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An Examination Of Academic Advising, Peer Mentoring, And Housing Services Provided To Freshmen Students Presented On Postsecondary Institutions' Websites: Do They Provide The Same To Transfer Students?

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AN EXAMINATION OF ACADEMIC ADVISING, PEER MENTORING, AND HOUSING SERVICES PROVIDED TO FRESHMEN STUDENTS PRESENTED ON POSTSECONDARY INSTITUTIONS' WEBSITES: DO THEY PROVIDE THE SAME TO TRANSFER STUDENTS?

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VITA

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzed the services that postsecondary institutions provided to freshman students to determine whether similar services were provided to transfer students. Additionally, this study investigated whether significant differences occurred between institutions based on institution size, institution type, and geographical regions. Postsecondary institutions in the United States invest numerous resources designed to help ensure the success of first-time full-time freshman students. Individual state governments, as well as the federal government, incorporate the institutions' retention, persistence, and graduation rates when allocating funding to the institutions. These benchmarks tend to be the definition that institutions use in defining student success. Previously, this funding formula only accounted for these freshman students, but recently, this formula has also taken into account the transfer students' retention, persistence, and graduation rate. As a result, this study sought to determine whether postsecondary institutions increased their focus on transfer students.

A sample single sample of 60 postsecondary institutions was used in this study. In this study, services were defined as academic advising, peer mentoring, and housing. To be considered a service, it must have been provided at the institutional level and not the departmental, unit, division, or college level. Single-sample *t* tests and one–way analysis of variance were used to analyze the results. The results suggest that postsecondary institutions continue to focus their resources on the needs of freshman students. Nearly three-fourths of all services provided by the institutions used in this study were offered to freshman students. This study also suggests that there were not any statistically significant differences between services provided to freshman and transfer students and geographical regions, institution type, nor

institution size. The results of this study support the need for postsecondary institutions to consider adding transfer student success to their strategic plan as a means to improve transfer student success. Investing in personnel trained in assessing the unique needs of transfer students, implementing peer mentoring programs for transfer students, and incorporating themed housing for transfer students are other measures that institutions should consider.

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To understand the magnitude of completing this journey, one must understand where I come from. This journey began in Camden, NJ, a city that has been repeatedly determined as one of the most dangerous cities in the nation. A city where "they" say African American boys are destined to be killed before turning 18. Those who were not killed would probably end up in jail. It has been said numerous times that it takes a village to raise a child, and despite all that has been said about Camden, I am proud to be from that village. To understand the magnitude of completing this journey, one must understand that this is the same kid who repeatedly played hookie in junior high and high school. This is the same kid who once had a high school teacher look in shock when he said he is going to college. The same person who cried and cried during his first month in a master's program. The same person who quit a doctoral program two times previously. I honestly do not know where to begin saying "thank you" to everyone who traveled this journey with me.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Colleges and universities in the United States have witnessed increased accountability from their respective state governments and the federal government to increase four-year graduation rates of their students (Cofer, 2000; Hale, Graham, & Johnson, 2009; Handel, 2013). Historically, postsecondary institutions have received funding based on the number of full-time equivalent students that were enrolled at the beginning of the semester, but this model failed to take into account the percentage of students who complete their degrees (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2015). Colleges and universities are now mandated to be more aggressive in ensuring students complete their degree programs. For instance, in October of 2013, the Indiana Commission for Higher Education legislated that institutions in Indiana introduce degree mapping for all new, full-time students. These degree maps are designed to increase the probability that undergraduate students will complete their degrees in four years. The state of Arkansas created a higher education funding model that allocates 25% of institutional appropriations based on factors such as course and degree completion (U.S. Department of Education, 2012). Adelman (1999) noted that "degree completion is the true bottom line for college administrators, state legislators, parents, and, most importantly, students" (para. 4).

Additional recommendations from the federal government may mandate future changes. During the 2015 State of the Union address, President Obama proposed that two years of

community college should be free "for those who are willing to work for it" (Obama, 2015, para. 35). Similar legislation has made its way to the state level in several states. For example, Tennessee in 2014 passed a bill creating the Tennessee Promise program, which is a scholarship and mentoring program that is designed to "improve college access and success of recent high school graduates" (National Conference of State Legislatures [NCSL], 2016, para. 7). Oregon passed a bill in 2015 known as the Oregon Promise, which makes use of a tuition waiver program for Oregon residents who enroll in a community college within six months of graduating from high school (NCSL, 2016). Minnesota passed a bill that created the College Occupational Scholarship Pilot Program that will "provide a last-dollar scholarship to cover any tuition and fee expenses not covered by state or federal grant aid for students seeking a credential in a designated high demand program area" (NCSL, 2016, para. 13) In all, 12 states and the District of Columbia have introduced some form of legislation designed to reduce significantly the cost of community college (NCSL, 2016). Similar changes are taking place at the city level. In 2016, the mayor of San Francisco announced that the city would make college education free to all of its residents through the City College of San Francisco.

Because the formula in higher education funding for state-supported institutions is heavily determined by enrollment numbers, persistence, and graduation rates, postsecondary institutions invest a significant portion of resources to help aid the success of first-time, full-time students. For instance, Kuh, Kinzie, Buckley, Bridges, and Hayek (2006) showed that most institutions concentrate resources on first-year students. Because the emphasis is placed on these students, transfer students rarely receive equal attention and resources (Bahr, 2012; Handel, 2013; Townsend, 2008) even though the transfer student population continues to be an increasingly growing population. Marling (2013) reported that as many as one-third of all

students transfer during their college careers. Compounding these issues is that "four-year colleges and universities have historically preferred to enroll students directly from high school rather than from community colleges, believing that the supply of first-time students was inexhaustible . . . but the supply, if not drying up, is certainly slowing down" (Handel, 2013, p. 10). This further supports the idea that four-year institutions can expect to see more students begin their postsecondary careers at community colleges prior to transferring. Furthermore, Townsend and Wilson (2006) found that at one research-intensive university, "the first-year to second-year retention is over 86%, partly because of major institutional efforts to involve first-year students academically and socially" (p. 450), which further demonstrates that institutions invest a wealth of resources toward first-time, full-time student retention.

The National Center for Education Statistics (2016c) found that the graduation rate for first-time, full-time students who began college in the fall semester of 2008 and earned their bachelor's degrees within six years was 60%. The National Student Clearinghouse (2012) reported that nearly 60% of students who earned an associate's degree and subsequently transferred to a four-year institution earned their bachelor's degrees within six years.

Statement of the Problem

Students who transfer to new institutions often experience myriad complications ranging from navigating the transfer process itself (Hagedorn, 2012; Townsend, 2008), interacting socially at their new institutions (Moman, 2002), and adjusting academically at their new institutions (Handel, 2013; Hills, 1965) and financial concerns including higher tuition, room and board, academic fees, and other expenses (Long, 2005). These issues are all inter-related; the cost of attendance, including tuition, books, and fees, have been found to affect both student academic performance and retention decisions (Nora, Barlow, Crisp, & Seidman, 2005).

Compounding this issue is that the previously mentioned changes in legislation may lead to an increasing number of students who begin their academic careers at community colleges. In previous years, states appropriated funds to their state-supported institutions based, in part, on their retention and graduation rates of first-time, full-time freshman students. Recent changes in legislation regarding transfer students have affected this formula. Students who earn an associate's degree and transfer to a four-year institution are expected to earn their bachelor's degree within two years from beginning programs in their new institutions, and the funding formula now takes into account transfer students' persistence and graduation rates.

Transfer orientation is perhaps the most critical transition activity for transfer students (Grites, 2013), but Townsend and Wilson's (2006) study found that transfer students do not receive much assistance after orientation. The purpose of their study was to

> ascertain the perceptions of current community college transfer students about institutional factors that influenced their fit within the receiving institution, including the transfer process, orientation to the university, and social and academic experiences there as compared to those in the community college. (Townsend & Wilson, 2006, p. 440)

Their study indicated that transfer students often need future assistance once they are at their new institutions, are in need of social interactions, and would like to learn from students who have been through the process. Specifically, their findings showed

- the community college should provide further assistance to students during the transfer process;
- students were not quite sure whom to approach at the four-year institution for assistance;
- students need more assistance beyond transfer orientation and/or transfer welcome events;

- "student affairs staff may need to lead the way in fulfilling the four-year institutions' responsibility for integrating community college transfers into the fabric of the institution" (p. 439) and;
- students had difficulty integrating socially into their new environments; social integration was easier at the community college than the four-year institution.

Overall, Townsend and Wilson's study helped demonstrate that community college transfer students initially struggle to assimilate into their new institutions. This process, they argued, might have been easier if they "had received a 'hand hold for a little bit' during their first few weeks or first semester at the university" (Townsend & Wilson, 2006, p. 450). Their study also suggested that transfer students could benefit from extra guidance beyond what is provided during transfer orientation.

Transfer students are a significant population of many large four-year public institutions (Lester, Brown-Leonard, & Mathias, 2013), and it is important to determine whether these students receive services to help ensure their academic success. If former President Obama's proposal were accepted, postsecondary institutions should expect to see an even more significant increase in the number of students who begin their careers in community colleges prior to attending four-year institutions.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this quantitative study was to ascertain if, based on information available on the institutions' websites, institutions used in this study provide similar services to transfer students when compared to freshman students. The institutions' websites were used as these are considered the points of first access and may influence decisions as to whether a potential student elects to attend the institution. This study was guided by seven research questions:

1. Is there a significant difference between the total number of services available to freshmen students when compared to transfer students?
2. Is there a significant difference between institution type and the services provided to freshman and transfer students?
3. Is there a significant difference between institution size and the services provided to freshman and transfer students?
4. Is there a significant difference between the institution's region and the services provided to freshman and transfer students?
5. What are the most prevalent and least prevalent services by institution type?
6. What are the most prevalent and least prevalent services by institution region?
7. What are the most prevalent and least prevalent services by student type?

Importance of Study

Multiple stakeholders, ranging from the faculty and staff at the individual institutions to postsecondary education students and most certainly taxpayers, are impacted by this issue. State governments often use a formula when allocating funding to institutions. In previous decades, retention and graduation rates focused primarily on first-time, full-time freshmen students (Hale, et al., 2009). The funding formula the states use in allocating funding now takes into account graduation rates of transfer students as well. Because of the importance of funding, faculty and staff's livelihood is at stake. Because of the rising costs of higher education, students who spend many years in school are at risk of incurring higher debt. Taxpayers often want to feel their tax dollars are well-spent and degree completion is often used as a means of measuring this.

Before the recent free tuition initiatives began, there was an increase in the number of students who began their postsecondary education careers at community colleges. In the fall

semester of 2014, 42% of all undergraduate students and 25% of all full-time undergraduate students were enrolled in a community college (Ma & Baum, 2016). However, there is a gap between the percentage of students who begin at two-year colleges with aspirations of earning bachelor degrees and the students who actually do (Cuseo, 1995). Transfer students often undergo a phenomenon that Hills (1965) described as transfer shock, which occurs as the result of transfer students experiencing a decline in their grade point averages after their first semesters at new institutions. Although the research primarily focuses on persistence and graduation of college students, little has been done to research what services are provided to students to help them become successful. Handel and Strempel (2016) stated that while there are many two-and four-year institutions that actively assist transfer students, there "must be a more sustained and strategic partnership around the country, born of the same commitment that is currently lavished on first-year students" (p. xiv). This study help determines whether or not a gap exists in researching what services are provided to transfer students.

The increase in student debt is another factor. Students who transfer from a community college to a four-year institution can expect to see a significant increase in the cost of attendance. During the 2014–2015 academic year, the average cost of attendance at two-year institutions was $10,153, while the "average annual current dollar prices for undergraduate tuition, fees, room, and board were estimated to be $16,188 at public institutions, $41,970 at private nonprofit institutions, and $23,372 at private for-profit institutions" (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016c, para 2). This increase is compounded if transfer students must attend four-year institutions for a significant amount of time.

Limitations of the Study

This study examines three services provided to freshman and transfer students at postsecondary institutions: academic advising, peer mentoring, and housing. Each institution determines the specific services and resources that it offers to students. Institutions that were used in this study may provide a wide array of such resources. These resources may not be apparent on the institution's website, which may limit representativeness; yet, such will reflect what is apparent to potential students and their guardian. Additionally, this study did not examine outcomes and did not seek to determine whether institutions that offer the most services have higher persistence and graduation rates among the two student groups.

Definitions of Terms

Housing: For the purpose of this study, dedicated housing is determined by information obtained from the institution's webpage. Any institution used in this study that provides college/university housing designed for freshmen or transfer students was classified as dedicated housing.

Peer mentoring: In this study, peer mentoring is defined as a specific service provided by the institution in which students serve as a mentor to another student or a group of students. Additionally, in this study, the service must be provided by the institution. There are instances where schools/colleges/divisions within an institution provide such services, but in this study, they are not considered services. Townsend and Wilson (2006) illustrated that students desired to "to have heard from someone that had actually gone through or is going through [being a transfer student] versus someone that is teaching about it" (p. 445).

Advising: For the purpose of this study, advising has two connotations. The advising service is considered "freshman advising" if the institution mandates that freshmen students meet

with their academic advisors. For transfer students, transfer advising services are advisors whose responsibilities is to guide transfer students through the entire transfer process.

Summary

This chapter established that more states are holding postsecondary institutions accountable for their students' success. Overwhelmingly, the definition that states use to determine "success" is the students' persistence and graduation rates. Accordingly, it is a common practice for postsecondary institutions to invest heavily in resources designed to improve the success rates of first-time, full-time freshman students. However, there is an increasing trend where states offer financial incentives for students to earn associate's degrees prior to enrolling in four-year institutions. However, state governments expect students to spend two years earning associate's degrees and two years earning bachelor's degrees. Because of these trends, this research seeks to determine whether four-year postsecondary institutions provide similar services to transfer students. The research questions that guided this study were presented as well as the importance of this study. This chapter concluded with limitations of this along with the definition of the terms.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The purpose of this quantitative study was to examine the services that four-year institutions provide for freshmen students followed by a comparison of services provided to transfer students to determine if the institutions offer similar services. In first chapter, it was demonstrated that despite the increasing number of students who begin their college careers at community colleges before transferring to four-year institutions, these four-year institutions continue to invest their resources in services designed for first-time, full-time freshman students. Much of the literature regarding student success focuses on first-year students. Although virtually all four-year institutions provide transfer students with transfer orientation, these students do not receive much formalized assistance afterward.

To synthesize the existing literature, this review is organized into multiple sections. First, retention in higher education is reviewed. This overview includes the varying—and sometimes contradicting—definitions of retention and dropouts, differing perspectives of student dropout, and a brief history of retention in higher education. Second, prominent theories on student retention are synthesized. Third, a review of the enrollment patterns of is provided. Finally, the impact, on both the student and the institution, of transferring is provided.

Retention in Higher Education

Retention, persistence, and graduation rates tend to be the central benchmarks that represent "success" in higher education. Adelman (1999) pointed out that "degree completion is the true bottom line for college administrators, state legislators, parents, and most importantly, students" (para. 4). All postsecondary institutions are required to submit retention data to state and federal governments (Hagedorn, 2012). Historically, many colleges and universities have received funding based on the number of full-time equivalent students that are enrolled at the beginning of the semester, but this model failed to take into account the percentage of students who complete their degrees (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2015).

"Retention" tends to have different definitions. The National Center for Education Statistics (2015) defined "retention" as

> A measure of the rate at which students persist in their educational program at an institution, expressed as a percentage. For four-year institutions, this is the percentage of first-time bachelors (or equivalent) degree-seeking undergraduates from the previous fall who are again enrolled in the current fall. For all other institutions this is the percentage of first-time degree/certificate-seeking students from the previous fall who either re-enrolled or successfully completed their program by the current fall. (para. 1).

Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) pointed out that this definition of retention is complex because there are different extremes to student retention. Normal progression occurs when students attend classes full time each semester and graduate in approximately four years. Conversely, students who "drop out" are students who leave college before graduating and never return to complete their studies. In the middle of these extremes, they argued, is the transfer student, who begins at one institution but transfers to another. Although these students are continuing their studies, the

sending institution considers these students dropouts (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). Conversely, in his retention formula, Seidman (2005) simplified the definition by offering it simply as "student attainment of academic and personal goals, regardless how many terms a student is at the college" (p. 21.)

Hagedorn (2012) argued that, because of the variability in student enrollment patterns, it is very difficult to offer one singular definition of retention or persistence. She demonstrated various examples of enrollment such as:

1. one student who enrolls at a university for two years, stops out to return six years later,
2. a student who enrolls in a university for one year and transfers to another to complete a degree, or
3. a student who begins in a community college and successfully transfers to a university. However, the student is not successful at the university and leaves prior to earning any credits. The next semester the student returns to the community college taking the few remaining courses necessary to earn an associate degree.

These examples highlight the variability in student enrollment patterns that make it difficult to label one student a persister and another a non-persister (Hagedorn, 2012). Hagedorn (2012) expanded upon this point by indicating that retention is an institutional measure while persistence in a student measure; therefore, institutions *retain* and students *persist*. Furthermore, "the simple dichotomous student outcome measures often employed in quantitative analysis do not compute the complexity in student progress" (Hagedorn, 2012, p. 3).

Institution type may also influence how retention is defined. Berger and Lyon (2005) stated that specific kinds of campuses tend to attract different kinds of students. Some campuses, such as highly selective, prestigious institutions, recruit and enroll students who are more likely

to be retained. Other institutions do a good job in retaining specific types of students, such as women's colleges and historically Black colleges and universities (Seidman, 2005). Finally, because most students who enroll in community colleges do not intend to earn degrees, retention in community colleges varies greatly by type of academic programs within the specific community college (Seidman, 2005).

Although transfer students make up one-third of an institution's student population, transfer students are less likely to attain their baccalaureate degrees in a given six-year period than non-transfer students (Fauria & Fuller, 2015). Tobolowsky, McClellan, and Cox (2014) noted that some students struggle because advisors could not determine whether students received proper preparation for success at the new campus. Specifically, transfer students "who do poorly at their new schools . . . have to 'deal with the shock of the transition but also the loss of what they perceive as their future'" (Tobolowsky, et al., 2014, p. 73).

Measuring graduation rates is equally complex. Studying persistence in higher education is complicated because very few students follow a linear path to graduation; many attend part-time while others attend intermittently. Still, other students transfer to different institutions including some who transfer multiple times (The American Federation of Teachers, 2003). Most importantly, "the failure to separate permanent dropouts from temporary and/or transfer behaviors has often led institutional and state planners to overestimate substantially the extent of dropout from higher education" (Tinto, 1975, p. 90).

Perspectives of Dropout

Defining dropout also presents complexities. Tinto pointed out that the distinction between dropout differs between students and the institution (Pascarella, 1982) and is a matter of perspective. According to Tinto (1975),

> It is not uncommon to find, for instance, research on dropouts that fails to distinguish dropout resulting from academic failure from that which is the outcome of voluntary withdrawal. Nor is it uncommon to find permanent dropouts placed together with persons whose leaving may be temporary in nature or may lead to transfer to other institutions of higher education. (p. 89)

Because of these shortcomings, the findings of past research are often contradictory. The inability to distinguish between a dropout and a temporary stopout and/or transfer "has often led institutional and state planners to overestimate substantially the extent of dropout from higher education" (Tinto, 1975, p. 90). Past studies related to dropouts "have been limited to descriptive statements of how various individual and/or institutional characteristics relate to dropout (Tinto, 1975, p. 112).The act of leaving an institution often has multiple and contrasting meanings to those who are involved and affected by such actions. The institution may define dropout as failure to complete a given course of study; students may view leaving as a positive step toward goal completion. Students' perspectives differ because their goals and interests differ (Pascarella, 1982).

Student perspective of dropout. From the student's perspective, Tinto (1975, 1982, 2012) argued that the definition of dropout is related to the goal and intentions with which the student enters the higher education system; some students enter higher education with more limited education goals than others. For these students, the primary purpose for attending a postsecondary institution is to earn enough credits for a job-related certification and/or promotion (Tinto, 1975, 1982). For part-time working students, the goal of attending a postsecondary institution is to acquire a specific—as opposed to a general—set of skills needed

for on-the-job activities. For these students, completing a certificate or certain courses may be required for employment opportunities or promotion (Pascarella, 1982).

Institution perspective on dropout. Because institutions differ in their goals and their student populations, their definitions of dropout vary as well. These differences often reflect the circumstances of the individual institution. For example, two-year colleges may view a student's dropping out due to transferring to a four-year institution as a desirable form of attrition; however, this same process at an elite, private institution would be viewed negatively (Pascarella, 1982).

Historical Elements of Retention

Demetriou and Schmitz-Sciborski (2011) noted, from the 1690s to the mid-1800s, the earliest institutions of higher education in the United States catered to very select populations and "student degree completion was rare, and universities focused more on institutional survival than student graduation" (p. 2). The select population who was able to attend college was often affluent, White males. For the poorest of Americans, college was out of the question and beyond expectation (Miller-Solomon, 1985).

A significant characteristic of colonial colleges in their first decades is that there was very little emphasis on completing degrees and "many students matriculated and then left college after a year or two, apparently with none of the stigma we now associate with dropouts" (Thelin, 2011, p. 20). These colleges were primarily concerned with surviving and the majority of these institutions did not stay open long enough to develop a graduating class (Seidman, 2012). The emphasis of early studies on student retention focused on university structures such as schedules, courses, and libraries (Yorke & Longden, 2004). The first study on college student retention was conducted by John McNeely in 1938 and it was "one of the first widespread studies to examine

multiple issues related to the departure of students at multiple institutions" (Seidman, 2012, p. 61). Seidman (2012) explained that neither this nor other studies on retention were recognized by educators, researchers, or institutions until the 1970s when enrollment management became a concern for institutions.

Demetriou and Schmitz-Sciborski (2011) cited the impact of the 1862 Morrill Land Grant Act along with the growth of American cities on higher education. The first Morrill Land Grant Act helped create more institutions of higher education along with promoting greater numbers of individuals seeking access to higher education. The introduction of the 1937 version of *The Student Personnel Point of View* had an impact on student development and subsequently, student retention. This document asserted,

> The central purpose of higher education is the preservation, transmittal, and enrichment of culture by means of instruction, scholarly work, and scientific research. During the past few decades experience has pointed up the desirability of broadening this purpose to embrace additional emphases and objectives. Among these new goals, three stand out: 1) education for a fuller realization of democracy in every phase of living; 2) education directly and explicitly for international understanding and cooperation; 3) education for the application of creating imagination and trained intelligence to the solution of social problems and to the administration of public affairs. (American Council on Education, 1937, p. 2)

As more institutions of higher education began to adopt the core principles of *The Student Personnel Point of View*, these institutions began investing in student personnel services who had responsibilities in helping ensure the success of their students, thus beginning an increasing emphasis on student retention and graduation.

Tinto's Model of Student Retention

Tinto's model in addressing college retention and dropout is one of the most commonly cited retention theories in the literature (Bean, 1980; Braxton, Jones, Hirschy, & Hartley, 2014; Pascarella, 1982). During the previous three decades, the theoretical models of student retention closely examined the student's "fit" in the institution by examining institutional variables, and specific themes such as how the institution integrated the student into its culture (Andres & Carpenter, 1997). Shields (1994) pointed out,

> Although Tinto explicitly recognizes older students in his model, almost all of the research has been focused on the retention of traditional students. [His] model takes into account (a) family background, (b) individual attributes, (c) precollege academic characteristics, and (d) individual commitment to educational goals and the institution as factors in retention. (p. 13)

Tinto argued that colleges and universities have an obligation to do whatever they can to help students stay and graduate (Tinto, 2012). Specifically, his model "sought to focus attention upon the impact the institution has, in both its formal and informal manifestations, upon the dropout behaviors of its own students" (Tinto, 1982, p. 688) and that individual institutions "can do much to influence the rate of dropout among their own students" (p. 696). Although Tinto's model is primarily concerned with addressing the differences within specific institutions and how these institutions seek to integrate students, it also takes into account the attributes, skills, abilities, commitment, and value orientations of entering students (Tinto, 1982).

Tinto's model evolved from Durkheim's 1961 theory of suicide. In Durkheim's theory, "suicide can be attributed to the individual's lack of social and intellectual integration into the social life of his or her society" (Aljohani, 2016, p. 3). The likelihood of suicide in society

increases when individuals fail to achieve sufficient moral integration and sufficient collective affiliation. College can contain its own social system and maintain its own values and structures and the concept behind dropping out of college draws parallels to those who commit suicide (Tinto, 1975).

Tinto (1975) also argued that students who are able to integrate socially and academically within their campus communities increase their commitment to their institutions. Social systems relate primarily with the individual needs of students while academic systems revolve around interactions that occur during formal education opportunities with faculty, staff, and other students (Reisinger, 2016). Because of this integration, students have a higher likelihood of graduating. The factors that appear to influence those forms of integration are the frequency of informal interactions with other students and with faculty outside the classroom (Tinto, 1982). Tinto (1975) was sure to point out that a student could

> theoretically be integrated into the social realm of college yet dropout because of insufficient integration into the academic domain (i.e., poor grades) and conversely, a student could perform adequately in the academic domain and dropout because of insufficient integration into the social realm of the institution. (p. 92)

Four basic conditions for student success. Tinto (1975, 1982, 2012) outlined four basic conditions for student success: expectations, support, assessment and feedback, and involvement. When all four conditions are met, students are more likely to stay in college.

Expectations. Tinto stated that much of student success occurs in part by what students expect of themselves. Specifically, "student success is directly influenced not by the clarity and consistency of expectations, but by their level" (Tinto, 2012, p. 7). He hypothesized that low–to–moderate levels of institutional commitment may lead to transfer behavior when educational

expectations are substantially altered. If these expectations are diminished, downward transfer—where a student transfers from a four-year institution to a two-year institution—may occur. When these expectations have been enhanced because of positive experiences in college, upward transfer may result (Tinto, 1975).

Support. In addition to students having high expectations, universities must provide adequate support for students to achieve these expectations. The support students need includes academic, social, and financial support. This support, Tinto argued, is most important in the critical first year of college "when student success is still so much in question and still very responsive to institutional intervention" (Tinto, 2012, p. 7).

Assessment and feedback. Tinto (1975, 1982, 2012) argued that students are most likely to succeed when institutions assess their performance and provide feedback in ways that allow students, faculty, and staff to adjust their behaviors to better promote student success. He added that this assessment and feedback is especially important in the first year.

Involvement. Tinto (1975, 1982, 2012) theorized that involvement and engagement is the most important condition for student success. Students who are socially and academically engaged with faculty, staff, and other students are more likely to succeed in college. The more students are involved with the institution, the greater the students' levels of commitment to the institution. This increased commitment increases the likelihood students will persist.

External factors. Although Tinto's (2012) model placed much of the responsibility on the institution, he acknowledged that individual decisions and individual factors external to the institution often affect the student's decision to leave the institution. In addressing this aspect, Tinto applied the theory of cost-benefit analysis. The cost-benefit analysis theory states "individuals will direct their energies towards that activity that is perceived to maximize the ratio

of benefits to costs over a given time perspective (Tinto, 1975, p. 97). To apply this theory to higher education, Tinto further elaborated by noting:

> this perspective argues that a person will tend to withdraw from college when he perceives that an alternative form of investment of time, energies and resources will yield greater benefits, relative to costs, over time than will staying in college. (Tinto, 1975, p. 98)

Tinto (1975) used changes in supply and demand in the job market and changes to the individual's commitment to remain in school as specific examples to apply the cost–benefit analysis theory to higher education

Bean's Model

Bean (1980) theorized that institutional commitment was the primary variable influencing dropout. Similar to Tinto, Bean also argued that students who are socially integrated in their institutions are more likely to be retained. Bean's model expands heavily from Price's model in studying turnover in work organizations and Price's theory is generalizable to student attrition. While Bean was clear to point out there are differences between students and employees, he added, "the similarities make the study of models of employee turnover worth assessing in terms of their potential contribution to our understanding of the student attrition process (Bean, 1980, p. 9).

Bean and Eaton (2001) theorized that individuals enter an institution with psychological attributes that are shaped by dynamic experiences, abilities, and self-assessments. These attributes are self-efficacy assessments, normative beliefs, and past behavior. During self-efficacy assessments, the individual will ask "do I have confidence that I can perform well academically here?" When examining normative beliefs, the individual will ask, "do the

important people in my life think attending this college is a good idea?" When examining past behavior, the individual will ask, "do I have academic and social experiences that prepared me to be successful in college" (Bean & Eaton, 2001, p. 75).

Enrollment Patterns of Transfer Students

There have been a number of studies (Bahr, 2012; Braxton et al., 2008; Demetriou & Schmitz-Sciborski, 2011; Lester et al., 2013; Lukosius, Pennington, & Olorunniwo, 2013; Marling, 2013; Nora et al., 2005; Strempel, 2013; Tinto, 1975, 1982, 2012; Townsend & Wilson, 2006; Yorke & Longden, 2004) that help explain why students transfer as well as seek to better understand the transfer patterns of students. The traditional pattern of transfer, also known as upward transfer, behavior assumes that the student enrolls in community college immediately following high school then transfers to a four-year postsecondary institution where students earn their degrees (Townsend & Dever, 1999).

Over the past three decades, new trends in transfer behaviors have emerged. In addition to students who follow the "traditional" transfer path, recent years have seen a shift in the number of students attending multiple institutions, known as swirling and reverse transfers, which are students who transfer from a four-year institution to a two-year institution (McCormick, 2003).

Upward Transfer Students

Research of upward transfer showed that "a combination of socio-demographic, precollege, pull factors, degree expectations, and college experiences influence vertical transfer (Crisp & Nuñez, 2014, p. 294). Crisp and Nuñez (2014) found that female students are less likely to transfer. Turk and Chen (2017) hypothesized that this is due to the fact that female students were more likely to enroll in a degree program that did not lead to upward transfer. Crisp and

Nuñez (2014) further found that parents' education levels and socioeconomic status and financial aid support are positively related to vertical transfer. Turk and Chen (2017) indicated that the probability of upward transfer to a four-year institution was 47% higher for students in lower socioeconomic statuses.

Turk and Chen (2017) showed that the student's behavior and actions while in high school were factors that helped determine the likelihood of upward transfer. They found that the number of dual enrollment and AP courses taken during high school, and academic performance in high school, had a positive effect on the probability of upward transfer. Turk and Chen (2017) also found that participating in student activities and having college aspirations also increased the likelihood of upward transfer.

Reverse Transfer Students

Students who transfer in a pattern that is the reverse of the traditional pattern are considered "reverse transfer" students (Townsend & Dever, 1999). Early studies in reverse transfers assumed that reverse transfer students were those who experienced academic difficulty at their prior institution (Kajstura & Keim, 1992); however, "undergraduate students transfer from four-year to two-year colleges for reasons significantly different from those who have bachelor's degrees, as the former usually intend to fulfill degree requirements while the latter are looking for greater success in the labor market" (Yang, 2006, para. 13). Kajustura and Keim (1992) reported that the most common reasons that students left their four-year institutions were personal reasons and financial reasons, while citing low tuition and proximity to home as common reasons for enrolling in community colleges. Townsend and Dever (1999) placed reverse transfer students into two distinct categories: undergraduate reverse transfer and post baccalaureate reverse transfer students. The students in each category possess unique traits.

Undergraduate reverse transfer. Students who are in this category are students who begin their education at four-year institutions then transfer to a two year institution or temporary reverse transfer, who are students who attend a two-year college, usually during the summer, with the intent on transferring those credits back at their home institution (Townsend & Dever, 1999). Townsend and Dever (1999) reported that these students consistently improve their GPAs after transferring to the community college. Additionally, those with previous academic difficulty at the university improved their GPAs when they transferred back to a four-year institution, especially when they transfer to a different institution (Townsend & Dever, 1999).

Post-baccalaureate reverse transfer. Students who are in this category are students who attend a two-year institution for "personal development, exploration of new career fields, or advancement within their current field" (Townsend & Dever, 1999, p. 6). These students are often able to transfer these credits to their four-year institutions to use toward a degree.

Swirling and Double Dipping

An increasingly common pattern is attending two or more institutions during the same academic term (Kuh et al., 2006). Researchers have labeled this concurrent enrollment pattern as *double-dipping* while other authors have labeled the back-and-forth enrollment among different institutions as *swirling* (McCormick, 2003).

de los Santos and Sutton (2012) hypothesized that there is a connection between the increase in the number of the transfer student swirl and the overall health of the economy. During the 2009 recession, 47 states faced some sort of financial stress and as a result, state legislatures cut budgets. As a consequence, financial support for higher education institutions was significantly reduced, causing institutions to increase tuition. de los Santos and Sutton (2012) argued that "in this environment, transferability of credits among and between

institutions, now more than ever, becomes more important than during less turbulent times" (p. 968), and students cannot afford not to have credits accepted at another institution.

Issues Impacting Transfer Students

Transfer students face many barriers, including navigating the transfer process (Fann, 2013), lack of support from both the current institution and the receiving institution (Lukosius et al., 2013; Strempel, 2013) and making the adjustment, especially when transferring from a two-year institution to a four-year institution (Nutting, 2011). Each of these barriers has the potential to negatively impact the transfer students' abilities to be successful.

Barriers to the Transfer Application Process

Transfer students often report barriers to the transfer process. For instance, in California, all institutions within the University of California system are expected to coordinate and collaborate to ensure the academic success of all students, but Herrera and Jain (2013) found that the transfer function does not always work well for students who attempt to transfer from a community college to a top-tier University of California institution. Furthermore, this especially impacts underrepresented and minority students from lower socioeconomic statuses by severely limiting or even preventing their upward mobility (Herrera & Jain, 2013).

Transferring to a selective, private institution introduces additional barriers. Kinney-Contomichalos (2014) found that admissions rates for transfer students to selective colleges are often lower than for freshman applicants to the same schools. Additionally, Kinney-Contomichalos reported that while the application process is streamlined for freshmen applicants, this consistency does not exist for lateral transfer students.

Townsend and Wilson (2006) reported that transfer students perceive both community colleges and the receiving institutions as needing to improve the transfer process by providing

more accurate information while better assisting students in understanding which courses will transfer. Townsend (2008) reported that the most frequent frustration in the application process was the transfer of course credits. Course transfer articulation agreements provide a greater level of transparency to the transfer process. Long (as cited in de los Santos & Sutton, 2012) identified a number of barriers, including "state finance, governance, accountability, and institution mission and differentiation" (de los Santos & Sutton, 2012, pg. 970). Students also encounter academic barriers such as appropriate courses in which to enroll, transferability of courses, financial barriers such as higher room and board, and higher tuition (de los Santos & Sutton, 2012).

The issue surrounding how students' credits will transfer has been a long-standing concern for students (de los Santos & Sutton, 2012). Over the last two decades, the rise of articulation agreements has streamlined the transfer process for both students and the institution (Anderson, Sun, & Alfonso, 2006; Long, 2005). These agreements provide opportunities for community colleges and four-year institutions to create partnerships while increasing transfer opportunities at four-year institutions (de los Santos & Sutton, 2012). Nonetheless, students must cope with "the seemingly arbitrary translation of their community college courses into bachelor's degree credit" (Handel, 2013, p. 9).

Factors Influencing Students Decision to Transfer

There are numerous factors that influence the reason students may transfer. Gordon and Hably (2000) noted that some students transfer "because the educational opportunities or the social environment of the current institution is not congruent with the student's expectation, abilities, future plans, or academic performance" (p. 156). However, many of the reasons, such

as lack of finances, poor fit in the institution, changing academic and/or career goals, or other personal reasons, that students transfer are beyond institutional control (Lau, 2003).

A transition can be defined as "any event, or non-event that results in changed relationships, routines, assumptions, and roles" (Evans, Forney, Guido, Patton, & Renn, 2010, p. 215). In Schlossberg's transition theory, she theorized that "a need existed to develop a framework that would facilitate an understanding of adults in transition and aid them in connecting to the help they needed to cope with the 'ordinary and extraordinary process of living'" (as cited in Evans et al., 2010, pg. 213). In her transition theory, Schlossberg devised three types of transitions that college students experience. The first of three transitions that Schossberg described is *anticipated transitions*, which are transitions that occur predictability (Evans et al., 2010). As it relates to transfer students, this transition could occur once students meet their degree requirements at community colleges and intend to earn bachelor's degrees from a four-year college. *Unanticipated transitions* are not predicted or scheduled (Evans et al., 2010). When applied to the transfer student, a death of a close family member, sudden loss of employment, unexpected pregnancy, or other unplanned events which forces the student to either leave college or transfer to another institution that may alleviate the problems caused by the event are examples of unanticipated transitions. The final transition is *nonevents*, which are events the student expected to occur, but do not (Evans et al., 2010). When applied to transfer students, an example is failing to meet academic requirements for admissions into a specific program, such as nursing or education.

Original intent to transfer. The rise of state-mandated transfer articulation agreements has further increased the number of students who begin at community colleges before transferring to four-year institutions. Prior to the 21st century, transferability of courses was

often inconsistent and vague (Fann, 2013). During the 1970s and 1980s, there was a sharp decline on transfer rates from two-year to four-year colleges, which led to fewer students receiving bachelor degrees (Anderson et al., 2006). To combat low rates of transfer and to provide transparency to the transfer credit evaluation process, states instituted polices to ease the transfer process, which led to the formulation of transfer articulation agreements (citation).

Many college students begin their postsecondary careers at two-year schools with the intent to transfer to four-year institutions. Nutting (2011) argued that a critical purpose of two–year colleges is to prepare students for four-year institutions. Additionally, the Community College Research Center (n.d.) pointed out that 79.5% of community colleges in the United States make some reference to facilitating the transfer process as part of their mission statements or strategic planning processes, and data show that 81% of all first-time beginning community college students indicate completing a bachelor's degree as a goal (Fann, 2013). In two-year colleges, transfer rates are often considered an important indicator of student success and the effectiveness of the institution. (Kuh et al., 2006).

Dissatisfaction with institution. Numerous researchers (Bahr, 2012; D'Amico et al., 2014; Grites, 2013; Hale et al., 2009) illustrated that students cite discontent as a primary factor influencing their decisions to transfer. Hale et al. (2009), for instance, noted "student satisfaction measures how effectively campuses deliver what students expect, need, and want. When institutions meet or exceed student expectations, higher student satisfaction and retention are the result" (para. 14). Additionally, Bahr (2012) showed that "course success rate in the preceding semester, number of units attempted in the preceding semester, and number of noncredit courses taken in the preceding semester are all associated with a lower risk of lateral transfer in the subsequent semester" (p. 115). Rendon, Jalomo, and Nora (2004) confirmed Tinto's model,

reporting that there is a significant relationship between academic integration and social integration, and likelihood in transferring.

Campus ecology can also impact the level of a student's discontentment and subsequently, the student's decision to leave. Banning (1978) defined campus ecology as "the study of the relationship between the student and the campus environment" (p. 5). "[Campus ecology] incorporates the influence of environments on students and students on environments" (p. 5). The physical buildings and space are part of campus ecology. Lau (2003) outlined five physical facilities that impact retention:

- residence halls,
- study rooms,
- facilities that meet APA guidelines,
- career centers, and
- social and professional organizations.

Similarly, Reynolds (2007) found that students viewed living and learning spaces as the top facilities that influenced them to attend a particular institution. Specifically, facilities for the major, campus library, technology, classrooms, and residence halls were offered as the top five physical facilities that influenced students' decisions to attend a particular institution. In this same study, Reynolds found that 29.3% of the participants rejected an institution because it lacked a facility the student deemed important.

Financial considerations. Finances are often cited as a driving reason for transferring. In efforts to meet the demands of rising tuition costs, full-time students must often work part time, 20 to 30 hours a week, in order to put themselves through college, often preventing them from putting forth the time and energy to devote to their studies (Lau, 2003). Lau (2003) noted

"numerous studies have indicated that scholarship programs are needed because many students are motivated to improve their grades to stay in school with this type of funding (p. 28).

Tinto (1982) added that the effect of dropout due to finances can be long-term or short-term and direct or indirect. The impact of finances occurs at the entry point and will often impact the choice of which institution an individual will pursue and to which institutions the individual will be admitted:

> In this manner the effects of finances upon dropout may be long term and indirect in character as it may induce persons to enter institutions that may increase or decrease the likelihood of their dropping out of college. (Tinto, 1982, p. 689)

As previously stated, in Tinto's (1982) model of student retention, the students' experiences at their institutions heavily influenced whether they will remain at the institutions. Tinto argued that if the students' experiences are positive, they are more likely to accept greater financial burdens.

Unplanned transfers. Some students make unplanned transfers. Thurmond (2007) noted, "Reasons for such a transfer include forced relocation by reason of employment for student or family member, academic failure at first choice institution, failed relationships, or other circumstances including some over which the student has little control" (para. 10).

Impact on Transferring

Impact on Student

Transfer students often undergo the challenge of having to adapt to different institutional policies and "a lack of centralized systematic information about academic requirements at new institutions" (Tobolowsky et al., 2014, p. 68). This transition that transfer students experience leads to what is known as transfer shock. Hills (1965) devised this term to describe the

phenomenon, which serves as a contributor to the decreased GPA transfer students experience at their new institutions (Thurmond, 2007). Stewart and Martinello (2012) explained this initial drop in GPA can be due to a number of factors, including socioeconomic status, race, and gender, psychological barriers and challenges, economic and family concerns, and academic preparation for the rigors of a four-year institution. Townsend (2001) argued that "the drop in GPA may reflect institutional differences in standards or expectations for academic performance as well as insufficient preparation for upper division courses" (p. 37). Students who are unprepared for transfer shock may become discouraged and dropout prior to obtaining their degrees (Gordon & Habley, 2000).

Although transfer students may experience academic difficulties, they may also experience financial difficulties. Transfer students who have concurrent enrollment at more than one institution may have their financial aid packages negatively impacted as this enrollment pattern makes it more difficult to accurately calculate their financial need (McCormick, 2003).

Impact on Institution

Though student retention is often addressed in an institution's strategic goal, there are various reasons for which students will leave a given institution. As Pascarella (1982) pointed out, "an institution must choose not only a course of action to pursue but also the types of leaving behavior it will seek to treat" (Pascarella, 1982, pp. 10–11).

Institutions receiving the transfer student are also affected by transfer shock. Stewart and Martinello (2012) showed that transfer shock might contribute to course failures, thus resulting in longer times to complete degrees, which ultimately negatively impacts students' persistence and retention. As previously noted, public postsecondary institutions receive funding from the federal government and state governments, which are based in large part on graduation rates.

These institutions would benefit from implementing quality services and programs that are designed to improve transfer student success.

As previously stated, the definition of retention is convoluted, and it is difficult to differentiate between a student who has dropped out as compared to a student who has temporarily stopped out. Some state legislatures devise a formula that considers retention (Vemulapalli, 2014) while tuition funds and monies generated by fund raising are also sometimes influenced by retention rates.

The increase in the number of swirling and students who double-dip can also negatively impact the institutions financially. Some institutions might face unexpected shortfalls in tuition revenue because these students are earning credit elsewhere, while other institutions might experience an increase in budget because of what appears to be an increase in enrollment demands (McCormick, 2003). McCormick (2003) also argued that concurrent enrollment makes it difficult to "make attributes about an institution's educational impact" (p. 23) because it is challenging for educators, policymakers, and researchers to assess institutional impact they are unable to garner accurate details about their institution's attendance profiles.

Summary of the Review of Literature

This chapter summarized the current literature regarding student retention in higher education. The literature review indicated that many of the theories related to successful student retention suggest that there is a strong relationship between social and academic integration and the likelihood that a student will persist in higher education. The literature also showed that there are varying degrees of dropout and that the definition of a dropout is often dependent on the student perspective and the institution perspective. Even within the institutions, the perspective is

divided even further depending on the type of institution it is. The literature also helps illustrate that the impacts on a transferring students vary between the student and the institution.

The literature helped demonstrate that there are different types of transfer students. These differences in transfer students also have impacts on the institution and sometimes make it difficult for the institution to develop accurate data on their students.

CHAPTER 3

STUDY DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this quantitative study is to provide a comparison between the services that postsecondary institutions provide to freshmen and to transfer students. Specifically, this study sought to determine whether there are significant differences between the total services offered to freshmen students from transfer students. Additionally, this study sought to determine whether there are significant differences between institution types, institution size, and the institution's geographical region and the services offered to students. Finally, this study sought to identify the most prevalent service to freshmen students and the most prevalent service to transfer students. This research served to strengthen policy and practice at the postsecondary institutions to improve academic outreach at the state level. This study was guided by seven research questions:

1. Is there a significant difference between the total number of services available to freshmen when compared to transfer students?
2. Is there a significant difference between institution type and the services provided to freshman and transfer students?
3. Is there a significant difference between institution size and the services provided to freshman and transfer students?

4. Is there a significant difference between the institution's region and the services provided to freshman and transfer students?
5. What are the most prevalent and least prevalent services by institution type?
6. What are the most prevalent and least prevalent services by institution region?
7. What are the most prevalent and least prevalent services by student type?

Hypotheses

$H_0$1. There is not a statistically significant difference between the total number of services available to freshmen compared to transfer students.

$H_0$2. There is not a statistically significant difference between institution type and the services provided to freshman and transfer students.

$H_0$3. There is not a statistically significant difference between institution size and the services provided to freshman and transfer students.

$H_0$4. There is not a statistically significant difference between the institution's region and the services provided to freshman and transfer students

This chapter describes the study design and methodology used to address the research questions. Specifically, it is organized as follows: describing the research design, describing the sampling procedure, reviewing the variables, reviewing the data collection process, providing an analysis of the data, and concluding with a summary of the chapter.

Research Design

This study used a quantitative design using inferential and descriptive statistics. As noted by Gravetter and Wallnau (2013), inferential statistics allow researchers to study a sample and make generalizations regarding the populations from which the samples were drawn. Descriptive statistics "are techniques that take raw scores and organize them in a form that is more

manageable" (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2013, p. 8). In this study, those raw scores were used to form inferential statistics. This quantitative research design provided a means for investigating relationships between independent and dependent variables.

Sampling Procedure

The sample for this study consisted of 60 postsecondary institutions in the United States. Data for this study were retrieved from the online Carnegie Classification of Institutions in Higher Education (2015a) database. Randomly selected from the this database, this study used 20 institutions classified as doctoral universities, 20 institutions classified as masters colleges/universities, and 20 institutions classified as baccalaureate colleges. On its website, the Carnegie Classification (2015a) system allows users to customize a search based on a number of variables. Using the variables outlined below, a list was generated then downloaded to Microsoft Excel. By using Microsoft Excel's random number generator feature, 20 institutions of each institution type was selected for the study.

Even though the Carnegie Classification (2015a) system divides United States institutions into nine individual regions, this report excluded what the Carnegie system label as outlying areas for institutions located in areas such as Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Guam. Additionally private, non-profit online universities, two-year colleges, and for-profit institutions were excluded from this study. Also excluded from this study were the United States Service Academies (i.e., West Point, the United States Airforce Academy, the United States Coast Guard Academy, and the United States Naval Academy). These institutions were excluded because not all have transfer admissions (i.e., U.S. Service Academies) or housing (i.e., private non-profit online universities, for-profit institutions, and two-year colleges). Institutions that have multiple satellite campuses were treated as separate institutions. For instance, if Indiana University

Bloomington and Indiana University Southeast were randomly chosen, each was considered as a separate institution. These institutions often have their own president or chancellor and their own governing bodies, policies, and admissions standards.

Variables

The primary purpose of this study is to examine the services that postsecondary institutions provide to freshmen students and determine whether or not there are statistical differences between the services provided to transfer students. The first four research questions seek to determine whether or not statistical differences exist. For these questions, the independent variables are the student category, institution type, geographical location, and institution size, respectively. The dependent variable in the first three research question is the type of services offered.

Independent Variables

In order to determine whether or not statistically significant differences exist, this study examined various independent variables in efforts to make statistical inferences. A total of seven independent variables were examined.

Student category. In this study, student category was defined as either freshman student or transfer student. Although different institutions may have varying degrees of the definition of a freshman, generally a freshman student is a student who is matriculating in a postsecondary institution for the first time. Students who earn college credit while concurrently enrolled in high school and later enrolls in a postsecondary institution was classified a freshman student. Conversely, a transfer student is a student who has previously matriculated in a postsecondary institution, ceased attending that institution, and later transferred to another institution. As it

relates to data collection, this study must rely on the metrics each individual institution uses to determine what is a freshman and what is a transfer student.

Institution type. For the purposes of this study, institution type follows the definition set by the Carnegie Classification (2015a) system. The three institution types used in this study were

- doctoral universities
- master's colleges and universities, and
- baccalaureate colleges.

Even though the Carnegie Classification system has subcategories for these types, for the purposes of this study, only the primary category was used. For instance, the Carnegie system subdivides doctoral universities into three tiers based on research activity while master's colleges and universities are subdivided into three categories based on the size of the institutions' programs.

Doctoral universities. Based on the Carnegie Classification system, a doctoral institution awarded at least 20 research doctoral degrees during the update year. Special focus institutions and Tribal colleges were not included in this category (Carnegie Classification, 2015a).

Master's colleges and universities. According to the Carnegie Classification, institutions in this category "[generally award] at least 50 masters degrees and fewer than 20 doctoral degrees during the update year" (Carnegie Classification, 2015a, para. 4).

***Baccalaureate colleges*.** Institutions in this category "include institutions where baccalaureate or higher degrees represent at least 50 percent of all degrees by where fewer than 50 master's degrees or 20 doctoral degrees were awarded during the update year" (Carnegie Classification, 2015a, para. 6).

Table 1

2015 Carnegie Classification System Geographic Regions

Region Name	US States
New England	CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT
Mid East	DE, DC, MD, NJ, NY, PA
Great Lakes	IL, IN, MI, OH, WI
Plains	IA, KS, MN, MO, NE, ND, SD
Southeast	AL, AR, FL, GA, KY, LA, MS, NC, SC, TN, VA, WV
Southwest	AZ, NM, OK, TX
Rocky Mountains	CO, ID, MT, UT, WY
Far West	AK, CA, HI, NV, OR, WA

Geographical regions. Table 1 shows the 2015 Carnegie Classification geographical regions. This system subdivides institutions into nine various geographical regions. As previously noted, this research excluded what the Carnegie system labels as outlying areas for institutions located in areas such as Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Guam.

Institution size. The final independent variable studied was institution size. The 2015 Carnegie classification system states "for institutions with both undergraduate and graduate students, institutions are grouped according to the distribution of full-time equivalent (FTE) students across the two levels, giving an approximate measure of the student populations 'center of gravity' year" (Carnegie Classification, 2015b, para 1). The enrollment numbers used in this study are based on the Fall 2015 academic year. In this study, these institutions were subdivided by enrollment size (Table 2).

Table 2

2015 Carnegie Classification System Institution Size

Institution Size	Enrollment
Small	< 5,000
Medium	5,000-12,000
Large	> 12,000

Dependent Variables

The types of services that each institution offers served as the dependent variable in this study. For the purposes of this study, services offered specifically refers to academic advising, housing, and peer mentoring. While each of these terms may have general definition, this study followed the definition that institutions use.

Housing. For the purpose of this study, dedicated housing was determined by information obtained from the institution's webpage. Any institution used in this study that provides college/university housing designed for freshman or transfer student was classified as dedicated housing.

Peer mentoring. In this study, peer mentoring was defined as a specific service provided by the institution in which students serve as a mentor to another student or a group of students. Additionally, in this study, the service must be provided by the institution. There are instances where schools/colleges/divisions within an institution provide such services, but in this study, they were not considered services. Townsend and Wilson (2006) illustrated that students desired to "to have heard from someone that had actually gone through or is going through [being a transfer student] versus someone that is teaching about it" (p. 445). Grites (2013) found that transfer students are often unconfident, in part, because of the "invisibility of the peer group and the lack of transfer student engagement" (p. 62). Transfer students attend their first classes and

are not aware of other transfer students because they assume most other students are native students.

Advising. For the purpose of this study, advising had two connotations. The advising service is considered freshman advising if the institution mandates that freshmen students meet with their academic advisors. For transfer students, transfer advising services are advisors whose responsibilities is to guide transfer students through the entire transfer process.

Townsend and Wilson (2006) noted that transfer students often felt they had to learn things on their own before, during, and after the transfer process. Furthermore, these students noted that they did attend transfer orientation, but upon the completion of orientation, such services were not easily accessible.

Data Collection

Information collected directly from each institution's website were used for data collection. As previously noted in this proposal, the services being examined were

- academic advising,
- peer mentoring, and
- housing.

To determine whether an institution offers each specific service for each specific student group, one of two methods were used: Method A or Method B.

Method A

The A–Z index, which is often found on the institutions' websites, was utilized. Multiple strategies were used. Once on the index, I went to M for mentoring to view information available on peer mentoring. Similarly I, went to H for housing and/or r for residential life to review information on housing, then A for academic advising or advising services to review advising

information. Additionally, I went to T for transfer services to determine if all relevant services related to transfer services were housed under a transfer student directory.

Method B

If the institution did not provide an index or if Method A was unsuccessful, a more robust approach will be used. The search feature found on the website was utilized, and a search term for each search was used. For instance "transfer student peer mentoring" or "freshman housing" was used. Only the first two pages of the results were reviewed.

Because data used in this study came directly from the institutions' website, no permission from the institutions studied was necessary. Information from websites are considered public domain, thus not requiring prior approval.

Instrumentation

The Appendix illustrates the instrument that was created to collect the data for this study. A simple scoring system was used to record whether or not an institution offers a specific service. If an institution offered a given service, the number 1 was entered; if the institution did not offer a given service, the number 0 was entered. The sum of freshman total and transfer total was used to determine whether there is a statistically difference between the two groups. When all of the data were collected, they were entered into the SPSS statistical software for analysis.

Ethical Considerations

This research involved minimum risk to the institutions studied. Because student data are not a factor in this study, no student information was collected; therefore, there were not any risks to students enrolled at these institutions. During the data collection process, the name of the institution was recorded on the instrument found in the Appendix. In the final document, only the raw score total was published.

Analysis of Data

Research Questions 1–4 sought to determine whether or not there were statistically significant differences between the various groups. The data collection instrument yielded a sum of total services offered to freshman students and the total services offered to transfer students. An independent measures *t* test was used to determine whether statistically significant differences exist. *t* tests are best when two separate scores are obtained for each individual in the sample (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2013). Inferential statistics were also used to quantify the descriptive statistics and to determine whether or not statistically significant differences existed. A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to determine whether significant differences existed between institution type and to determine whether significant differences existed between the three ranges of institution sizes and geographic regions. Field (2015) noted that one-way ANOVAs are used when comparing the means of more than two groups.

Research Questions 5–7 sought to determine which services are most prevalent and which services are least prevalent between the groups. Descriptive statistics were used to answer these research questions. Descriptive statistics are techniques that take raw scores and organize or summarize them in a form that is more manageable (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2013). Although the data collected in this study were not raw scores, numeric values were assigned to institutions based on the services made available to students. These values served as the basis of the descriptive statistics.

Summary

The purpose of Chapter 3 was to outline this study's methodology. This chapter reviewed the research questions and hypotheses. Following that section, the research design, including sampling procedure, independent, and dependent variables were described and identified. Additionally, the data collection methods and instrumentation were introduced. Finally, a discussion on data analysis was provided.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This chapter describes the results of the research performed to determine whether the postsecondary institutions used in this study provide similar services to transfer students when compared to freshman students. Specifically, the research questions that guided this study were

1. Is there a significant difference between the total number of services available to freshmen students when compared to transfer students?

    $H_0$1. There is not a statistically significant difference between the total number of services available to freshmen compared to transfer students.

2. Is there a significant difference between institution type and the services provided to freshman and transfer students?

    $H_0$2. There is not a statistically significant difference between institution type and the services provided to freshman and transfer students.

3. Is there a significant difference between institution size and the services provided to freshman and transfer students?

    $H_0$3. There is not a statistically significant difference between institution size and the services provided to freshman and transfer students.

4. Is there a significant difference between the institutions' region and the services provided to freshman and transfer students?

   $H_0$4. There is not a statistically significant difference between the institutions' region and the services provided to freshman and transfer students

5. What are the most prevalent and least prevalent services by institution type?
6. What are the most prevalent and least prevalent services by institution region?
7. What are the most prevalent and least prevalent services by student type?

This chapter is organized in four sections. In the first section, a review of the study data is provided. This review includes a description of the sample used in this study, along with how each variable was distributed. The results of the inferential findings are next, followed by the results of descriptive findings. This chapter concludes with a chapter summary.

Study Data

This study used a single sample of 60 randomly selected postsecondary institutions from the United States. Data from these institutions were retrieved from the online Carnegie Classification (2015a) database. This study used 20 institutions classified as doctoral universities, 20 institutions classified as master's colleges/universities, and 20 institutions classified as baccalaureate colleges. These institutions were further grouped by enrollment size (Table 3) and geographic region (Table 4). Table 5 illustrates an overview of services provided.

Table 3

Frequency of Institutions Used in Study Grouped By Enrollment Size

Institution Size	Frequency (*n*)	Percent(%)
Small	30	50.0
Medium	16	53.3
Large	14	46.7

Table 4

Frequency of Institutions Used in Study Grouped By Geographical Region

Institution Region	Frequency (*n*)	Percent(%)
New England	6	10.0
Mid East	9	15.0
Great Lakes	7	11.7
Plains	8	13.3
South East	6	26.7
South West	6	10.0
Rocky Mountains	3	5.0
Far West	5	8.3

Table 5

Distribution of Services Provided Grouped by Student Type

		Academic Advising		Peer Mentoring		Housing	
Student Type	Total Services	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
Freshman	117	40	26.5	41	27.1	36	23.8
Transfer	34	10	6.6	9	6.0	15	9.9
Totals	151	50	---	50	---	51	---

Private, non-profit online universities were excluded from this study. Because public institutions receive a large percentage of their funding from their respective state government

and the federal government, those institutions have a greater financial incentive to improve their retention and graduation rates. Additionally, two-year colleges and for-profit institutions were excluded from this study. Also excluded from this study were the United States Service Academies (i.e., West Point, the United States Airforce Academy, the United States Coast Guard Academy, and the United States Naval Academy). These institutions were excluded because not all have transfer admissions (e.g., U.S. Service Academies) or housing (e.g., private non-profit online universities, for-profit institutions, and two-year colleges).

Data Collection

All of the data collected for this study were obtained via the institution's website. A raw score was given for each service that the institution offered and recorded on the data collection instrument. If an institution offered a specific service, a score of 1 was recorded; if the institution did not offer a specific service, a score of 0 was recorded. For example, if an institution offered freshman housing, freshman academic advising, and transfer housing, that institution's score would be a 3. Thus, the highest score an institution could receive was a 6 and the lowest score an institution could receive was a 0. After all of the data were collected, they were entered into SPSS for analysis

Inferential Findings

Research Question 1

Research Question 1 asked *is there a significant difference between the total number of services available to freshmen students when compared to transfer students?* An independent measures *t* test was conducted to determine if there was a statistically significant difference between the total number of services available to freshmen compared to transfer students. There was a statistically significant difference between the overall number of services provided to

freshman students and the overall number of services provided to transfer students at the .05 alpha level, $t(59) = 11.07$, $p < .05$ ($r^2 = .67$). Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected.

As shown Table 5, the sample institutions used in this study offered a total of 151 services. Institutions offered a total of 117 services to freshman students and a total of 34 services to transfer students. This represented a disproportionate amount, with freshman students receiving 77.4% of services provided while transfer students received only 22.5% of services offered (Figure 1).

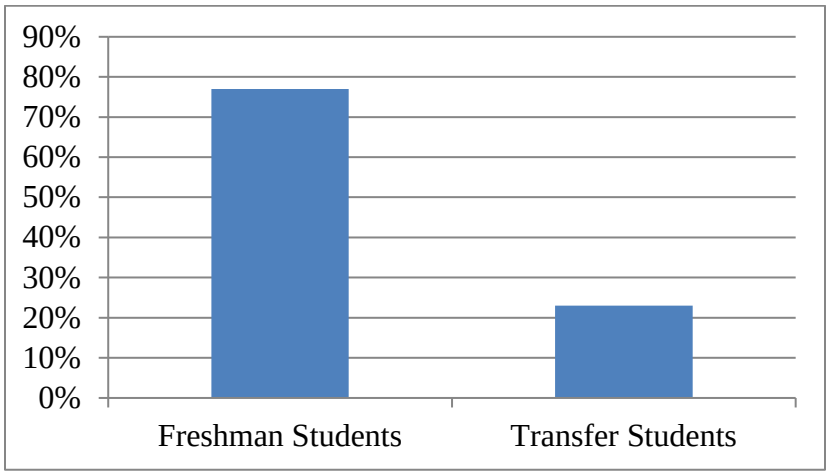

Figure 1. Distribution of services by percentage offered by institutions used in study.

Research Question 2

Research Question 2 asked *is there a significant difference between institution type and the services provided to freshman and transfer students?* A one-way ANOVA was conducted to determine if there was a statistically significant difference between institution type and the services provided to freshman and transfer students. Table 6 shows the sample as distributed by institution type.

Table 6

Distribution of Services Grouped by Institution Type

			Freshman				Transfer			
Institution Type	n	Total Services	Freshman Totals	%	M	SD	Transfer Totals	%	M	SD
Bachelor's	20	49	39	79.6	1.95	.69	10	20.4	.50	.76
Master's	20	56	42	75.0	2.10	.55	14	25.0	.70	.87
Doctoral	20	46	36	78.2	1.80	.70	10	21.7	.50	.69
Totals	60	151	117	---	---	---	34	---	---	---

There was not a statistically significant difference between institution type and the services provided to freshman and transfer students, $F(2, 57) = .24$, $p = .79$); thus, the null hypothesis was accepted. The ANOVA summary of the interaction between institution type and number of services is shown in Table 7. Figure 2 shows how the mean scores were distributed between each institution type.

Table 7

ANOVA Summary of Student Type and Institution Type

Source	*SS*	*df*	*MS*	*F*	*Sig*
Student Type	.53	2	0.27	.24	.79
Institution Type	64.5	7	1.13		
Total	65.03	9			

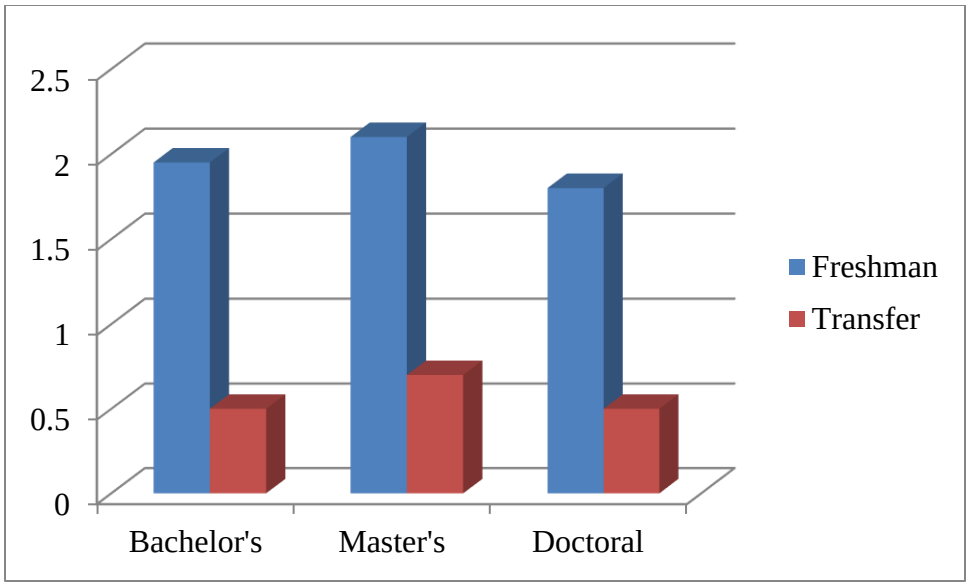

Figure 2. Distribution of mean scores based on institution type.

Research Question 3

Research Question 3 asked *is there a significant difference between institution size and the services provided to freshman and transfer students*? Table 8 illustrates how the institutions used in this study were distributed based on institution size along with a distribution of services based on student status.

Table 8

Frequency of Services Provided to Students Grouped by Institution Size

			Freshman				Transfer			
Institution Size	*n*	Total Services	Freshman Totals	%	*M*	*SD*	Transfer Totals	%	*M*	*SD*
Small	30	75	58	77.3	1.93	.64	17	22.7	.57	.82
Medium	16	46	36	78.0	2.25	.45	10	27.8	.63	.72
Large	14	30	23	76.7	1.64	.75	7	23.3	.50	.76
Totals	60	151	117	---	---	---	34	---	---	---

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to determine if there is there a significant difference between institution size and the services provided to freshman and transfer students. There was

not a statistically significant difference between institution size and the services provided to freshman and transfer students at the .05 alpha level, $F(2, 57) = 2.59$, $p = .08$; thus, the null hypothesis was accepted. The ANOVA summary of the interaction between institution size and number of services is shown in Table 9. Figure 3 shows the mean scores grouped by enrollment size.

Table 9

ANOVA Summary of Student Type and Institution Size

Source	*SS*	*df*	*MS*	*F*	*Sig*
Student Type	5.41	2	2.71	2.59	.08
Institution Size	59.57	57	1.05		
Total	64.98	59			

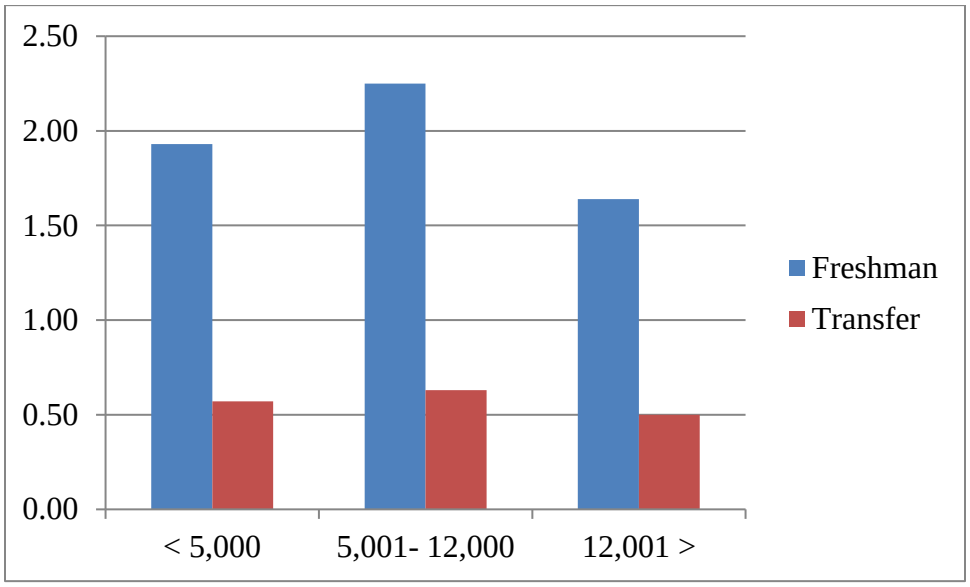

Figure 3. Mean scores of services grouped by institution enrollment size.

Research Question 4

Research Question 4 asked *is there a significant difference between the institutions' region and the services provided to freshman and transfer students*? A one-way ANOVA was conducted to determine if there a significant difference between the institutions' regions and the services provided to freshman and transfer students. There was not a statistically significant difference between the institutions' region and the services provided to freshman and transfer students, $F(7, 52) = .17$, $p = .99$; thus, the null hypothesis was accepted. The ANOVA summary of the interaction between institution region and the number of services is shown in Table 10.

Table 10

ANOVA Summary of Student Type and Institution's Region

Source	*SS*	*df*	*MS*	*F*	*Sig*
Student Type	1.43	7	.20	.17	.99
Institution's Region	63.56	52	1.22		
Total	64.98	59			

Figure 4 shows the mean number of services for each of the regions grouped by student status. Four of the eight (Plains, South West, Rocky Mountains, and Far West) provide services with a mean of two or greater for freshman students while the maximum mean number of services for transfer students is 1.00 (Plains and Far West).

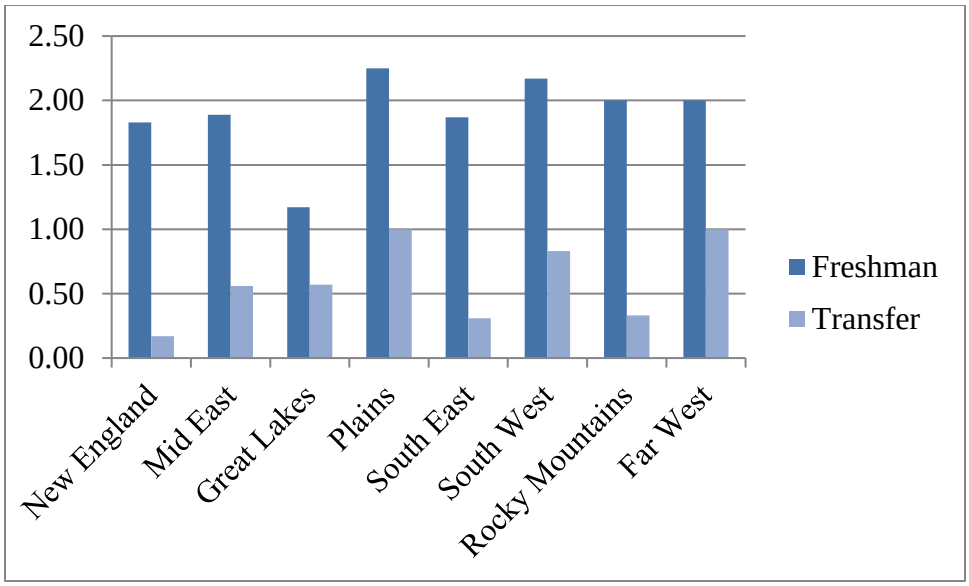

Figure 4. Mean scores of services grouped by institution region.

Descriptive Findings

Research Questions 5, 6, and 7 sought to answer questions related to prevalence of services provided to students, based on various independent variables. As previously noted, institutions used in this study (n = 60) provided a total of 151 services for all students. The data showed that three services—academic advising, peer mentoring, and housing—provided by the institutions in this study produced a small range of scores. The institutions provided 50 academic advising services and 50 peer mentoring services, each accounting for a cumulative of 33.1% of all services provided by institutions in this study and 51 housing services, which accounted for 33.8% of services provided (Figure 5). Although the specific type of service was nearly evenly distributed, a disproportionate number (77.4%) were offered to freshman students. Ten (16.7%) of the institutions in this study provided all three services to freshmen students. Of these 10 institutions, eight of them did not provide any services to transfer students.

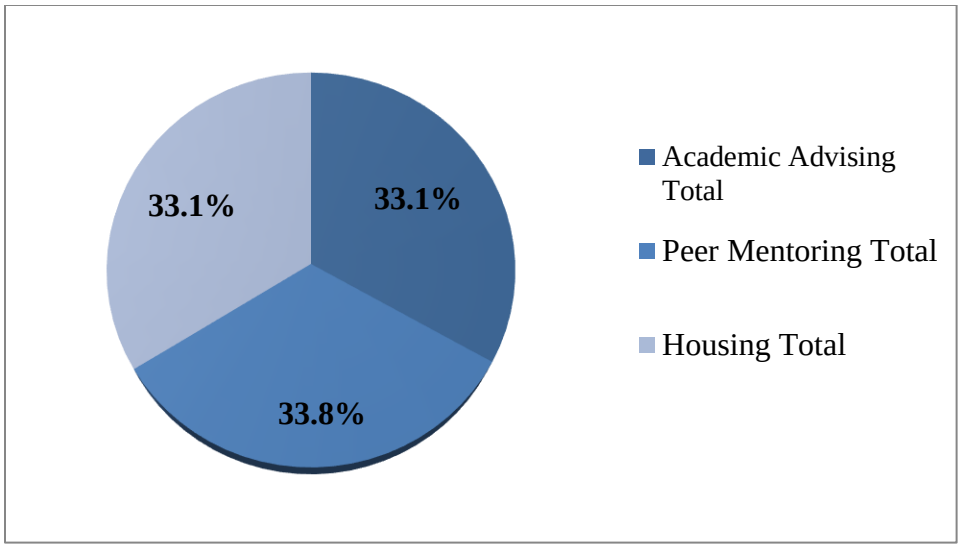

Figure 5. Distribution of services based on type of service.

None of the institutions used in this study scored a 6, thus none of the institutions provided each service to both freshman students and transfer students. Conversely, one institution scored a 0, thus it did not provide any service to either student group. Additionally, none of the institutions in this study offered more services to transfer students than to freshman students. Finally, 10 institutions offered two services to both freshman and transfer students. Of those 10, six provided identical services to both student groups: four institutions offered both academic advising and peer mentoring; two institutions offered academic advising and housing.

Research Question 5

Research Question 5 asked *what are the most prevalent and least prevalent services by institution type*? Table 11 provides the raw data of services provided by the sample institutions grouped by institution type used in this study.

Table 11

Frequency of Services Offered Grouped by Institution Type

Institution Type	*n*	Total Services	Academic Advising		Peer Mentoring		Housing	
			Total	*%*	Total	*%*	Total	*%*
Bachelor's	20	49	16	32.7	16	32.7	17	34.7
Master's	20	56	21	37.5	19	33.9	16	28.6
Doctoral	20	46	13	28.3	15	32.6	18	39.1
Totals	60	151	50	33.1	50	33.1	51	33.8

As shown by the data in the tables, each institution type was near evenly represented in this study. There is very little disparity between the total services by each of the institution types. The three institution types produced a relatively small range of scores (10). Additionally, there is very little disparity between the type of services offered, which also produced a very small range of scores (one). As a result of the small range of scores, very few discernable conclusions can be drawn.

Research Question 6

Research Question 6 asked *what are the most prevalent and least prevalent services by geographical region*? Table 12 shows how each service was distributed by region while Table 13 shows the mean services and the standard deviations of services. Because these regions, such as the Rocky Mountain and Far West regions, have a relatively small sample size, this presents a limitation that will be further addressed in the considerations offered in the following chapter.

Table 12

Frequency of Services Offered Grouped by Geographical Region

			Academic Advising		Peer Mentoring		Housing	
Institution Region	*n*	Total Services	Total	*%*	Total	*%*	Total	*%*
New England	6	12	3	25.0	4	33.3	5	41.7
Mid East	9	22	6	27.3	8	36.4	8	36.4
Great Lakes	7	16	6	37.5	6	37.5	4	25.0
Plains	8	26	10	38.4	8	30.8	8	30.8
South East	6	35	10	28.6	14	40.0	11	31.4
South West	6	18	6	33.3	4	22.2	8	44.4
Rocky Mountain	3	7	2	28.6	2	28.6	3	42.9
Far West	5	15	7	46.7	4	26.7	4	26.7
Totals	60	151	50	33.1	50	33.1	51	33.8

Although the fourth research question of this study revealed there are not any statistically significant differences between the institutions' regions and the services provided to freshman and transfer students, the descriptive data suggest that institutions in the western portion of the United States (Plains, South East, South West, Rocky Mountain, and Far West) offered a greater mean number of services to freshman students. However, no discernable pattern can be inferred for transfer students. Furthermore, the South East region shows the greatest disparity of services. Forty percent of the institutions in the South East region offered peer mentoring to students, while 28.6% of its institutions offered academic advising to its students.

Table 13

Mean and Standard Deviations of Services Grouped by Region

Institution Region	*n*	Total Services	Freshman Students *M*	Freshman Students *SD*	Transfer Students *M*	Transfer Students *SD*
New England	6	12	1.83	0.75	0.17	0.41
Mid East	9	22	1.89	0.93	0.56	0.73
Great Lakes	7	16	1.71	0.76	0.57	0.98
Plains	8	26	2.25	0.46	1.00	0.93
South East	6	35	1.87	0.62	0.31	0.60
South West	6	18	2.17	0.41	0.83	0.75
Rocky Mountain	3	7	2.00	1.00	0.33	0.57
Far West	5	15	2.00	0.00	1.00	1.00
Totals	60	151				

Research Question #7

Research Question 7 asked *what are the most prevalent and least prevalent services by student type?* Figure 6 provides a graphical illustration of services based on student type.

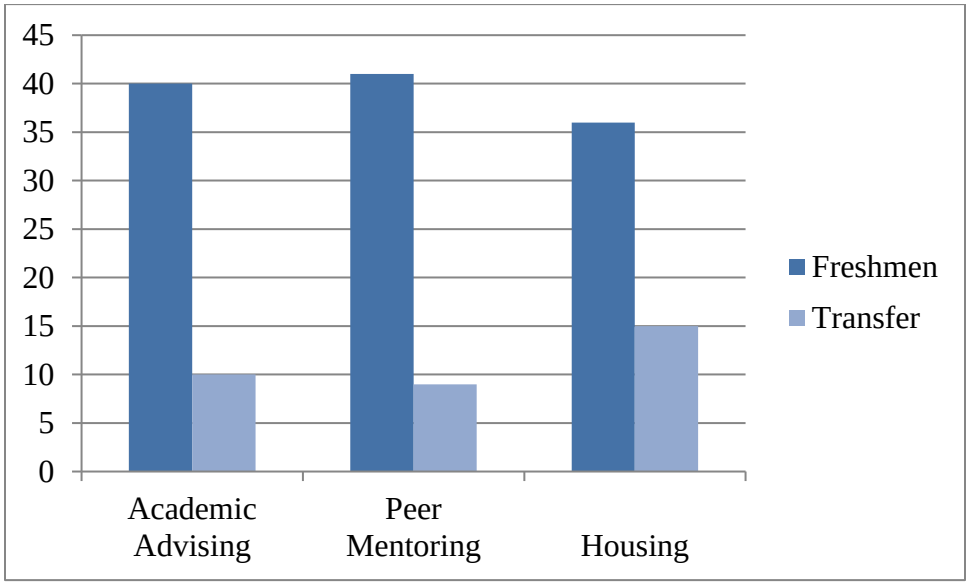

Figure 6. Distribution of services based on student type.

As previously stated, freshman students received a disproportionately high percentage of services by institutions in this study. Freshman students received 117 (77.5%) of the services offered by institutions. The institutions used in this study provided a near equal distribution of academic advising and peer mentoring services to freshmen students. Conversely, these two services were the least prevalent services provided to transfer students.

Summary of Results

The analysis of data collected via the websites of the postsecondary institutions used in this study show that there is a statistically significant difference between the total number of services available to freshmen compared to transfer students. These institutions provided nearly three times more services to freshmen students, though these institutions provided a near-equal distribution of academic advising, peer mentoring, and housing services to their students. This study suggests there are not any statistically significant differences in services provided between the type of institution, the region in which the institution is located, or the size of the institution. These research questions relied on inferential statistics, specifically an independent measures *t* test, and one-way ANOVA.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Postsecondary institutions in the United States are accountable for the success of their students. Success is often defined as the institution's ability to maintain acceptable retention, persistence, and graduation rates. These institutions continue to compete for funding from the federal government as well as their respective state governments. In the past, postsecondary institutions have received funding based on the number of full-time equivalent students that were enrolled at the beginning of the semester. Presently, the federal government, as well as the institutions' state governments use a formula to determine funding. This formula takes retention and graduation rates into consideration. To help ensure the success of their students, postsecondary institutions often devote numerous resources, such as academic advising, housing services, and peer mentoring to freshman students. Because the emphasis is placed on these students, transfer students rarely receive equal attention and resources (Bahr, 2012; Handel, 2013; Townsend & Wilson, 2006).

Because an increasing percentage of students use community college as an entry strategy in pursuing bachelor's degrees, the transfer student population continues to increase (Anderson et al.,2006; Bahr, 2012; de los Santos & Sutton, 2012; Fann, 2013; Handel, 2013; Herrera & Jain, 2013; Ma & Baum; 2016; Marling; 2013; McCormick, 2003; Nutting, 2011; Stewart & Martinello, 2012; Strempel; 2013; Thurmond, 2007; Tobolosky et al., 2014; Yang, 2006). In fact, more than half of institutions view transfer students as a vital component in meeting their

enrollment goals (National Association for College Admission Counseling, 2017). Despite the growing number of students who transfer to four-year institutions, Townsend and Wilson (2006) found that "for some students, [integrating into their new institution] might have been easier if they had received 'a hand to hold for a little bit' during their first few weeks or semester at the university" (p. 450).

The purpose of this study was to ascertain whether or not, based on information available on the institutions' websites, the institutions used in this study provide similar services to transfer students when compared to freshman students. In this study, service is defined as academic advising, peer mentoring, and housing. Only if these services were provided by the institution was it considered a service. In the instance where a specific unit, division, or college within the institution provided the service, it was not included in this study. The institutions' websites were used as these are considered the point of first access, and may influence decisions as to whether a potential student elects to attend the institution. The goal of this chapter is to summarize the results of this study. A discussion of each research question is provided.

Summary

This study used a single sample of 60 randomly selected postsecondary institutions from the United States. Data from these institutions were retrieved from the online Carnegie Classification (2015a) database. This study used 20 institutions classified as doctoral universities, 20 institutions classified as master's colleges/universities, and 20 institutions classified as baccalaureate colleges. This study tested seven research questions:

1. Is there a significant difference between the total number of services available to freshmen when compared to transfer students?

2. Is there a significant difference between institution type and the services provided to freshman and transfer students?
3. Is there a significant difference between institution size and the services provided to freshman and transfer students?
4. Is there a significant difference between the institution's region and the services provided to freshman and transfer students?
5. What are the most prevalent and least prevalent services by institution type?
6. What are the most prevalent and least prevalent services by institution region?
7. What are the most prevalent and least prevalent services by student type?

Discussion

Chapter 4 provided the results of the research questions from the previous section. This section provides a discussion of the findings. Research Questions 1, 2, 3, and 4 were analyzed using inferential statistics. Research questions 5, 6, and 7 were analyzed by using descriptive statistics of the independent variables presented in the first four research questions. To discuss the findings better, each discussion is grouped by the independent variables.

Discussion of Overall Services to Students

Research Question 1 asked *is there a significant difference between the total number of services available to freshmen students when compared to transfer students.* Tangentially, Research Question 7 asked *what are the most prevalent and least prevalent services by student type?* To ascertain whether or not significant differences exist, all services offered by each institution were tallied as a raw score. After obtaining the total scores, an independent measures *t* test was conducted to determine if there was a statistically significant difference between the total number of services available to freshmen compared to transfer students. The results

indicated there was a statistically significant difference between the overall number of services provided to freshman students and the overall number of services provided to transfer students $t(59) = 11.07$, $p < .05$ ($r^2 = .67$, $p < .05$). The 60 institutions used in this study provided a total of 151 services to their students. Of these services, 117 (77.4%) were provided to freshman students. This is alarming given the increasing number of students who begin their academic careers at community colleges. As presented in Chapter 2, prior studies on transfer students' experiences suggest that institutions continue to place their emphasis on first-year programs. For instance, in one study a transfer student noted, "I had to find everything on my own" (Townsend & Wilson, 2006, p. 446). This same study also found that transfer students often struggled with social integration at their new institutions. In other instances, personnel at the receiving institutions often have a "one-size-fits-all" expectation of transfer students (Grites, 2013, p. 63), with students expected to quickly acclimate themselves to campus culture. However, Grites (2013) also suggested that institutions tend to assume that because the students are transfer students, they are already familiar with the inner workings of higher education. The descriptive findings of this study align with Grites's assessment that institutions overvalue the knowledge gained from transfer students' prior college experience.

The results of Research Question 7 showed that there was little disparity between the services provided to freshman students. While peer mentoring accounted for 35% of services to freshmen students, academic advising accounted for 34.1% of services to freshmen students. Academic advising is a common tool that institutions use in student retention. Multiple studies (e.g., DeLaRosby, 2017; Finnie, Poirier, Bozkurt, Fricker, & Pavlic, 2017; Gordon & Habley, 2000, Walter & Seyedian, 2016) regarding the positive effects academic advising has on student success are consistent with Knapp and Krentler (2006) who described academic advising as one

of the many institutional factors that affect student satisfaction. Additionally, academic advising is one of the few resources on campus that provides all students with the opportunity of having a one-to-one interaction with an individual (Nutt, 2003). Nutt is also clear in pointing out that a successful academic advising program cannot be solely responsible for retention at an institution. Consequently, it might not be surprising that peer mentoring was a close second to academic advising in terms of the overall percentage of instances of offering. McCavit and Zellner (2016) reported that at one Midwestern university, academic advising and peer mentoring were used together in advising STEM students. Additionally, Taylor (2016) noted the positive effects that peer mentors have on a student's self-esteem and overall satisfaction with their major, thus aiding in retention. Finally, in an period where postsecondary institutions are competing for funding and resources, peer mentoring "represent[s] a cost-effective way for colleges and universities to meet educational goals and address retention issues" (Collier, 2017, p. 12).

While academic advising and peer mentoring are the most prevalent services for freshman students, they are the least prevalent for transfer students; academic advising accounted for 29.4% of services to transfer students while peer mentoring accounted for 26.7% of services for transfer students. These findings are consistent with current research that suggests transfer students do not receive equal consideration when compared to freshman students. Community colleges tend to focus on facilitating the process of transferring to the four-year institution (Utter, 2016); however, four-year institutions tend to focus on retention and persistence of students who began as first-time; full-time freshmen, thus there is a lack of support services for transfer students (Utter, 2016).

Discussion of Institution Size and Services Provided to Freshman and Transfer Students

Although it is typical to present research question discussion in the order the questions were researched, the discussion is most logically approached through a slight alteration. Therefore, Research Question 3 is examined preceding Research Question 2 hereafter. Research Question 3 asked *is there was a significant difference between institution size and the services provided to freshman and transfer students?* A one-way ANOVA determined there was not a statistically significant difference, F (2, 57) = 2.59, p = 08. The data used in this study makes it somewhat difficult to draw meaningful comparisons. As presented in Chapter 4, half of the institutions used in this study had an enrollment size of 5,000 students or less. These institutions provided a total of 75 (49.7%) services to students. As previously discussed, a limitation with this data is that total services represent a raw score; because institutions with 5,000 students or less represented nearly half of the institutions in this study, it is logical that these institutions would provide most of the services.

As an attempt to draw meaningful comparisons, services were converted to percentages. As Figure 7 shows, there is little disparity between how the percentage of services is distributed with the exception of housing. With regard to housing, a trend emerged from this study: the larger the institution size, the greater percentage of housing services was provided. This should not be surprising as larger student enrollment would suggest a greater number of students who reside on campus.

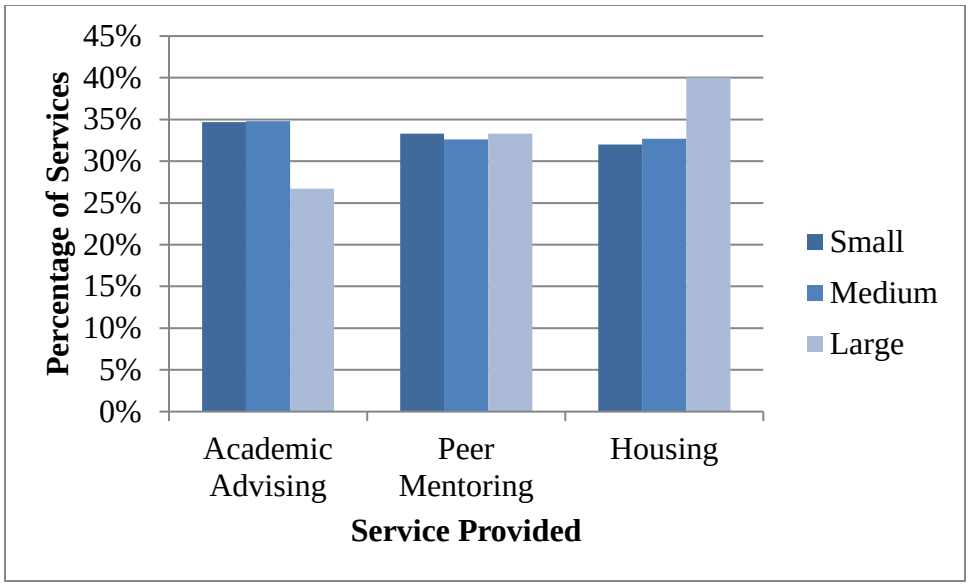

Figure 7. Distribution of services based on institution size.

In another attempt to draw meaningful comparisons, the mean of the services was also examined (see Figure 8). Institutions with enrollment greater than 12,000 had the lowest mean score for freshman services provided (M = 2.14) and the lowest mean score for transfer services (M = 1.64).

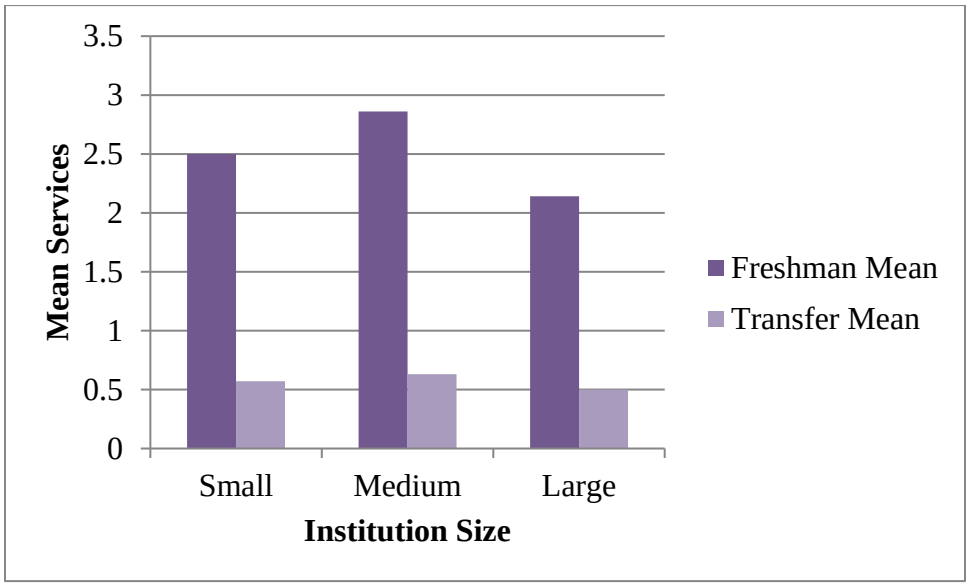

Figure 8. Mean scores of services to student group based on institution size.

Despite what these figures suggest, it is difficult to infer that student enrollment has a direct relationship on services provided to students. As of fall 2014 enrollment, doctoral institutions represent 7% of all postsecondary institutions in the United States, and they have 32% of all students enrolled in postsecondary institutions (Carnegie Classification, 2015c). As it pertains to this study, the lack of services to students enrolled in institutions with greater than 12,000 students can be attributed to the likelihood that an institution with this enrollment size is a doctoral institution. These data are consistent with the sample of institutions used in this study. Each of the 20 bachelor's degree-granting institutions used in this study had enrollments less than 5,000 students. Similarly, of the 20 doctoral institutions used in this study, 13 (65.0%) had enrollment greater than 12,000 students and seven (35.0%) had enrollment between 5,000 and 12,000 students. None of the doctoral institutions had an enrollment less than 5,000 students.

Overall, there is little research that compares services students receive and the size of the institution. As previously stated, there is a strong relationship between institution size and institution type. Future research that seeks to evaluate or examine services based on institution size should take into account other variables such as the students' entering achievement scores, high school GPA, student persistence, retention, and graduation rates, along with other variables.

Discussion of Institution Type and Services Provided to Students

Research Question 2 asked *if there a significant difference between institution type and the services provided to freshman and transfer students*? Research Question 5 asked *what are the most prevalent and least prevalent services by institution type*? In this study, institution type was based on the definitions used in the 2015 Carnegie Classification System. The three institution types used in this study were

- bachelor's institutions,

- master's institutions, and
- doctoral institutions.

A one-way ANOVA suggested there was not a statistically significant difference between institution type and the services provided to freshman and transfer students, $F(2, 57) = .24$, $p = .79$. This suggests that each of the three institution types do not do provide equal services. Doctoral institutions offered the fewest overall services to both freshman students and to transfer students. Based on the scoring system described in Chapter 4, a mean score of three indicates the institutions provided all three services to that respective student group. There is little disparity between bachelor's institutions (freshman M =1.95, SD = .69; transfer M = 0.50; SD = .76) and master's institutions (freshman M = 2.10; SD = .55; transfer M = .70; SD = .87). Doctoral institutions produced the lowest mean scores for both freshman students (M = 1.80; SD = .70) and transfer students (M = 0.50; SD = .69).

Multiple studies (e.g., Astin, 1993; Bean & Eaton, 2001; Demetriou & Schmitz-Sciborski, 2011; Dixon-Rayle & Chung, 2008; Hagedorn, 2012; Jensen, 2011; Komarraju, Musulkin, & Bhattacharya, 2010; Kuh et al., 2006; Lau, 2003; Nora et al., 2005; Tinto, 1975, 1982, 2012) suggested that student interaction with faculty is a dominant variable in student retention, but other studies suggest that students might not be experiencing this interaction. For instance, Gansemer-Topf, Saunders, Schuh, and Shelley (2004) reported that while students in larger institutions were involved socially in their institution, they often had less contact with faculty than students in smaller institutions. Similarly, Ziker (2014) reported that faculty members at one research-intensive institution spent less than 15% of their time doing activities with students. In a study of faculty at a mid-sized nursing school, Harrison (2009) stated "among

the responsibilities associated with faculty positions, student advising is likely to be given short shrift compared to teaching, research, and service" (para. 1).

In this study, academic advising was the least prevalent service, accounting for 28.3% of services provided by doctoral institutions, thus aligning with the research that suggests that students are not experiencing faculty interaction. This presents an interesting question: if students at doctoral institutions do not interact with faculty and these institutions provide the least amount of services, what resources do these students receive to help ensure their success? This is a rather complicated dichotomy. Although this study reviewed academic advising, it did not take into account who was performing the advising: professional academic advisors, faculty advisors, or a combination of both.

The connection between enrollment size and institution type was discussed in the previous section. Because doctoral institutions tend to have a large student enrollment, it is difficult to determine whether the institution's status or the institution's enrollment is the variable that affects the type of services provided. Further research may prove useful in resolving this issue.

In an attempt to contextualize these findings, cost of attendance was reviewed and compared to housing services. In the 2017–2018 academic year, the cost of attendance at master's institutions was the lowest of the three institution types (see Figure 9). Master's institutions also had the smallest percentage of housing services (28.6%). Conversely, doctoral institutions had the highest cost of attendance but also had the highest percentage (39.1%) of housing services. Social and academic integration are major components in Tinto's (1975, 1982, 2012) theory of student departure. In short, Tinto theorized that lack of appropriate social and academic integration were important contributors to student attrition. Bearing out the

suppositions in Tinto's theory, Pascarella, Terenzini, and Blimling (1994) were one set of the earliest researchers to recognize the important role housing and residential life play in the integration of students into campus culture. More recently, Gonyea, Graham, and Fernandez (2015) confirmed the roles of housing and residential life in finding that students who live on campus report having more opportunities to be involved socially, attend more campus activities, and have quality interaction with advisors and other staff members. Moreover, Demetriou and Schmitz-Sciborski (2011) pointed out that students who merely attend classes and then return home are less likely to be retained. Associated with the importance of housing and residential life, Kuh et al. (2006) further found that financial aid often has an impact on student success. Students who have a higher expected family contribution may receive less aid, thus making affordability of campus housing more difficult. By extension, it is logical that one might assume that students who must pay higher out-of-pocket expenses will spend more hours working, thus having minimum opportunities to integrate on campus. While there appears to be a relationship between cost of attendance and the percentage of housing services provided, further quantitative research should be conducted to determine the strength of this relationship.

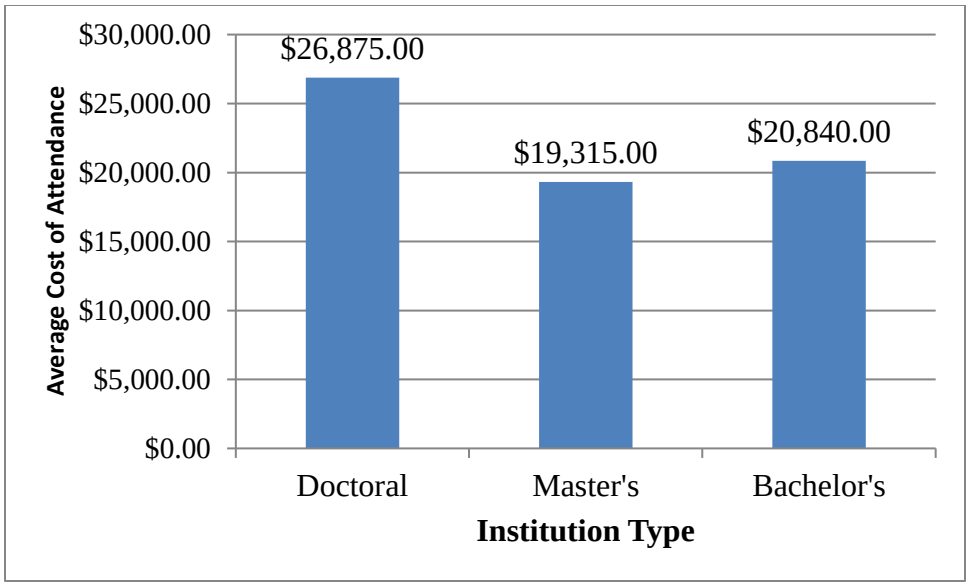

Figure 9. Average tuition, fees, and room and board. Adapted from "Trends in Higher Education" by CollegeBoard. Retrieved from https://trends.collegeboard.org/college-pricing/figures-tables/average-published-undergraduate-charges-sector-2017-18

Discussion of Institution Geographical Region and Services Provided to Students

Research Questions 4 and 6 investigated differences based on geographical region and services provided to freshman and transfer students. Specifically, research question 4 asked *is there a significant difference between the institution's region and the services provided to freshman and transfer students* and Research Question 6 asked *what are the most prevalent and least prevalent services by institution region?* The one-way ANOVA determined there was not a statistically significant difference between regions in terms of services provided, $F(7, 52) = .17$, $p = .99$. Despite no statistically significant differences in services to freshmen and transfer students between regions being found, consideration of the descriptive data related to specific regions does provide insights for consideration.

This study used a sample of 60 institutions with a total of eight geographical regions, as defined by the 2015 Carnegie Classification. Each region has a relatively small representation. For instance, the Rocky Mountain region, comprised of the states of Colorado, Idaho, Montana,

Utah, and Wyoming, contained only three institutions. This small representation makes drawing meaningful conclusions problematic. Examining the raw data as percentages helps address this issue. Chapter 4 revealed that the geographic regions of Far West (46.7%), Plains (38.4%), Great Lakes (37.5%,) and the South West (33.3%) had the highest percentages of academic advising services. These regions were followed fairly closely by the Rocky Mountain and South East regions (28.6%), followed by the Mid East region (27.3%), and finally the New England region (25.0%).

Related to peer mentoring, calculations reveal that the geographic regions of the South East (40.0%), Great Lakes (37.5%), Mid East (36.4%), and New England had the highest percentages for peer mentoring. These regions were followed by the Plains region (30.8%), the Rocky Mountain region (28.6%), the Far West (26.7%) region. Finally, the South West region had the lowest percentage for peer mentoring (22.2%).

Housing percentages by region were led by the South West (44.4%), Rocky Mountain (42.9%), New England (41.7%), and the Mid East (36.4%). Following these regions were the South East (31.4%), Plains (30.8%), and then the Far West (26.7%). Finally the Great Lakes had the lowest percentage for housing (25.0%).

To contextualize these findings, the demographics of the United States population were explored. The Southeast, which consists of Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia, and Far West regions, which consists of Alaska, California, Hawaii, Nevada, Oregon, and Washington, were the only two regions where collectively, the minority population is higher than the white population. As Figure 10 shows, the minority population in the South East region is approximately 52%, and the minority population in the Far West region is approximately 54%.

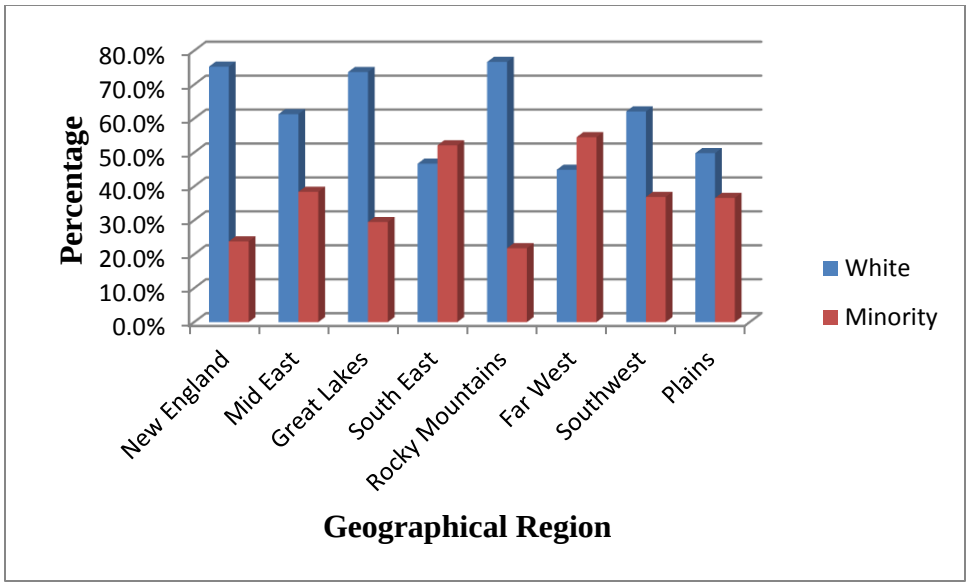

Figure 10. A comparison of white and minority population of each U.S. state within each geographical region. Adapted from "Population Distribution by Race/Ethnicity," by Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation (n.d). *Population Distribution by Race/Ethnicity.* Retrieved from https://www.kff.org/state-category/demographics-and-the-economy/population/

Research regarding the effects of peer mentoring on minority students is consistent. For example, Blackwell and Pinder (2014) showed lack of peer counseling is one of the barriers for minority students, especially if they are also first-generation students. Good, Halpin, and Halpin (2000) noted that peer mentors provide a vital role in improving campus climates. Additionally, their study found that students who share the same ethnicity and similar backgrounds to their mentors experience a sense of identity and belonging within their community. In the Far West region, it would appear that peer mentoring and housing, each representing 26.7% of the services provided, are services that this region should consider expanding, given the large number of minorities that reside in these two regions.

Conversely, peer mentoring accounted for 40% of all services provided by institutions in the Southeast region. This is interesting given that the largest percentage of historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) are located within the states in this region. Presently, there are

at least 83 four-year HBCUs in the United States, and at least 69 (83.1%) of these institutions are located in the Southeast geographical regions. Because the research presented earlier in the section suggests that peer mentoring is a valuable asset in student retention, it could be inferred that HBCUs rely heavily on this service. Unfortunately, because whether or not the institution was classified as a HBCU was not a variable in this study, such was not accounted; therefore, it not possible to discern the number of HBCUs that were used in this study.

The relationship between housing services, geographic region, and other institutions used in this study was explored. Students who live on campus have a higher likelihood of being academically and socially involved in their campuses (Pascarella et al., 1994) and this involvement leads to a higher likelihood in the students being retained. As previously stated, the South West and Rocky Mountain regions had the highest percentage of housing services and the Great Lakes and Far West regions had the lowest percentage of housing services. This finding is consistent with other findings in this study that revealed housing was the most prevalent of all services provided. In this study the Far West region and the Great Lake regions contained a total of 12 institutions. Of these institutions, only 2 (16.7%) were bachelor's institutions. The South West and the Rocky Mountain region contained a total of nine institutions. Of these institutions, 7 (77.7%) were doctoral institutions. Overall, a relationship between geographical region and housing services could not be identified. This represents a suggestion for future research.

Implications for Policy and Practice

Chapter 4 revealed that none of the institutions used in this study scored a six and provided each service to both freshman and transfer students. Additionally, none of the institutions in this study offered more services to transfer students than freshman students. Chapter 4 also revealed that transfer students receive only 22.5% of all services provided to

students. These findings are consistent with national trends in both public and private institutions (see Figure 11).

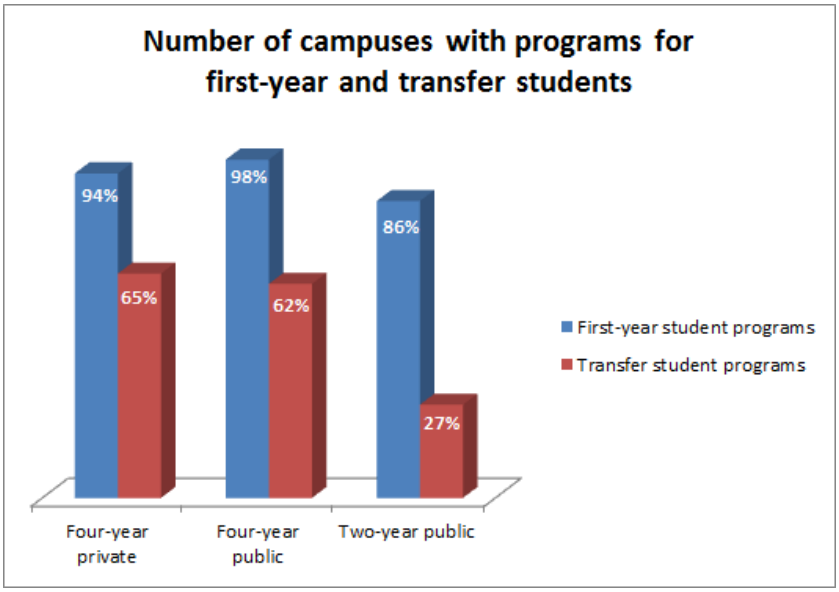

Figure 11. Number of campuses with programs for first-year and transfer students. Adapted from Panfil, J. (2014). *Are campuses supporting transfer students enough? A look at recent data*. Retrieved from http://blogem.ruffalonl.com/2014/01/28/data-point-support-college-transfer-students

Because goals such as recruiting talented students, improving student success and graduation rates are often part of their strategic planning, four-year institutions must include the success of transfer students as part of their strategic plans. Postsecondary institutions "need to consider the unique needs and contributions of [transfer students] during their strategic planning processes" (Handel & Strempel, 2016, p. 1).

Personnel at the Receiving Institution

To account better for the needs of transfer students, receiving institutions should consider investing in transfer student services. These services should begin during the admissions processes. By providing such services, the student will be better acclimated to various campus services. While transfer students often wish to know how their credits will transfer, this is often

resolved during or just after orientation. As previously stated, transfer students often report they need to find things on their own once they begin attending their new institutions. The transfer student services could help reduce this by providing services and resources during the transfer students' first year at their new institutions.

Transfer Orientation

To help ensure the success of students, institutions often provide some form of orientation for freshman students and transfer students (Schupp, 2009). However, freshmen students are often provided with an array of services beyond orientation. As stated by Townsend and Wilson (2006), efforts to acclimate students to their new campuses are often limited to a one-day orientation; an event that not all students attend. Schupp (2014) argued,

> . . . faculty, staff, and administration attempt to cram [financial aid, registration, receiving student IDs, etc.], along with several other lectures on curriculum prerequisites, understanding college culture, and the need to meet with your advisor into a one-day, non-mandatory event. Obviously there appears to be a disconnect between what students feel is most important to accomplish (their needs) and what the College (staff, administration, faculty) feels is most important to accomplish (what we think they need to learn). (para. 6)

Although many institutions provide transfer student orientation, unfortunately, this is one of the few dedicated experiences transfer students receive. Transfer students can certainly benefit from transfer orientation, institutions may operate under the assumption that transfer students are familiar with the operations of postsecondary education, thus assume they possess more knowledge than they actually do (Grites, 2013). Furthermore, transfer students sometime believe that because of their prior experience as students, they are familiar with the inner workings of

higher education. Specifically, Grites stated this "manifests itself in two primary ways: the invisibility of the peer group and the lack of transfer student engagement" (p. 62). To address further the needs of transfer students, institutions should consider establishing ongoing and continuous programs for all transfer students and specifically for minority students and other subpopulations. For example, Roscoe (2015) emphasized the effect that family has on the Hispanic belief system. Accordingly, institutions should have special orientation programs for Hispanic and Latino parents that target their needs (Torres, 2004). Programming to meet the needs of specific populations may ultimately support better integration into the campus, and promote retention and graduation rates. For African American students, campus involvement, cultural awareness, and self-efficacy have a higher impact on student success (Harrell, 2016).

Academic advising

In this study, only 10 (16.7%) institutions provided dedicated academic advising for transfer students. Postsecondary institutions should invest in personnel who are trained in issues related to transfer students. For instance, institutions may have advisors who specialize in advising subpopulations such as honors students, student athletes, students with disabilities, or underprepared students (Gordon & Habley, 2000); however, four-year institutions "need to consider the unique needs and contributions of [transfer students] during their strategic planning processes" (Handel & Strempel, 2016, p. 1). Roscoe (2015) recommended, "Administrations should consider the college experience from the underrepresented student's perspective and evaluate the current support systems in place" (pp. 51–52). Transfer students who are from minority populations represent an additional layer of complexity. As described in Chapter 2, transfer students must undergo the process of assimilating into the new campus culture. In addition to assimilating to the new culture, minority transfer students face additional obstacles

such as lack of family and social support, lack of financial support (Roscoe, 2015) or struggles with ethnic identity or cultural identity (Evans et al., 2010).

Peer mentoring

Only nine (15.0%) institutions in this study provided peer mentoring for transfer students. The level of campus involvement is often an indicator of whether or not a student is retained, and formalized mentoring programs provide opportunities to improve student retention (Torres, 2004). Because prior studies (e.g., Grites, 2013; Townsend, 2008; Townsend & Wilson, 2006) suggest that transfer students feel a lack of campus integration, four-year institutions should consider implementing peer mentoring programs for transfer students. It seems logical that the transfer students' prior experiences in higher education could serve as assets; therefore, the transfer student might not need as much mentoring as a first-time, full-time freshman students would; however, this does not preclude the need for such services to be offered. As previously stated, a transfer student who is a minority faces additional challenges. Minority students often benefit from peer mentoring programs (Roscoe, 2015). Because of the lack of minority role models, peer mentors are able to provide the support system that minority students tend to lack on college campuses (Good et al., 2000). The advantages of establishing a mentoring program are often two-way because the students who serve as mentors tend to improve academically, professionally, and personally (Good et al., 2000).

Housing

Of the 60 institutions used in this study, only 15 (25.0%) provided housing services for transfer students. Students who integrate within their campuses tend to be retained at a higher rate (Tinto, 1975, 1982, 2012). Individuals who live on campus tend to have higher interactions with other students, faculty, and advisors when compared to those who do not live on campus

(Gonyea et al., 2015). Residential campuses tend to have "stronger and more engaging cultures, which ultimately lead to higher persistence and graduation rates" (Ong, Petrova, & Spieler, 2013, p. 143). Particularly for institutions that offer themed housing, administrators should consider adding transfer students as one of those themes. These themes could incorporate many of the elements that are part of the previously discussed peer mentoring components.

In higher education, "degree completion is the true bottom line for college administrators, state legislators, parents, and most importantly, students" (Adelman, 1999, para. 4). As previously stated, an institution's state and federal funding is no longer, in part, based on persistence, retention, and graduation rates for first-time, full-time freshman students. The persistence, retention, and graduation rates of transfer students are now part of the funding formula. Consideration of the preceding recommendation may better support goal retention and graduation rates for institutions.

Future Research

This study sought to investigate whether postsecondary institutions provide similar services to transfer students as provided to freshman students. The services examined in this study were academic advising, peer mentoring, and housing. As previously mentioned, the goal of this study was not to measure outcomes; that is, the study did not seek to determine whether institutions that provided these services had stronger student persistence, retention, or graduation rates. Additionally, this study did not seek to measure the effectiveness of these services.

Furthermore, only three services were investigated in this study. Future research on this topic could study more services. These services may include scholarships, admissions services, or counseling. Another avenue for further study would be to limit this research to a specific state

or region. This study researched nine geographical regions, as defined by the 2015 Carnegie System. By focusing on a specific state, it is possible more relevant conclusions may be drawn.

Additionally, this study focused specifically on services provided to freshman and transfer students. Future research can further expand to account for services provided to other student groups. For instance, little research has been conducted on students who enroll part time at four-year institutions. Even though distance-education is on the rise, relatively little research has been conducted on these students as well. Additional research can also focus on students with disabilities, non-traditional students, or veteran students.

Finally, this research did not focus specifically on transfer students. Institutions should consider comprehensive research—both qualitative and quantitative—that relates specifically to transfer students at their institutions. This research should explore their backgrounds, their interests, and their strengths. Institutions often engage similar comprehensive, extensive data collection means for freshman students. These institutions should consider engaging in similar studies of their transfer students.

Limitations of Study

As noted in Chapter 3, an institution was considered offered a specific service only if the institution provided the services. There were instances where a specific unit, school, or college within the institution provided a specific service. For example, in one institution, the School of Business and the School of Nursing provided peer mentoring for students in those respective areas, but neither the School of Engineering nor the School of Communications provided peer mentoring. In these instances, the institution was considered not having the service. Whether a service was designated as being available to freshman or transfer students was sometimes vague. For instance, one institution indicated “all new students must receive academic advising.”

However, this statement was found on the institution's freshman admissions webpage. As is often the case in qualitative research, the researcher must often decide how to interpret vague statements. The data collected in this study were essentially self-reported by the institutions. The effectiveness of the services provided was not verified or confirmed.

An additional limitation of this study is that the results were based on what the institution self-reports. This study focused on what the institutions indicated they offered; it did not focus of whether or not these services were mandated. For instance, there was at least one institution in the study that mandated freshman students reside on campus. Conversely, at least one other institution indicated that freshman housing was available. This suggested that freshman students had the option of living in a residence hall designed for freshmen students. Similarly, this study merely addressed whether or not a service was offered; it did not address the number of students who took advantage of these services.

Information provided on the institutions' websites was sometimes not clear or it was vague. For example, at least one institution stated "all new students are required to live in a university-sponsored housing." The language of new student created issues. This implies that if a student transferred to the institution, because the student was new, living on campus was required. If this was the case, it did not specify whether or not a transfer-themed housing was available. Another institution's website indicated "peer mentoring is a resource available to students." Similarly, because it did not indicate whether it was specifically for a freshman or transfer student, it did not meet the definition of a service, as described in this study.

The relatively small sample size was another limitation of the study. Research questions three and six were related to the specific geographical region. This study reviewed eight geographical regions, as defined by the 2015 Carnegie Classification system. This resulted in

some regions having a very small sample size, thus making it difficult to draw accurate conclusions and comparisons.

Finally, the impact of these services was not considered in this study. For instance, an institution may indicate it provides housing for freshman, but this study did not seek to determine the effect of these services on student retention, persistence, or graduation. At least four institutions, while freshman housing was available, did not provide data on programming that were available to students who resided in freshman housing. Similarly, academic advising is a difficult term because institutions may define it differently. Some institutions require students to meet with an academic advisor, while other institutions mandate it. Similarly, the outcomes of the impact of academic advising on student success were not evaluated

Summary

Postsecondary institutions compete for funding. Historically, the federal government and state governments allocated funding primarily based on the institutions' graduation rates of first-time, full-time freshman students. This funding formula now takes into account the graduation rates of transfer students. Additionally, postsecondary institutions continue to see an increasing number of students who begin their careers at community colleges prior to transferring. However, these institutions continue to invest their resources in ensuring the success of their freshman students. Therefore, the overall purpose of this study was to determine whether postsecondary institutions provide similar services to transfer students as they provide to freshman students. Institution size, type, and geographical region were some of the variables studied. This study found that postsecondary institutions provide more than three times the number of services to freshman students when compared to transfer students. This study suggested that there are not statistically significant differences between institution size and

services provided to freshman and transfer students. This study also suggested there are not statistically significant differences between institution type and services provided to freshman and transfer. However, there was a statistically significant difference between the overall number of services provided to freshmen students when compared to transfer students. A limitation of this study is that services provided was based on what the institution provided in their websites. It was not always clear whether the service was for freshmen students, transfer students, or both. Another limitation of this study is some variables such as geographical region produced a relatively small sample size. For future research, institutions should consider addressing the needs of the transfer as part of their strategic plans and explore investing in personnel trained in working with transfer students.

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