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Support and Retention: Exploring the Role of Mentoring Relationships and Social Capital between College Students and Student Affairs Professionals

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Education

in

Educational Leadership

by

Domenica Cimarusti Pearl

Committee in charge:

University of California, San Diego

Alan J. Daly, Chair

Carolyn Huie Hofstetter

California State University San Marcos

Patricia Stall

2013

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The Dissertation of Domenica Cimarusti Pearl is approved, and is acceptable in quality and form for publication on microfilm and electronically:

Chair

University of California, San Diego

California State University San Marcos

2013

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my bright and spirited children
Savina August, Audrey Joseph and Micah Dugan Giuseppe Pearl.

You are each remarkable human beings and I am so proud to be your mother.

Remember to always be yourself, lead with your heart,
have the courage to make a difference and never stop learning.
You *can* and *will* achieve greatness. I believe in you.

I love you *no matter what* my huckleberries!

EPIGRAPH

Forth too from the ship stepped Telemachus, and Athena led the way.

Homer, The Odyssey

As I got older and grew more interested in attending college, I had fewer direct ties to individuals who could help me navigate the path to university. This changed when I began doing yard work for an elderly man in my neighborhood.

One hot afternoon after losing a battle with a particularly vicious onslaught of weeds, I casually mentioned my desire to go to college. My employer, who had become more of a mentor at this point, insisted I meet some of his friends – one of whom happened to be a college counselor. I drank in the resources that flowed from the tie with the counselor and slowly gained insider knowledge and information that would enable me to apply and eventually be accepted into a college. I am the beneficiary of the strength of weak ties because I lost a hard-fought war with dandelions and made on offhand comment to a man for whom I did the proud work of labor.

Ties matter sometimes in ways we are not aware.

Alan J. Daly, Social Network Theory

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To my committee, Dr. Pat Stall and Dr. Carolyn "The Hoff" Hofstetter, thank you for putting up with me in classes, proofreading drafts, supporting me through my pregnancy and helping me to become a better scholar.

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VITA

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Support and Retention: Exploring the Role of Mentoring Relationships and Social Capital Between College Students and Student Affairs Professionals

by

Domenica Cimarusti Pearl

Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership

University of California, San Diego, 2013
California State University San Marcos, 2013

Alan J. Daly, Chair

The California State University system recently announced a long-term Graduation Initiative to increase the six-year graduation rate by 8%. As a result, close attention is being focused on ways to retain students at risk of leaving the university prior to graduation. Although it is generally acknowledged that mentoring programs promote college student success, little is known about informal mentoring relationships between Student Affairs practitioners and students and the influence these relationships have on college student persistence. Using emotional intelligence and social capital theory as a framework to explain the importance of meaningful relationships, this dissertation explored the literature on mentoring as a means to promote college student persistence. A two-phased explanatory mixed methods study was conducted to explore elements of social capital and emotional intelligence in mentoring relationships. A conceptual framework, intersectional model and an ideal mentor condition mentors can utilize as a means to facilitate college student retention are proposed. Implications for practice as well as future considerations are suggested.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

After World War II, 27% of baby boomers[1] graduated from college. In the United States today, 30% of young Americans are anticipated to earn a college degree. This means that in more than fifty years, the college graduation rate has increased by only 3% in the United States, while other nations have either exceeded or are catching up to this number (Hout, 2009). In 2009, the six-year average graduation rate of bachelor's students in the United States was 56% (National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS), 2012) suggesting roughly 44% of students enrolled in bachelor degree programs will drop out. Due to this alarming trend, attention must be focused on ways to retain students at risk of leaving the university prior to graduation.

In January 2010, the California State University (CSU) system announced a long-term Graduation Initiative with the goal of increasing CSU graduation rates. Former Chancellor of the CSU, Charles B. Reed stated, "The Obama Administration has set a goal for the United States to be the leader in college degree holders by the year 2020…The CSU graduates 90,000 students into the workforce each year, and we cannot reach this national goal without the CSU increasing the number of students that we graduate each year" (CSU Public Affairs, 2010, p. 1). The Graduation Initiative involves all twenty-three CSU campuses, and is expected to raise the six-year graduation rate 8% by 2016, as well as cut in half the existing gap in degree attainment by CSU's underrepresented students. Currently, the overall six-year graduation rate for the CSU is approximately 46%. The goal of the Graduation Initiative is to bring the graduation rate up to approximately 54%, which would match the national averages of similar

[1] A baby boomer is defined as a person born in the United States between 1946 and 1965 (Baby Boomer, 2011)

institutions (CSU Public Affairs, 2010).

A number of factors have been attributed to the decline in college student retention, some of which include academic difficulty, adjustment issues, lack of clear goals or commitment, poor integration into the college community (Tinto, 1993) and rising, unpredictable costs (Moore, Offenstein & Shulock, 2011). Oftentimes, it is interaction with faculty and staff that can positively affect the retention of students failing to acclimate to university life (Astin, 2006). Noel, Levitz and Saluri (1985) acknowledged,

> It is the people who come face-to-face with students on a regular basis who provide the positive growth experiences for students that enable them to identify their goals and talents and learn how to put them to use. The caring attitude of college personnel is viewed as the most potent retention force on a campus (p. 17).

According to Tinto (1993), institutions of higher education consist of two interrelated systems: academic and social. Tinto affirms that college student retention results from a combination of student personality, ambition, loyalty to the institution and most importantly, integration into the campus environment through academic and social experiences. Social experiences often include interaction with faculty. Interaction with faculty, either formal or informal, is essential to student retention and oftentimes these interactions provide shared benefits, such as overall academic development (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991), for both faculty and student. The social aspect of these interactions, or relationships, is the foundation of social networks (Lin, 1999) and the connections between individuals that carry social capital[2]. Furthermore, empirical research links

[2] Social Capital is defined as "investment in social relations with expected returns" (Lin, 1999, p. 30).

emotional intelligence[3] to quality and satisfaction of interpersonal relationships (Lopes, Salovey & Straus, 2003). Interpersonal relationships are necessary for students to become accustomed to college life (Hurtado, Carter & Spuler, 1996). Therefore, this research proposes to examine the effect social capital, specifically the relational components, has on the retention[4] of college students today.

With the establishment of Harvard University, the first American college in 1636, faculty members were empowered by the teaching philosophy of *in loco parentis* or, "in place of parents", where faculty living in the dormitories were given legal responsibility to act in the best interest of students and were free to regulate, mentor and discipline them as a parent (Komives & Woodard, 2003). Until the 1960s, *in loco parentis* was the philosophical foundation and legal doctrine of higher education policy and practice defining the relationships between universities, students and parents (Henning, 2007). Throughout the years, the role of the Student Affairs profession[5] has evolved from *in loco parentis* to what it is today – the anticipation and response to the needs of a diverse and constantly changing student body. With the continual transformation of undergraduate students, the importance of meaningful relationships has endured and remains a constant component of academic success.

---

[3] Emotional Intelligence is defined as "the ability to monitor one's own and other's feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions" (Salovey & Mayer, 1990, p. 189).

[4] Retention is defined as: "A student who enrolls in college and remains enrolled until degree completion" (Hagedorn, 2006, p.2). The terms *persistence* and *retention* will be used interchangeably throughout this dissertation.

[5] In higher education today, divisions of Student Affairs exist to anticipate, respond and support the needs of the student body by integrating student development theory, expanding the learning experiences of students and enhancing student engagement.

Statement of the Problem

The quality of relationships students establish with both academic staff and peers is essential to successful social integration and is crucial for student retention in higher education (Qualter, Whiteley, Morley & Dudiak, 2008). Failure to acclimate to university life is the most common reason for undergraduate students to leave the university (Parker, Summerfeld, Hogan & Majeski, 2004) and over 25% of first year students do not return to college for their sophomore year (Mangold, Bean, Adams, Schwab & Lynch, 2002; NCHEMS, 2008; Parker et al., 2004). According to Pascarella and Terenzini (1991, as cited in Reno, 2011), individuals who attend college are "better informed, more involved in civic activities, better able to handle life's ambiguities, happier, healthier, richer, and more likely to have their children get a college education" (p. 2). Further research demonstrates that individuals with an earned bachelor's degree have an occupational status advantage, are less likely to be unemployed, and will average higher net earnings over their counterparts with a high school diploma (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). Therefore, closing the performance gap and holding universities accountable must be a top state priority to ensure access to public higher education and student success (Moore et al., 2011).

Establishing a new social network, modifying existing relationships and learning how to function as an independent adult is difficult for college students and can take time. Oftentimes, students do not receive sufficient academic and social support in order to be successful in college. At the outset of the twenty-first century, rigid accountability measures, such as the Student Right to Know and Campus Security Act (1990), have focused educators' attention primarily on academic skills, rules and procedures.

However, a growing community of scholars and practitioners are striving to revive the "heart" of education, emphasizing that a caring culture is the foundation for authentic growth and learning. A caring culture is cultivated by meaningful relationships. As a result, universities are establishing mentoring programs[6] with the primary goal of increasing student persistence (Nora & Crisp, 2008).

Purpose of the Study

Current literature espouses that mentoring programs increase retention in higher education (Jacobi, 1991). Mentoring promotes goal and career achievement through support, reinforcement and emotional sustenance (Anderson & Shore, 2008) – all of which are means of helping students to recognize they are capable of succeeding (Nora & Crisp, 2008; Santos & Reigadas, 2005). However, we know little about what aspects of those relationships, particularly with Student Affairs professionals, are persuading students to remain in college. Few studies have explored the contribution of relational factors or the impact of personal characteristics of mentors on mentoring efficacy (Bernier, Larose & Soucy, 2005). While emotional intelligence and social capital literature point to the value of meaningful relationships for increasing student achievement, scholars have not yet conceptualized mentoring in terms of social capital and emotional intelligence. With retention efforts in mind, this research explored what educators and Student Affairs practitioners currently know about supportive relationships, which characteristics of those relationships affect the retention of college students and how colleges can increase retention by modeling these efforts. This study provides empirical and theoretical insight Student Affairs practitioners might consider

[6] In higher education, mentoring programs are often established in order connect an experienced faculty member with a student in order to enhance the student's educational, professional and personal growth.

when establishing and preserving mentoring relationships as a means to promote student retention.

Theoretical Framework

This study examined mentoring relationships as a means to influence college student retention using social capital theory. Social capital has been defined as a "set of resources rooted in relationships" (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998, p.243) or, the advantages an individual acquires through the social network in which they belong (Bourdieu, 1986). Social capital describes the benefits an individual receives from social connections and parallels with mentoring given both are structures in which individuals benefit from a relationship. Mentoring has the potential to provide students with the social capital needed to better navigate the university through outcomes, information exchange and trust (Hezlett & Gibson, 2007). Outcomes of a mentoring relationship can include confidence in goal setting, enhanced decision-making and problem solving capabilities. Knowledge exchange occurs with access to information, through a mentor, due to shared networks from more senior educators. Given that trust is developed through relationships, it is essential in order to establish open and honest communication and to learn from one another. Trust is a foundation to both social capital theory and mentoring in that it is essential for a successful mentorship to occur.

Individuals who interact with one another gain access to each other's embedded resources, constituting social capital. Therefore, connections between individuals hold social capital. Lin (1999) stated, "if it is assumed that social capital attempts to capture valued resources in social relations, network locations should facilitate, but not necessarily determine, access to better embedded resources" (p. 36). Unpacking social

capital theory illuminates knowledge about relationships, the way individuals interact with one another and the role it plays in college student retention.

Research Questions

This study explored the exchange of social capital between Student Affairs professionals and students through mentoring as a means to promote college student retention. The following research question and sub-questions were addressed: In what ways do mentoring relationships between Student Affairs professionals and students support or constrain the retention of college students?

a. To what degree do mentoring relationships foster social capital?
b. In what ways do students use 'mentoring social capital' to persist toward degree?
c. Do students perceive a relationship between a mentor's emotional intelligence and the quality of the mentoring relationship?

Overview of Methodology

In order to gain information regarding mentoring relationships between Student Affairs professionals and students, how those relationships affect the social capital of students and how social capital supports or constrains college student retention, a two-phased explanatory mixed methods approach was implemented (Creswell, 2008). The first phase of this study allowed the researcher to obtain quantitative results from senior-level undergraduate students at a medium size public university regarding demographic information and current mentoring relationships. The quantitative results provided the subjects for the research. Further analysis of the data took place in the second phase of this study through qualitative data collection in the form of one-on-one interviews with

both students and their identified mentors. The interviews provided an in-depth exploration of established mentoring relationships (Creswell, 2008) and focused on the specific characteristics of the student-mentor dynamic, as well as the social capital and emotional intelligence aspects of the relationship.

Significance of the Study

One of the most critical issues facing institutions of higher education today is the number of students failing to graduate (Mangold et al., 2002). Students in higher education are not progressing each year and something must be done to address this gap in achievement. From the emotional intelligence literature, the notion of meaningful relationships emerged as a predictor of student success. Although the characteristics of undergraduate students have evolved throughout the years, the notion of meaningful relationships has remained constant. Meaningful relationships can be developed through mentoring (Lee, 1999). Mentoring provides students with access to resources and information, trust through reciprocal personal interaction and motivational support (Jacobi, 1991). Mentorships offer students improved academic outcomes and the social capital necessary to effectively navigate the university (Stanton-Salazar, 2011).

Leadership implications. Akin to mentoring, "leadership is an emotion-laden process" (George, 2000, p. 1046). The ability to contribute to a mentoring relationship asserts that an individual has emotionally intelligent characteristics. Emotional intelligence is essential for 21st century leaders (Goleman, Boyatzis & McKee, 2002). Leaders with a high level of emotional intelligence generate conditions in an organization where information sharing, trust, risk-taking, and knowledge thrive (Goleman, Boyatzis & McKee, 2001). Emotionally intelligent leaders recognize an organization's culture is

defined by relationships and are flexible and understanding of others' perspectives – both of which are key characteristics of a mentor. Modern leadership skills depend on the ability to understand relationships and emotions, specifically emotions that deal with how one motivates and addresses the needs of others. Gardner and Stough (2002) explain:

> Successful leaders who are able to manage positive and negative emotions within themselves and within others are able to articulate a vision for the future, talk optimistically, provide encouragement, and meaning, stimulate in other new ways of doing things, encourage the expression of new ideas and intervene in problems before they become serious. Emotional management may underlie the ability of the leader to be inspirationally motivating and intellectually stimulating. (p.76)

Leaders who are trusted and maintain strong social ties are connected to staff performance, satisfaction and retention (Hezlett & Gibson, 2007). Given that emotions play a central role in the leadership process, leaders' emotional intelligence contributes directly to their effectiveness (Gardner & Stough, 2002). By taking a sincere interest in not only students, but staff as well, leaders exemplify care extending beyond their general job descriptions. Adopting an "open door policy" and serving as a role model promotes social capital within the institution (Gasman & Palmer, 2008). It is important for educational leaders to recognize that a culture of mentoring in the university environment is an expression of vitality (Zachary, 2005). By modeling the importance of mentoring relationships, leaders will improve the quality of mentoring programs on campus, thereby fostering authentic growth and learning in their organizations.

Social justice implications. A major component of emotional intelligence is empathy, the ability to understand and identify with individuals emotionally. Empathy is crucial to cultural awareness and human sensitivity (Goleman, 1998). Respecting the viewpoint of others and a positive attitude toward working with individuals from various

cultural groups are essential characteristics of a successful mentor. Therefore, in order to serve the needs of students from diverse cultural, racial, gender, and socioeconomic backgrounds, mentors must have both the desire and capacity to understand and care about the students they serve.

Gasman and Palmer (2008) discovered a link between students with encouraging faculty and academic success. Participants described the most beneficial faculty support came in the form of genuine concern for the personal and academic welfare of students and the empathy faculty displayed in order to maximize student potential. This not only increased the level of rapport between mentor and student, it helped connect students to the university, creating a much-needed community between students and faculty.

According to Bourdieu (1986), individuals from low-status demographic groups have less access to social capital than middle and upper class individuals from White backgrounds. Mentoring is a means to help increase social capital for historically underserved students by providing access to networks in which they otherwise would not have had access. Considering both emotional intelligence and social capital research, mentoring programs will enable students to form meaningful relationships with institutional agents. Such relationships have the potential to make the difference between students remaining in school or dropping out.

Limitations

One limitation to this study was the perception that the design did not allow for generalizability. Given the sample that only included participants gathered from one institution, it was possible to assume that the results were not generalizable to other colleges or universities. However, the data collected from this study can inform and

provide valuable insight to Student Affairs practitioners on the effects meaningful relationships have on college student retention. Additionally, the conceptual framework and ideal mentor model used in this study can be repeated at other higher education institutions.

The researcher's positionality also presented a limitation, as the researcher is currently the Associate Director of Undergraduate Advising Services at the research site. Although this position brings experience, perspective and direct access to student information and records, it also could have influenced the information students provided in their surveys and interviews. Therefore, the researcher employed two doctoral candidates to conduct the student and mentor interviews so as not to affect responses.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

This literature review summarizes research on the retention of college students through mentoring employing the theoretical framework of social capital.

The first section of Chapter Two provides a historical overview of social capital theory, accentuating its importance in providing individuals with resources needed to realize goals and the importance of relationships in social capital. Furthermore, the concept of relationship building within higher education, specifically in college Student Affairs, how social capital affects college student retention and mentoring as a form of social capital are explored. This section of the literature review demonstrates the potential social capital theory has in addressing the issue of college student retention and provides a lens in which to review mentoring relationships more deeply.

The second section of this chapter examines the mentoring of students from a higher education perspective. The history, key definitions and characteristics of mentoring are discussed as well as the importance of emotional intelligence in mentoring relationships and the impact mentoring has on college student retention. Chapter Two concludes with a conceptual framework model describing how relational resources utilized by mentors have a positive affect on college student retention.

Social Capital

The theory of social capital is credited to sociologists Pierre Bourdieu and James Coleman (Dika & Singh, 2002). Bourdieu (1986) defined social capital as an advantage an individual acquires through the social network in which they belong. Bourdieu emphasized that the cultural and economic standing of an individual depends on the size

of their network (Gasman & Palmer, 2008). Subsequently, Coleman (1988, 1990) found social capital to be a feature of social structure that facilitates actions of individuals due to the value of relationships, or ties, within that structure. Under this model, in order to succeed, individuals must understand trust, authority and social control (Coleman, 1988, 1990; Gasman & Palmer, 2008; Seibert, Kraimer & Liden, 2001). Both definitions accentuate the importance of social networks and that social capital provides individuals with resources they can utilize to realize goals (Dika & Singh, 2002). One such resource is the building of relationships (Coleman, 1988, 1990). As will be discussed, the heart of social capital is the relationship (Gross, 2011). Social capital can only exist within the formation of relationships between individuals (Coleman, 1988) and cannot be created by a single individual. Without the foundation of a relationship, developed through human interaction and networking, social capital is non-existent (Coleman, 1988; Gross, 2011).

The Importance of Relationships in Social Capital

Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998) defined social capital as "the sum of the actual and potential resources embedded within, available through, and derived from the network of relationships possessed by an individual or social unit" (p. 243). Thus, social capital is characterized as the benefits individuals receive through established relationships (Coleman, 1988). It supplies access to an exchange of information, knowledge and expertise through networking relationships between individuals (Moolenaar, Daly & Sleegers, 2012) and can be used to accomplish goals (Coleman, 1988).

Relationships are shaped through continuous exchange and are enhanced with higher levels of interaction. It is through these frequent interactions that individuals foster sociability, approval, and reputation – all assets of social capital leveraged through

relationships (Bourdieu, 1986; Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). Given that Student Affairs professionals have a unique opportunity to regularly interact with students, many opportunities to build relationships with students can present themselves.

Social Capital and Student Affairs

The Student Affairs movement is a twentieth century phenomenon that developed from the need to shift faculty participation in student matters to that of student responsibility (Nuss, 2003). In higher education today, divisions of Student Affairs exist to anticipate, respond and support the needs of a diverse and constantly changing student body by integrating student development theory, expanding the learning experiences of students and enhancing student engagement. Given that Student Affairs professionals perform a variety of tasks including, but not limited to, counseling, teaching, program development, and assessment, Student Affairs professionals are well positioned to build relationships and community with students that capitalize on student learning (Keeling, 2006).

Building the student community through relationships in higher education is extremely important to Student Affairs professionals as is evident in student development research (Astin, 1999; Tinto, 1975, 1993). Individuals often develop their social capital in school (Coleman, 1990). For this reason, exploring the concept of relationship building within higher education, specifically in Student Affairs, can be advantageous. According to Daly (2010), social capital is "an investment in a system's social relations through which the resources of other individuals can be accessed, borrowed or leveraged" (p. 4). It is the quality of these resources, or ties, in a social system that determines social capital opportunities and resource access (Coleman, 1988; Daly, 2010). Therefore,

enhancing student engagement and involvement has the potential to build the social capital of college students (Astin 2006, Avery & Daly, 2010).

Akin to the concept of social capital theory, Student Affairs practitioners are concerned with the embeddedness of students within the college community as this embeddedness has the potential to support or constrain student achievement (Moolenaar & Sleegers, 2010). In 1999, Lin presented the concept of embedded resources, that individuals who interact with one another share and provide access to each other's embedded resources, or social capital. Given that feelings of appreciation, respect, and friendship are generated from membership in a school culture, specifically in relationships between students and Student Affairs professionals, social capital theory is a valuable resource in the practice of Student Affairs (Bourdieu, 1986; Nahapiet & Ghosal, 1998) and in fostering opportunities to connect with students (Jensen, 2011).

Stanton-Salazar (2011) describes the type of relationship where an educator goes beyond helping a student to enhance their social capital to encouraging students to produce authentic change in the world as an "empowerment agent" (p. 7). Given that Student Affairs professionals have been portrayed as "agents of influence" (Ellis, 2009, p. 449), the relationship between a Student Affairs professional and a student can have a positive effect on the student's life through the relational system, or social capital, they create (Ellis, 2009) – consequently facilitating retention.

Social Capital and College Student Retention

The amount of research utilizing social capital as a theoretical framework in the field of college retention studies is on the rise. In recent years, the importance of social capital for student retention in higher education is being more widely acknowledged

(Jensen, 2011). The research on social capital in higher education implies that the presence of supportive connections between students and the institution result in higher graduation rates (Avery & Daly, 2010). In 2009, Wells confirmed that social capital had significant positive effects on the persistence of college students and Astin's (2006) research on degree completion predictors found the amount of social capital a student possesses significantly affects college graduation. Social capital was a stronger predictor than academic preparation and other personal factors.

Supportive relationships, such as those with faculty and staff, are considered important interpersonal ties and have been positively linked with retention (Astin, 2006; Dika & Singh, 2002; Muller, 2001) and academic achievement (Rhodes, 2002). According to Gasman and Palmer (2008), "the entire university community is responsible for deploying social capital in a way that promotes student persistence and retention" (p. 67). Furthermore,

> College and universities should encourage administrators and other personnel of the institution to go beyond their prescribed roles to support students' success. These individuals can support, encourage, guide, mentor, and serve as role models to students. This synergy will ensure that the campus is truly a supportive enclave and place a strong emphasis on creating an environment that values student persistence and success (p. 67).

Research on student success in K-12 education suggests that strong social relationships in schools play a critical role in improved student achievement (Daly & Finnegan, 2010; Moolenaar et al., 2012). However, student retention in higher education has not been analyzed from a social capital perspective. From a practitioner perspective, it is essential for college communities to work together to support student academic and non-academic success and achievement in the form of retention efforts. Keeling (2006)

affirms, “Successful learning happens in relationship – relationships with new ideas, new people, and new ways of achieving” (p.14, as cited in Ellis, 2009). DeBerard, Spielmans and Julka (2004) stated, “There is a consistent relationship between college academic achievement and retention, with higher performing students persisting in their studies to a greater degree than their lower achieving cohorts” (p. 67). The literature suggests Student Affairs professionals who establish meaningful relationships with their students may help increase both the social capital and retention of their students.

Mentoring

The History of Mentoring

The word mentor and the concept of mentoring are traced back to Greek myth of The Odyssey. Mentor was entrusted by Odysseus to guide and watch over his son, Telemachus, while he was fighting in the Trojan War. Odysseus was away for nearly twenty years so Mentor educated and shaped the character of Telemachus. Mentor’s role was magnified when the goddess of wisdom, courage and inspiration, Athena, took on Mentor’s form at crucial times in his life, spiritualizing their relationship (Homer, trans. 1998; Johnson, 1989). In The Odyssey, Mentor represented the transition from adolescence to adulthood in Telemachus’ life. In 1911, mentoring in higher education was studied by engineering faculty at the University of Michigan where in an effort to assist incoming students, they depicted a mentor as an individual with a larger role than just a role model or advisor (Aagaard & Hauer, 2003; Crisp, 2009; Johnson, 1989). A mentor also supports a student’s professional development by discussing their ambitions, limitations and accomplishments (Aagaard & Hauer, 2003). According to Jung (1958, as

cited in Johnson, 1989) mentors are present where, “insight, understanding, good advice, determination, planning etc. are needed but cannot be mustered on one’s own” (p. 71).

Mentoring Defined

Throughout the literature, the definition of a mentor varies in scope and breadth (Jacobi, 1991; Mullen, 1994; Nora & Crisp, 2008). The concept of mentoring is most commonly defined in the areas of business, psychology (Johnson, 2002) and education (Campbell & Campbell, 1997). In business, mentoring is frequently described as an organizational strategy to develop company employees and as a guidance mechanism for vocational advancement (Campbell & Campbell, 1997). In the field of psychology, mentoring is depicted as a personal relationship where an older, more experienced individual acts as a role model, guide and counselor of a young adult (Johnson, 2002).

The definition of mentoring is particularly ambiguous in the field of education. For example, Donaldson, Ensher and Grant-Vallone (2000) discerned two mentoring categories: career-related – where faculty advise students on vocational interests, and psycho-social – where faculty employ a role model function by providing the student with friendship, encouragement and someone with whom to identify. Conversely, Packard (2004) found that mentoring could not be generalized into a set of functions like career-related and psychosocial. Packard asserted that career mentoring was more helpful in facilitating persistence than mentoring with psychosocial components. Santos and Reigadas (2005) found mentoring to be a process in which high ranking and/or achieving individuals guide the academic and occupational development of students while providing access to available resources in order to be intellectually successful. Although the definitions differ, the research is consistent in that a robust mentoring

relationship is centered on the progress of the student, includes professional development opportunities, enhances the student's academic performance and the relationship is both personal and reciprocal (Aagaard & Hauer, 2003; Campbell & Campbell, 1997; Crisp & Cruz, 2009; Jacobi, 1991).

Formal and Informal Mentorships

Mentorships are described as either formal or informal (Campbell & Campbell, 1997; Chao, Walz & Gardner, 1992; Crisp & Cruz, 2009; Packard, 2004). The significant difference between formal and informal mentoring lies in the formation of the relationship (Chao et al., 1992). Formal mentoring programs are usually managed and sanctioned by a college or university and have been found to help to motivate students, improve study skills and assist with both personal and academic adjustment (Bernier et al., 2005; Jacobi, 1991; Tinto, 1993). Formal mentoring programs have also been revealed to "result in less identification, less relational comfort, less motivation for mentoring and ultimately less communication and interaction" than informal programs (Johnson, 2002, p.89.; Fagenson-Eland, Marks & Amendola, 1997).

Contrary to formal mentoring, informal mentoring is typically organic, spontaneous, and not officially organized by the institution. Moreover, informal mentoring has been found to promote positive self-identification and emotional security (Santos & Reigadas, 2005) in students and more effective and meaningful than formal mentorships (Johnson, 2002). Students involved in an informal mentoring relationship received slightly more vocational support (Chao et al., 1992) and received greater outcomes and satisfaction in relationships with their mentors than from their counterparts participating in formal mentorships (Johnson, 2002). Successful relationships are based

on common interests, frequent contact and relational attraction. Therefore, thriving mentorships are distinguished by shared expectations regarding the purpose and meaning of the relationship (Johnson, 2002).

It is important for students to cultivate a developmental network of individuals who take a genuine interest in their learning and success (Kram & Higgins, 2008). Similar to social networks, mentorships can be promoted; however when mandated they are less effective because their value is not established on trust, social ties and loyalty (Hezlett & Gibson, 2007).

Characteristics of Mentoring Relationships

The prominent characteristics of a mentorship include commitment and duration of the relationship, level of trust, benefits and homogeneity (Jacobi, 1991). Knowing these characteristics can help educators capitalize on what is working in order to replicate positive mentoring practices to establish meaningful relationships.

Duration and commitment. A typical mentoring relationship can last anywhere from three to ten years (Upcraft & Gardner, 1989). However, some formal university mentoring programs, such as mentorships designed for first-year students, only continue for one year (Jacobi, 1991). Chao et al. (1992) discovered that longer mentorships were associated with more significant results as mentoring relationships can often deepen with time. Motivation and a commitment to continuity by both the mentor and student are necessary for the mentorship to be successful (Rhodes, 2002). Frequency of contact is a significant aspect of mentoring relationships and is consistent with social network research in which social embeddedness, or frequency of contact with members of a

network, integrates participants into an encouraging community (Santos & Reigadas, 2005).

According to Allen and Eby (2008), the most common reported problems with unsuccessful mentorships are unmet expectations and mentor neglect, both of which stem from an absence of mentor commitment. Poteat, Shockley and Allen (2009) found that both mentors and mentees report maximum satisfaction in the mentorship when the commitment levels of both participants are mutually high. Furthermore, Allen and Eby (2008) asserted mentor commitment to positively influence the mentee's report of relationship quality.

Trust. Trust and intimacy signify the level in which mentors and students reveal emotional and intellectual information to one another (Hezlett & Gibson, 2007). The stage in which mentors and protégés are emotionally connected can significantly affect how the student benefits from the relationship (Cherniss, 2007). Mentoring in education has been described as a "one-to-one learning relationship" (Lester & Johnson, 1981, 1989, as cited in Jacobi, 1991, p. 513) and requires direct interaction and more than a shallow exchange of personal information (Jacobi, 1991). Trading of personal knowledge enables mentors to encourage students to think about the connection their education has to their personal lives (Light, 2001). The level of psychological connectedness between a mentor and student influences the amount of vocational and psychosocial information they will exchange (Mullen, 1994).

Benefits. It is a misconception of mentorships that only students only benefit from the association, as mentoring relationships are most often reciprocal (Higgins & Kram, 2001; Jacobi, 1991; Mullen, 1994). Students receive guidance and learn skills to

assist in navigating the university; mentors gain the valuable experience of facilitating learning on a personal level outside of the classroom and assisting the development of skills that can be translated back into the classroom (Salinitri, 2005). In 1963, Erik Erikson introduced the notion of generativity, an intangible reward a mentor obtains when assisting a protégé (Jacobi, 1991). Generativity involves an element of selflessness, making societal contributions with the welfare of future generations in mind (Jacobi, 1991; Rhodes, 2002). Additional benefits mentors can receive from the mentorship include assistance with workload, increased self-importance, enhanced leadership skills, friendship and sense of pride. Further, the positive reputation of the mentorship within organizations has been linked to the career advancement and success of both the mentor and mentee (Mullen, 1994).

Homogeneity. The literature is consistent regarding the importance of connecting students with mentors having the same ethnic background, gender or similar cultural values and vocations. A primary factor in establishing mentoring relationships is the ability in which both parties relate to each other (Mullen, 1994). Santos & Reigadas (2005) found homogeneity to be an essential quality of the mentor relationship and both mentors and mentees attach greater value to the relationship when they can personally identify and connect with one another. According to Lee (1999), mentors should take the time to learn about their student's culture and understand their viewpoints in order to have meaningful communication. Additionally, mentors "should develop a level of cultural competence that will enable them to effectively participate in either a cross-cultural or a uniracial mentoring relationship" (Lee, 1999, p. 40).

Women. Empirical comparisons of women in same-gender versus cross-gender mentorships have been researched. Women in same-gender mentorships are more likely to perceive their mentors as role models and opportunities for personal discussions are more available than in cross-gender mentorships (Mullen, 1994; Ragins & McFarlin, 1990). This is due to positive communication and comfort levels resulting from the ability to identify with one another. A principal concern of cross-gender mentorships is potential misinterpretation of the relationship as more than platonic (Mullen, 1994).

Historically disadvantaged students. In 2007, there was an 11% gap between the six-year average graduation rate of minority and White students in the United States (NCHEMS, 2009). Given that only 45% of degree seeking minority students earned a college degree, the significance of recognizing how mentoring programs affect historically disadvantaged students is crucial. Research has revealed shared traits with a mentor, such as ethnicity and socioeconomic status, fosters self-efficacy and motivates students (Gasman & Palmer, 2008). In a qualitative analysis of mentoring relationships and social capital at a traditionally Black public college, Gasman and Palmer (2008) interviewed eleven African American men in their junior or senior year entering the university through a program for academically under prepared students and persisted until graduation. In response to a question regarding access to role models and the influence it had on academic success, one student commented:

> I know one of the most important things, I've probably said this about a billion times already, is to get a mentor. You must get a mentor. Without a mentor, you're lost. Without anyone to look up to, it's like you don't have a sense of where you could be. One of the first things I got was a mentor around this campus…And once you start talking with mentors and socializing, you begin to understand…and start setting goals for yourself, and…then you can go from there, and whenever you need him, he'll be

> there. It's like a brotherly relationship, and also like a parental figure (p. 63).

For this student in particular, his mentor provided encouragement and guidance. Additional participants agreed with the significance of racial homogeneity at the university. Access to faculty and staff resembling the student body produced a supportive climate and rich source of social capital, which is positively related to retention (Gasman & Palmer, 2008).

Research confirms individuals with mentors are more skilled at overcoming advancement obstacles than those without mentors. Currently, colleges and universities are activating mentor programs with the objectives of recruiting nontraditional students, assisting with assimilation into college life, and improving academic and career prospects (Santos & Reigadas, 2005). The supportive connections established through social capital and mentoring provides students with the necessary skills needed to rise above difficult circumstances, realize potential, and flourish in college.

Mentoring as a Form of Social Capital

Social capital describes the benefits an individual receives from social connections. It parallels with the concept of mentoring given both are structures in which individuals benefit from a particular kind of relationship (Hezlett & Gibson, 2007) and both emphasize "the value of information stemming from different network configurations" (Hezlett & Gibson, 2007, p. 388). Individuals in strong mentoring relationships are prone to provide one another with greater information and assistance (Seibert et al., 2001).

An increased degree of student exposure and visibility is associated with mentoring relationships. Mentoring relationships can result in powerful decision makers becoming more knowledgeable about the student's potential resulting in an increase in the student's social capital (Dougherty & Dreher, 2007). It is not that the mentor is changing the capability level of their student; it is that mentors are making key people aware of their student's abilities. Therefore, given the degree of exposure and resource access mentors can provide students, mentoring facilitates the development of social capital (Lankau & Scandura, 2002; Thomas & Lankau, 2003).

Mentoring provides students with the social capital needed to navigate the university. Thus, individuals in mentoring roles have the opportunity to advocate for their students and connect them to the university community (Rhodes, 2002). From the mentoring and social capital literature, three shared concepts emerged, outcomes, trust and information exchange (Hezlett & Gibson, 2007).

Outcomes. Individuals involved in mentorships often gain career-related benefits. This is the very nature of social capital theory as students in mentoring relationships usually experience more favorable outcomes than their non-mentored counterparts, including career contentment, accelerated promotion rates, greater visibility, recognition and higher salaries (Hezlett & Gibson, 2007; Mullen, 1994).

A meaningful relationship with a mature faculty or staff member promotes college student development (Evans, Forney & Guido-DiBrito, 1998). When a mentored student is able to recognize and accept the importance of reciprocal relationships with others (Evans et al., 1998), outcomes of a mentorship can include confidence in goal

setting, enhanced decision-making and problem solving capabilities (Upcraft & Gardner, 1989).

Trust. Trust is rooted in the definition of mentoring, as it implies a personal relationship. However, little research has been conducted on the role of trust in understanding the characteristics of mentors (Hezlett & Gibson, 2007). In a study on mentor-protégé interpersonal relationships, Wanberg, Welsh and Hezlett (2003) found intimacy, the state of a mentoring relationship that is both personal and private, is achieved only through trust.

Trust is also a cornerstone in social capital theory. However, the role of trust varies in the literature (Hezlett & Gibson, 2007). According to Adler and Kwon (2002), "Some authors equate trust with social capital (Fukuyama, 1995, 1997), some see it as a source of social capital (Putnam, 1993), some see it as a form of social capital (Coleman 1988), and some see it as a collective asset resulting from social capital construed as a relational asset" (p. 26; Hezlett & Gibson, 2007; Lin, 1999). Although researchers disagree as to the precise relationship between trust and social capital, trust is certainly a significant element of both social capital and mentoring. Individuals are more likely to participate in a mentorship that is founded on trust.

Information exchange. The exchange of information is a key idea in both the mentoring and social capital literature. The social and performance information exchange between a student and mentor is collective and is a way for mentees to "self-socialize" – by gathering necessary information needed to adjust in an organization (Mullen, 1994). In some cases, having a mentor provides a student with access to

information shared in networks from more senior educators; meanwhile, the mentor can acquire information from the student's point of view (Hezlett & Gibson, 2007).

The Importance of Emotional Intelligence in Mentoring

Research has shown that there is a connection between emotional intelligence and quality of relationships (Goleman, 1998; Santos & Reigadas, 2005) and suggest educators participate in training to improve emotional intelligence skills, such as relationship building (Stone, Parker & Wood, 2005). Given that mentoring consists of emotionally connected relationships, it may be helpful that universities attend to the development of emotional intelligence skills of students and mentors as they relate to understanding, expressing and recognizing emotions in others that can motivate adaptive behavior (Salovey & Mayer, 1990), an important aspect of a college education (Light, 2001).

Goleman (1998) summarized the five elements of emotional intelligence as (1) self-awareness, the ability to recognize and understand your moods, emotions, and drives, as well as their effect on others; (2) self-regulation, the tendency to suspend judgment and to think before acting; (3) motivation, the inclination to pursue goals and a passion to work for reasons that go beyond wealth or rank; (4) empathy, understanding the emotional makeup of people and treating them according to their reactions; and (5) social skill, having the aptitude in managing relationships and building connections. All five elements of emotional intelligence underscore that relationships are essential and define the culture of an organization.

Salovey and Mayer (1990) originally defined emotional intelligence as "the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions" (p. 190). In 1997,

they revised the definition to include the manner in which individuals perceive, express, manage and understand emotion in both themselves and others (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). Furthermore, empirical research links emotional intelligence to quality and satisfaction of interpersonal relationships (Lopes et al., 2003). Interpersonal relationships are necessary for students to become accustomed to college life (Hurtado et al., 1996).

Astin (2006) found emotional health to be the only self-rated personal characteristic to have a positive effect on degree completion and Kingston (2008) found emotional factors influence academic performance and play an important role in a student's decision to remain in school. Students who persisted in their education were rated considerably higher than their counterparts on a broad range of social and emotional competencies such as emotion perception/utilization as well as in their ability to regulate others' emotions. Given that emotional intelligence is a key factor influencing the retention of college students (Qualter et al., 2008), developing competency in emotional intelligence may be a way for Student Affairs professionals to enhance their ability to support students through mentoring thereby increasing social capital and improving retention.

The Impact of Mentoring on Retention

Since the 1970s, American colleges and universities have acknowledged the importance of student retention (Hicks, 2005; Salinitri, 2005; Tinto 1975, 1993). Due to the Student Right to Know and Campus Security Act in 1990, federal law requires colleges and universities to disclose their retention and graduation rates (Astin, 2006; Mangold et al., 2002; Student Right To Know and Campus Security Act, 1990). This has substantially increased the retention efforts of colleges and universities across the nation.

The decline in college student retention has been attributed to academic difficulty, adjustment issues, lack of clear goals or commitment, poor integration into the college community (Tinto, 1993) and rising, unpredictable costs (Moore et al., 2011). Given that students are not receiving the adequate academic and social support necessary to be successful in college (Nora & Crisp, 2008) mentoring programs are being established predominantly with retention efforts in mind (Campbell & Campbell, 1997).

The impact of mentoring on retention and graduation rates has been broadly studied in recent years and overall results are encouraging. Promoting mentoring relationships fosters cooperation, enables trust and encourages educators to make a commitment to retention (Hezlett & Gibson, 2007). It also integrates students into these efforts. According to Vincent Tinto (1975), seminal researcher on college student retention, it is "the individual's integration into the academic and social systems of college that most directly relates to his [or her] continuance in that college" (p. 96). A student's positive interaction with their institution can predict persistence (Crisp & Cruz, 2009; Nora & Crisp, 2008; Tinto, 1993) and students involved in mentoring relationships are considerably less likely to drop out of college (Mangold et al., 2002; Nora & Crisp, 2008). In particular, mentoring is significant to the retention efforts of first year, at-risk[7] and first-generation[8] college students and can lead to improved grade point averages (Astin, 1999; Collier & Morgan, 2006; Pagan & Edwards-Wilson, 2002; Tinto, 1993).

According to Terenzini, Springer, Yaeger, Pascarella and Nora (1996) first-generation college students have lower degree aspirations, are less involved with peers

[7] The term "at-risk" student often refers to a student who is an ethnic minority, academically disadvantaged, disabled, of low socioeconomic status, and/or probationary students (Heisserer & Parette, 2002).
[8] A first-generation college student is defined as a student "whose parents had no education beyond high school" (U.S. Department of Education, 2001).

and teachers in high school, take longer to graduate, and receive less encouragement from their parents to attend college. In the last fifteen years, the amount of first-generation college students has considerably increased (McCarron & Inkelas, 2006). The motivational boost to attend college has been attributed to personal interest, intellectual curiosity and career advancement (Dennis, Phinney, & Chuateco, 2005).

While access to college has increased, the graduation rates have not. Colleges and universities are constantly searching for ways to facilitate the graduation of many unique populations, including first-generation students by focusing on conditions that promote student success. Mentors can make lucrative steps towards increased retention by enhancing conditions for student success, such as setting expectations, being emotionally supportive, providing feedback and encouraging involvement (Tinto, 2010). Utilizing mentoring programs as an intervention model for at-risk, first-generation or students with low proficiency levels can considerably affect student persistence (Salinitri, 2005).

The three stages of adjustment for college students include separation, transition and incorporation (Tinto, 1993). Separation involves moving away from the comfort of home and family for the first time, when students begin to question their values and need the support of a new community. The second stage, transition, involves the student's attempt at connecting to a new environment. The final stage, incorporation, entails the immersion into the social and academic community of the university. Immersion in particular, is the stage in which retention occurs (Tinto, 1993). Mentoring can assist with adjustment issues by providing support and community for students, necessary connections to campus staff and social engagement through a mentoring relationship.

The skills students learn as mentees strengthen their relationships throughout the organization, therefore resulting in a deeper connection to the university (Zachary, 2005). The more students view interactions on campus as positive, the more students will persist (Nora & Crisp, 2008; Tinto, 1993). Mentoring promotes goal and career achievement through support, reinforcement and emotional sustenance (Anderson & Shore, 2008) – all of which are means of helping students to recognize they are capable of succeeding (Nora & Crisp, 2008; Santos & Reigadas, 2005). Understanding the history and conditions of mentoring will help Student Affairs practitioners attend to the elements necessary for maintaining prosperous mentoring programs.

Summary

Although the definition of mentoring varies in the literature, the research is consistent in that the core of a robust mentoring relationship is the progress of the student. Given that "chemistry and personal commitment cannot be legislated" (Fagenson-Eland et al., 1997, p. 31), meaningful mentoring relationships should be facilitated, not designed. Similar to social capital, mentoring can be encouraged, but not forced as the relationship is established on trust and personal connections. Both social capital and mentoring are constructs in which individuals benefit from some form of a relationship and share three main concepts: outcomes, trust and information exchange (Hezlett & Gibson, 2007).

The majority of mentorships are comprised of the following characteristics: duration of the relationship, level of trust, benefits and homogeneity. Sustained mentorships have the ability to deepen over time and therefore are associated with outcomes that are more significant. The level of trust and intimacy between a mentor and

student influences the quality and quantity of exchanged information and affects how the student profits from the relationship. Mentoring relationships have reciprocal benefits and contain elements of career advancement and generativity. Additionally, homogenous relationships are important for students in order to connect to the university as they might share similar values, expectations and background with a member of the university culture. Knowing these successful mentoring characteristics will help Student Affairs practitioners capitalize on what is working and replicate positive mentoring practices in order to establish meaningful relationships.

By establishing collective relationships, the community of a university improves. Having emotionally intelligent qualities and the ability to understand relationships and emotions can help educators stimulate authentic growth and learning in higher education. The elements of emotional intelligence provide educators with the internal mechanism necessary to participate in healthy mentoring relationships. At the same time, social capital serves as the external component mentors need to advocate for their students and connect them to the university community. Having high emotional intelligence and valuable social capital nurtures positive student outcomes, trust and information exchange. The confluence of emotional intelligence and mentor commitment is how an influential mentorship occurs.

Salovey, Brackett and Mayer (2007) stated, "Emotional skills begin in the home with good parent-child interaction. Parents help children identify and label their emotions, to respect their feelings, and to begin to connect them to social situations" (p.43). This can be reinforced and sustained though positive mentorships in college. While *in loco parentis* is largely outdated, the reality is that students still need

meaningful relationships to be successful in college. With the development of positive person-to-person interactions, educators and students are motivated to work toward common goals, such as remaining in school (Goleman, 2006). A deeper look at relationships is necessary in order to acquire a more detailed understanding of what Student Affairs practitioners must do to nurture meaningful relationships with students.

Conceptual Framework Model

Figure 2.1 binds the research reviewed in Chapter Two, and offers a model of how emotional intelligence, mentor commitment and social capital, all relational elements, improve college student retention.

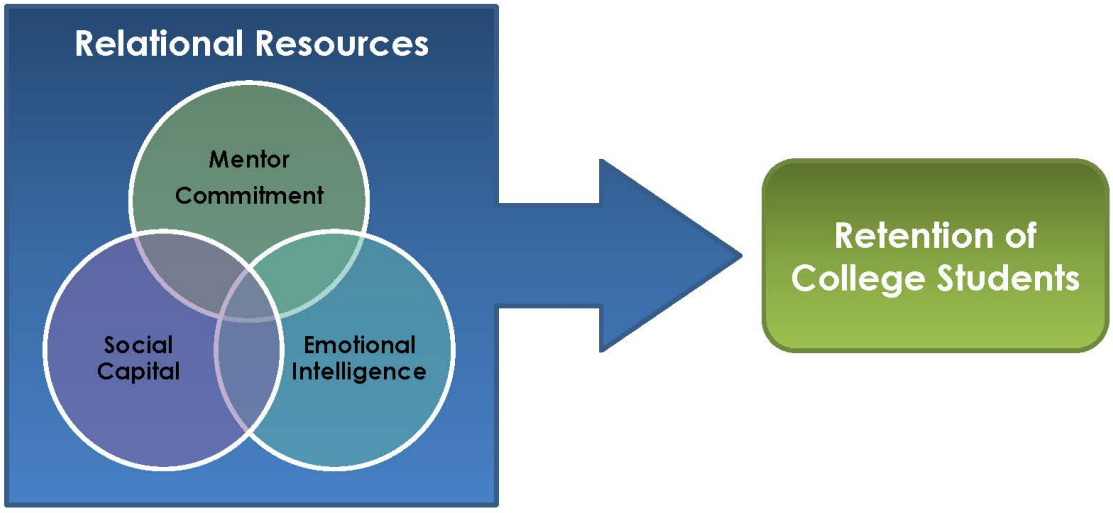


Figure 2.1. Conceptual Framework Model: Relational elements affecting the retention of college students. By combining emotional intelligence, mentor commitment and social capital, retention of college students occur.

Given that social capital affects college student retention, it is important for a mentor to have both high emotional intelligence and establish a supportive, committed relationship in order to contribute to a comprehensive and meaningful mentorship. Emotional intelligence accounts for the mentor's own capacity to care, empathize and

understand, while a meaningful relationship promotes persistence, fosters identity and helps students gain the necessary skills to navigate the university. Building this connection – or relationship capital – suggests the importance of social ties in improving academic outcomes (Coleman, 1988). As illustrated in *figure 2.1*, combining emotional intelligence, a mentor commitment and social capital can positively affect college student retention. Student Affairs practitioners must build their emotional intelligence, foster emotional intelligence in their students and strengthen their commitment to their mentoring relationships in order to affect the social capital of their mentees, thus developing the potential of thriving mentoring relationships, student connection to their campus and increasing retention.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

In order to better understand mentoring relationships between Student Affairs professionals and students, specifically how those relationships affect the social capital of students and how social capital supports or constrains college student retention, a two-phased explanatory mixed methods approach (Creswell, 2008) was utilized. Chapter Three will begin by explaining the purpose of the study and reviewing the research questions. Next, the importance of using an explanatory method, including details about both the quantitative and qualitative approaches is discussed. Subsequently, the selection of participants, as well as how the data was collected and analyzed are addressed. The chapter will conclude with the discovered limitations.

Purpose of the Study

The literature suggests that mentoring programs increase retention in higher education (Jacobi, 1991). However, we know little about what specific aspects of those relationships are persuading students to remain in college. Few studies have explored the contribution of relational factors or the impact of personal characteristics of mentors on mentoring efficacy (Bernier et al., 2005). While emotional intelligence and social capital literature point to the value of relationships for increasing student achievement, scholars have not yet conceptualized mentoring in terms of social capital and emotional intelligence, as related to retention. This research explored what educators and Student Affairs practitioners currently know about supportive relationships and which specific characteristics of those relationships affect the retention of college students. This research provides empirical and theoretical insight Student Affairs practitioners might

consider when establishing and preserving mentoring relationships as a means to promote student retention.

Research Questions

This study investigated the exchange of social capital between Student Affairs professionals and students through mentoring as a means to promote college student retention. The following research question and sub-questions were explored: In what ways do mentoring relationships between Student Affairs professionals and students support or constrain the retention of college students?

a. To what degree do mentoring relationships foster social capital?
b. In what ways do students use 'mentoring social capital' to persist toward degree?
c. Do students perceive a relationship between a mentor's emotional intelligence and the quality of the mentoring relationship?

Research Design

To answer the research questions, the researcher utilized a sequential explanatory mixed methods design (Creswell, 2008) to explore and analyze data regarding mentoring relationships between Student Affairs professionals and students. The researcher was drawn to the sequential explanatory design because of its straightforward implementation approach where two methods were conducted in separate phases and only one type of data was collected at a time (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) explain, "This design lends itself to emergent approaches where the second phase can be designed based on what is learned from the initial quantitative phase" (p.83). Given that human relationships are dynamic and complex, this design was selected in

order to collect both quantitative and qualitative data and provide both subjective and objective perspectives. A mixed methods approach "combines the rigor and precision of experimental quasi-experimental or correlation designs and quantitative data with the depth of understanding of qualitative methods and data. Thus, the methods can help inform one another or deal with different levels of analysis" (Rudestam & Newton, 2007, p.51). Furthermore, the mixed methods design divided the research into dichotomous categories: confirmation, the quantitative component and exploration, the qualitative component (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). This method provided useful and complementary information (Johnson & Christensen, 2012) on the research topic and expanded the scope and breadth of the results (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

This study consists of two sequential phases. The first phase allowed the researcher to obtain quantitative results from senior-level undergraduate students at a medium size public university. The quantitative results provided demographic characteristics and participants for the study, screening for target students indicating the existence of a mentoring relationship with a Student Affairs professional, rather than a faculty member.

The second phase of the study consisted of one-on-one focused interviews (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009) with both students and their identified mentors. The interviews provided an in-depth exploration (Creswell, 2008) of established mentoring relationships. The qualitative phase of this study was prioritized as both students and mentors were intended to provide in-depth explanation of the quantitative results regarding mentoring relationships. The researcher connected the phases using the results of the quantitative phase to inform the sampling and interview protocol of the qualitative phase.

Research site. This study was conducted at a medium size public institution of higher learning. In order to ensure privacy for all participants, "State University" or "SU" will be the pseudonym assigned to the research site. SU is one of the twenty-three campuses included in the California State University System offering bachelor and master degrees, as well as a doctorate in education through a joint program with a University of California. According to SU Institutional Planning and Analysis (2012), the undergraduate and graduate population of SU have a combined enrollment of 10, 276 students. Sixty-one percent of students are female, 39% are male and currently the percentage of transgender students is not published. The majority of students at SU identified themselves as White (39%), Latino/a (32.5%) or Asian/Pacific Islander (9.8%).

SU currently houses four colleges, the College of Business Administration, College of Education, Health, and Human Services, College of Humanities, Arts, Behavioral and Social Sciences and the College of Science and Mathematics. Given that the researcher is currently employed by SU, the site was chosen based on convenience and information accessibility. Due to the nature of the researcher's work in Undergraduate Advising Services, which provides exclusive knowledge and deep perspective of the student population, the researcher is uniquely qualified to conduct research at SU.

Quantitative Methodology: Phase One

Given the researcher's dual role as a student and an employee at SU with access to student data, in order to abide by The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act

(FERPA)[9] (1974) regulations, the researcher was required to obtain permission to access student information for research purposes. The Office of Information Technology and Project & Business Intelligence at SU (2012) provided a query of student data to the researcher that met the specific perimeters requested. The query included potential participants by name, student identification number, class level, grade point average, major and email address. The researcher sorted the data to isolate non-probationary[10] senior-level[11] undergraduate students. An electronic survey (Appendix A) was administered to the isolated population, reaching approximately 3,500 students.

This survey presented data from a large sample of students who have successfully persisted in their college education, determined by both units obtained and a grade point average of at least 2.0, or a "C" average. Demographic questions focused on age, gender, ethnicity, colleges attended and years of attendance at SU. Additional questions inquired about mentoring relationships, specific elements of the mentoring relationship, quality of mentoring relationships, effects of the mentorship on the student's social capital and the perceived emotional intelligence of the mentor. The survey concluded with a prompt for the student to continue to participate in the second stage of the study. Student name, email, phone number and mentor name were requested for researcher follow-up. The gathered quantitative results revealed data regarding the targeted population.

Participants. The researcher employed a purposeful sampling (Creswell, 2008) to select active undergraduate senior-level students. Criteria for selecting participants in

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[9] The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education. (FERPA, 1974)

[10] Non-probationary students have maintained a cumulative grade point average of 2.0 or higher.

[11] Students are considered senior-level if they have completed 90 or more undergraduate units. State University requires a minimum of 120 units completed in order to graduate.

the first phase of the study included active undergraduate status, grade level and grade point average. From the purposeful sample respondents, the researcher selected a convenience sample of participants for interviews.

Data collection. The researcher utilized an original survey design drawing upon the Mentoring Functions Questionnaire (MFQ) (Scandura & Ragins, 1993), a three dimensional measurement developed to appraise vocational, psychosocial, and role modeling functions of mentoring relationships and the Mentoring Functions Questionnaire 9 (MFQ-9) (Castro & Scandura, 2004 as cited in Scandura & Pellegrini, 2010), an abridged version of the MFQ that focuses on mentor relationship satisfaction (Scandura & Pellegrini, 2010). The survey included thirty-one questions, statements and agreement scales intended to identify a mentoring relationship with a Student Affairs professional. The survey included statements such as:

1. My mentor has devoted special time and consideration to my academic success.
2. I share personal problems with my mentor.
3. I admire my mentor's ability to motivate others.
4. My mentor listens respectfully to understand my point of view.

The survey items and scales were developed based on the analysis of related literature and by using social capital as the theoretical framework.

The survey was administered online through *Survey Monkey*, a web-based survey host. The survey was accessed by students through a unique universal resource locator (URL). Email addresses of potential participants were obtained by the Office of Information Technology and Project & Business Intelligence at SU. Emails were sent to qualified students asking for their voluntary participation in a survey for a graduate study. Informed consent was incorporated into the survey. Included in the email was a

link to a *Survey Monkey* questionnaire. The researcher imported survey results into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for data analysis. The researcher ran tests for frequencies, reliability, descriptive statistics, correlations and factor analysis. Each participant was given a random number to represent his or her responses. With the exception of student identification to the mentor, identities of the participants were not disclosed in research findings. Individuals within the sample who identified relationships with a Student Affairs professional were purposefully selected for interview. The researcher substantiated the statistical data from the survey with qualitative data collected in the second phase of this study.

Data analysis. From the quantitative results, the researcher explored correlations between student and mentor demographics, the student/mentor relationship and social capital and the quality of the mentoring relationship and emotional intelligence. The results of this phase validated, clarified and illustrated the quantitative findings and strengthened the social capital theoretical framework (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The researcher utilized statistical tests to analyze the quantitative data using SPSS, including descriptive statistics to describe the characteristics of the sample. Both exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis were conducted to gather information about the relationships between variables and better understand the validity of the survey responses. Correlation tests were also conducted in order to describe the strength and direction of the relationships between variables (Pallant, 2010). The data was used to understand how mentoring relationships between Student Affairs professionals affect the retention of college students.

Qualitative Methodology: Phase Two

From the survey results, the researcher contacted students who indicated a mentoring relationship with a Student Affairs professional and who have persisted in their college education. The researcher employed two doctoral candidates in educational leadership to conduct the interviews for this study. The doctoral candidates interviewed six students. A semi-structured interview protocol was utilized with questions derived from the literature on mentoring, social capital, and emotional intelligence. Interviewees were given an opportunity to identify a Student Affairs professional who served as a mentor throughout their undergraduate career. The researcher sought out these mentors to learn more about how their relationships affected the social capital and retention of the corresponding student. Each individual interview was digitally voice recorded, professionally transcribed verbatim, and coded for common themes. Further inquiry focused on specific characteristics of the student-mentor dynamic, as well as the social capital and emotional intelligence aspects of the relationship.

Participants. The target population for Phase Two of this study was active undergraduate senior-level students indicating the existence of a mentoring relationship with a Student Affairs professional. From the purposeful sample respondents in phase one, the researcher selected a criterion sample (Miles & Huberman, 1994) of participants for interviews. Students indicating a mentoring relationship with a Student Affairs professional at SU served as the catalyst for selecting participants in the second phase. From this criteria, using a maximal variation sampling (Creswell, 2008), the researcher selected students for an interview who displayed different demographic characteristics, such as age, gender, major and ethnicity, which allowed for multiple perspectives on

mentoring relationships. Students were asked to identify their mentor. The researcher then contacted mentors based on criterion sampling protocol, the selection of participants who meet a "predetermined criterion of importance" (Patton, 2002, p. 238).

All undergraduate students in the targeted population were afforded the opportunity to participate, however their participation was voluntary. Any person whom did not identify having a mentoring relationship with a Student Affairs professional was excluded from Phase Two of this study. Student participants were asked to complete a "consent to participate in research" form (Appendix B). Additionally, identified mentors were invited to participate and were asked to complete a "consent to participate in research" form (Appendix C).

Data collection. Interviews of both students in mentoring relationships and their identified mentors were conducted. The researcher consulted with the doctoral candidates to approach the interviews using appreciative inquiry, engaging participants in dialogue that explored the "nature, worth, quality, and significance" of their mentoring experiences (Preskill & Catsambas, 2006). The interviews were held in a private interview room at the SU campus. Interviews were digitally recorded and professionally transcribed verbatim. Participation was voluntary. Participants were provided the opportunity to stop the interview at any time, leave any question unanswered or withdraw from the study at any time. Both student and mentor interviews were kept confidential, available only to the researcher and dissertation faculty for analysis purposes. Interview recordings, interview transcripts, and electronic versions of analysis were stored on the researcher's personal and work computers, as well as on a flash drive and cloud storage.

Any paper documentation involving interviews or analysis was kept at the researcher's residence or personal office.

Per the researcher's request, the doctoral candidates conducting interviews began interviews with a briefing. In the briefing, the doctoral candidates provided the purpose of the study, notified participants they were being recorded and inquired as to whether they had any questions before the start of the interview. The interviews were concluded with a debriefing in which the doctoral candidates asked subjects if they had any additional comments or concluding remarks (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009). Each interview took approximately thirty minutes.

Student interviews. One-on-one focused interviews with six students took place in order to provide an in-depth exploration of established mentoring relationships (Creswell, 2008). Kahn and Cannell (1957, as cited in Marshall & Rossman, 1999) describe in-depth interviewing as "a conversation with a purpose" (p. 108). The student interviews focused on particular themes, such as relationships, emotional intelligence, social capital and retention and included a combination of structured and open questions (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009) using a protocol developed to explore significant factors of mentoring relationships (Appendix D) (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Sample interview questions included:

1. What aspects/characteristics of your mentor were you drawn to?
2. Tell me about a specific time when your mentor helped you with an issue.
3. What factors do you think challenge the success of a mentoring relationship?
4. Has your mentor provided any additional benefits in your life? (jobs, internships) How?
5. Is your mentor able to "put themselves in your shoes" in order to better understand/experience an issue you are dealing with? Do you feel that this quality enhances your mentoring relationship? How?

6. Do you feel you are more connected to the university because of your relationship with your mentor? How?

The doctoral candidate facilitated discussion on the before-mentioned themes, but depended on the subject to discuss important aspects of the themes of inquiry from their own perspective (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009). This method of data collection allowed for the representation of student voice by allowing participants to share personal experiences.

During the interview, the doctoral candidate asked the student to identify their mentor. The doctoral candidate asked the student for permission to contact the mentor for further inquiry and interview and if it would be acceptable to identify the student to the mentor.

Mentor interviews. Following the student interviews, one-on-one focused interviews with five mentors identified by participating students took place to further examine the established mentoring relationships. Resembling the student interviews, the mentor interviews focused on particular themes, such as mentoring relationships, emotional intelligence, social capital and retention and included a combination of structured and open-ended questions (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009) using an established interview protocol (Appendix E) (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). The doctoral candidate conducting the interviews prompted the mentors to share personal experiences about their mentoring relationship as identified by the student. The doctoral candidate lead the subject to discuss the before mentioned themes, but was dependent on the subject to discuss important aspects of the themes of inquiry from their own perspective, (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009; Marshall & Rossman, 1999). Sample interview questions included:

1. Did you seek out your mentee or did they approach you? What aspects/characteristics of your mentor were you drawn to? Why do you think they were drawn to you?
2. Did your mentee ever express an interest in dropping out of school? Did you talk with your mentee about this? How was it resolved?
3. What role does trust play in your mentorship? How was it developed? Did it ever break down?
4. What has been the most rewarding aspect of being a mentor?

Data analysis. In conjunction with survey collection and interviewing methods, coding through content analysis and cross-case analysis (Johnson & Christensen, 2012; Kvale & Brinkman, 2009) were used to examine, compare, conceptualize and categorize specific themes addressed in the interviews.

Content analysis. Preliminary exploration of the data took the form of reading through the student and mentor interview transcripts and taking initial notes and highlighting important quotes. The researcher then coded the interview content in order to condense the extensive interviews into a small amount of meaningful categories and develop themes by grouping similar codes together (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). According to Kvale and Brinkman (2009) "the coding of a text's meanings into categories makes it possible to quantify how specific themes are addressed in a text, and the frequency of themes can then be compared and correlated with other measures" (p. 203). Miles and Huberman (1994) affirm, "It is not the words themselves but their meaning that matters" (p.56). Using social capital theory and emotional intelligence properties, content analysis was utilized to explore underlying meaning, illuminate central themes of participant statements (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009) and determine where the greatest emphasis of the data occurred (Marshall & Rossman, 1999).

Cross-case analysis. After each interview was examined and coded in total, cross-case analysis was used to compare interviews and categorize important themes (Johnson & Christensen, 2012) identified by the students regarding mentoring relationships. Cross-case analysis aided in increasing generalizability, by deepening both understanding and explanation of the results (Miles & Huberman, 1994), dividing the data by type across all cases, searched for patterns and corroborated evidence, enhancing the findings (Yin, 2009).

Limitations

Generalizability. One limitation to this study was the perception that the design did not allow for generalizability. Given the sample that only included participants gathered from one institution, it was possible to assume that the results were not generalizable to other colleges or universities. However, the researcher is confident the data collected from this study will inform and provide valuable insight to Student Affairs practitioners on the effects meaningful relationships have on college student retention. Additionally, the conceptual framework and ideal mentor model used in this study can be repeated at other higher education institutions.

Positionality. The researcher's positionality also presented a limitation, as the researcher is currently the Associate Director of Undergraduate Advising Services at the research site. Although this position brings experience, perspective and direct access to student information and records, it also could have influenced the information students provided in their surveys and interviews. The researcher assured students that participation in the interviews did not affect their academic or graduation status in any way. Given that the researcher did not have a supervisory role relative to any of the

student participants in this study, no breach of privacy occurred. Although the researcher has worked closely or collaborated with many of the mentors interviewed for this study, there was no supervisory or supervised relationship between the researcher and mentors and the researcher employed two doctoral candidates to conduct the student and mentor interviews so as not to affect responses. Both student and mentor participants were assured their responses would be kept confidential as only the researcher and dissertation faculty had access to the data. With the purpose of ensuring privacy, pseudonyms for both students and mentors were used. Furthermore, member checking and triangulation of data took place in order to moderate risk and minimize bias allowing the use of the researcher's positionality as a resource, rather than an impediment.

CHAPTER FOUR: QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

As explained in Chapter One, the purpose of this study was to explore supportive relationships between Student Affairs practitioners and college students in order to provide empirical and theoretical insight that Student Affairs practitioners can utilize when establishing mentoring relationships as a means to promote student retention.

Previous chapters have introduced the study, outlined applicable literature, and provided a method for answering the core research questions. *Figure 2.1* in Chapter Two depicts the conceptual framework, displaying the connection between emotional intelligence, social capital and a mentoring relationship on the retention of college students. In relation to the conceptual model and research questions, Chapter Four provides the quantitative results of mentoring and retention analysis.

The results of the first phase were analyzed using principal components analysis, a variety of descriptive statistics, means and correlations. Additionally, t-tests were employed to provide a base for examining similarities and differences among mentoring relationships between students, faculty and staff. The specific research question and sub-questions are: In what ways do mentoring relationships between Student Affairs professionals and students support or constrain the retention of college students?

a. To what degree do mentoring relationships foster social capital?
b. In what ways do students use 'mentoring social capital' to persist toward degree?
c. Do students perceive a relationship between a mentor's emotional intelligence and the quality of the mentoring relationship?

Instrument Overview

The researcher employed an original survey design drawing upon the Mentoring Functions Questionnaire (MFQ) (Scandura & Ragins, 1993) and the Mentoring Functions Questionnaire 9 (MFQ-9) (Castro & Scandura, 2004 as cited in Scandura & Pellegrini, 2010). The survey included thirty-one questions, statements and agreement scales intended to identify a mentoring relationship with a Student Affairs professional. Findings center on how respondents engage in mentoring relationships. The survey included statements such as:

1. My mentor has devoted special time and consideration to my academic success.
2. I share personal problems with my mentor.
3. I admire my mentor's ability to motivate others.
4. My mentor listens respectfully to understand my point of view.

This survey presented data from a sample of students who have successfully persisted in their college education, determined by both units obtained and a grade point average of at least 2.0, or a "C" average.

Response Rate

The survey was sent to 3,487 senior-level, non-probationary undergraduate students at SU. Of these, 641 (18%) participated in the survey. Prior to scoring the results of the survey, it was necessary to clean the data. This involved eliminating thirteen participants who did not complete a satisfactory amount of the survey. Therefore, 628 participants were included in the final analysis. Although the response rate is low, the survey results are representative of the overall population of the University.

Demographics

The survey solicited a variety of demographic information from participants including gender, ethnicity, age, major and grade point average. *Table 4.1* illustrates a detailed representation of the demographic frequencies and compares the study sample with the SU student population. Sixty-nine percent of participants identified as female, reflecting the population of the institution as a whole (61%) (SU Office of Communications, 2012).

Most of the participants identified as White (61%) or Latino/a (23%). Although the number of White respondents was slightly higher and the number of Latino was slightly under the amount we expected, the survey sample approximates the overall population of the institution (42.3% White, 29.4% Latino).

The mean participant age was 26 years with the minimum age reported at 20 years and the maximum age at 61 years. The average age of SU students is 21 years. The age of the sample population tended to be older given that 98.4% of the respondents were upper-division students at the junior and senior level.

Study participants held a variety of majors, however, most had majors housed in the College of Humanities, Arts, Behavioral and Social Sciences (46.2%), followed by students with majors in the College of Business Administration (22.6%), College of Education, Health and Human Services (17.2%) and the College of Science and Mathematics (12.7%). As displayed in *table 4.1,* the participant's academic majors largely mirrored the majors declared by the overall SU student population.

The mean grade point average of participants was 3.18. This was relatively higher than the University's mean grade point average at 2.99 (SU Institutional Planning

& Analysis, 2012). Given that the survey was only sent to non-probationary students (with a grade point average of 2.0 or higher), this outcome was expected. Moreover, research revealed college students with higher grade point averages more inclined to respond to surveys than students with lower grade point averages (Porter & Umbach, 2006).

Table 4.1. Demographics of Study Sample Compared with Demographics of State University Student Population

Factor	Study Sample	SU Students
Gender		
n	628	10,276
% Female	69	61
% Male	31	39
Race		
n	628	9929
% African American/Black	3.2	2.8
% Asian/Pacific Islander	10.6	9.8
% Latino/a	22.6	32.5
% Native American	.6	.5
% White	61.1	39
% Other/Unknown	1.8	15.7
Age		
n	628	9922
% 22 or younger	31.1	76.3
% 23-25	29.3	11.5
% 26-35	32.3	9.4
% 36 or older	7.3	2.8
Grade Point Average		
n	628	6822
Mean GPA	3.18	2.99
Class Level		
n	628	9928
% First Year	.3	25.3
% Sophomore	1.3	12.0
% Junior	21.2	24.3
% Senior	77.2	38.3
Majors Distributed by College		
n	620	9929
% College of Business Administration	22.6	19.0
% College of Education, Health & Human Services	17.2	20.2
% College of Humanities, Arts, Behavioral & Social Sciences	46.2	41.6
% College of Science & Mathematics	12.7	14.7
% Undeclared	0	4.4

(SU Institutional Planning & Analysis, 2012; SU Office of Communications, 2012)

Frequencies Analysis

Forty-six percent of participants reported having a mentor of which 49% were described as faculty, 39% did not work on campus and 11% were identified as staff in Student Affairs.

Factor Analysis

The survey questions were generated from the MFQ and MFQ-9. Thirteen items of the mentoring survey were subjected to principal components analysis using SPSS version 18 *(table 4.2)*. Prior to performing the principal components analysis, the suitability of the data for factor analysis was addressed. Inspection of the correlation matrix revealed the presence of many coefficients of .3 and above. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin value was .783, exceeding the recommended value of .6 (Kaiser, 1970, 1974 as cited by Pallant, 2010) and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (Barlett, 1954 as cited by Pallant, 2010) reached statistical significance, supporting factorability of the correlation matrix. Factor loading for each item on the correlated component ranged from .564 to .774. Three items were dropped from the analysis as they cross-loaded or did not load on the expected factor[12].

[12] Although beyond the scope of the research questions, examination of the frequencies analysis revealed no statistical difference between White students and students of color on each of the three components. Additionally, female respondents perceived their mentors to have statistically higher emotional intelligence than their male counterparts.

Table 4.2. Rotated Component Matrix[a] on Thirteen Item Mentoring Survey

	Component			
Survey Item	1	2	3	4
My mentor is aware how his/her words affect others.	**.774**	.192	.039	.298
My mentor is not judgmental.	**.748**	-.001	.086	.198
My mentor listens respectfully to understand my point of view.	**.746**	.330	.114	.021
My mentor is comfortable expressing his/her feelings or emotions.	**.564**	-.045	.542	-.118
My mentor has devoted special time and consideration to my academic success.	.058	**.843**	.122	.181
My mentor takes a personal interest in my education.	.117	**.764**	.120	-.071
My mentor has helped me to be successful in my academic career at SU.	.200	**.729**	-.094	.140
My mentor helps me coordinate my professional goals.	.017	**.556**	.109	.501
I share personal problems with my mentor.	-.025	.137	**.812**	.250
My mentor is comfortable discussing my feelings or emotions with me.	.401	.010	**.788**	-.050
I consider my mentor to be my friend.	-.059	.131	**.666**	.512
I try to model my behavior after my mentor.	.208	.070	.191	**.811**
I admire my mentor's ability to motivate others.	.488	.178	.029	**.644**

a. Rotation converged in 12 iterations.

The remaining ten items of the mentoring survey were subjected to a second principal components analysis *(table 4.3)*. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin value was .76 and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity reached statistical significance. Principal components analysis revealed the presence of three components with eigenvalues exceeding 1, explaining 37%, 16% and 14% of the variance respectively. Using Catell's (1966, as cited by Pallant, 2010) scree test, it was decided to retain all three components for further investigation. This was further supported by results of Parallel Analysis, which showed all three components to have eigenvalues exceeding the corresponding criterion values for a randomly generated data matrix of the same size (10 variables x 628 respondents).

The three-component solution explained 66% of the variance, with Component 1 contributing 36.7%, Component 2 contributing 15.9% and Component 3 contributing 13.9%. To aid in the interpretation of these three components, Varimax with Kaiser

Normalization rotation was performed revealing factor loadings for each item on the correlated component ranging from .619 to .840. Based on the items that loaded together, the three factors were renamed as Mentor Emotional Intelligence, Academic Concern and Personal Concern.

Table 4.3. Rotated Component Matrix[a] on Remaining Ten Item Mentoring Survey

	Component		
Survey Item	1	2	3
My mentor is aware how his/her words affect others.	**.840**	.174	.091
My mentor is not judgmental.	**.798**	-.030	.129
My mentor listens respectfully to understand my point of view.	**.756**	.254	.085
I admire my mentor's ability to motivate others.	**.619**	.255	.179
My mentor has devoted special time and consideration to my academic success.	.107	**.853**	.164
My mentor has helped me to be successful in my academic career at SU.	.223	**.776**	-.054
My mentor takes a personal interest in my education.	.126	**.733**	.120
I share personal problems with my mentor.	.055	.114	**.881**
I consider my mentor to be my friend.	.077	.171	**.818**
My mentor is comfortable discussing my feelings or emotions with me.	.359	-.068	**.691**

a. Rotation converged in 5 iterations.

Component 1, Mentor Emotional Intelligence, included agreement responses to statements such as, *My mentor is aware how his/her words affect others, my mentor is not judgmental, my mentor listens respectfully to understand my point of view* and *I admire my mentor's ability to motivate others.* Given the definition of emotional intelligence, "the ability to monitor one's own and other's feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions" (Salovey & Mayer, 1990, p. 189), these statements loaded together based on an emotional intelligence theoretical framework.

The statements, *my mentor has devoted special time and consideration to my academic success, my mentor has helped me to be successful in my academic career at*

SU and *my mentor takes a personal interest in my education* all suggest a mentor's concern for the student's academic achievement and therefore delineate Component 2, Academic Concern.

Finally, the statements encompassing Component 3, *I share personal problems with my mentor, I consider my mentor to be my friend* and *my mentor is comfortable discussing my feelings or emotions with me* indicate a mentor's individual concern for the student's emotional wellbeing, thus named Personal Concern.

As displayed in *table 4.4*, most participants agree that mentors have high emotional intelligence (mean = 4.5(.63) and concern for their educational success (mean = 4.4(.67). Additionally, students agree that mentors have concern for their personal wellbeing (mean = 3.9(.96), though standard deviation at .96 indicates a broader dispersion of scores on Personal Concern.

Table 4.4. Descriptive Statistics of Three Components

	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Mentor Emotional Intelligence	252	4.4828	.63223
Educational Concerns	253	4.4374	.66876
Personal Concerns	253	3.9381	.96059
Valid N (list wise)	252		

Reliability

Each of the three components, Mentor Emotional Intelligence, Educational Concern and Personal Concern have good internal consistency, with Cronbach alpha coefficients reported as .79, .74 and .76, respectively *(table 4.5)*.

Table 4.5. Reliability Scores of Three Components

Component	N	Cronbach Alpha
Mentor Emotional Intelligence	4	.79
Educational Concerns	3	.74
Personal Concerns	3	.76

Independent Sample T-tests

Independent samples t-tests were used to compare students with and without mentors, students with faculty mentors and students with staff mentors on the three components found in the principal components analysis. Preliminary analyses ensured no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity and homoscedasticity.

An initial independent samples t-test was conducted to compare the grade point average and age of students with mentors and students without mentors *(table 4.6)*. No significant difference in the grade point average of students with mentors (M = 3.2, SD = .68) and students without mentors (M = 3.19, SD = .67; t = .173, p > .863, two-tailed) was found. However, younger students are more likely to have a mentor (M = 25, SD = 5.7) than older students (M = 27, SD = 7.1); t = -2.44, p <.015, two-tailed).

Table 4.6. T-test Comparing Age and Grade Point Average of Students With and Without Mentors

Does the student have a mentor?		N	M	SD	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
Age	Yes	279	25.44	5.702	-2.443	.015
	No	331	26.73	7.097	-2.488	.013
GPA	Yes	279	3.2090	.68012	.173	.863
	No	331	3.1996	.66641	.173	.863

A second independent samples t-test compared the grade point average and age of students with faculty mentors and students with staff mentors *(table 4.7)*. There was no significant difference in the age of students with faculty mentors (M = 26, SD = 6.2) and students with staff mentors (M = 24, SD = 5.3; t = 1.40, p > .162, two-tailed). However, students with faculty mentors have a higher grade point averages (M = 3.3, SD = .67) than students with staff mentors (M = 3.0, SD = .67; t = 2.26, p < .025, two-tailed).

Table 4.7. T-test Comparing Age and Grade Point Average of Students with Staff Mentors and Students with Faculty Mentors

		N	M	SD	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
Age	Faculty Mentor	140	25.98	6.220	1.403	.162
	Staff Mentor	31	24.29	5.267	1.560	.125
GPA	Faculty Mentor	140	3.2992	.69523	2.256	.025
	Staff Mentor	31	2.9896	.67262	2.305	.026

In a final independent samples t-test, the scores between faculty and staff mentors on the three components found in the principal components analysis (Mentor Emotional intelligence, Educational Concern and Personal Concern) *(table 4.8)* were compared. There was no significant difference in scores for faculty ($M = 4.57$, $SD = .62$) and staff ($M = 4.51$, $SD = .67$; $t = 1.62$, $p > .52$, two-tailed) in regards to Educational Concern. Students statistically perceive faculty ($M = 4.59$, $SD = .573$) and staff ($M = 4.42$, $SD = .68$; $t = 1.44$, $p > .151$, two-tailed) to both have high emotional intelligence. Finally, students perceived staff to have statistically significantly higher personal concern ($M = 4.18$, $SD = .86$) than faculty ($M = 3.56$, $SD = 1.01$; $t = -3.12$, $p < .002$, two-tailed). In other words, students indicate that they perceive Student Affairs staff to be more concerned for their personal wellbeing than that of faculty mentors.

Table 4.8. T-test Comparing Scores of Faculty Mentors and Staff Mentors and the Three Components

		N	M	SD	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
Mentor Emotional Intelligence	Faculty Mentor	122	4.5922	.57334	1.443	.151
	Staff Mentor	30	4.4167	.68649	1.294	.203
Emotional Concern	Faculty Mentor	122	4.5710	.62026	.465	.643
	Staff Mentor	30	4.5111	.68219	.439	.663
Personal Concern	Faculty Mentor	122	3.5587	1.00844	-3.123	.002
	Staff Mentor	30	4.1833	.86031	-3.438	.001

Means

Mean scores of the total sample provide an overview of similarities and areas of difference. A variety of variables were compared to further explore mentorship relationships. It is important to note that within the survey scale, a "5" represented "agree", "4" denoted "somewhat agree" and "3" indicated "neither disagree nor agree". *Table 4.9* offers an overview of means and standard deviations for students with staff mentors and students with faculty mentors.

The means in the total sample of students with mentors for the three components ranged from a low of 3.93 for Personal Concern to a high of 4.49 for Mentor Emotional Intelligence. Students with faculty mentors ranged from a low 3.57 in Personal Concern to a high 4.59 in Mentor Emotional Intelligence. Finally, the means for students with staff mentors were relatively high and ranged from 4.18 in Personal Concern to 4.42 in Mentor Emotional Intelligence.

Overall, it appears that students with a faculty or staff mentor agree that their mentors are emotionally intelligent and have significantly high concern for their educational success. Whereas, only students with staff mentors agree that their mentors are concerned for their personal wellbeing.

Table 4.9. Descriptive Statistics of the Three Components and Total Sample of Students with Mentors, Students with a Faculty Mentor and Students with a Staff Mentor

Factor	Total Sample of Students with a Mentor		Students with a Faculty Mentor		Students with a Staff Mentor	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Mentor Emotional Intelligence	4.49	.63	4.59	.57	4.42	.69
Educational Concern	4.44	.67	4.57	.62	4.51	.68
Personal Concern	3.93	.96	3.57	1.01	4.18	.86
	n=251		n=122		n=30	

Correlations

The relationship between perceived Mentor Emotional Intelligence, Educational Concern and Personal Concern was investigated using Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient *(table 4.10)*. There was a positive correlation between Mentor Emotional Intelligence and Personal Concern, $r = .37$, $p < .01$, and Mentor Emotional Intelligence and education concern $r = .37$, $p < .01$, meaning the more emotionally intelligent a mentor is, the more personal and educational concern they have for their student. Additionally, there was a significant correlation between student grade point average and perceived Mentor Emotional Intelligence, $r = .17$, $p < .05$, indicating emotionally intelligent mentors have a positive influence on the academic success of their mentee. There was no correlation between a mentor's personal concern for the student and the student's grade point average, suggesting an enhanced personal mentor/mentee relationship does not elevate a student's grade point average.

Table 4.10. Correlations of Grade Point Average, Mentor Emotional Intelligence, Educational Concern and Personal Concern of all Students with a Mentor

		1	2	3	4
1. Grade Point Average	Pearson Correlation	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)				
	N	279			
2. Mentor Emotional Intelligence	Pearson Correlation	.168**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.008			
	N	251	251		
3. Educational Concern	Pearson Correlation	.136*	.368**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.032	.000		
	N	251	251	251	
4. Personal Concern	Pearson Correlation	-.071	.370**	.224**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.260	.000	.000	
	N	251	251	251	251

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Further Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients were run to compare Mentor Emotional Intelligence, Educational Concern and Personal Concern and grade point average of both staff mentors *(table 4.11)* and faculty mentors *(table 4.12).*

There was no correlation between the three components and a student's grade point average for students with faculty mentors.

Table 4.11. Correlations of Grade Point Average, Mentor Emotional Intelligence, Educational Concern and Personal Concern of Students with Faculty Mentors

		1	2	3	4
1. Mentor Emotional Intelligence	Pearson Correlation	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)				
	N	122			
2. Educational Concern	Pearson Correlation	.418**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000			
	N	122	123		
3. Personal Concern	Pearson Correlation	.437**	.305**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.001		
	N	122	123	123	
4. Grade Point Average	Pearson Correlation	.132	.027	-.142	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.149	.763	.118	
	N	122	123	123	140

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Alternatively, there was a positive correlation between Educational Concern and student grade point average for students with staff mentors, $r = .37$, $p < .05$.

Table 4.12. Correlations of Grade Point Average, Mentor Emotional Intelligence, Educational Concern and Personal Concern of Students with Staff Mentors

		1	2	3	4
1. Mentor Emotional Intelligence	Pearson Correlation	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)				
	N	30			
2. Educational Concern	Pearson Correlation	.769**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000			
	N	30	30		
3. Personal Concern	Pearson Correlation	.671**	.648**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		
	N	30	30	30	
4. Grade Point Average	Pearson Correlation	.143	.368*	-.015	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.451	.045	.938	
	N	30	30	30	31

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Summary

Data from the survey help broadly describe mentoring relationships between students, faculty and/or staff at State University. Findings from the survey illustrate that students rated both faculty and staff mentors high on educational concern and to be considerably emotionally intelligent. However, staff mentors have more personal concern for their students and have a more positive affect on their mentee's academic success. In order to investigate the mentoring relationships between staff mentors, particularly Student Affairs practitioners, and successful college students, the qualitative phase introduced in Chapter Five queried students and their identified mentors to describe these relationships in more detail.

CHAPTER FIVE: QUALITATIVE RESULTS

While Chapter Four illustrated the quantitative findings of the research, Chapter Five presents the results of a qualitative inquiry into the student-mentor dynamic, their experiences in mentoring relationships and how the relationships affected the students' success in college.

The purpose of this qualitative inquiry was to gain knowledge about mentoring relationships between successfully retained students and Student Affairs staff. From the survey results, the researcher contacted six students who have both persisted in their college education and indicated they had a mentoring relationship with a Student Affairs professional. The student interview participants identified their mentor and the researcher sought out these mentors to learn more about how their relationships affected the social capital and retention of the corresponding student. Further inquiry focused on specific characteristics of the student-mentor dynamic, as well as the social capital and emotional intelligence aspects of the relationship.

In order to offer context about who was interviewed, comprehensive descriptions of the participants will be provided. Next, overarching themes, as determined from both data and cross-case analysis of the interview transcripts in the form of themes will be presented. A summary of the findings will complete this chapter.

The research question and sub-questions addressed in the qualitative phase of this study were, in what ways do mentoring relationships between Student Affairs professionals and students support or constrain the retention of college students?

a. To what degree do mentoring relationships foster social capital?

b. In what ways do students use 'mentoring social capital' to persist toward degree?

c. Do students perceive a relationship between a mentor's emotional intelligence and the quality of the mentoring relationship?

Data Collection

One-on-one focused interviews with both students and their identified mentors were conducted by two doctoral candidates from the researcher's Educational Leadership cohort. Student interviews took place in May 2012 and mentor interviews took place in July 2012. The researcher consulted with the doctoral candidates to conduct the interviews by approaching conversations using appreciative inquiry, engaging participants in dialogue that explored the quality and significance of their mentoring experiences (Preskill & Catsambas, 2006).

Participants

Interview participants included six undergraduate students and five fulltime staff members working directly with students at SU. To enhance the anonymity of the students and their mentors, the researcher provided each participant a pseudonym. Participant social identities are reported for students and mentors in relation to their selected pseudonym. Moreover, the position and department in which the mentor works are disguised in order to provide an additional level of anonymity. *Table 5.1* provides the student participant demographics.

Table 5.1. Student Participant Demographics

Student	Gender	Age	Ethnicity	Major	GPA	Class Level	First-Generation Student?	Length of Mentorship	Mentor
Connie	Female	22	White	Nursing	3.5	Senior	No	5+ years	Frances
Mike	Male	22	White	Psychology	3.2	Senior	Yes	4 years	Beatrice
Gail	Female	23	White	Political Science	3.2	Senior	Yes	2 years	Beatrice
Luca	Female	21	Latina	Finance	3.0	Junior	Yes	4 years	Jack
Dylan	Male	27	Asian	Biological Sciences	4.0	Senior	Yes	4 years	Patricia
Chrissy	Female	22	White	Literature & Writing	3.9	Senior	No	3 years	Marie

All of the student participants were active undergraduate senior-level students who indicated a mentoring relationship with a Student Affairs professional. Using maximal variation sampling (Creswell, 2008), students who displayed different demographic characteristics, such as age, gender, major and ethnicity were selected which allowed for multiple perspectives on mentoring relationships.

Table 5.2 provides the demographics of the identified mentor participants. Given that mentor participants were selected based on criterion sampling protocol – they were identified by the student participants – the demographic characteristics, such as age, gender and ethnicity do not vary as much as the student participant sample.

Table 5.2. Identified Mentor Demographics

Mentor	Gender	Age	Ethnicity	Department	First-Generation Student?	Student(s)
Frances	Female	43	White	Campus coffee store	Yes	Connie
Beatrice	Female	33	White	Incoming student programs	No	Mike and Gail
Jack	Male	49	Latino	Grant based student support program	Yes	Luca
Patricia	Female	~45	White	Supplemental instruction program	Yes	Dylan
Marie	Female	32	White	Student government and activities	Yes	Chrissy

In the next section of this chapter, each of the student and mentor relationships will be described in pairs, with the exception of two students who both identified the same mentor; their case will be presented as a triad. Comprehensive descriptions of each of the participants and their relationships were provided in order to provide a contextual foundation for exploring the mentoring relationship. Within each of the student/mentor pairs, the student participants are described first, followed by the description of their corresponding mentor.

Connie and Frances. Connie is a twenty-two year old sixth-year Nursing major with a 3.5 grade point average and intentions of becoming a perinatal nurse post-graduation. She is originally from Northern California and both of her parents are college educated. Connie identifies as female, heterosexual and White.

The nursing program is an impacted major at SU and is extremely competitive with more applicants each year than spaces available (SU School of Nursing, 2012). After being turned down from the nursing program the first time she applied, it was the emotional and professional support of her mentor, Frances, whom encouraged Connie to continue to cultivate her extracurricular portfolio in order to be a more competitive candidate, eventually leading to her admission into the nursing program.

Connie met her mentor, Frances, as a first-year student when she was employed at the campus coffee store under her management. They have been in a mentoring relationship for over five years. Connie considers Frances a mentor and friend because she has provided her with personal, academic and career advice during her undergraduate tenure. The initial words Connie used to describe Frances were enthusiastic, intelligent, organized, loving and caring.

Frances is a forty-three year old mother of four children and two stepchildren. She comes from a strict Italian heritage and began working in her family's business at the age of thirteen. She was expected to marry at a young age and have children, which she did – and now advises her children and mentees to do the opposite. Frances attended community college where she enrolled in visual and performing arts courses then went on to a technical school where she took business and accounting courses. She did not attend a four-year university.

Frances managed the campus coffee shop and market for over eight years and only employed SU students. She explained, "I claim that I am the parent of six of my own immediate [children] and then I have eighteen to twenty-five new kids every semester." Frances alleged that she is extremely maternal and is a self-proclaimed "work-mom." Frances was drawn to Connie immediately, explaining:

> She definitely has a servant's heart. Her passion for people, her moral code, the love she has for her peers, family, is amazing, and it radiates from her…I met her when she was 18, and I immediately complimented her on it. I said, 'You know what? You have something. You exuberate something and have this aura around you.' I had to say something to her, because that's how she came across.

Additionally, Connie and Frances share similar religious beliefs and both agreed that they have a similar moral compass. Although Frances was Connie's supervisor, their mentoring relationship developed organically.

Mike, Gail and Beatrice. Two of the students interviewed, Mike and Gail, both identified Beatrice as their mentor. Mike is a twenty-two year old first-generation senior-level Psychology major with a 3.22 grade point average. He was raised in a single-parent home originally in Central California with his mother and later moved to the San Diego

area in order to live with his father. He has been financially independent of his parents since the age of fifteen and has a strong work ethic in order to support himself. Post-graduation, Mike intends to go to graduate school to earn a Master of Education in Student Affairs and Higher Education with a goal of working with first year students in a higher education setting. He has worked in a variety of campus offices from the LGBTQA (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Questioning and Ally) Support Center to Incoming Student Programs where he met his mentor, Beatrice. Mike identifies as a White gay male.

Gail is a twenty-three year old first-generation senior-level Political Science major with a 3.2 grade point average. She identifies as a heterosexual White female. Due to the recession that took place in the United States while Gail was in high school, her father became unemployed from his lucrative career in the airline industry, causing her family to struggle to make ends meet. Given that she was not able to qualify for student loans, Gail worked through school to help support her family and attended community college before transferring to SU.

Once Gail transferred to SU, she joined the new student Welcoming Team, where she met her mentor, Beatrice. She considers the Welcoming Team to be her second family and the reason why she has been successful in school. With Beatrice's encouragement, Gail applied for a congressional internship, was accepted, and represented SU as an ambassador in Washington, D.C. Additionally, she is involved with several political, leadership and law-related clubs on campus. Post-graduation, Gail plans to attend law school and/or graduate school specializing in public policy or international relations with the objective of becoming a lawyer and ultimately a political analyst.

Beatrice is a thirty-three year old coordinator of Incoming Student Programs at SU. She identifies as a heterosexual White female. Given that Beatrice's mother worked at a local university, she considers herself "born and bred on a college campus". Both of her parents have earned bachelor's degrees. After graduating from college, Beatrice went on to earn a Master of Arts in Counseling with a specialization in College Student Development.

Beatrice describes Gail as "amazing", "phenomenal" and a great role model for her peers. Additionally, Beatrice revealed:

> She is just very friendly and approachable, bubbly personality, and I think she and I just naturally connected. She is a little bit older compared to the rest of them [Welcoming Team], so it wasn't hard to create a relationship. I just think that it was just open and comfortable from the get-go when she first joined the team.

Although Mike is no longer a member of the Welcoming Team, Beatrice continues to serve as his supervisor where he works in Incoming Student Programs as a student assistant. Beatrice describes Mike as "incredibly independent" and "very communicative". Regarding her relationship with Mike, Beatrice disclosed:

> He was one of those students who really cared about the program and really wanted the best…I saw him more of as a partner than – kind of a more mature adult involved in the situation versus just students who are volunteering their time and just having fun with it. I think his maturity, his follow-through, I see him as a point of contact. I really fully trust him, and I think with that, I have then opened myself up more to him and give him more opportunities for him to grow and to find himself too.

Both of Beatrice's mentees view her as an avid student advocate and because of their mentoring relationship with her, they have had access to educational and career related opportunities they may not have been privy to without her support.

Luca and Jack. Luca is a twenty-one year old Finance major earning a 2.97 grade point average. She is also a first-generation Latina who indicated that her college experience has been mostly "trial and error" and attributes her success thus far to her mentor, Jack. Post baccalaureate, Luca is considering attending law school.

Jack is a forty-nine year old Latino gay male. In his interview, Jack revealed that his family and heritage are what shape who he is – "an open-minded, diverse individual" passionate about student success. As a first-generation college student, Jack's undergraduate experience was challenging. He began his education at a public university where he eventually dropped out. He returned to a private college later as an adult where he graduated with a degree in Business. He then went on to work in banking, was an administrator for a vocational school, did non-profit work, and came to SU as a budget officer for a grant based student support program offering personal, transitional, and academic support to students from first-generation, low-income, and disability backgrounds**.** Now, Jack is a coordinator and advisor for the same grant based program. He feels that if he had a mentor when he began college he may not have originally dropped out. Jack considers himself a voice for students, underrepresented students in particular.

Luca and Jack originally met through the program in which Jack works, where he serves as her advisor. They immediately connected because they have similar cultural and religious backgrounds and both had business related majors. Luca and Jack also indicated that they share similar personalities, sense of humor and have excellent rapport. Luca said that they "just click". Jack describes why he was drawn to Luca:

> I think that what drew me to her is her desire to seek out knowledge and advice…We talk about where she is at right now. Her experiences. Her experiences in the classroom. I think her level of interest and maturity were one of the things that really drew me to that relationship.

Luca is a first-generation college student. Although she has a supportive family and is extremely close with her mother, her mother could not provide her with college-related advice. As a result, she relied on Jack to provide the experience and support she needed to both connect her to the campus and excel academically. Jack has also assisted Luca in attaining an internship outside of the university, as well as a student assistant position in the grant based student support program in which he is employed.

Dylan and Patricia. Dylan is a twenty-seven year old first-generation college student earning a 3.96 grade point average majoring in Biological Sciences. Dylan is originally from Vietnam and attended high school in the United States as an exchange student. Prior to attending SU, he went to college at another institution before dropping out. Post-graduation, Dylan plans to broaden his experience in biological research and apply to graduate school with the ultimate goal of teaching college level biomedical research. Dylan identifies as a heterosexual Asian male.

Dylan's mentor, Patricia, is a director of a science supplemental instruction program at SU, is in her mid-forties and was also a first-generation college student. She is a self-proclaimed "lifelong learner," persevered through many life challenges to earn a Doctorate of Education in Educational Leadership and is considering a second doctorate in science. She is passionate about the science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) field and is active in molecular genetics research. Patricia did not indicate the race or sexual orientation in which she identifies.

Dylan and Patricia first met four years ago when she hired him to be a peer supplemental instruction leader for the program she directs where he serves as Patricia's "right-hand man". Dylan and Patricia were naturally drawn to one another other because they shared similar career interests and Patricia is fervent in supporting Dylan in obtaining internships, research experience and assisting him with his graduate school applications. Dylan aspires to emulate Patricia and without her academic and personal support, be believes he would not have been as successful at SU.

Dylan initially described Patricia as inspiring, friendly, motherly, and encouraging. He explains, "I look up to Dr. Patricia…she helps me to develop as a better student, a better researcher." Moreover, Patricia describes Dylan:

> He's a saint-in-training. He's a good egg…He was intrinsically motivated to do well…He's one of those guys that just cares about the world around him, he truly does, I kid you not. I think of myself and I try to hold myself to *his* sort of standard. He's a special guy.

Both Dylan and Patricia revealed a high level of mutual respect for one another and both suggested that they would stay in contact while Dylan attends graduate school.

Chrissy and Marie. Chrissy is a twenty-two year old Literature and Writing major and Women's Studies minor who recently graduated from SU with a 3.9 grade point average. Chrissy identifies as White heterosexual female and grew up in Southern California. She was recently admitted into a graduate school in the South where she intends to earn a Master of Education in Higher Education and Student Affairs, the same institution where her mentor Marie attended and earned the same degree.

Marie is a thirty-two year old heterosexual White female, originally from the Southwest United States. She is married and has one child. As an undergraduate and

first-generation college student, she attended a university in the Southwest, where she discovered her love for campus life though her involvement in a variety of campus programs and activities, such as orientation programs and peer mentoring. Once Marie completed graduate school, she moved to the San Diego area with her now husband. For the past eight years, Marie has worked her way up the administration ranks in the Student Government and Activities department at SU, where she now serves as the Associate Executive Director.

As an undergraduate, Chrissy was active in student government and leadership, where she first met Marie. Chrissy feels connected to the campus because of her involvement with student government and her relationship with Marie. Chrissy describes why she connected so well with Marie:

> Over the years I just knew right away that she would always be there for me. She was open to new ideas and never really put down your ideas or anything. She was always very optimistic and that just grew into a personal friendship with her. Now, she helps me with everything. She helped me with all my grad school apps because I didn't know what I was doing, and taught me – because she has the same Master's degree in Higher Education and Student Affairs.

This section provided a detailed description of each of the mentor and mentees and the formation and nature of their individual relationships. Next, data analysis will be introduced and the main themes extracted from the data will be revealed.

Data Analysis

In conjunction with survey collection and interviewing methods, coding through content analysis and cross-case analysis (Johnson & Christensen, 2012; Kvale & Brinkman, 2009) were used to examine, compare, conceptualize and categorize specific themes addressed in the interviews. Using content analysis, preliminary exploration of

the data was conducted by reading through the transcribed interview transcripts and taking notes. In order to condense the extensive interviews into meaningful groups and assemble similar codes together, the researcher divided the interview content into categories. By doing this, the researcher was able to recognize common themes and the frequency in which they occurred.

According to Miles and Huberman (1994), cross-case analysis can lead to a deeper explanation and understanding of qualitative results. Therefore, cross-case analysis was utilized to compare the preliminary codes found in the content analysis stage. Data were classified into overarching categories and the final themes were identified.

The student interview data were coded into the following themes, all related to mentor actions, *Mentor Guidance in Establishing a Clear Vision, Mentor Commitment to College Success* and *Mentor Provides Emotional Support. Table 5.3* provides a depiction of the sub-themes that emerged from the student interview theme data.

Table 5.3. Themes and Sub-Themes from Student Interview Data

Themes	**Sub-Themes**
Mentor Guidance in Establishing a Clear Vision	Serving as a Role Model
	Providing "Parent-like" Support
	Developing Social Connections
	Instilling a Sense of Belonging and Mattering
Mentor Commitment to College Success	Dependable and Consistently Available
Mentor Provides Emotional Support	Developing Trusting Relationships
	Demonstrating Empathy
	Building Rapport

The first student theme, *Mentor Guidance in Establishing a Clear Vision* encompassed four sub-themes, *Serving as a Role Model, Providing "Parent-like" Support, Developing Social Connections* and *Instilling a Sense of Belonging and*

Mattering. Mentor Commitment to College Success, the second student theme had one sub-theme, *Dependable and Consistently Available.* The last student theme, *Mentor Provides Emotional Support*, included three sub-themes, *Developing Trusting Relationships, Demonstrating Empathy* and *Building Rapport.*

The mentor interview data were coded into the following three themes: *Commitment to Student Success, Cultivating Social Connections* and *Nurturing Reciprocal and Rewarding Relationships. Table 5.4* provides a depiction of the sub-themes that emerged from the mentor interview data.

Table 5.4. Themes and Sub-Themes from Mentor Interview Data

Themes	**Sub-Themes**
Commitment to Student Success	Exhibiting Holistic Concern
	Dependable and Consistently Available
Cultivating Social Connections	Instilling a Sense of Belonging and Mattering
Nurturing Reciprocal and Rewarding Relationships	Passion for One's Profession

The first mentor theme, *Commitment to Student Success* included two sub-themes, *Exhibiting Holistic Concern and Dependable and Consistently Available. Cultivating Social Connections,* the second mentor theme had one sub-theme, *Instilling a Sense of Belonging and Mattering.* The last mentor theme, *Nurturing Reciprocal and Rewarding Relationships* also had one sub-theme, *Passion for One's Profession.* Finally, an unexpected theme that emerged from the data analysis regarding the amount of first-generation mentors and mentees that participated in the study will be addressed.

Student themes. The following three themes were extracted from the student interview data and reflect how mentor participants supported their students, *Mentor*

Guidance in Establishing a Clear Vision, Mentor Commitment to College Success and *Mentor Provides Emotional Support.*

Mentor guidance in establishing a clear vision. All of the student participants described how their mentors helped them visualize their future goals and provide both suggestions and assistance in attaining them. As discussed in Chapter Two, an important strategy in increasing student retention is the establishment of supportive relationships on campus, specifically through mentoring. From the interview results, it was discovered that through their mentoring relationships, students reported higher levels of academic and social support. With the assistance of their mentor, students described a healthy commitment to achieving their goals, such as earning a college degree. Chrissy explained how she believes mentors have a significant role and a unique opportunity to influence the successes their students' college experience:

> I think [mentors] should just know how much some students look up to them and rely on them. Because, I feel like if they know that they hold that responsibility that they're going to take it just that much more seriously and really just try and be there for that person. I feel like if someone didn't realize that they wouldn't see their job as that important, but it really is important. So, I think if they know that and they're the right person for that job they're going to do everything they can to help the student succeed.

Repeatedly, students reported how their mentors helped to provide them with a clear vision of how to attain their future goals. Mentors were able to not only support goals of their students, but also suggest a set of action steps in order to reach said goals.

The sub-themes of *Mentor Guidance in Establishing a Clear Vision* include *Serving as a Role Model, Providing "Parent-like" Support, Developing Social Connections* and *Instilling a Sense of Belonging and Mattering.*

Serving as a role model. The student participants discussed how their mentors were inspirational and how that motivated them to be more responsible. By inspiring their mentees, the mentors fostered responsibility by setting an example based on their own behavior. The students wanted to model themselves after their mentors. In particular, by observing Beatrice's passion, enthusiasm and the talent to connect with others, Mike was inspired by her leadership abilities. Like Beatrice, Mike decided to pursue a profession in Student Affairs. He explained:

> I think a lot of the skills and tools that I've learned as a leader have come from her and watching her own leadership…I even want to do Student Affairs as a master's degree, and so any opportunity that I can, she helps bring me along to see what kind of leadership skills she has or where, you know, when we go into a situation, how she approaches it and to learn from her how she deals with things on a daily basis…

Chrissy describes how Marie is her role model and also wants to follow in her same career path, "Personally she's taught me a lot. I want to go into Student Affairs now, and just – I want to strive to be the mentor that she was to me." Dylan, like his mentor, intends to further his education in the sciences. Through observing Patricia's love for her job, he was inspired to change career directions, from going to medical school to becoming a professor. In addition, from his perception of Patricia's strong work ethic and persistence, he understands he must be diligent in order to proceed in the sciences, stating, "I need someone who can inspire me to choose a *career path* and not just, a career."

In the act of role modeling, mentors were fostering responsibility in their students. Given the mentors' high expectations for their students, students did not want to let their

mentors down. In the case of Dylan and Patricia, Dylan explains how Patricia would be disappointed if he were not to go on to graduate school:

> If I were to do something extreme, you know, like not go to grad school, and go get married and have a kid – I don't think she'd be too happy. I mean, she would have to be supportive, but I think she believes I can do a lot more…If I do something…like that, then, yeah, it's not going to go over well.

Beatrice, Mike's mentor, does periodic grade checks on her student leaders and recognizes good grades. When Mike did not do well one semester, he not only was disappointed in himself, he also felt as though he let Beatrice down:

> I'm always one to strive for the best, and so my very first semester when I didn't make…the Honor Roll – it was kind of disheartening, so I was like, here I am, I'm in college, and here we're getting recognized for the success that we have, and I'm not getting recognized because I'm not succeeding. And so, that really was my kind of first drive to really do better, you know.

Overall, student interview results indicated that a mentor who served as a student's role model was associated with increased academic and vocational success and fostered student accountability.

Providing "parent-like" support. Student participants indicated that they felt their mentor played a parental role in their collegiate lives. Given that the students were living away from home, or their parents were unfamiliar with university life, they found comfort in their mentors and viewed them as a "parent away from home." This was confirmed by the mentor interviews. Each of the mentors felt responsibility for their students the way a parent would and advocated for their students as a parent might do for their child. Jack, Luca's mentor explained:

> I don't have children. So they're like my children. They really truly are like my kids. Now I'm old enough to probably be their father, but I see

> them come through and I see them struggle and I help them. I take stuff very personal…I'm very proud of them succeeding and some of the advising and mentoring and guidance that I'd given them, I know have helped them. It becomes very personal to me.

Providing a comfortable familial atmosphere for the students in this study served as a solid foundation of support and helped them to be more productive.

Developing social connections. Each of the mentoring relationships was enhanced with higher levels of interaction. Through these frequent interactions with their mentors, students were able to foster sociability, approval, and reputation – for example, students described how through their mentoring relationships, they were exposed to additional benefits, such as visibility on campus and career-related, internship and networking opportunities. Mike described how Beatrice encouraged him to apply for a Student Affairs fellowship:

> I actually applied for this undergraduate fellowship program…and that I actually heard about from Beatrice. She went to the conference – the national conference…and when she came back, she said, "You know, I know you want to go into Student Affairs in higher education. Have you ever thought of doing an undergraduate program to get you into a graduate program?"

Then Beatrice helped Mike complete the application for the fellowship and assisted him in finding a leader in Student Affairs at SU to serve as his fellowship mentor. Mike explained:

> I had no idea what that was, and so she kind of helped gear me toward the application process and get me ready for that as well as help me find a mentor or someone who would be a mentor on campus for that program…had Beatrice not told me about it – then I probably would not have done it. I would not have known about it.

Gail discussed how Beatrice encouraged her to apply for a prestigious internship in Washington, D.C. She was accepted and served as an ambassador for one semester.

Gail explained how Beatrice put her in contact with former ambassadors to discuss their experiences as interns, "[Beatrice] put me in contact with other students who had those resources that I was able to go to them and ask them for help." Similarly, Luca described how Jack broadened her social network for an internship opportunity, explaining, "He was actually the one who introduced me to the person who led me to get the internship."

Dylan said that working with Patricia helped him decide to choose a different career path given his interest to work in the sciences in higher education:

> I signed up for an internship at a hospital and…I would go in once a week and help the nurses with patient care, but at the same time, I have my job as a supplemental instruction leader so I work with students in study sessions outside of class time and…I just to put the two positions side by side and compared them. I only see myself working in a university. I like the student interaction that I get from it. I like when people understand something and a light bulb goes off, and you know you get satisfaction from that, and I just don't have that kind of satisfaction from working in a hospital...And I think by working for Dr. Patricia…I am exposed to a new option, I am given the opportunity to explore what I would really want to do.

In each of these cases, without their mentors, the students would not have had access to important connections and resources. Mentors not only provided their students with the social capital needed to navigate the university, but also with information and assistance in post-graduation activities.

Instilling a sense of belonging and mattering. Elements of social capital provided students with assistance in navigating the university. Through their mentoring relationships, students indicated they felt appreciated and respected. This naturally instilled a sense of belonging[13] and mattering[14]. Each of the student participants

[13] Belonging is defined as "the psychological sense that one is a valued member of the community" (Hausmann, Schofield & Woods, 2007, p. 804 as cited by Toya, 2011).

indicated that their mentors helped connect them to the university community and persist to be successful. By fostering opportunities to connect with their students, mentors promoted embeddedness of their students within the college community, supporting student achievement. Gail described how through her involvement with Incoming Student Programs and her relationship with Beatrice, she was provided with a college support system:

> They treated me as a secondary family, and they have been huge in my college success and helping me to become not only academically successful, but also with student involvement. So, I have basically a whole support system that I can count on here.

Given Gail's degree of exposure on campus resulting from her relationship with Beatrice, access to more University resources and individuals became available to her:

> Not only did I have the people from incoming student programs, I had the people from incoming students programs lead me to more clubs, where I met more people, and then more people. And, not only that, being a transfer student, you're already on your own that sometimes it's harder to meet new students…I was able to feel more comfortable around my own classmates and to probably get help from them or just to talk to them, in general.

Chrissy explained how working in Student Government and Activities, and just being part of the office itself, has instilled in her a sense of belonging and mattering, and became her "second home." Connie described how Frances embraced her as a family member, also infusing a sense of mattering in Connie, helping her to persist in college,

> She has six children of her own, like four of her own and then two from another marriage, and so I feel like I'm literally another child that she's taking care of. I mean, there was one time that my sister and I were struggling with groceries, so she took me to the store. She was like, 'Connie, you have to eat groceries. Let's go to the store.' I wouldn't be

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[14] Mattering is defined as "a feeling that others depend on us, are interested in us, are concerned with our fate, or experience us as an ego-extension" (Rosenberg & McCullough, 1981, p. 165, as cited by Toya, 2011).

> where I am today, as successful with my grades and my courses, if I had not met her when I came to college, and I worked at the coffee shop with her.

Mike explained how he considered dropping out of college:

> I wanted to drop out the most my freshman semester…I wasn't really succeeding in class. And so, dropping out was an option, working full-time was an option and kind of making money, you know, because I thought, okay, if I can do this full-time and not have to do school, I can still support myself.

Then after getting a job in incoming student programs, and working with Beatrice, Mike decided school was a more important option:

> That was kind of the first light at the end of the tunnel to pull me out of the funk I was in, just because I had something to look forward to, you know. And in the fall semester we didn't do much, but just knowing that there were people – other students – out there wanting to see me succeed, helped pull me out of that and…I wasn't going to drop out.

By instilling a sense of belonging and mattering in students, mentors provided their students with comfort and support. This helped students to establish a solid connection to the university and believe in their own personal worth and ability to succeed. The students' personal commitment to their own college success is the next theme that emerged from the data.

Mentor commitment to college success. Social support is critical for college student success (Grant-Vallone, Reid, Umali & Pohlert, 2004). As discussed in Chapter Two, strong social relationships play a critical role in improved student achievement. Each of the student participants described how their mentors were committed to their success in college and each of the first-generation student participants expressed appreciation of their mentors for being instrumental in presenting them with a path in which to be more successful. Given the mentors' capacity to consistently exceed the

basic duties of their positions in order to help their students be more successful, their collegiate life was significantly positively impacted.

Each of the students described how their mentor was the first person they would go to at school because of their ability to encourage and counsel them. The mentors' desire for their students to do well provided the security and reinforcement they needed to flourish. Luca described how Jack helped her through a time when she was struggling with her courses:

> I have never failed anything in my life. Last semester I got a D in one class and an F in another one. I was absolutely devastated. It had such a huge impact and it was something that has never happened to me. I went to Jack and… he said, 'Okay let's think about this...Did you take too many classes?' I was taking five upper-division classes and I think that was my mistake. I guess I felt invincible. He helped me study. He gave me cool counseling websites. It said it was how I was studying, so I changed a lot of my study habits, especially on hard topics like finance. That was really helpful. He was supportive... It was nice for him to say 'it's not you', 'it's the topic' and 'it has to do with study habits'

Luca was certain that her connection with Jack, his ability to provide a supportive relationship and his commitment to see her succeed, was what facilitated her to change her study habits and thrive academically. Furthermore, the mentors were essential in contributing to the success of their students by having a holistic concern for their student and by being dependable and making themselves consistently available.

Dependable and consistently available. The most prevalent theme in the student interviews was the fact that their mentors were dependable and made themselves consistently available. Whenever a student needed their mentor's advice or assistance, they knew they were readily accessible. Mike indicated, "A mentor is someone who you know is there for you whenever you need her...Beatrice is the one who's been there for

me from start to finish." This availability and dependability was essential to the success of the relationships.

The "my door is always open" philosophy and the notion that the mentor would "drop everything" and set aside work to meet with their students was empowering. They knew someone believed in them and would make time for them. Having a mentor within reach connected students to the University and increased their confidence. Connie discussed how a mentorship would lack value if the mentor were not willing to be regularly available. The sense of having someone there to talk, if necessary, was instrumental to the success of the mentorship.

This was especially true for Luca. As a first-generation college student, she described how she counted on Jack's consistent availability because she did not necessarily have the same *kind* of support at home:

> I was a first-generation student, so was Jack, and because he's already been there and done that, he kind of helped me along the way...Even though I have a family who supports me. My mom doesn't speak English, she's working day by day. I have a mother and stuff, but they never went through it. It's nice to have somebody here, where I can go, and he's always available or he'll make time. If I email him, he emails me right away. It's nice to have that support here on campus. I have at home, which is great, but also I come here and I can't go to my mom and ask what classes should I take? It's just nice to have it here.

Data revealed that mentors consistently made themselves available and dependable, resulting in their students' ability to trust them. Given that trust is a fundamental component of emotional intelligence, there is connection between being a dependable and available mentor and having emotional intelligence.

Mentor provides emotional support. Emotional intelligence accounts for an individual's own capacity to care, empathize and understand others. Interview data

revealed that students perceived a relationship between a mentor's emotional intelligence and the quality of the mentoring relationship. Students described how their mentors would often notice and mention changes in their mood or demeanor. Gail, self-described as a loner and socially "awkward", explained how Beatrice had the ability to make her feel valued at times when she needed it most. Gail said Beatrice's sense of humor is what initially drew her to their relationship stating, "I think it's her ability to adapt to every person on the team…In general, she just has that type of all-encompassing kind of warmth that's needed." The student participants specified that emotional factors were important to their success in college and influenced their academic performance. With the help of their mentor's genuine, caring attitudes, the student participants acknowledged that they were able to thrive.

The student participants discussed the emotional support of the mentors in terms of *Developing Trusting Relationships, Demonstrating Empathy* and *Building Rapport,* the three sub-themes of *Mentor Provides Emotional Support.*

Developing trusting relationships. As discussed in the literature review, trust is rooted in the definition of mentoring and individuals are more likely to participate in mentorships founded on trust. Emotionally intelligent individuals have been described as are honest, inspiring, credible and competent (Goleman, 2006), the foundation in which the student participants based their trust in their mentors. Students described how they were willing to share emotional and intellectual information with their mentors because of the level of confidence they had developed in one another. Chrissy said that trust played a significant role in her relationship with Marie, as she was confident Marie sincerely wanted to help her. As a result, she knew conversations between them would

remain confidential and therefore was able to share and discuss matters that were more significant. For Mike, trust was a particularly difficult barrier in all of his relationships:

> I have trust issues, growing up kind of in the family household I did with my family situation and just how my life has played out, I'm not a very trusting person…But even still, it's that I have learned to break down the wall that I've built in front of me… I think that's where the relationship goes further, but it's both the mentor and mentee getting to that point where that true trust kind of builds upon.

In the past, Mike had a difficult time confiding in others. He discussed how he was able to break down his trust issues given the level of respect he had for Beatrice:

> Beatrice is very much about confidentiality. If you need to tell her something and it needs to stay with her, then it will. And I have a high, high, high respect and gratitude for that since trust is an issue, with me. And, so, the ability—the fact that I can go to her and know that it won't go beyond her, if I need it to, then it's—I appreciate that.

Given the level of trust Mike had in Beatrice, their mentoring relationship was more impactful.

The level of trust between mentors and students seemed to indicate the amount the student benefited from the relationship. Dylan described how because of the trust Patricia had in him, he was promoted, provided with more opportunities to conduct supplemental instruction sessions and gained valuable experience in a field he was interested in pursuing professionally.

Demonstrating empathy. According to Goleman (1998), one of the five elements of emotional intelligence is empathy, understanding the emotional makeup of people and treating them according to their reactions. Empathy is crucial to cultural awareness and human sensitivity (Goleman, 1998) and is a vital element in relationships. Being empathic and caring is essential for mentors. According to Prange (2013), having an

empathic attitude and high expectations for students can affect students' belief in their own potential. Each of the students described how *knowing* that their mentors cared about them made all the difference in their relationships. They knew their mentors were empathic because they demonstrated understanding of their moods, behaviors and emotions in order to assist them through difficult times. The mentors were able to effectively serve the needs of their students because they had both the desire and capacity to understand and care about what they were experiencing. When asked what characteristic of a mentor is most important, Gail responded with,

> To be kind. To be kind and humorous and to be welcoming…Try to relate to them, I guess, is a big thing. Place yourselves in their shoes, because it makes it that much easier to talk to somebody, rather than being, like, condescending…that would be my biggest recommendation.

Gail described a specific time when she was having financial difficulties and it was affecting her emotionally. Beatrice knew how Gail was feeling from across the room just by looking at her. Gail explained:

> I actually made eye contact with her, and she gave me a nod, like, it's okay, it'll be okay, and I was just, like, oh, don't look at me, Beatrice. Because I hate being emotional. But she was just really supportive. I just remember that she was comforting and supportive, that time – just the right way of being supportive but not making it to where you're going to bawl…which I appreciate.

Other student participants expressed that the relationships they had with their mentors were the most beneficial type of support they received in college, over other faculty and staff, because of their genuine concern for their personal and academic welfare. Chrissy conveyed, "I think Marie has done a really good job of really looking at my personal situation, and knowing my personality and being able to offer the best guidance with that information." Mentors who demonstrated empathy by aiming to view

their students' perspectives were better able to understand the importance of building students' confidence in their own abilities (Prange, 2013). Therefore, the empathy mentors displayed towards their students maximized student potential.

Building rapport. Genuine concern for the personal and academic welfare of students is displayed by an increased level of rapport between mentor and student. Rapport was indicated as creating a community between students and their mentors. Students were more interested in continuing their relationships because they had established both a natural connection and a constructive rapport with their mentors. Pre-existing rapport contributed to students feeling as through their mentor knew them well enough to ask the right questions and provide effective solutions. In each of the cases, rapport helped establish a more nurturing relationship, enhancing student success.

Three themes were extracted from the student interview data: *Mentor Guidance in Establishing a Clear Vision, Mentor Commitment to College Success* and *Mentor Provides Emotional Support,* as well as several sub-themes. Next, the emergent themes and sub-themes from the mentor interview data will be discussed.

Mentor themes. The mentor interview data was coded into the following three themes: *Commitment to Student Success, Cultivating Social Connections* and *Nurturing Reciprocal and Rewarding Relationships.*

Commitment to student success. As discussed in Chapter Two, a student's positive interaction with their institution can predict persistence and students involved in mentoring relationships are considerably less likely to drop out of college. In particular, mentoring is significant to the retention efforts of first-generation college students and can lead to improved grade point averages. Each of the interviewed mentors indicated

how they intentionally developed mentoring relationships with their students with the utmost priority being their success in college. Students responded well to their mentor's genuine belief in their abilities and investment in their achievements. Students appreciated their mentors' ability to push them to do well and challenge them to do better. It was also important to students how their mentors were able to redirect them when they were not necessarily going down the right path. Patricia explained, "The best part about [mentoring] is working with the students and watching them develop and go on to be successful. We tell them all the time, your success is our success."

The commitment mentors had to their mentoring relationships was exemplified through the holistic concern they exhibited for their students' well-being and by making themselves dependable and consistently available.

Exhibiting holistic concern. Mentors established that mentoring students to be academically successful was their priority. However, a sincere holistic concern for all aspects of the student's life was what made the relationship more meaningful. Marie described, "I help my mentees out in whatever possible way that they need, but a lot of times the students who come to me who need that mentorship role are looking for life advice, looking for school advice, for career advice. I find that a mentor should be there in all aspects of a person's life." Each of the mentors described how their students responded positively when they exhibited genuine concern with their student's family, social and academic life. Jack explained:

> A mentor is someone who provides guidance, support, not only through the college experience, but all those things that surround that as you're attempting to complete. Which include your financial and your personal and degree plans. Because a lot of times students think this is what I want to do and once you start talking about it, you take classes, it's kind of like

> I don't know if that's what I want to be. But then also there's a personal side of stuff that affects…I think as a mentor you touch on guiding students in a holistic fashion… with Luca, we've talked about a holistic way of advising her through choosing majors, possible careers in that major, the challenges in the workforce. We talked about those things as well as some personal struggles and how to get through everyday life.

All of the mentors described how their students responded positively when they exhibited genuine concern regarding their student's family, social and academic life. By setting expectations, being emotionally supportive, providing feedback and encouraging involvement, the mentor participants enhanced the conditions for their students' success.

Dependable and consistently available. Students and mentor participants agreed that mentor advocacy, dependability and availability was essential to the strength of their relationship and fostered growth in the student. Beatrice stated, "If all I could do every day was talk to students and help to develop and groom them for better things, I would…I have to make a very intentional choice to carve out time for students to have those conversations and get out of the office to connect with people." Being dependable and available was defined as a cornerstone to the success of the relationships. Each mentor participant indicated they had an "open-door" policy and made themselves accessible to their students for non-judgmental advice and assistance, whenever it was needed. Frances explains:

> I'm not a counselor, I'm not a doctor, I'm not a police officer…I'm just a window…because sometimes, these kids, they know so many people and they still could be the loneliest people around, or it's their first experience away from mom and dad. They don't make the right choices or they feel so lonely, or they can't go to their parents for anything, or even their best friend. So, I make myself available to them – to be able to come in for whatever, and then I just point them in the right direction.

Moreover, Patricia emphasized the importance of "being there":

> No matter what I'm doing, I'll turn around and have five to ten minutes just to shoot the breeze or just talk…I'm hoping that my openness to having a relationship helps them see me as that kind of person…I never say 'make an appointment with me.' I don't have office hours for my student leaders – it's anytime, anywhere…

The mentor's "anytime, anywhere" availability to students resulted in an increased degree of exposure and visibility on campus for their students, fostering social capital.

Cultivating social connections. Individuals in strong mentoring relationships are prone to provide one another with greater information and assistance. The student participants articulated that they experienced an increased degree of exposure and visibility on campus due to their mentoring relationships. Both mentor and student participants indicated that their mentoring relationships resulted in other faculty, staff and administration becoming aware of the student's potential. This degree of exposure and resource access facilitated the development of social capital for students. The social capital and advocacy students received from their mentors enhanced their navigation of and connection to the university community.

Mentors indicated how they considered it particularly important to assist their students in gaining career-related benefits, whether it was in the form of graduate school application assistance, internship referrals or job placement support. Patricia explained:

> I feel a sense of responsibility that, if you come work for me, I want to share my knowledge of this college education process. I want to share with you what you can do afterwards and how high you can go – as high as you want. I think it's my responsibility, when I'm with them, to make sure they feel like I'm in their corner and I want them to succeed, I do…I find the most mentoring I do is the confusion of what to do next.

In each of the cases, the mentoring relationship promoted college student development, and even what to do after graduation, as exemplified by each of the students' increased confidence in goal setting, enhanced decision-making and problem solving capabilities. This was accentuated by the sense of belonging and mattering the mentors instilled in their students.

Instilling a sense of belonging and mattering. As previously indicated in the student themes, mentors confirmed that their relationships with their students helped to instill a sense of belonging and mattering in their students' lives. Having an amplified sense of belonging and mattering positively affected the students' academic and social integration. From Tinto (1993), we know that successful academic and social integration facilitates retention. Therefore, each of the mentor participants helped to retain their students and increased their social capital. Jack described how important a mentor is to retention efforts based on his own college experience, "I think that if I myself, back when I was in college as a first-generation college student, had I had a mentor, a guide, a sounding board, I probably wouldn't have dropped out."

Nurturing reciprocal and rewarding relationships. Interview data revealed that each of the mentors benefitted from the mentoring relationships just as much as their students did. The notion of generativity (Erickson, 1963) emerged in the results. Generativity, intangible rewards a mentor obtains when assisting a mentee, included enhanced leadership skills, significant friendships and a heightened sense of pride when their students succeeded. Mentors suggested that consistent interaction and exchange of personal information with their students was essential to building the relationship to a

meaningful level. The more meaningful the relationship became the more connectedness and reciprocity between mentor and student existed.

The reciprocal and rewarding aspects of the mentorships were also revealed through the parental role that mentors often took in their student's lives. As discussed in the student themes, the parental role exhibited by the mentors enhances the relationship, causing a mutually beneficial connection for both the student and mentor. Frances declared,

> You know what? They call me on Mother's Day. They call me on Christmas. They'll text me. 'Frances, how are you? Haven't heard from you', 'Miss you. Can't wait to go back to work.' It's so awesome. They invite me if they're all having dinner for a birthday. It's wonderful to be cared for like that so much.

Similarly, Jack explained how the success of his mentee was reciprocal.

> The most rewarding part of the relationship that you build with students is their success…I think when you talk to them and you see them succeed in any fashion of life, that's very rewarding.

Although being a mentor can be challenging and is not always "a positive, happy experience", each of the mentors concluded that it is extremely rewarding to see their students thrive, return to tell them about what they have accomplished and acknowledge that their mentoring relationship is what facilitated their achievements.

Passion for one's profession. Every mentor who was interviewed expressed a passion for his or her profession. They were genuinely devoted to the field of Student Affairs. The mentors' passion for their profession enhanced the rewards both students and mentors received from the mentoring relationship. Jack said, "People don't work in higher education for the money, we are here for the students, we want to make a difference." Being involved in a healthy mentoring relationship provided mentors with

recognition and appreciation for their efforts in Student Affairs. The mentors were excited and honored to be selected as a participant for this study because they were proud of their students and wanted to share how others could also influence students' lives in a positive way. Each of the mentors mirrored Beatrice's following sentiment,

> I love my job…it's really all about the relationships that I have and building those relationships with students. I think I just love being in an environment where I see that growth. College is such a great setting to see that happen.

Building relationships, supporting students, making a difference and *changing lives* were phrases repeatedly verbalized during the mentor interviews. The mentors each took pride in watching their mentees succeed, and as a result, found their roles in Student Affairs to be extremely fulfilling.

Unexpected theme: First-generation students and mentors. An unexpected theme that emerged from the data was the number of first-generation college students and mentors that participated in interviews. Four of the six students indicated that they were first-generation college students *(table 5.1)* and four of the five mentor participants were first-generation college students *(table 5.2)*. During interviews, the first-generation students reported their mentoring relationships to be the catalyst of their success.

First-generation college students by definition come to college with less social capital than their counterparts. Mentors provided their students with possibilities in terms of career opportunities, internships and graduate school information. For the first-generation students in this study, the mentoring relationships were a vital way for them to gain access to social capital.

Some of the unique challenges specific to first-generation college students are conflicting obligations with work, school and family, false expectations on how to be successful in academia and a lack of academic preparation and support from family and friends (London, 1992). Therefore, first-generation college students require additional support in order to be successful in college and graduate. In this study, the success of the first-generation students was facilitated by a supportive interpersonal relationship with a mentor. The mentors provided the academic and social support to first-generation college students that may have been missing from home.

Many of the parents of the first-generation students in this study were unfamiliar with the educational system. The mentors, a majority of first-generation college students themselves, were able to intervene in order to assist students in navigating the university and facilitate academic success. The mentors understood the difficulties their mentees could possibly experience and were able to assist in avoiding common obstacles. The mentors' first-generation status positively contributed to their ability to empathize with students for whom college was an unknown territory.

Summary

"I have met many young adults, and have hired many of them throughout the years, and they have all respected me on a level that I hadn't thought I was even worthy of. It was amazing. And, somehow I have impacted their life." (Frances)

This chapter presented a qualitative inquiry into the student-mentor dynamic, the experiences of students and mentors involved in mentoring relationships and how those relationships affected the students' success in college. Six students who have persisted in their college education and their identified mentors employed in Student Affairs were interviewed to learn more about how their relationships affected the social capital and

retention of college students. Comprehensive descriptions of the participants were provided, offering context. From both data and cross-case analysis of the interview transcripts, overarching categories in the form of themes were identified. The student interview data were coded into three themes, *Mentor Guidance in Establishing a Clear Vision, Mentor Commitment to College Success* and *Mentor Provides Emotional Support*. The mentor interview data were also coded into three themes: *Commitment to Student Success, Cultivating Social Connections* and *Nurturing Reciprocal and Rewarding Relationships*. Furthermore, the theme of first-generation college students emerged from the results. Chapter Six will provide a summary of the findings and discuss the significance of the study's results as related to retention, social capital and emotional intelligence.

CHAPTER SIX: DISCUSSION

Summary of the Dissertation

Statement of the problem. The quality of relationships students establish with both academic staff and peers is essential to successful social integration and is crucial for student retention in higher education (Qualter et al., 2008). Failure to acclimate to university life is the most common reason for undergraduate students to leave the university (Parker et al., 2004) and over 25% of first year students do not return to college for their sophomore year (Mangold et al., 2002; NCHEMS, 2008; Parker et al., 2004). According to Pascarella and Terenzini (1991, as cited in Reno, 2011), individuals who attend college are "better informed, more involved in civic activities, better able to handle life's ambiguities, happier, healthier, richer, and more likely to have their children get a college education" (p. 2). Further research demonstrates that individuals with an earned bachelor's degree have an occupational status advantage, are less likely to be unemployed, and will average higher net earnings over their counterparts with a high school diploma (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). Therefore, closing the performance gap and holding universities accountable must be a top state priority to ensure access to public higher education and student success (Moore et al., 2011).

Establishing a new social network, modifying existing relationships and learning how to function as an independent adult is difficult for college students and can take time. Oftentimes, students do not receive sufficient academic and social support in order to be successful in college. At the outset of the twenty-first century, rigid accountability measures, such as the Student Right to Know and Campus Security Act (1990), have focused educators' attention primarily on academic skills, rules and procedures.

However, a growing community of scholars and practitioners are striving to revive the "heart" of education, emphasizing that a caring culture is the foundation for authentic growth and learning. A caring culture is cultivated by meaningful relationships. As a result, universities are establishing mentoring programs with the primary goal of increasing student persistence (Nora & Crisp, 2008).

Purpose statement. Few studies have explored the contribution of relational factors or the impact of personal characteristics of mentors on mentoring efficacy (Bernier et al., 2005). While emotional intelligence and social capital literature point to the value of meaningful relationships for increasing student achievement, scholars have not yet conceptualized mentoring in terms of social capital and emotional intelligence. With retention efforts in mind, this research explored what educators and Student Affairs practitioners currently know about supportive relationships, which characteristics of those relationships affect the retention of college students and how colleges can increase retention by modeling these efforts. This study provides empirical and theoretical insight Student Affairs practitioners might consider when establishing and preserving mentoring relationships as a means to promote student retention.

Research questions. This study explored the exchange of social capital between Student Affairs professionals and students through mentoring as a means to promote college student retention. The following research question and sub-questions were addressed: In what ways do mentoring relationships between Student Affairs professionals and students support or constrain the retention of college students?

a. To what degree do mentoring relationships foster social capital?

b. In what ways do students use 'mentoring social capital' to persist toward degree?

c. Do students perceive a relationship between a mentor's emotional intelligence and the quality of the mentoring relationship?

Review of the methodology. In order to gain information regarding mentoring relationships between Student Affairs professionals and students, how those relationships affect the social capital of students and how social capital supports or constrains college student retention, a two-phased explanatory mixed methods approach was implemented (Creswell, 2008). The first phase of this study allowed the researcher to obtain quantitative results from senior-level undergraduate students at State University regarding demographic information and current mentoring relationships. The quantitative results provided the subjects for the research. Further analysis of the data took place in the second phase of this study through qualitative data collection in the form of one-on-one interviews with both students and identified mentors. The interviews provided an in-depth exploration of established mentoring relationships (Creswell, 2008) and focused on the specific characteristics of the student-mentor dynamic, as well as the social capital and emotional intelligence aspects of the relationship.

Summary of the findings. The results of this study indicate that having a mentor that is able to help students navigate the university can make a positive difference on student persistence. Quantitative results confirmed that students rated both faculty and staff mentors high on educational concern and to be considerably emotionally intelligent. However, staff mentors had more personal concern for their students and had a more positive affect on their mentee's academic success.

Qualitative analysis of the student and mentor interview data distilled six themes, three of which surfaced from the student interview data: *Mentor Guidance in Establishing a Clear Vision, Mentor Commitment to College Success* and *Mentor Provides Emotional Support.* The remaining three themes emerged from the mentor interview analysis: *Commitment to Student Success, Cultivating Social Connections* and *Nurturing Reciprocal and Rewarding Relationships.* Finally, an unexpected theme was revealed, the influence mentoring relationships have on both first-generation college students and their mentors.

From the both the quantitative and qualitative data, three main concepts influencing college student retention surfaced, Emotional *Support, Mentor Commitment* and *Relational Capital.* An intersectional model answering the main research question regarding the ways mentoring relationships between Student Affairs professionals and students support the retention of college students, is proposed. From the intersectional model, an ideal mentor condition is provided as a recommendation that Student Affairs professionals may consider in both practice and mentoring relationships with students.

Intersectional Model and Ideal Mentor Condition

The conceptual framework *(figure 2.1)* introduced in Chapter Two offered a model of how emotional intelligence, mentor commitment and social capital, all relational elements, improve college student retention. Upon research and reflection of the framework model, it was realized that although mentor commitment, social capital and emotional intelligence are all important facets of retaining college students, a more thorough assessment of actions an emotionally intelligent mentor can demonstrate to assist college student retention was needed.

Both the literature and this study demonstrate how mentor commitment, social capital and emotional intelligence are all elements of an influential mentoring relationship. However, it where these three elements intersect that an ideal and meaningful mentor relationship can occur *(figure 6.2)*. A mentor who demonstrates a combination of all three elements, mentor commitment, social capital and emotional intelligence, will positively influence student success. Fundamentally, it is at the intersection of mentor commitment, social capital and emotional intelligence, where a condition is established in which an emotionally intelligent mentor could provide emotional support, commitment to student success and cultivate relational capital.

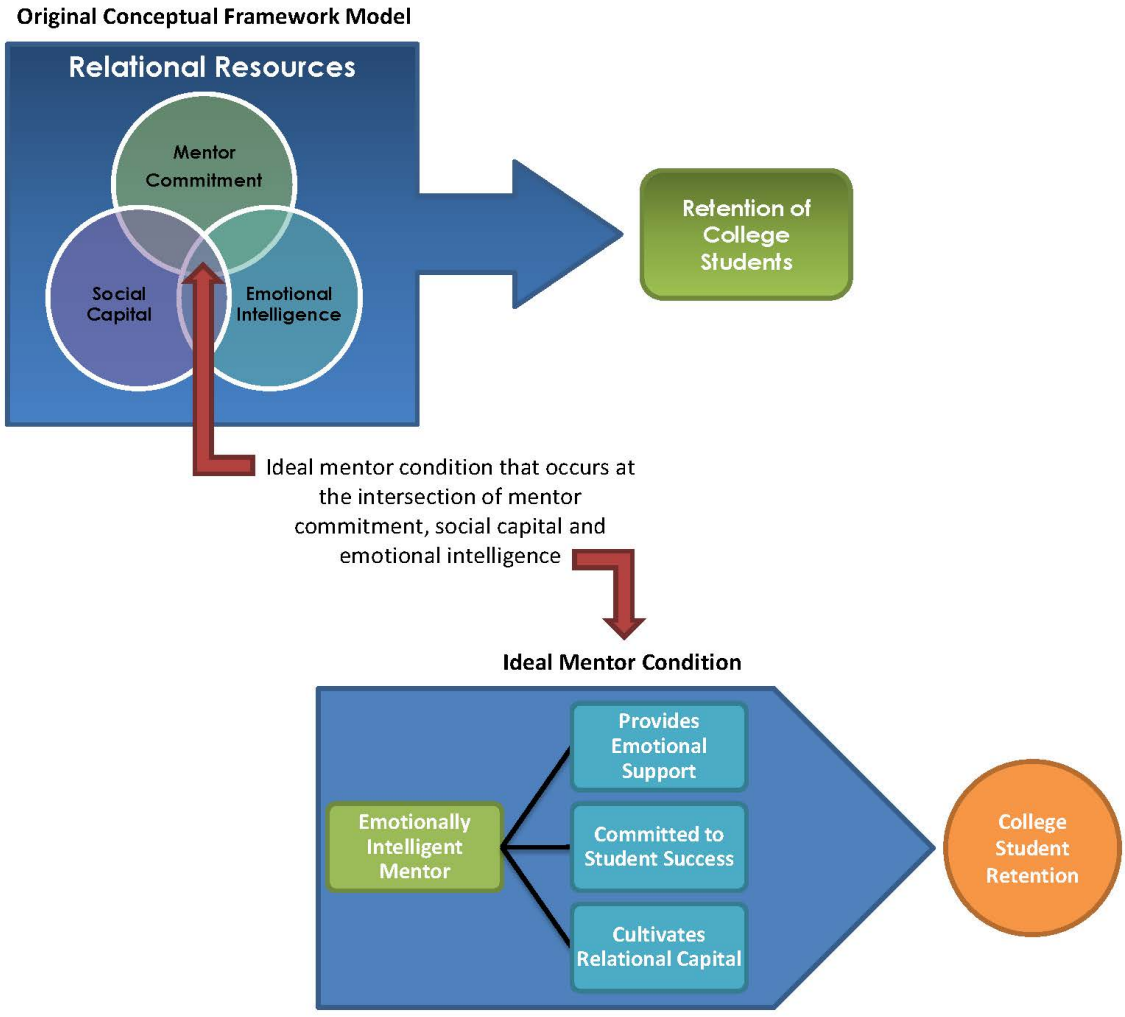


Figure 6.1. Intersectional Model. At the intersection of mentor commitment, social capital and emotional intelligence, a condition is established in which an emotionally intelligent mentor can provide emotional support, is committed to student success and cultivates relational capital.

A detailed representation of mentor attributes that formulate the ideal mentor condition is depicted in *figure 6.2.* An ideal state of mentoring occurs at the intersection of mentor commitment, social capital and emotional intelligence. Emotionally intelligent mentors provide their students with emotional support, cultivate relational capital and exhibit a sincere commitment to their mentees personal and academic progress, thus facilitating retention.

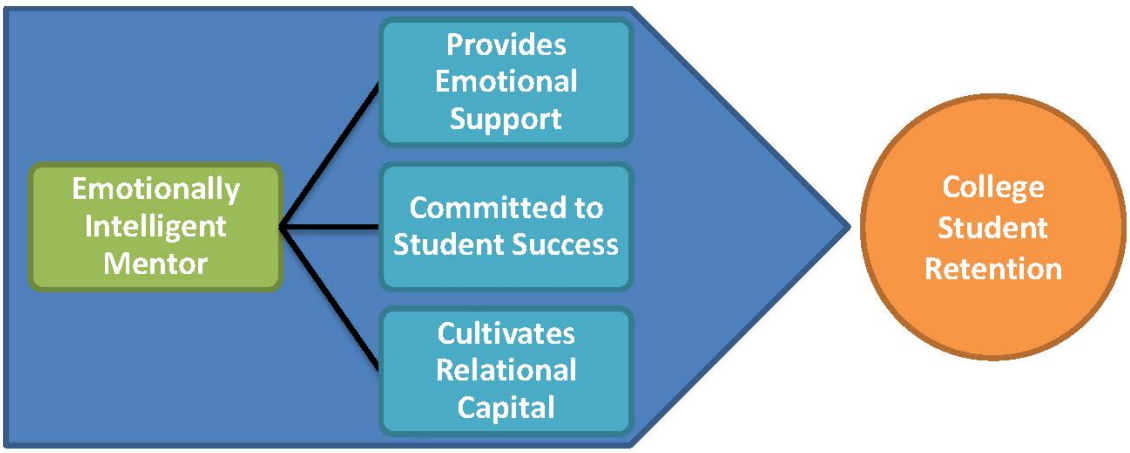


Figure 6.2. Ideal Mentor Condition. An ideal mentor is emotionally intelligent. An emotionally intelligent mentor provides students with emotional support, is committed to student success and cultivates relational capital as a means to facilitate student retention.

Salovey and Mayer (1990, 1997) defined emotional intelligence as the manner in which individuals perceive, express, manage and understand emotion in both themselves and others and the ability to discriminate among them to guide thinking and action. Five elements of emotional intelligence are self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skill (Goleman, 1998). According to the student participants in this study, their mentors encompassed each of these elements. The literature describes emotional intelligence as a key factor influencing the retention of college students (Qualter et al., 2008). The quantitative results exposed a significant correlation between student grade point average and perceived mentor emotional intelligence ($r = .17$, $p < .05$) indicating emotionally intelligent mentors have a positive influence on the academic success of their mentee. Moreover, qualitative data revealed mentor emotional intelligence as the foundation for being an effective mentor. The following discussion will provide a deeper understanding of the contributing emotional intelligence factors demonstrated by mentors of successful students.

Discussion of the Findings

The literature demonstrated that mentoring relationships facilitate the academic success and retention of college students. Mentoring promotes goal and career achievement through support, reinforcement and emotional sustenance – all means of assisting students recognize their capabilities. However, there is a dearth of research regarding what aspects of those relationships, with Student Affairs staff in particular, are persuading students to remain in college. This study revealed important qualities, skills and behaviors Student Affairs practitioners may want to reinforce in order to strengthen interpersonal relationships with students as a means to facilitate graduation.

The findings will be discussed using the ideal mentor condition model as an outline. With the objective of exploring factors of emotional intelligence that facilitate college student retention, three components required of an emotionally intelligent mentor – emotional support, mentor commitment and relational capital – will be presented, along with ways in which Student Affairs staff can replicate these elements in order to improve practice and enhance their ability to support students to improve retention efforts. The section will conclude with a discussion on the influence mentoring relationships have on both first-generation college students and their mentors.

Emotional support. Emotional health is one of the only self-rated personal characteristics to have a positive effect on degree completion (Astin, 2006). Emotional factors have the capacity to influence academic performance and affect a student's decision to remain in school. From both the quantitative and qualitative data, personal concern and emotional intelligence were designated as important factors for successful mentoring relationships. The literature and this study confirm there is a connection

between emotional intelligence and relationship quality and that mentoring relationships are necessary for students to become accustomed to college life. Elements of personal concern and emotional intelligence that emerged from the data included trust, empathy, rapport and parent-like support.

Trust. As discussed in the literature review, trust is rooted in the definition of mentoring and individuals are more likely to participate in mentorships founded on trust. Student participants described how they were willing to share emotional and intellectual information with their mentors because of the level of confidence they had developed in one another. Students described how they trusted their mentors to have their best interests in mind and knew any communication between them would remain confidential. Moreover, the level of trust between mentors and students indicated the amount the student benefited from the relationship, including internships and promotions.

Empathy. An element of emotional support that repeatedly emerged from the data was mentor empathy, the ability to understand the emotional makeup of their students and treat them according to their reactions. Students described how *knowing* that their mentors cared about them made all the difference in their relationships. Given the mentors' empathic capacity, they were able to relate to students on a personal level and encourage them in their social and academic journey. Mentor empathy guided students' belief in their own potential. The mentors' desire and capacity to understand and care about what their students were experiencing promoted student persistence. Therefore, mentor empathy maximized student potential.

Rapport. Rapport, demonstrated through mentor self-awareness and self-regulation, was indicated as creating a community between students and their mentors.

Students described their mentors as non-judgmental and able to recognize and understand their moods and emotions, as well as the effect they had on others. Students were more interested in continuing a relationship with their mentor because they had established both a natural connection and a constructive rapport with one another. Pre-existing rapport contributed to students feeling as through their mentor knew them well enough to ask the right questions and provide effective solutions. These mentor qualities provided students with enhanced emotional support and confidence, thus heightening their success.

Parent-like support. Both students and mentor participants agreed that the mentors often played a parental role in their collegiate lives. Given that the students were living away from home, they found comfort in their mentors and viewed them as a "parent away from home." This familial social and emotional support provided by mentors assisted in fostering a more personal connection with their students. Furthermore, the parent-like role increased the responsibility mentors felt for their students as a parent might feel and helped them to demonstrate ongoing support and advocacy for their students.

The role of the Student Affairs profession has moved away from the philosophy of *in loco parentis*. However, the importance of emotional and parent-like support has been restored as a component of academic success to be considered by practitioners in Student Affairs. Although *in loco parentis* is a notion of the past, students revealed they still need at least one supportive relationship outside of the home to be successful in college. Mentor commitment to nurture positive interpersonal relationships and a comfortable familial collegiate atmosphere helps motivate both students and mentors to work toward common goals, such as remaining in school.

Mentor commitment. According to Allen and Eby (2008), mentor commitment relates positively to mentee accounts of relationship quality. Qualitative data from this study confirmed that the commitment Student Affairs practitioners placed into their mentoring relationships influenced their student's success in college. Students responded well to their mentor's investment in their achievements and appreciated their mentors' ability to push them to do well and challenge them to do better. The "your success is my success" mentality of mentors empowered students and played a critical role in their achievement. This was particularly true for the first-generation student participants, who described mentor commitment as instrumental in providing a path to college graduation. Mentor dedication to student success provided the students with the security and reinforcement needed to excel academically and socially.

Dependability and availability. The most prevalent theme in the qualitative research was student appreciation of mentor dependability and availability. Student Affairs professionals have the unique opportunity to empower their students by being a reliable and consistently available presence. Reliability and accessibility were essential conditions to the success of the relationships and gave students confidence knowing they had their mentors unwavering support, especially for first-generation students given the lack of college-related understanding at home. Both quantitative and qualitative results indicated that mentor commitment was demonstrated to their students through a sincere holistic concern for their wellbeing. Students did not just want an academic mentor; they wanted a mentor who would provide career and personal advice as well.

Motivation. The ability for mentors in Student Affairs to be readily available, dependable and have a holistic concern for student wellbeing develops from a passion for

the profession. Mentor commitment was enhanced because they were devoted to their jobs. The motivation and desire to make a difference in the lives of students provided non-financial recognition for their efforts in Student Affairs. Motivation is also one of the five elements of emotional intelligence, defined as the inclination to pursue goals and a passion for work for reasons that go beyond wealth and rank. Mentors embraced motivation by taking pride their students' success, resulting in reported job satisfaction. Mentors were highly committed to their relationships, found satisfaction in their Student Affairs role and understood they were capable of making a significant and positive impact on their students' goal to graduate from SU. The role of a committed mentor is not an easy undertaking, as it requires substantial responsibility. Student Affairs practitioners interested in developing quality mentorships should be willing to invest a significant amount of time and energy to the relationship in order to positively influence college student retention.

Relational capital. While social capital is used to describe the benefits an individual receives from social connections and emotional intelligence includes an element of social skill, having the aptitude to manage relationships and build connections with others – or *relational capital* – suggests the importance of social ties in improving academic outcomes. Relational capital can contribute to a comprehensive and meaningful mentorship and influence successful retention of college students.

This study confirmed that mentors in Student Affairs could promote college student development and provide students with the relational capital needed to better navigate the university. Mentors can do this for their students by acting as a positive role

model, instilling a sense of belonging and mattering, and providing them with significant social connections.

Role modeling. Student participants discussed how they were inspired by their mentors and how it motivated them to be more responsible. Some of the students decided to pursue similar educational or career paths as their mentor and aspired to be the same kind of mentor. Recall Dylan and Patricia. Given Patricia's affection for her job, Dylan was inspired to forgo medical school and attend graduate school instead with the objective of becoming a college professor. He explained how Patricia not only helped him decide his plans for the future, but a *path* in which to get there. Qualitative results indicated that mentors who served as a student's role model correlated with increased academic and vocational success. As mentors, staff in Student Affairs have a unique opportunity to positively influence students regarding potential opportunities as well as foster responsibility and academic persistence.

Data indicate mentoring relationships helped to promote college student development, as well as post-graduation plans, as exemplified by each of the students' increased confidence in goal setting, enhanced decision-making and problem solving capabilities. This was accentuated by the sense of belonging and mattering the mentors instilled in their students.

Belonging/mattering. In this study, mentors in Student Affairs used relational capital as a way to help connect students to the university. Given that student embeddedness within the college community supports student achievement, using relational capital and emotional intelligence to foster feelings of appreciation, respect, and friendship generated opportunities for students to connect with the campus.

Relational capital provided students with assistance in navigating the university. Through their mentoring relationships, students felt appreciated and respected, thus instilling a sense of belonging and mattering. The sense of belonging and mattering augmented student persistence by offering a college support system, a degree of exposure on campus, access to more University resources and individuals and by providing a "second home." Many of the students were embraced as family by their mentors. The familial support students received by their mentors provided them with comfort, support, and assisted them in establishing a solid connection to the university enriching their confidence.

Correspondingly, mentors also considered the relational capital to instill a sense of belonging and mattering in their students' lives. Qualitative results demonstrated that an amplified sense of belonging and mattering positively affected the students' academic and social integration. Given that successful academic and social integration facilitates retention, mentors in Student Affairs can help students succeed in college by providing relational capital.

Connections. This study confirmed the literature in that student exposure and visibility on campus can originate from their mentoring relationships. This research indicated that mentors are a conduit in allowing key people to become aware of their student's abilities. The degree of exposure and resource access mentors provide to students results in the development of relational capital. Relational capital promoted social skill, relationship management and connection building.

Additionally, relational capital promoted sociability, approval, and reputation for students and exposed to them to benefits such as campus visibility as well as career,

internship and networking opportunities. The students in this study indicated that they would not have had access to important connections and resources without the relational capital offered by their mentors. The connections provided by mentors helped students persist toward degree and even delivered post-baccalaureate opportunities. Essentially, having a mentor provided students with access to information shared in the Student Affairs network. This access was reciprocated as the mentor could also acquire information from the student's point of view, subsequently helping to support other students campus-wide.

Reciprocity. Research reveals that mentoring relationships can be reciprocal for both involved individuals whereas mutual benefits and influence are exchanged (Richey, Gambrill & Blythe, 1988). Richey et al. (1988) suggested that mentors and mentees experience greater satisfaction in the mentorship when their interactions are an even exchange of resources. The results from this study mirror this finding in that mentors and their students helped one another in a variety of ways including mutual encouragement, problem-solving, increased visibility, skill development, emotional support and even friendship.

Qualitative data revealed that each of the mentors benefitted from the mentoring relationships just as much as their students did. Relationships with students provided mentors with enhanced leadership skills, significant friendships and a heightened sense of pride when their students succeeded. Mentors indicated that consistent interaction and exchange of personal information with their students was essential to building the relationship to a meaningful level. The more meaningful the relationship became the more connectedness and reciprocity between mentor and student existed. Furthermore,

mentors specified that it was extremely rewarding to see their students thrive, return to tell them about what they have accomplished and acknowledge that their mentoring relationship is what facilitated their achievements.

First-generation college students and mentors. An unexpected finding in this study was the number of first-generation student and mentor participants. Four of the six students indicated that they were first-generation college students while four of the five mentor participants were first-generation college students. *Figure 6.3* displays the level of student and mentor participant's parental education.

According to Gandara and Contreras (2009), the formation of a strong relationship with a caring adult who truly knows the student is the most important condition in which to assist underrepresented students to successfully navigate college. As discussed throughout this paper, students indicated that their mentoring relationships have provided them with many academic and personal benefits. However, for the first-generation students in this study, the mentoring relationships were a vital way for them to gain access to information and opportunities that may not have had access to or even known about prior to entering the University. In this study, the success of the first-generation student participants was facilitated by the supportive interpersonal relationship with their mentor. The mentors, many of whom were first-generation college students themselves, were able to intervene in order to assist students in navigating the university and facilitate academic success. Given the first-generation status of the mentors, they understood the adversity their mentees could experience and were able to assist in avoiding common obstacles.

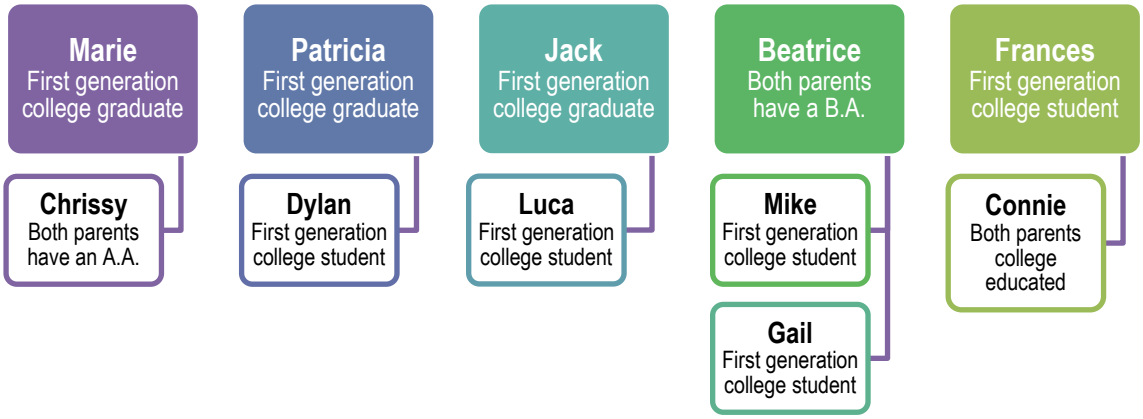


Figure 6.3. Level of Participant Parental Education. Four of the six students indicated that they were first-generation college students while four of the five mentor participants were first-generation college students.

Mentors who were first-generation college students positively contributed to their ability to empathize with their first-generation mentees. However, two of the mentors who were first-generation college students and were paired with students who had college educated parents were able similarly support their students. Perhaps recognizing the common obstacles they may have once faced encouraged them to mentor their students more effectively.

Practical Implications

Mentoring relationships between students and Student Affairs professionals facilitate college student retention. These relationships are influenced by emotional support, mentor commitment and relational capital. As discussed in Chapter Two, students involved in an informal mentoring relationship received slightly more vocational support (Chao et al., 1992) and received greater outcomes and satisfaction in relationships with their mentors than from their counterparts participating in formal mentorships (Johnson, 2002). Organic mentoring relationships have been found to be more significant and to promote positive self-identification, emotional security (Santos &

Reigadas, 2005) are more meaningful than formal mentorships (Johnson, 2002). Regardless of how well a formal mentoring program is designed, it has the potential to be less valuable than an informal mentoring relationship that developed organically. However, Student Affairs staff wishing to mentor college students, with organizational support, can still take part in mentoring and emotional intelligence training. As mentoring continues to expand, it is essential to incorporate empirically supported practices into mentor training. This training should be informed by both the literature and observation as to what comprises a quality mentoring relationship. Important to consider in mentor training and efficacy is a conceptual framework and model to ensure consistency in training efforts and practice.

The conceptual framework *(figure 2.1)* in this study provides as a model of how emotional intelligence, mentor commitment and social capital, all relational elements, improve college student retention. Furthermore, an ideal mentor condition *(figure 6.2)* provides an approach emotionally intelligent mentors in Student Affairs may consider in order to facilitate college student retention by providing emotional support, cultivating relational capital and committing to their mentees collegiate and personal success.

Students and Student Affairs staff often meet through campus involvement, activities and programming. Student Affairs programs such as orientation team, peer advising, internships, Greek organizations, athletics, Student Support Services and student government, to name a few, provide excellent opportunities for Student Affairs staff interested in mentoring to reach out and form strong interpersonal relationships, premised on similar interests, with students. Evaluating strategies and approaches

mentors could develop in establishing and maintaining organic mentorships would be advantageous.

Currently, each of the twenty-three CSU campuses are immersed in producing results for the system wide Graduation Initiative, a mandate that intends to raise the six-year graduation rate of CSU students 8% by 2016, as well as cut existing gap in degree attainment by CSU underrepresented students by 50%. Because of the Graduation Initiative, administrators at SU are exploring peer, faculty and online mentoring programs. However, the concept of mentor and emotional intelligence training for both faculty and staff at SU has not been proposed. Perhaps in future discussions and assessment of mentoring models, mentor training for Student Affairs staff wishing to make meaningful connections with students, particularly with those of whom are first-generation and/or underrepresented, could be explored as a means to decrease the achievement gap and help increase the six-year graduation rate.

Empirical findings, including this study, suggest there is a need for emotional intelligence program development for educators in order to enhance social and emotional intelligence skills in order to provide effective mentoring. In 2006, Goleman discovered that emotional intelligence is developed in the neurotransmitters of the brain's limbic system, the part of the brain that learns best through motivation, practice and feedback. Therefore, emotional intelligence *can* be learned (Goleman, 1998). Given that mentoring consists of emotionally connected relationships, it may be helpful for universities to attend to the development of emotional intelligence skills of Student Affairs staff as they relate to understanding, expressing and recognizing emotions in others as a means to develop interventions to support students adjusting to a variety of personal and

interpersonal challenges of acclimating to university life. Developing emotional intelligence skills can help Student Affairs practitioners build healthy mentoring relationships with students in order to facilitate their success.

Given the importance of social ties in improving academic outcomes, colleges and universities could assist Student Affairs staff in cultivating relational capital in order to contribute to comprehensive and meaningful mentorships with students. Mentors knowledgeable in developing relational capital have a unique opportunity to positively influence students by fostering responsibility, instilling a sense of belonging and mattering and enhancing confidence and academic persistence. Relational capital promotes sociability, approval, and reputation for students and exposes to them to benefits such as campus visibility and career, internship and networking opportunities. The students in this study indicated that their mentors provided access to important connections and resources. Essentially, having a mentor provides students with access to information shared in the Student Affairs network. Universities may consider increasing deliberate strategies to promote rapport, collaboration, and engagement between Student Affairs staff and students. Universities that invest in a system's social relations, in which the resources of other individuals can be accessed, borrowed or leveraged, would provide relational capital opportunities and resource access (Daly, 2010) to students resulting in enhanced student engagement and involvement, thus facilitating retention.

Finally, the ideal mentor model can be incorporated into campus academic advising units. According to Habley (1994), "Academic advising is the only structured activity on the campus in which all students have the opportunity for ongoing, one-to-one interaction with a concerned representative of the institution" (p. 10). At most colleges or

universities, all students have the opportunity or are required to meet with an academic advisor in order to review requirements needed to graduate.

Oftentimes students do not have the opportunity to seek out a mentor. However, they still must see an academic advisor. Intrusive advising is an opportunity to reach out to students who may not be taking advantage of all the resources the university has to offer. Therefore, assigned academic advisors can step into a mentoring role for students and encourage persistence. Although this is not an entirely organic means in establishing a mentoring relationship, it is not completely formal either, as students must still take the initiative to seek out advising.

The ideal mentor model shares many similar traits as the intrusive advising concept. Intrusive advising is defined as "Intentional contact with students with the goal of developing a caring and beneficial relationship that leads to increased academic motivation and persistence" (Varney, 2007, p.11). It requires academic advisors to utilize elements of emotional intelligence, such as empathy, trust and rapport, as well has the cultivation of relational capital. Training academic advisors on components of the ideal mentor model concept through intrusive advising is an excellent opportunity for universities to capitalize on the student/advisor continuous interaction. Unfortunately, many advising units do not have the resources to commit to the time and training it would take to incorporate intrusive advising. Collaborating with Student Affairs in order to allocate resources and implement the ideal mentor model could be a means to promote Graduation Initiative efforts.

Limitations

This study offered insight into mentoring relationships and the positive affect they have on college student retention. Findings from this research can help colleges and universities establish training initiatives and programming in order to develop the emotional and relational skills of Student Affairs staff as a means to cultivate and influence student success. However, this study also has certain limitations, including generalizability and positionality.

Perhaps the greatest limitation of this study is that the data is not generalizable. Given the sample only included participants gathered from one institution and a limited number of students indicated a mentoring relationship with a Student Affairs professional, it is impossible to assume that the results are generalizable to other colleges or universities. However, data collected from this study can inform and provide valuable insight to Student Affairs practitioners on the effects meaningful relationships have on college student retention. Additionally, the framework and ideal mentor condition model proposed in this study can be repeated at other higher education institutions.

The researcher's positionality also presented a limitation, as the researcher is currently the Associate Director of Undergraduate Advising Services at the research site. Although this position brings experience, perspective and direct access to student information and records, it also could have influenced the information students provided in their surveys and interviews. The researcher assured students that participation in the interviews did not affect their academic or graduation status in any way. Given that the researcher did not have a supervisory role relative to any of the student participants in this study, no breach of privacy occurred. Although the researcher has worked closely or

collaborated with many of the mentor participants in this study, there was no supervisory or supervised relationship between the researcher and mentors.

Furthermore, the researcher employed two doctoral candidates to conduct the student and mentor interviews so as not to affect responses. Both student and mentor participants were assured their responses would be kept confidential as only the researcher and dissertation faculty had access to the data. With the purpose of ensuring privacy, pseudonyms for both students and mentors were used.

Future Considerations

Areas for further research should explore the influence of culture, and/or socioeconomic status and emotional intelligence on mentoring relationships. A longitudinal study on how the emotional intelligence of students and mentors expands over the duration of their relationship and the effect it may have on a student's decision to remain in college could be beneficial for educators interested in retention efforts. Discovering exactly *how* emotional intelligence can generate a caring culture in higher education and what effective strategies can be utilized in coaching mentors to develop emotional intelligence would be advantageous.

Additionally, an important avenue for future research is to more deeply analyze mentoring in terms of homogeneity. The current methodology did not allow participants to indicate mentor demographics and how demographics may or may not have influenced their relationship. Further research is needed to examine the benefits and challenges regarding the importance of students connecting with mentors having the same ethnic background, gender or similar cultural values and vocations.

Finally, further examination of the affect mentoring relationship have on the retention of first-generation college students, particularly regarding the effects cultural and family dynamics have on student achievement could prove extremely valuable in developing student success initiatives. A deeper look at these relationships is necessary in order to acquire a more detailed understanding of what Student Affairs practitioners could do to nurture meaningful relationships with first-generation college students.

Conclusion

One of the most critical issues facing institutions of higher education today is the number of students failing to graduate (Mangold et al., 2002). Students in higher education are not progressing each year and something must be done to address this gap in achievement. This study serves as a means to raise awareness among designers of mentor training programs, as well as potential mentors, regarding college students' experiences and perceptions in order to promote graduation.

Although the characteristics of undergraduate students have evolved throughout the years, the notion of meaningful relationships has remained constant. With retention efforts in mind, this research explored what educators and Student Affairs practitioners currently know about supportive relationships, which characteristics of those relationships affect the retention of college students and how colleges can increase retention by modeling these efforts. In order to gain information regarding mentoring relationships between Student Affairs professionals and students, how those relationships affect the social capital of students and how relational capital supports or constrains college student retention, a two-phased explanatory mixed methods approach was implemented.

Quantitative results confirmed that students rated both faculty and staff mentors high on educational concern, to be considerably emotionally intelligent and staff mentors to have more personal concern for their students and a more positive affect on their mentee's academic success. Qualitative analysis extracted three themes from the student data: *Mentor Guidance in Establishing a Clear Vision, Mentor Commitment to College Success* and *Mentor Provides Emotional Support* and three themes from the mentor data: *Commitment to Student Success, Cultivating Social Connections* and *Nurturing Reciprocal and Rewarding Relationships.* The influence mentoring relationships have on both first-generation college students and their mentors was an unexpected theme uncovered in the data.

A conceptual framework *(figure 2.1)* was introduced offering a model of how emotional intelligence, mentor commitment and social capital, all relational elements, improve college student retention. Stemming from the conceptual framework is an intersectional model providing a more thorough assessment of actions an emotionally intelligent mentor can take in order to assist college student retention was proposed. The intersectional model introduced an ideal mentor condition in which three main concepts influencing college student retention emerged: *Emotional Support, Mentor Commitment and Relational Capital.*

Emotional support provided by mentors has the capacity to influence academic performance and a student's decision to remain in school. Elements of emotional support that emerged from the data included trust, empathy, rapport and parent-like support. Mentor dependability, availability and motivation, all aspects of mentor commitment, were also correlated with student success. This was particularly true for first-generation

students, who described mentor commitment as reinforcement to excel academically and socially. Moreover, the concept of relational capital, having the aptitude to manage relationships and build connections with others, emerged from the data. Mentors can promote relational capital for their students by acting as a positive role model, instilling a sense of belonging and mattering, and providing them with significant social connections.

Student Affairs professionals have been described as "agents of influence" (Ellis, 2009, p. 449). Colleges and universities should consider better capitalizing on this influence agents of Student Affairs have on students by providing more resources and professional development opportunities to encourage mentor relationships. While access to college has increased, the graduation rates have not. Colleges and universities are constantly searching for ways to support student persistence by focusing on conditions that promote student achievement. Mentoring relationships are a means to do this. Utilizing mentoring as an intervention model can considerably affect student retention.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: ELECTRONIC SURVEY

Invitation to Participate in a UCSD/CSUSM Research Study

Domenica Pearl, a doctoral candidate in Educational Leadership, is conducting research to explore how mentoring relationships between undergraduate students and university staff affect college student retention. The purpose of this research is to discover ways in which university staff can better meet the expectations of university students and facilitate graduation.

The survey is voluntary, there are no negative consequences if you decide not to participate and you may exit the survey at any time.

By answering and submitting the survey, you are agreeing for your answers to be used in the research. All information collected will be kept confidential by the researcher, and no names or identifying information will be included in the reports or research articles.

If you have any questions about the research, please feel free to contact Domenica Pearl at dpearl@csusm.edu.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Demographic Questions:

1. What is your age?
2. What is your gender?
    a. Male
    b. Female
    c. Prefer not to answer
3. With what race/ethnicity do you most identify?
    a. Black or African/American
    b. Asian
    c. Latino(a)
    d. Pacific Islander
    e. Native American, American Indian or Alaska Native
    f. White
    g. Other (please specify)
4. Please select your year in college:
    a. First Year
    b. Sophomore
    c. Junior
    d. Senior
5. Major:
6. Overall GPA:

7. Did you transfer to SU?
8. If so, how many colleges or universities did you attend prior to your attendance at SU?
9. How many semesters have you attended SU?

Definition of a mentor:
A mentor is a person who facilitates personal and professional growth in an individual by sharing the knowledge, skills, information and insights that have been learned through the years in order to foster the personal and professional growth of someone else.

General Questions:

10. Considering the definition of a mentor (described above), do you have a mentor at SU?
11. Is your mentor a faculty member (professor) or a staff member at SU?
12. Please select the department(s) in which your mentor is employed (select all that apply):
    a. ACE Scholars Services
    b. Admissions
    c. Associated Students Inc.
    d. Athletics
    e. Campus Recreation
    f. Career Center
    g. College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP)
    h. College Corps
    i. College of Business Administration
    j. College of Education, Health and Human Services
    k. College of Humanities, Arts, Behavioral and Social Sciences
    l. College of Science and Mathematics
    m. Cross Cultural Center
    n. Dean of Students Office
    o. Disabled Student Services (DSS)
    p. Early Assessment Program (EAP)
    q. Early Outreach
    r. Educational Opportunity Program (EOP)
    s. Extended Learning
    t. Financial Aid
    u. First Year Programs
    v. Housing
    w. International Students
    x. LGBTQ Pride Center
    y. Registration & Records
    z. Student Academic Support Services (SASS)
    aa. Student Life & Leadership (SLL)
    bb. Student Health & Counseling Services
    cc. Student Support Services (SSS – TRIO)

dd. Study Abroad
ee. Talent Search
ff. Undergraduate Advising Services (UAS)
gg. Upward Bound
hh. Veteran's Services
ii. Women's Center
jj. Not sure
kk. Other – please specify

13. How/where did you first meet your mentor?
14. How long has this person served as your mentor?

Mentoring/Social Capital/Emotional Intelligence Questions:
Please answer each statement by selecting the number that best reflects your degree of agreement or disagreement with that statement:

(Disagree, Somewhat Disagree, Neither disagree or agree, Somewhat Agree, Agree)

15. My mentor takes a personal interest in my education.
16. My mentor has helped me to be successful in my academic career.
17. My mentor helps me coordinate my professional goals.
18. My mentor has devoted special time and consideration to my academic success.
19. I share personal problems with my mentor.
20. I consider my mentor to be my friend.
21. I try to model my behavior after my mentor.
22. I admire my mentor's ability to motivate others.
23. My mentor is not judgmental.
24. My mentor is aware how his/her words affect others.
25. My mentor is comfortable expressing his/her feelings or emotions.
26. My mentor is comfortable discussing my feelings or emotions with me.
27. My mentor listens respectfully to understand my point of view.

Mentoring Open-Ended

28. Why do you consider this person a mentor?
29. What words would you use to describe your mentor?
30. What works would you use to describe your mentoring relationship?

Participation Prompt:

31. Would you be willing to participate in an interview about your success in college and your mentoring relationship?

Thank you for your interest in participating in an interview. Please complete the following information:

32. Name
33. Email
34. Phone number

35. What is your mentor's name (your mentor will not be contacted without your consent)

36. I agree to be contacted by the researcher in order to schedule an in person individual interview regarding my mentorship.
    a. Yes
    b. No

You have completed the survey!

Thank you for your participation.

Domenica Pearl, M.Ed.
Doctoral Candidate, Educational Leadership
UCSD/CSUSM

APPENDIX B: STUDENT INFORMED CONSENT



California State University
SAN MARCOS

Consent to Participate in Research

Invitation to Participate
Domenica Pearl, a doctoral candidate in the joint doctoral program at California State University San Marcos (CSUSM) and University of California, San Diego (UCSD), is conducting a study that seeks to identify how mentoring relationships can affect the retention of college students. You are being contacted because you indicated interest in participating in this research study from the initial electronic survey distributed by the researcher.

This study has one principal objective:

1. To identify ways mentoring relationships between student affairs leaders and students support or constrain the retention of college students.

Description of Procedures
You will be interviewed individually. The conversational style interview regarding your mentoring relationship will take approximately one hour and, with your permission, will be digitally recorded and transcribed.

Risks and Inconveniences
There are minimal risks to participating in this study. These include:

1. Loss of personal time necessary to participate in the interview.
2. Potential breach of confidentiality.

Safeguards
Safeguards put in place to minimize risk include:

1. Interview sessions will be restricted to 1 hour; if it persists longer than this duration, it can be stopped at your request.
2. Your interview data will be kept confidential, available only to the researcher and dissertation faculty for analysis purposes. The interview will be transcribed by a professional transcription service. The digital recordings will be destroyed following final analysis; no later than June 30, 2013.
3. Pseudonyms for students and identified mentors will be used to minimize the risk of identification. You will be given the opportunity to review the transcribed interview and to eliminate any comments or references you feel may be identifiable or have negative connotations with respect to your mentoring relationship. Your responses will not be linked to your name or address.

Voluntary Participation
Your participation is entirely voluntary, and may be withdrawn at any time. If the length of the interview becomes inconvenient, you may stop at any time. There are no consequences if you decide not to participate.

Benefits
Although your participation will yield minimal or no direct benefits to you, we believe

that the study has the potential to positively affect the retention of college students.

Questions/Contact Information
This study has been approved by the California State University San Marcos Institutional Review Board (IRB). If you have questions about the study, you may direct those to the researcher, Domenica Pearl, dpearl@csusm.edu, or the researcher's dissertation advisor, Dr. Patricia Stall, pstall@csusm.edu. Questions about your rights as a research participant should be directed to the IRB at (760) 750-4029. You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

[ ] I agree to participate in this research study.

[ ] I agree to have the interview digitally recorded.

_____ _____
Participant's Name Date

_____
Participant's Signature

_____
Interviewer's Signature

_____
Researcher's Signature

This document has been approved by
the Institutional Review Board at
California State University San Marcos
Expiration Date: March 8, 2013

APPENDIX C: MENTOR INFORMED CONSENT



California State University
SAN MARCOS

Consent to Participate in Research

Invitation to Participate
Domenica Pearl, a doctoral candidate in the joint doctoral program at California State University San Marcos (CSUSM) and University of California, San Diego (UCSD), is conducting a study that seeks to identify how mentoring relationships can affect the retention of college students. You are being contacted because a [redacted] student identified you as a mentor.

This study has one principal objective:

1. To identify ways mentoring relationships between student affairs leaders and students support or constrain the retention of college students.

Description of Procedures
You will be interviewed individually. The conversational style interview regarding your mentoring relationship will take approximately one hour and, with your permission, will be digitally recorded and transcribed.

Risks and Inconveniences
There are minimal risks to participating in this study. These include:

1. Loss of personal time necessary to participate in the interview.
2. Potential breach of confidentiality.

Safeguards
Safeguards put in place to minimize risk include:

1. Interview sessions will be restricted to 1 hour; if it persists longer than this duration, it can be stopped at your request.
2. Your interview data will be kept confidential, available only to the researcher and dissertation faculty for analysis purposes. The interview will be transcribed by a professional transcription service. The digital recordings will be destroyed following final analysis; no later than June 30, 2013.
3. Pseudonyms for students and identified mentors will be used to minimize the risk of identification. You will be given the opportunity to review the transcribed interview and to eliminate any comments or references you feel may be identifiable or have negative connotations with respect to your mentoring relationship. Your responses will not be linked to your name or address.

Voluntary Participation
Your participation is entirely voluntary, and may be withdrawn at any time. If the length of the interview becomes inconvenient, you may stop at any time. There are no consequences if you decide not to participate.

Benefits
Although your participation will yield minimal or no direct benefits to you, we believe that the study has the potential to positively affect the retention of college students.

Consent to Participate in Research

Questions/Contact Information
This study has been approved by the California State University San Marcos Institutional Review Board (IRB). If you have questions about the study, you may direct those to the researcher, Domenica Pearl, dpearl@csusm.edu, or the researcher's dissertation advisor, Dr. Patricia Stall, pstall@csusm.edu. Questions about your rights as a research participant should be directed to the IRB at (760) 750-4029. You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

[ ] I agree to participate in this research study.

[ ] I agree to have the interview digitally recorded.

_____ _____
Participant's Name Date

_____
Participant's Signature

_____
Interviewer's Signature

_____
Researcher's Signature

This document has been approved by
the Institutional Review Board at
California State University San Marcos
Expiration Date: March 8, 2013

APPENDIX D: STUDENT INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Support and Retention: Exploring the Role of Mentoring Relationships and Social Capital Between College Students and Student Affairs Professionals

Date	
Time of Interview	
Location	
Interviewer	
Participant	

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. The purpose of this study is to learn more about how mentoring relationships can affect the retention of college students.

Your interview data will be kept confidential, available only to the researcher and dissertation faculty for analysis purposes. The audio files will be transcribed by a professional transcription service. The audio files will be destroyed following final analysis; no later than June 30, 2013.

Your participation is entirely voluntary, and may be withdrawn at any time. If the length of the interview becomes inconvenient, you may stop at any time. There are no consequences if you decide not to participate.

1. Tell me a little about yourself. What significant events do you believe shaped your personality and character?

2. What are your educational goals and what are you doing to attain those?

3. Please define "mentor." What do you feel a mentor should be expected to do?

4. Who is your mentor?

5. What aspects/characteristics of your mentor were you drawn to?

6. Tell me about a specific time when your mentor helped you with an issue.

7. Has your mentor affected your success in college? How? Academically? Personally?

8. Do you feel that you are more connected to the university because of your relationship with your mentor? How?

9. Have you ever thought of dropping out of college?
   a. What occurred that made you consider this?

b. Did your mentor help you through this? How did they help?

10. Has your mentor provided any additional benefits in your life? (jobs, internships …) How?

11. Is your mentor able to "put themselves in your shoes" in order to better understand/experience an issue you are dealing with?
    a. Do you feel that this quality enhances your mentoring relationship? How?

12. What role does trust play in your mentorship?
    a. How was it developed?
    b. Did it ever break down?

13. What factors do you think challenge the success of a mentoring relationship?

14. What do you think all mentors should know to better support students so that they can graduate from college?

15. Would it be okay for us to contact your mentor for an interview?

APPENDIX E: MENTOR INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Support and Retention: Exploring the Role of Mentoring Relationships and Social Capital Between College Students and Student Affairs Professionals

Date	
Time of Interview	
Location	
Interviewer	
Participant	

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. The purpose of this study is to learn more about how mentoring relationships can affect the retention of college students.

Your interview data will be kept confidential, available only to the researcher and dissertation faculty for analysis purposes. The audio files will be transcribed by a professional transcription service. The audio files will be destroyed following final analysis; no later than June 30, 2013.

Your participation is entirely voluntary, and may be withdrawn at any time. If the length of the interview becomes inconvenient, you may stop at any time. There are no consequences if you decide not to participate.

1. Tell me a little about yourself. What significant events do you believe shaped your personality and character?

2. Tell me about your background and education.

3. Why/how did you choose working in higher education/with college students as a career?

You are being interviewed because you were identified by _____as their mentor. For purposes of this interview, I will refer to _____ as your "mentee."

4. Please define "mentor." What do you feel a mentor should be expected to do?

5. Did you ever have a mentor?
    a. If yes, what did he/she/they contribute to your life?

6. Did you seek out your mentee or did they approach you?
    a. What aspects/characteristics of your mentor were you drawn to?
    b. Why do you think they were drawn to you?

7. How do you and your mentee interact?

8. Tell me about a specific time when you helped your mentee with an issue. Describe the issue.

9. How would your mentee describe you?

10. Did your mentee ever express an interest in dropping out of school?
    a. Did you talk with your mentee about this?
    b. How was it resolved?

11. Aside from academics, have you provided any additional benefits in your mentee's life (jobs, internships …)? How?

12. Are you comfortable discussing your feelings or emotions with your mentee?

13. Does your mentee discuss their feelings/emotions with you?

14. What role does trust play in your mentorship?
    a. How was it developed?
    b. Did it ever break down?

15. What factors do you feel challenge the success of a mentoring relationship?

16. What has been the most rewarding aspect of being a mentor?

17. Do you think you will be in contact with your mentee after he/she graduates? Why?

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