecting*

E-2: “Yeah, this was good. We got to know the students and they got to know us. This makes it easier for them to come to us for help if they needed it.” *Theme: Connecting*

E-5: “Yeah! I think we both learned a lot. You really get to know the students when you work with them like that. They are ok when you get to know them. I am glad I was able to help them.” *Theme: Connecting*

E-4: “Yes, this is what I mean. We get to know each other and know what we need to do to work with each other better. It is easier to tell a student you know that they need help than try to tell some student that you are not familiar with that they need to go to the counseling center. They would think you are trying to be smart.” *Theme: Connecting*

E-3: “I worked with students before and they seemed to be alright with the things we were doing. This time was alright too. They seem to be alright with the things we are doing now. If I could help someone then I felt like I was doing my part. The student/staff communities gave us the chance to talk to the students and listen to the student’s concerns. I learned a lot from working with the students.”
Theme: Connecting

E-6: “No. I met them at the Focus Group meeting and have not seen them since.”
Theme: Open

Staff Response Second Interviews Fifth Question

How will this research project impact my leadership theory in use?

E-1: “It should give you the confidence you need to continue working with the students and us.” *Theme: Connecting*

E-2: “I think you are working us more now. I guess you are getting smarter, getting us to do all the work for you.” *Theme: Connecting*

E-2: “I think we all are more comfortable with the way you are working with us now than we were when we started.” *Theme: Connecting*

E-4: “I know now what you are looking for. You are not saying much now. When we started you were doing all the talking. Right!” *Theme: Connecting*

E-3: “I guess it will help you know better just how to lead people on our campus.”
Theme: Connecting

E-6: “It should make people see that you like helping people get ahead. You helped us help them.” *Theme: Connecting*

Second Observations

The second phase of observations were quite promising in that they demonstrated that the study participants were beginning to buy into the benefits of maintaining positive relational contacts with members of the campus, including Department of Public Safety representatives. I think they realized that there was not much difference between the two groups. Some of the students actually seemed to be developing genuine friendships with the Police and Security study participants.

Second Surveys

At this point in the study, all the remaining participants were jubilant, excited about our journey’s end. We had reached the final phase of the study and most of the students were preparing for their graduation. Many of the surveys suggested a valid increase in the overall preference of the study participants for increased relational contact between the study participants (Cronk 2008).

Chapter IX

Mentoring

Mentoring Relationship

When determining a project to pursue for my dissertation, I was excited by the thought of pursuing a program that would cultivate meaningful support for students experiencing difficulty with their college endeavors. I looked for ideas that would enhance my ability to connect students encountered by members of the Department of Public Safety to resources designed to support student growth.

I decided that the Department of Public Safety officers interacting with the students could also serve in a mentoring role, supporting and guiding the students down a more productive path. I was confident that by connecting the students to Rowan University's Public Safety officers in a mentoring relationship, I could better support the students. I was certain that a mentoring relationship was the route to take when trying to provide a stable support system for those students participating in the study, and did not consider the possibility of being wrong about my decision to connect the two groups in a mentoring relationship. However, it did not take long for me to realize that I had erred in my effort to bring the two groups together harmoniously and productively.

While interacting with staff study participants, it quickly became apparent that there was a problem with one aspect of my initial plan for the study. I realized that the planned mentoring component of the plan that I had proposed would be ineffective coming from the Rowan University police officers participating in the study. This realization was based on my knowledge of the officers' training, which I believe prohibited the police officers from functioning effectively in a mentoring role with a student. One of the staff

study participants validated my thoughts during a recent conversation. E-1, after some lengthy conversations on the matter of how best to interact with the students, suggested that there may be some problems with the mentoring component of the study proposal.

E-1 indicated that, “As a result of some of the training that the officers went through and the impact of that training on the officers’ attitudes they may not be comfortable working that close to the students.”

Attitudes as Social Constructs

Attitudes are regarded as social constructs that provide an individual with an efficient way to sum up his impressions of an attitude object, or in this instance, person of interest (Olson & Zanna, 1993). However, when people are asked about their attitudes, the expressions they offer are self-reported, evaluative reactions, thus, subject to many potential biasing influences or contextual consideration (Schwarz, 1998).

Society has created certain ideas about how even a process such as marriage is supposed to look, and how it is supposed to be accomplished by the couples involved. Society has also determined how effective parenting might look for the families in a particular society. These opinions and attitudes are the basis for a social construct.

Large portions of all cultures are socially constructed with rules and procedures that help determine the way things are done by the members of particular societies. These social constructs originate through the collective behaviors and attitudes of the members of the specific society.

Relational contact between Rowan University police, security, and students are currently determined by the historical attitudes or social constructs, which are derived from the officers’ training and those poignant elements of the students’ culture. Some of

the officers' training leaves the officers with social constructs suggesting that there is only one way to respond to the Rowan University student community. The students recoil from the officers, lead by the assumption that the officers are an inherent threat and should be avoided.

Impact of Police Training and Orientation

Most, if not all significant police training, is designed to accomplish a specific goal, such as ensuring various types of situations and events remain under control at all times. The training the officers receive is sculpted in such a manner that the level of the officers' responses increase as their perceptions of the threat event they may be confronted with expands, or gets worse. This process is referred to as threat escalation matrix, or conflict escalation matrix.

One example of this model of threat or conflict escalation matrix is Thomas Jordan's (2000) reworked version of Friedrich Glasl's Nine-Stage Model of Conflict Escalation. The Thomas Jordan model contains nine distinct steps that the participants in a progressive conflict follow on their way to a cataclysmic engagement as follow:

Glasl's Nine Stage Model of Conflict Escalation

1. The realization by one or both parties in conflict that they're unable to reach a resolution to the problem based on the solutions offered by either of the event participants.
2. The realization that the counterparts are not able to establish a sensible and solvable argument, which forces the discussion to evolve in to a verbal confrontation.
3. The individuals involved in this evolving conflict no longer believe that any

additional conversations between the event participants will have any impact on the problem, which shifts their attention to actions.

4. The participants of a conflict share no concrete issues and are concerned with personal victory or defeat. Defending their reputations is of the utmost importance.
5. The loss of face driven by the image of the counterpart centered on the moral inferiority, which is attributed to the adversary.
6. The participants are fraught with guilt and at an impasse. They now engage in threats of aggressive acts toward their counterpart.
7. Involves the safety of the participants. Each of the participants expects the counterpart to be paused to strike. Entering into step seven the participants are concerned about securing their own safety, their own survival now becomes an essential concern.
8. The attacks intensify and are aimed at destroying the vital systems and the basis of power of the adversary.
9. The drive to annihilate the enemy is so strong that even the self-preservation instinct is neglected. Not even one's own survival counts, the enemy shall be exterminated even at the price of destruction of one's own very existence as an organization, group, or individual (Jordan, 2000, pp. 1-11).

Jordan's model of Conflict Escalation is but one of many models used in the management of conflict. Elements of Jordan's model and similar models can be found in many threat response models used to effectively respond to a crisis.

Models of threat escalation used by police and security personnel would vary a little depending on the situation. For instance, Stage One could involve the initial threat response. The officer upon arrival would seek to establish control of the situation creating the problem. The officer would apply whatever force necessary to gain control of the situation from verbal commands up to and including physical restraint. If for some reason the threat continues to escalate and becomes dangerous, there may be a need to match the subjects' escalation in an attempt to stop the progress of this problem quickly before it spreads to other members of the community. Police and security personnel are trained to take this next step if deemed necessary.

Threat response models appropriate for universities and colleges would be behavioral models designed to be all inclusive. This model would include both participants or both groups involved in the conflict as well as Police and Security representatives. All of the participants would be responsible to work together dialogically to resolve the conflict, and all of the event participants would be responsible for the resolution of the conflict. Attitudes during the interactions between the participants would be more congenial and problem solving.

According to Bem and McConnell (1970), people whose attitudes changed often insisted that they had always felt as they currently expressed their feelings on a topic and denied any impact of other influences. In other words, individuals have a tendency to recall prior attitudes as similar to their current attitudinal reports, even when their attitudes have shifted (Bem & McConnell, 1970). This allows the officers to justify their attitudes when responding to new complaints.

Police training involves unique experiences, the acquisition of many new and purposeful skills, and the acquisition of important new group influences, which can have a powerful impact on the officers' attitudes. Currently, the majority of attitudinal responses by Department of Public Safety representatives during both Stage 1 and Stage 2 of Thomas Jordan's model of Conflict Escalation, are those which the students have come to recognize as, aggression, accusatory slurs, and threatening innuendos (Jordan, 2000). The indoctrination of police cadets into the work of policing by fellow Police Officers and Field Training Officers (FTO) has the potential for significant attitudinal influences. Often, a portion of an officer's attitudinal shifts that may be identified will be substantially attributable to the direct experience and strong group influences that can be present in a given police environment.

Some of the behaviors exhibited by the officers are acquired during their work experiences. These work related experiences, along with behaviors acquired during the officers' training, can be counterproductive when responding to the needs of college students. The goal of this study was to encourage a more positive and relational contact between students and representatives of Department of Public Safety.

According to Fazio, Zanna, and Cooper (1978), attitudes formed through direct action, such as during the Field Training Officer FTO process, have been found to predict later attitudes and behavior better than attitudes formed with less direct experience with an attitude object. The Department of Public Safety representatives are important elements of the Rowan University safety program. Many of the officers have worked in an educational environment for a substantial amount of time. Some of the officers have college degrees and considerable experience working with students. Additionally,

attitudes tend to assimilate to a group's standards (Turner, 1991) and are moderated by the degree of identification people have with a particular group (Hogg & Hardie, 1991; Terry & Hogg, 1996). Also, becoming an accepted member of the police in-group or clan is a critical matter for new officers, and this collective can wield both direct and indirect power and influence over a police cadet.

When reported attitudes or actions are inconsistent, individuals may change their attitude to be consonant with recent behavioral actions (Harmon-Jones & Mills, 1999). If the new or rookie officers observed their fellow officers and their Field Training Officers (FTOs) engaging in an organizationally-normative accepted behavior, they may be influenced to alter their attitude to fit the circumstance. "When individuals are induced to behave contrary to their beliefs, they tend to change these beliefs so that they become more in harmony with their behavior" (Snyder & Ebbesen, 1972, p. 502).

According to Myers (2004), the influence of direct experience, such as intensive police training, and a desire for acceptance by the normative police in-group can often be a compelling force in effecting attitude change. Monitoring and greater self-awareness of previously held attitudes and beliefs has been shown to decrease the susceptibility to errant attitudinal and behavioral change; particularly if the previously held attitude is specific, potent, and formed as a result of some direct experience (Myers, 2004). That is, an occasional reminder of the beliefs that one may hold can reduce biasing influences.

Police officers are often oriented toward a threat escalation matrix response to incidents occurring in their jurisdictions, which is a progressively aggressive or deescalating approach for responding to incidents. This approach encourages the police

officers to perceive everyone involved in an incident as part of the problem and a potential threat. This approach to policing is more appropriate for disruptive urban areas.

The behavioral threat response model is an approach that sees everyone involved in an incident as part of a potential solution. The behavioral model is thought to be more appropriate for the college campus environment, because of its focus on inclusive problem resolution. The behavior model would see everyone involved in an incident as part of a potential solution.

After engaging the study participant who voiced concern that officers were noticeably uncomfortable with the idea of mentoring students, it was determined that a solely relational approach would be used when connecting the students and staff during the study. The officers were much more comfortable with the general relational contact they shared with the students while participating in the study. Officers also agreed that there are benefits gleaned through the relational contact, and feel strongly about working to establish continued relational contact with the Rowan University student community.

I used the Student/Staff study communities to explain the benefits of a relational component. The determination to concentrate on the Student/Staff Communities and eliminate a mentoring study component occurred shortly after the completion of the Focus Group.

On the afternoon of July 18, 2011, I spoke with a study participant, E-3, in reference to a request made previously for some general information relating to a written definition for how they would define a crime on the campus of Rowan University. E-3 misinterpreted my request for information as an attempt to gather information unrelated to E-3's behavior in the study. E-3 quickly moved away from me and

any reference to the study. After speaking with E-3, it became apparent that E-3 felt I was not comfortable with the manner in which they were working with the students and felt it would be important that they did not engage the students in a mentoring relationship.

Clearly, there is an immense gulf between the maintenance of general relational contact between members of the Department of Public Safety and Rowan University students and the perpetuation of mentoring relationships. The attitudinal benefits of a relational component clearly outweighs the benefits of the mentoring component.

Redmond (1990b.), as well as Knox and McGovern (1988), indicated that mentors' and mentees' personal characteristics are key to understanding mentoring effectiveness. Also, research has shown that teachers who have the most impact on students are not characterized by professional traits such as knowledge, experience, or position in the institution, but rather by personal characteristics such as friendliness and flexibility (Theophilides & Terenzini, 1981), accessibility and availability (Wilson, Woods, & Gaff, 1974; Woods & Wilson, 1972), empathy and respect (Chang, 1981), as well as honesty and tolerance (Galbo, 1984). When speaking with the Rowan University Police and Security officers participating in the study, I did not hear the friendliness or the flexibility in their voices necessary to affect a positive mentoring relationship. The officers' attitudes exuded distance, aloofness, and indifference when relating to students. I spoke with other officers in the study and some of the officers who were not study participants. All of the officers were opposed to the mentoring component.

Discovering the Needs of Students

After initiating the acquisition of study participants, I began in earnest to arrange the focus group meeting and prepare an outline of the proposal for my mixed methods study. During the focus group, I began to present my plan for the study to a mixed group of students and Department of Public Safety personnel. During the focus group activity, I gathered data that was used to assemble the survey documents. I then engaged the study participants in individual interviews.

S-2. During the interviews I was able to gather information on the study participants. The first student study participant that I interviewed was S-2, a Peruvian, Spanish speaking male who was excited to be a student at Rowan University. S-2 was eager to assist with the study and wondered how the study would help him with his studies. S-2 was very concerned about his ability to master the English language. “Well, my English classes and some of the math classes. The computer work I do some practicing with my friend, I don’t want to forget what I have learned.” S-2 talked about being a psychologist and “finishing college soon.”

S-5. The second student study participant interviewed was S-5, an Asian female from China. “I live in China. Guangdong Province.” S-5 talked about how important her friends were in supporting and enabling her success at Rowan University. “I miss home and will return to China when I complete my studies soon. I have friends. They are here with me. I am really happy they are here.”

S-3. The third student study participant interviewed was S-3 an American Caucasian female. S-3 was very helpful and when not in class did assist the Department of Public Safety’s EMS emergency squad. “I am working for the university’s EMS, emergency

medical staff. I really enjoy helping people. I plan to graduate May. It will be so good to graduate. I can't wait until it is over."

S-1. The fourth student study participant student who agreed to participate in the study was S-1, who was from Saudi Arabia. During my conversations with S-1, I was left wondering just what he actually felt about Americans in general, and me in particular. S-1 seemed to be eager to devalue certain groups of Americans. S-1 stated more than once that, "Some Americans do not do all that they can do to sustain themselves," and continued with the statement, "Americans struggling to succeed need only to put forth a more genuine effort." When I attempted to schedule a second interview with S-1, no date or time seemed to be appropriate. Finally, I was able to get S-1 to agree to participate in a telephone interview. When asked to comment on the interactions during the Student/Staff Communities, S-1 indicated that, "We did not talk often." "When we did talk it was about why some of the students were doing bad. It was different talking to the officer. It was alright." "Some of the students don't really want to work. They expect to just sit there, do nothing and still graduate. That is why some of them are failing." S-1 continued, "I believe some of them want to work, but there are some of the students who just don't want to work. Nothing is free. You have to work if you want to get ahead. You just can't sit there and do nothing and expect to graduate." S-1 was asked, since his participation in the study, had he noticed any difference in the way members of the Department of Public Safety are perceived? S-1's response was consistent with his responses up to this point as follows: "Yes, the officers are like everyone else. They help you if they like you. They help you if you help them."

S-4. The fifth student study participant who agreed to participate in the study was S-4, who lives in China. S-4 is a hard worker and looks forward to returning home. “I am here in the United States attending college courses for a degree. I will return to my home in China when I complete my studies.” S-4 misses his home and is looking forward to returning soon. “I have friends here from my home in China. We spend time together talking about home.” During the second interview, S-4 talked about his family in China and how it was possible to master a number of languages. “I speak a number of languages and I am excited with my awareness of the practice of Ti Chi. My grandmother taught my sister and me Ti Chi technique. I am very interested in the learning process in America.”

S-4 was quite impressed with my fragile knowledge of Ti Chi technique. I was able to pick up some of the Ti Chi technique while with the Marine Corps in Vietnam. What was described as Ti Chi technique in Vietnam during the war looked much different than what we might see here in America today. S-4 may not have recognized what I was trying to demonstrate if her knowledge of the art was limited to an American Ti Chi technique only. I think my knowledge of Ti Chi technique was somewhat of an icebreaker, particularly for the two Asian students, and in particular, during my conversations with S-4.

Staff Participant Assessment

E-5. The first staff study participant who agreed to participate in the study was E-5, who is a police supervisor at Rowan University and lives in New Jersey. E-5 enjoys working with the students. “We have a number of safety programs to help the students be safe. These programs help the students protect their property, and their individual

safety.” “The students learn a lot of things from the Public Safety sponsored programs. Most important, they learn how to be safe on campus. We talk about alcohol, drugs and property theft. They learn how to take care of themselves.”

E-1. E-1 was the second staff study participant who agreed to participate in the study. E-1 was very helpful during the study and was instrumental in providing the insight leading me to rethink my initial plan for a mentoring component for my study. E-1 is not against the mentoring process. On the contrary,

The R.A.D. programs I think helps build confidence in the students and helps them make good decisions. Making good decisions will help the students a lot in their work. The R.A.D. program builds confidence I think. The Mentoring programs are really good for the younger students. There are a lot of mentoring programs on campus, E.O.F. has a program. All of the fraternities and sororities have a mentoring process. I think it helps the kids a lot. I don't think they would graduate without them.

E-3. The third staff study participant taking part in the study was E-3. E-3 works closely with the students at Rowan University.

Not all of the time. I deal with many students in R.A.D. program, and other department programs. Many of the students I talk with are part of an investigation of some type. I talk to all kinds of students concerning safety issues too. All of these students that I see are mostly good students and doing ok in school. Sometimes when I am investigating a crime I find that a student was involved in the crime. E-3 is a very caring person and often reveals their feelings, I can help them find help on campus. My job doesn't give me a lot of opportunity

at sitting down with students just to talk about their classes. I do talk to them about how to avoid problems with other students and how to make good decisions.

E-4. The fourth staff study participant agreeing to participate in the study was E-4. E-4 is another officer who works closely with the students at Rowan University. “The students I work with are normally student workers or interns. They are not working for nothing, so they are no problem. Every now and then one of them may cause a problem.” “The other students I deal with are the ones that cause problems. I don’t think these guys are use to this type of place.”

Telling them about some of the areas on campus that has counseling for students having problems getting their school work done and areas on campus that work with the students to help them get the tuition they need to stay in school. I tell the students to make friends and move in groups when they are on campus. You know, for safety.

E-6. The fifth staff study participant assisting with my study was E-6, who is from the local area and works closely with students at Rowan University. E-6 also supervises some of our student interns.

Most of the students I work with are okay. Some interns and some student patrol. These guys are okay, they are trying to graduate soon. I have very few problems with them. They are doing well in school and expect to graduate soon.

Some of the students that I work with are Law and Justice Interns. I work with them, allowing them to experience other areas of the judicial system away from the college. I think they enjoy interacting with other law enforcement agencies.

E-2. The sixth staff study participant is E-2, who is a police sergeant and often works with students at Rowan University. E-2 works closely with the Student Community. “I am a Rowan Police Officer. I am currently working as a Police Officer. I also spend a lot of time supervising the department’s Student Community Policing program.” “The students that I work with always talk with us about their work and school. When they seem to be having problems I have referred them to the Academic Success Center. They can help them better than I could.”

Upon completion of the interviews I met with each study participant and dispensed the survey document. This process was repeated after the data from each phase of the study was scrutinized. I engaged in the observation phase of the study at a number of different locations on the campus of Rowan University. The locations included the Savitz Hall, Wilson Hall, and the Department of Public Safety space in the Bole Annex building. These areas were selected as study sites because they allowed for the discreet observation of study participants and members from the student populations they encountered during the course of their work day (Glesne, 2006).

The observations provided information to assist in the development of an assessment of the interactions shared by Rowan students and other campus community members. Upon completion of the observations of study participants, an analysis of the information gathered was compiled and reviewed. Throughout the observation phase of the study I functioned as an observer-participant. Everyone in the study was informed of my status as a researcher, and I did not actively or consistently take on any

of the roles of the participants. During the observation phase of the study I was looking for helping behaviors, behaviors that connected the students to campus resources, and general caring behaviors.

The initial observations and interviews were administrated during Cycle 1. Also during Cycle 1, there was a focus group. Information from the focus group was used to develop a survey instrument.

During Cycle 2, I engaged in the coding process of the information gathered during Cycle 1. Also during Cycle 2, I developed the survey instrument to be used during Cycle 2 using the information gathered during Cycle 1. The survey was identical to the document used during Cycle 1, to allow for a comparison between the initial survey document and the second survey document (Cronk, 2008).

During Cycle 3, I implemented the student/staff community process, encouraging study participants to connect and establish relational contact. The idea for the student/staff communities evolved out of literature that involved the interaction of groups in intergroup dialogue (Zuniga et al., 2007).

Leadership: Intersection of Axes

Origin of leadership style. I have often struggled in trying to secure a definition for my leadership style. At a glance it looks like a Servant Leadership model the majority of the time. When I am responding to an actual problem or crisis it has felt like a Transactional model. Then, when trying to reach a consensus, I believe my leadership looks much more like that of a Democratic model. I am confident that leadership is nothing more than a product of an individual's experiences. My leadership style is little more than the culmination of my experiences, or a hodgepodge of leadership responses.

My first genuine leadership position was in Viet-Nam. When I was in Viet-Nam, it was as if the whole country was on fire. I was fortunate in that I just happened to be in the country at the start of the 1968 Tet Offensive. The 1968 Tet Offensive was thought to be the start of the end of the United States and their allies' efforts in Viet-Nam. The entire country was engaged in some level of combat.

The Tet Offensive broke out on an early morning of the waning days of January 1968, at many of the country's cities in the central part of Viet-Nam. At the time of the Tet Offensive, I was on a man made hill referred to only as Alpha-3, which was sitting on the DMZ, or Demilitarized Zone, separating North Viet-Nam from South Viet-Nam. I believe almost 70% of the Marines in my platoon received some type of injury, but all of them made it home.

When making decisions about how to approach a particular problem, when possible, I would include anyone directly affected by the outcome of the decision. They were included in many of the low-level decisions. It was my way to make the Marines feel that they were a party to what ever was about to take place. Given the circumstances, I felt it important to the morale of the Marines that they feel that they were in control of their own destiny.

My leadership does sound a lot like Servant Leadership. I enjoyed serving the Marines assigned to my platoon. They were a very special group. I will always remember them. There is also a strong Democratic Leadership component that I exploit when I see an opportunity. It is a good way to secure input from other group members in an effort to gain buy-in for decisions that impact large groups of people. Also, in the shadow of chaos is a powerful transactional ideology awaiting a porthole for entry, which

could be fueled by any consequential crisis. It would not surprise me to discover that most of us harbor multiple styles of leadership and exploit the benefits of these various leadership styles as needed.

Response to Research Questions

1. What are the methods and programs used by Department of Public Safety representatives at a higher education institution to motivate difficult students' academic and social achievement?
-Department of Public Safety personnel participate in an assortment of programs which enhance student safety by providing students with the information and resource needed to increase their access to safety programs offered by Rowan University including the escort service; R.A.D. program, Rape, Aggression, Defense; and the Student Patrol program.
2. What are the actions that can be taken by a representative of the Department of Public Safety to enhance support for difficult student programs?
-Department of Public Safety personnel can demonstrate support for difficult students by encouraging positive behavior on the part of the students and by vigorously connecting the students to resources on campus.
3. What will be the result of including members of difficult student populations in Department of Public Safety sponsored programs?
-Through working together Department of Public Safety staff and students will learn to trust each other and at the same time learn to work together.
4. Are the Student/Staff communities important in enhancing the relationship between students and Department of Public Safety members?

-After the Student/Staff communities both students and staff members were comfortable working together.

5. How this research project impacted my leadership theory in use?

-During the study I realized that an additional leadership style, relational leadership, with its emphasis on inclusiveness, its empowering component, ethical drive, its purposeful nature, and its process-oriented drive lead the way with my leadership menagerie (Komives, S. R., Lucas, N., & McMahon, T. R., 2006).

Conclusion

Working with the students has helped define my goals as a helping agent. I am usually working discreetly, providing an assortment of opportunities relating to access to assist students. A work by Flook, Repetti, and Ullman (2005), discussed a study evaluating the link between students' peer acceptance in the classroom setting to academic performance by way of academic self-concept and internalizing symptoms. The study predicted low peer acceptance in the classroom and also predicted lower academic self-concept (Flook et al., 2005). Many students are reaching out for someone to model their behavior after, to provide them with help in establishing their footing in an educational environment. I am excited at the opportunity to assist students as I was helped and guided during my educational experience. It is a great feeling to give back some of what you were given in an effort to help someone else succeed.

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