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Analysis of Academically at-risk Second Year Students' Perceptions of How Campus Support Services Engage Them Via Social Media

Brad Sandefer

Eastern Illinois University

This research is a product of the graduate program in [Counseling and Student Development](#) at Eastern Illinois University. [Find out more](#) about the program.

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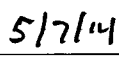
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of How Campus Support Services Engage Them Via Social Media

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Brad Sandefer

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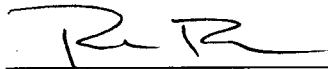
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IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL, EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
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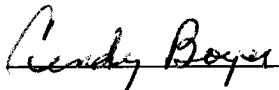
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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the loved ones in my life who left too soon. My mother Becky Sandefer, I know you are watching and smiling down every day as I pursue my career.

Dr. James A. Wallace, you were such an inspiration and I aspire to be half the professional you were. I would not be here today without the guidance and wisdom you have each bestowed upon me.

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ABSTRACT

The current study was designed to investigate academically at-risk second year students' perceptions about the value of campus support services and investigate how these support services can utilize different social media sources in engaging students. Through separate one-on-one interviews, six participants were asked a set of pre-determined questions regarding their perceptions of campus support services and social media, along with suggestions regarding how campus support services could utilize social media effectively. Through analyzing participant responses, eight themes emerged, including: 1) a high level of satisfaction, 2) structured helpfulness from support services, 3) underutilization/unknown use of support service, 4) popular social media outlets, 5) popular form of communication, 6) service effectiveness using social media 7) constant smart phone use, and 8) application creation. Several conclusions of the present study were drawn and recommendations for support services, as well as future researchers were established.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Not all students are academically ready for college. Because of this, universities have been implementing support services and programs around their campuses to help increase graduation and retention rates (Jamelske, 2009; Tinto, 1999). Retention is a widely studied area in higher education. This is becoming such a serious concern that consulting firms are being hired to assist universities increase student retention (Tinto, 2006). Retention is problematic and important to universities for many reasons. First and foremost, no institution wants their recruited and admitted students to fail. Many first year students begin college without knowing the tools and resources to be successful (Tinto, 1999). Academic resources provide much needed support for individual students. Helpful resources include academic advising, academic programs, career development, counseling and housing (Ramist, 1981). Second, the retention of students is important for financial reasons. Many universities are supported financially through student fees and tuition and lower student retention leads to lower revenue (DeBerard, Scott, Spielmans, & Julka, 2004). Third, losing students requires extra work for recruiters. Recruitment is a financial burden; it costs more money to recruit a new student than retain an enrolled student. Fourth, lower retention rates affects national rankings, which in turn results in harder efforts to recruit students to a university. Lastly, when students do not graduate, they are less likely to become active alumni (Jamelske, 2009). As a result, universities are looking in-house to help retain students; this is where on-campus support services can help.

Different factors lead to why students are at-risk including academic and non-academic influences. Academic influences can include high school GPA and college admissions tests, while non-academic influences can include a student's willingness to obtain a degree, level of academic self-confidence, time-management skills, study skills, and study habits (Lotkowski, Robbins, & Noeth, 2004). Other non-academic influences can include family and personal issues, roommate problems, and social anxiety.

While on campus, at-risk students may become particularly vulnerable to feelings that they don't belong, feel rejected, and may not adjust to normal academic challenges associated with college life (Heisserer, 2002). At-risk students may also be undecided about an area of study, or feel they do not 'fit' their chosen major. These factors can lead to a higher likelihood of at-risk students dropping out or academically underachieving. At-risk students have a disadvantage compared to regular students; many at-risk students do not meet the reading and writing expectations established by college administrators (Hart, 1998). Because of these reading and writing expectations, many at-risk students need to be enrolled in remedial courses. Mattson (2007) found that at-risk students GPA's for a first semester and first full year were 2.85 and 2.81, respectively. When assessing the university average, he found that the GPA's for first semester and the first full year were 3.08 and 3.20, respectively. Mattson's study shows on average, at-risk students do not perform as well as the regular student; therefore, support services need to assist at-risk students from the first day they arrive on campus.

Support services are important to universities beyond just retaining students. For example, many first year students have fears when they arrive on campus. These fears relate, but are not limited to the following: potential intellectual struggles, roommate

relationships, friendship anxieties, family support, finances and safety (Shanley & Johnston, 2008). Specifically, students worry about being smart enough to be successful in school, about their roommate being “weird” or their new best friend, about how often they will see their parents and how often their parents will send them money.

Universities understand that students are not successful for a variety of these reasons beyond their control, some being the aforementioned fears. However, one way to assist with these and other fears is to offer university supported assistance. As a result, universities have created strategic academic support structures (Potts & Schultz, 2008). Support services can help students overcome their struggles through personal advising and identifying problems while they are still manageable. Typical support services on a campus can include: academic advising, career services, counseling services, health education resource centers, housing, the library, student success centers, and writing centers.

One way to get at-risk students appropriate help is to redefine what it means to use support services. Professionals need to reassess how they help students so they can be more effective. First, professionals can look at the Inclusive Student Services Process Model. This model has a five step system which “provides a framework for designing processes and programs to support students in both traditional and online courses” (Floyd & Casey-Powel, 2004, p. 58). Through this model, professionals work with students beginning with an intake process, working their way through interventions, support, transitions, and ending with a measurement phase. Also, professionals can learn by researching distance learning students. Distance learners do not always have an opportunity to visit support services, so online technology is essential for them. Distance

learners are not new to the online assistance they receive; they actually research the best web-based assistance. If distance learners are unsatisfied, they will go elsewhere, so it is imperative that universities provide effective initial assistance. This is no different with traditional campus based students. With the increase in social media (Jacobsen & Forste, 2011), support services need model distance learning programs so they can become more efficient and available to students.

Social media was an emerging technology just a decade ago, and now social networking is considered an important aspect of a college students' day (Jacobsen & Forste, 2011). The number of students now interacting with social networking is high; the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI, 2007) reported 94% of first year college students use social networking websites. If there is a benefit to 94% of students using social networking sites, it is that only 21% of them would spend six hours or more on these websites. Essentially, just six hours a week still leaves plenty of time for students to be academically focused during a week.

Because social media is utilized by college students, faculty members have tried a variety of ways to get social networking involved in the classroom (Cao & Hong, 2011). Some professors are developing questions that students respond to using Twitter and clickers, while other professors allow students to text an answer to a live website showing the results of the question. These are just a few examples of how faculty members are implementing social media into the classroom, and support services could benefit from studying this new form of learning.

Purpose of the Study

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate academically at-risk second year students' perceptions about the value of campus support services. The secondary purpose of the study is to investigate how these support services can utilize different social media sources in engaging students. The findings of the study may help support services by creating awareness, creating new programs, identifying problematic areas, and increasing retention of students. The findings of the study may also help each support service reach out to students in ways previously unexplored.

Research Question

1. What are the perceptions of students' concerning campus support services?
2. What are the perceptions of students' satisfaction with campus support services including, but not limited to: academic advising, career services, counseling services, health education resource centers, housing, the library, student success centers, and writing centers?
3. What are the perceptions of students' regarding social media (Facebook, Quick Response codes, texting, Twitter) and its relation to campus support services?
4. What are the students' suggestions for how campus support services can utilize social media?
5. How do you see smart phones affecting support services?
6. On a skill of 1 to 5, with 5 being the most likely to visit, how likely are you to visit a support service?

Significance of the Study

The study is significant because support services can help students improve academically and support university retention efforts. Many students on campuses are unaware of all the support services available to them (Peck, Chilvers, & Lincoln, 2010). The main purpose of support services is to help guide and support students. With better insight into what students are looking for, support services can gather new and better ways to effectively reach out to students and run their programs more efficiently.

Limitations of the Study

First, the study will include data which is specific to a mid-sized (approximately 10,500 students) university located in the Midwest. The data will consist of second year students enrolled in a “Strategies for Academic Success” course, which does not represent the entire university. “Strategies for Academic Success” is a course which focuses on helping students academically. The course offers students insight into taking personal responsibility, discovering self-motivation and mastering self-management, employing interdependence, gaining self-awareness, developing emotional intelligence, and adopting life-long learning and critical thinking. Possibly most important, the course allows students to enhance self-esteem as it relates to their academic potential. Students who are enrolled in this class have seen their cumulative GPA drop equal to or less than 2.0 for the first time. The second year students have just finished their first year and will have an opportunity to reflect about their time spent as a first year student. The researcher teaches a section of the aforementioned course. The data was collected through face-to-face interviews (video recorded) at a specified location on campus. The participants for the interview were chosen conveniently. Convenient sampling includes

participants who are chosen due to accessibility (Morse, 2010). Also, because the interview was face-to-face, the researcher recognizes the possibility of the “Hawthorne Effect” on participants, which could lead to the participants answering differently (Chiesa & Hobbs, 2008).

Definitions of Terms

Academically at-risk: For the purpose of this study, an academically at-risk student refers to a student whose cumulative GPA is equal to or less than 2.0.

First Year Student: For the purpose of this study, a first year student refers to being in the first year of an experience at the researched university, regardless of any dual credit or transfer credit which the student might have accumulated prior to this university.

Second Year Student: For the purpose of this study, a second year student refers to being in the second year of an experience at the researched university, regardless of any dual credit or transfer credit which the student might have accumulated prior to this university.

Social Media: For the purpose of this study, social media will include: Facebook, QR (quick response) codes, texting, and Twitter.

Support Services: Different services on a campus may include: academic advising, career services, counseling services, health education resource centers, housing, the library, student success centers, and writing centers. Some of the services have different names for their services than reported, however, the identity of such services will be straightforward and simple to identify.

Summary

Universities are looking to support services every year to help with retention and graduation (Jamelske, 2009). These support services are vital for universities and are also helpful and crucial for successful and struggling students in college. Understanding and focusing on what academically at-risk second year students are looking for and how support services can adapt can lead to better student success.

Chapter II

Review of Literature

The following is a review of literature covering student support services and their relevance to at-risk second year students. This chapter reviews different perspectives on retention, the history of student support services, the types of student support services, social media, the first year experience for students, and theory.

Retention

Nearly half of all students at four year universities leave without graduating, and about one in four students do not make it to their sophomore year (ACT, 2006; Merrow et al., 2005; Soria, Fransen, & Nackerud, 2013). For universities concerned about retention, this is an alarming statistic. Students spend millions of dollars every year while obtaining a college degree. That investment implies a moral responsibility for universities to retain these students through the completion of the degree. Retention is also a fiscal burden for universities. When students leave universities before completing their degrees, they cost universities millions of dollars through untapped student fees, tuition, and potential alumni contributions (DeBerard, Scott, Spielmans, & Julka, 2004; Levitz, Noel, & Richter, 1999). According to Levitz, Noel, & Richter (1999), a university which lowers their first-to-second-year dropout rate by 30% can see up to \$3,000,000 saved per year.

Faculty members play retention roles for universities. According to Tinto (2006), it has become clear that faculty roles, especially in the classroom, are critical to institutional efforts to help increase student retention. Morrow & Ackerman (2012) conducted a study researching whether faculty support played a role in retention, among other factors. The study found faculty support was significantly related to students'

persistence at the university. Jackson, Smith, & Hill (2003) conducted a study which found the inviting atmosphere which faculty presented to students also accounted for persistence. Student's experiences in this study were contrasted from two different schools, and noted that the difference was the degree to which the faculty and staff personally engaged the student. Students felt these faculty members cared about them. Faculty were warm and caring, which gave these students confidence to ask questions in class and feel a stronger connection to the university.

It has been mentioned however, that while all these universities are aware that retention is important, many universities are not doing anything about it (Tinto, 1999; Tinto, 2006). Tinto does not believe the right practices or right questions are being asked at these universities. Universities claim to speak of the importance of retention, but their practices do not follow their words. At many universities, one way to fix the problem is just to enroll students into a freshman seminar or mentoring programs, which is the "key" to helping students persist. Even though faculty can be a great tool for retention, they can also be harmful. Many faculty proclaim publically the importance of retaining each and every student, however, faculty do not actually see retention as their job. One way faculty reduce their share of responsibility is to blame admissions, saying they should admit better qualified students. Faculty are also quick to blame student affairs professionals, stating that retention is their job, especially those who work in the area of educational development. According to Tinto, once faculty do a better job of enhancing student education, student retention will increase.

History of Support Services

Near the beginning of the century, universities began establishing some type of support program or course to help their underprepared students (Simpson, Hynd, Nist, & Burrell, 1997). From that time, there has been a steady increase in the number of programs in universities. Specifically, support services have been in high demand for the past forty years (Tinto, 2006). When the issue of retention was starting to emerge, universities were looking to student affairs professionals to provide students the assistance they needed. This was the beginning of the involvement and engaging era. It was found that involvement was essential for students, especially during their transition and first year of school. Essentially, support services were and are considered a direct tool to help with retention. Universities have established support services to help students obtain a college degree. According to Habley & McClanahan (2004), several retention practices include academic advising, career/life planning, residence hall programs, learning assistance centers, and learning communities. However, now that college campuses have become more diverse, support services have expanded past the basic programs (Collins & Sims, 2006). Colleges today routinely offer programs such as summer orientation programs, collaborative learning programs, and supplemental learning programs. Support services also provide a place where students can be unsure and transparent about their struggles. For instance, when professors and advisors asked first year students how they are doing, the common answer is “fine”. Levitz, Noel, & Richter (1999) also found that first year students indicated the following statements: “I’m scared”, “I don’t understand what my teacher wants”, “I feel lost and confused”, and “I

don't know how to make friends". These are all examples of questions which various support services help address on a daily basis.

Types of Support Services

academic advising.

Academic advising is beneficial to students' chances of being successful, especially at-risk students (Bahr, 2008). According to Thompson (2008), student academic support during the freshmen transition is critical because freshmen face extreme levels of academic stress. According to Drake (20011), solid academic advising has an important impact on student persistence. Students who are the happiest and academically the most successful have established a solid relationship with an advisor. Academic advising "helps students to value the learning process, to apply decision-making strategies, to put the college experience into perspective, to set priorities and evaluate events, to develop thinking and learning skills, to make choices, and to value the learning process" (p. 10).

career services.

There are two main functions of career services: (1) to assist students in making effective decisions about their major and their career path; and (2) to assist students in obtaining appropriate employment/volunteer activities to enhance their movement towards their career goals (Hammond, 2001). The centers offer career aptitude tests, career counseling, résumé building and critiquing, mock interviews, internship matching and establishing career fairs. According to the National Survey of Student Engagement (2012), of the 114,978 first year students responding, only 34% of the students responded "often" or "very often" in regards to talking career plans with a faculty member or

advisor. Nadya (2006) found that students indicated a need for help with career decision making, particularly in the areas of difficulties related to their readiness to make a decision, their knowledge about information needed to make a career decision, and helping to resolve conflicts.

counseling.

College and university counseling centers serve an average of 7-9% of students (Boone, et al., 2011; Nadya, 2006). However, counseling centers have been making strides to be more available to students. Counseling centers are now conducting outreach programs across campuses which can engage students who might not seek counseling otherwise. Some of these efforts include workshops, presentations, and consultations. However, one of the greatest programs counseling centers are providing is counselor-in-residence programs. This program allows for counselors to enter students' communities where they feel comfortable and may have taken advantage from the traditional model. Unfortunately, students just don't take advantage of these services frequently.

health education resource center.

Another resource for students is a health education/wellness center. The sexual health needs of college students are substantial, and health resource centers are a perfect home to educate these students (Eisenberg, Lechner, Frerich, Lust, & Garcia, 2012). Colleges and universities differ in many ways, including the number, type and extent of health services and resources they provide for their students. Particularly in the arena of sexual health, college health services place a substantial emphasis on health education, outreach, student groups and other prevention programs. These services often take place across the whole campus, outside of clinical interaction, in the form of peer education

programs, condom distribution and education, on-line health information, social norms campaigns and support groups. Unfortunately, Health Education Resource Centers are yet to see a high involvement of students similar to those of high frequency services on campuses. Nadya (2006) found that only 1.4% of students surveyed used their Health Education Center.

housing.

For many first year students, college is complex and demanding. First year students develop this perception from various outlets: teachers, television, internet, etc... (Meyer, 2009). Although many of these first year students have fears that college can be difficult and demanding, there are many resources at their disposal. There are various support services on campus which focus on helping students now and in the future. Many students might not realize it, but they live in one of the biggest resources available to them, residence halls. According to de Araujo & Murray (2010), students that are living on campus are able to achieve a GPA that is between .7 - 1.0 higher than those living off-campus. Increased GPA may be related to positive peer influences from resident assistants and other students living in residence halls, or the organization, structure and activities which residence halls provide their residents, create an environment conducive to learning.

Resident assistants are a resource for students inside the residence halls as well and serve as role models, counselors, and teachers for students (Roussel & Elleven, 2009). Resident assistants are typically hired because they showcase the necessary characteristics the university respects and considers important. Serving as a role model, students are able to witness firsthand, quality characteristics which are important.

Resident assistants also serve students by showing interest and listening to difficult situations. Resident assistants are trained to help students to the best of their ability, but also know to refer students to counseling centers when the time is necessary (Taub & Servaty-Seib, 2010). One last aspect of a resident assistant's position is to be a teacher for these students. Resident assistants can provide general information about the university, while also teaching values through their own personal behavior (Roussel & Elleven).

The structure of residence hall can be very beneficial for students. Many residence halls are currently set up with living-learning programs, where the wing or floor is focused on one specific academic theme. These living-learning programs have proven to benefit students in many different ways. One area where students benefit greatly is faculty interaction. According to Garrett and Zabriskie (2003), students living in these programs have three statistically significant formal or academic interaction advantages over nonliving-learning students, which includes (a) making an appointment to meet with faculty during office hours, (b) asking an instructor for course-related information, and (c) visiting informally with a faculty member before or after class. Living-learning programs have also been associated with higher academic achievement. Pasque & Murphy (2005) surveyed 2,387 students and found a significant, positive correlation between living-learning programs and academic achievement.

library.

According to Soria, Fransen, & Nackerud (2013), libraries are essential to the core mission of colleges and universities across the nation. The library is a resource which all students can take advantage of and offers many services. While in the library,

students can take advantage of the simple amenities, such as a quiet place to study, or a place to meet group members and work on projects. However, the library offers more than these few services to students. The library also offers services such as interlibrary loans (libraries loan books from other libraries) and the reference desk. The reference desk is an asset because it provides professional help to library users in their search for information. Reference staff also provide advice on research techniques and the use of information resources. The library also has computers where students may conduct research in an academic manner using the scholarly resources the library provides (Waldman, 2003).

student success center.

Learning assistance (student success) centers can be another resource for students. Learning assistance centers can be seen as a natural extension of the classroom with activities for all students, not just those students who have a history of underperforming. Some of the purposes which these centers focus on include: higher course grades for involved students, a central location for students to receive assistance, referral aid to other supporting services on campus, and a location of basic study aids (Arendale, 2004).

writing center.

Writing centers are a great resource at many universities and play a part in student success. In their most basic form, writing centers are essential resources for all writers (Grimm, 1996). Writing centers help students with areas concerning grammar, punctuation, style and organization. The variety in which writing centers help students can be through individualized tutored sessions, module work, workshops, and presentations (North, 1984). A great bonus from these tutors is the role model they play

for students. According to Robinson (2010), writing center tutors can often be described as being exemplars of academic culture. Students who come to the writing centers are interested in becoming like their tutors, understanding academic culture.

Social media

expansion of social media.

Social media has seen a steady increase in use over the past decade. Pew Internet and American Life data indicate that teen cell phone ownership has increased from 45% in 2004 to 75% in 2010 (Lenhart, Ling, Campbell, & Purcell, 2010) and that 51% of teens reported text messaging in 2006 which increased to 72% in 2009. Texting is not just becoming popular, but possibly addicting. Lenhart, Ling, Campbell, & Purcell found that half of teens send 50 or more texts a day, which leads to 1,500 a month and that one third of teens send more than 100 texts a day, totaling more than 3,000 texts a month. Updated Pew Internet and American Life data focuses on college aged students and reports 98% of undergraduates are internet users (Smith, Rainie, & Zickuhr, 2011) and 93% of students have broadband internet at home. Also, they reported that 96% of undergraduates have a cell phone and that 63% of those cell phone owners use the internet or email on their cell phones. Junco (2012) found that over 73% of college students text message daily and 99% own a laptop or desk computer.

Twitter was released in 2006 and has gained attention from corporations because of the immense potential it provides for viral marketing (Asur & Hubermann, 2010). Also, popularity is increasing through social trending. Asur & Huberman found during the week preceding box office hit movies such as *Twilight: New Moon* and *Avatar*, there were an average of 1365.8 and 1212.8 tweets per hour, respectively. These numbers

illustrate the impact that Twitter has in the social media world. Heiberger and Junco (2011) found that many professional conferences are using Twitter hashtags before, during, and after their events for participants to discuss and share content.

Jackson (2011) found that Quick Response codes are already popular in other countries and gaining popularity in the United States. Jackson explained some of the benefits of QR codes as when search engines instantly update when a QR code is updated, users not having to type URL's into their tiny keyboards, and allowing organizations to appear more "tech savvy". Another benefit of the QR code is the relatively low cost associated with them, which is primarily connected to the time a staff member invests.

growth of social media on campus.

Social media has become an integral part of the college experience. According to Heiberger and Junco (2011), college students spend an average of one hour and 40 minutes per day on Facebook. Also, online social space is an important place to engage students in addition to a classroom or lab. Likewise, next to visiting a student's residence hall or meeting them on campus, there is no better cost-effective method to engage students than social media sites such as Twitter and Facebook. Junco (2013) found that 98% of students participating in his study used social media sites, particularly Facebook. Second, he found that 100% of the students used some form of reference website, such as Wikipedia, Dictionary.com, or the universities search engine. Third, Junco's results showed that students were able to regulate their use of computers. The results showed when classes were in session students spent significantly more time using a university's learning management system rather than watching some form of video. According to

Roblyer, McDaniel, Webb, Herman, & Witty (2010), social networks can have a benefit for departments. First, networking sites such as Facebook allows administrators and directors to reach out to students. With Facebook, departments can easily communicate with students, alumni, and others in the school community. Second, the benefit to easily communicate with students offers departments an easy, low-cost method to post announcements and messages, upload photos of events, recruit potential members, and even receive feedback from students. Third, departments also have the benefit of social media through students sharing this information with each other. According to Fusch (2011), while students do frequently share status updates and gossip, they also share links, references, and ideas. Texting is also popular through the college experience. Salaway, Caruso, and Nelson (2007) found that about a third of student respondents like to learn information through text-based conversations over e-mail, text messaging, or instant messaging. Quick Response (QR) codes are a different way for support services to market to students. According to Massis (2011), QR codes are practical because students with smart phones can easily download free applications to read the codes. There are already some services taking advantage of these codes. Massis also discusses how there are some libraries incorporating this free and easy technology into their operations.

technology in the classroom.

One developing trend is faculty using social media such as Facebook, Twitter, and other online resources (Worley, 2011). According to a study conducted by Ophus and Abbitt (2009), students are intrigued and interested with integrating Facebook with class. They found that through Facebook, 86% of students would likely be open to participating in accessing course notes and other materials, 58% of students would likely be open to

communicating with the instructor, 64% of students would likely participate in using online discussion tools that included both instructor and students, and 78% would likely join a Facebook group for their course. Irwin, Ball, Desbrow, & Leveritt (2012) conducted a study on Facebook in the classroom. They found that 81% of students felt a course Facebook page would increase interaction with the instructor and fellow students, along with finding 80% of students would participate in general discussion about course topics. Fusch (2011) stated that Twitter is best used when there is a specific objective, such as giving feedback to an instructor during class or trying to reach out to students. According to Junco, Heiberger, & Loken (2010), Twitter can also have a positive effect on student engagement and have the potential to be effective in the classroom. Junco, Heiberger, & Loken also found that encouraging the use of Twitter for educationally relevant purposes has a positive effect on grades.

It is important, however, that these social media outlets stay relevant and focus on production. According to Jacobsen & Forste (2011), social networking sites, along with video and online gaming, television, and cell phone communication have an inverse relation with G.P.A. Jacobsen & Forste also found that for every hour of electronic media exposure reported by students on average, GPA was reduced between 0.05 and 0.07 points. Junco and Cotten (2012) found that multitasking with information and communication technologies (such as Facebook and texting) were negatively predictive of a college GPA. It is worth noting that other forms of multitasking, such as email and searching for information not related to class, had no relation to GPA. This inconsistency can possibly be explained because of social ambitions which are linked with Facebook and texting. They also reported that college students send an average of 97 text messages

per day, while 71 were sent while students worked on homework. Wood et al., (2012) found that students who engaged in Facebook during a lecture scored significantly lower than those who attended class using only a notepad and pencil to take notes. Rosen, Lim, Carrier & Cheever (2011) found that students who classified as high texting interruption group during class had scored lower on a post-test than the students who classified as no/low texting interruption group.

First Year Students

Because nearly 25% of first year students do not return for their second year (Merrow et al., 2005; ACT, 2006), focusing on a student's first year is essential. The first year of college allows students to explore and create a foundation for an educational experience, along with developing behaviors, skills, and knowledge (Messineo, 2012; Reason, Terenzini, & Domingo, 2007).

residence halls.

A great place for a first year student to create a foundation is in a residence hall. According to Turley & Wodtke (2010), previous research suggests that living in a residence hall promotes a variety of desirable academic outcomes by enhancing students' involvement and engagement with their institutions. One advantage which first year students have access too is living in a "themed" hall. These "themed" halls are called living-learning programs, and they bring together students with common interests, such as a major (Garrett and Zabriskie, 2003). Living with other students with similar academic endeavors allows students to use each other as resources. According to Willoughby, Larsen, & Carroll (2012), another shift has begun to occur at American colleges and universities that has the potential to have a similar impact on the

development of thousands of emerging adults. Some universities have begun to implement gender-neutral housing, or housing that allows men and women to share the same room. This brings the potential for a new level of comfort for students who may not have been previously comfortable in a generic housing situation.

financial obligations.

The first year college student is not yet financially independent, but is actively learning the skills needed to be financially independent. While some young adults do learn appropriate means of spending money, many others adopt risky behaviors such as overspending their budgets, accruing excessive credit card debt and failing to pay off debt in time (Shim, Barber, Card, Xiao, & Serido, 2010). According to Manton, English, Avard, & Walker (2006), incoming high school graduates are poorly versed in financial matters. Specifically, they found that half of the students were under-educated on financial planning and that 65% were unsure about credit card debt rate. Cobb (2011) found when current students could give advice to incoming freshmen, 38% of students expressed difficulty living day to day, especially given the rise in tuition and cost of text books, and many also expressed concern over long-term debt burden. Cobb also found that 40% of current students addressed the importance of budgeting, being conscientious of spending, or the importance of saving money.

health concerns.

A freshman has many health concerns he or she might face their freshman year. There are several factors affecting students eating and health concerns. According to Levitsky, Halbmaier, & Mrdjenovic (2004), eating in all-you-can-eat dining halls and snacking/eating high-fat junk foods were found to contribute to 20% each to freshman

weight gain. Nelson, Kocos, Lytle, & Perry (2009) found the following factors increase weight gain of freshman: (1) freshman did not know what they were eating because of the lack of posted nutrition facts; (2) the difficulty of accessing (traveling to a grocery store) and storing healthful food in their dorm rooms; (3) snacking and late-night eating; (4) ordering out for food because of convenience and relatively low prices marketed towards students; (5) Alcohol related to eating late at night after alcohol was consumed as well as eating before going out to allow themselves to consume more alcohol; (6) fast food, especially when they felt pressured by their friends who wanted to eat fast food; (7) negative experiences using campus recreation resources; and (8) eating for reasons other than hunger.

Not only is weight a concern for freshman, but there is the mental aspect as well. According to Lee, Olson, Locke, Michelson, & Odes (2009), freshmen suffer from more adjustment difficulties, such as appetite disturbances, feelings of worthlessness, concentration problems, depression, and suicidal thoughts, compared to other academic classes. They explain that previous studies have shown that the stress of relocation, separation from family and friends, meeting new people, new academic challenges, and the discrepancy between expectations and reality often result in personal, social, and academic adjustment difficulties for freshmen.

alcohol.

Many students are likely to experiment or increase their alcohol consumption during their first year of school. Also, college students experience alcohol-related problems which could interfere with their health, relationships, and academic performance (Grekin & Sher, 2006). One aspect of increased drinking can be related to

joining a Greek organization. Although Greek organizations have many positives features, students who join these organizations are more likely to consume alcohol and show greater alcohol dependence symptoms (Grekin & Sher). Wechsler, Kuh, & Davenport (2009) found that fraternity members tend to drink more heavily and more frequently, and to have more alcohol-related problems than their fellow students. Also, Cross, Zimmerman, & O'Grady (2009) found that students living in fraternity or sorority houses consume alcohol more frequently and drink more than other students. However, students living on campus in the residence halls are also at-risk. Cross, Zimmerman & O'Grady also found that rates of drinking among students living in the residence halls tend to be much higher than among students who live off-campus or with their families.

Growing in popularity are web-based interventions designed to reduce both hazardous drinking and alcohol-related problems on college campuses (Paschall, Antin, Ringwalt, & Saltz, 2011). An example of this intervention is AlcoholEdu for College. AlcoholEdu for College is a 2-3 hour online course designed to include personalized feedback to change normative beliefs about alcohol use, education about alcohol's different effects on the brain and on behavior, risk awareness, challenges to expectations regarding the effects of alcohol use, and suggestions for alcohol-free activities, and activities and strategies to minimize alcohol-related harm. Because this is a relatively brief, low-cost web-based prevention program which requires no class time to administer, the study suggest that AlcoholEdu for College should be considered for adoption.

Theoretical Perspective

There are two different identity theories which can help build awareness for where students may be starting, struggling, or striving at in college; Arthur Chickering's

(1993) “seven vectors of development which contribute to the formation of identity” and Schlossberg’s (Evans, Forney, Guido, Patton, & Renn, 2010) “transition theory”.

chickering’s model.

Chickering’s seven vectors of identity can play a crucial part of evaluating where first year students might be in their development. The seven vectors of Chickering’s theory are: (1) Developing Competence, (2) Managing Emotions, (3) Moving Through Autonomy Toward Interdependence, (4) Developing Mature Interpersonal Relationships, (5) Establishing Identity, (6) Developing Purpose, and (7) Developing Integrity (Evans et al, 2010). Through his vectors, college students, especially first year students, can be found near the beginning or end of the developmental continuance found in this theory. Many first year students are developing a basic competence on how to establish effective study habits. However, other students may be near the end of the continuance and honor the values they have for themselves.

During the first vector, developing competence, three different types of competence can emerge: intellectual competence, physical and manual skills, and interpersonal competence. When dealing with intellectual skills, students gain the basic knowledge to learn, comprehend, analyze, and master information. This skill also helps students make sense out of their observations and experiences. Handling the physical and manual skills, students gain the basic ability to be active and participate in recreational activities. Students learn self-discipline, strength, and focus in this stage. Students can also demonstrate adequate ability through artistic activities and expressions. While developing the interpersonal skills, students gain the basic ability to communicate with others, while also learning the basic skills associated with leadership and working

effectively. While mastering these skills, students can effectively work within the confines of group dynamics (Evans et al, 2010).

The second vector in Chickering's theory is managing emotions. During this vector, students become aware and learn how to recognize and control their emotions. Students develop through this vector by expressing these emotions appropriately and in a responsible manner (Evans et al, 2010).

The third vector, moving through autonomy toward interdependence, can result in emotional and instrumental independence. Emotional independence begins when students are not looking for the support from their parents. It is crucial that students begin to separate themselves from their parents and find a strong support network. A strong support network can come from friends, intimate partners, or even nonparent adults. Emotionally, students may be looking for guidance, reassurance, affection, or approval, and it is critical that they can rely on a correct network to guide them. Instrumental independence can be associated with organizing activities and solving problems by one's self. Students in this vector do not need detailed instructions on how to accomplish a task, but rather can figure out an outcome on their own. Students also learn how to be mobile. Students learn how to navigate and get place to place without direction, but rather through their own doing (Evans et al, 2010).

The fourth vector, developing mature interpersonal relationships, can be associated with tolerance and appreciation of differences, and capacity for intimacy. Through this vector, students start to show an appreciation for not only their friends and family, but also those who are diverse. While meeting diverse people for the first time, students can have an opportunity to work on creating an equally fair perception on all

individuals, rather than just rely on old perceptions and biases. The key to showing an appreciation for these individuals can come from respecting their differences. A greater sense of intimacy can also develop during this vector. These intimate relationships can develop through intimate partners, along with the bond which accompanies close friendship (Evans et al, 2010).

The fifth vector is establishing identity. Establishing an identity can be a detailed process because there are many different ways for students to identify themselves. According to Evans et al, (2010) this vector looks specifically at (1) “comfort with body and appearance, (2) comfort with gender and sexual orientation, (3) sense of self in a social, historical, and cultural context, (4) clarification of self-concept through roles and life-style, (5) sense of self in response to feedback from valued others, (6) self-acceptance and self-esteem, and (7) personal stability and integration” (p. 68). When completing this stage, a person should have a good sense of who “I am”. This student may choose to associate with many of the different factors loosely, or they might associate strongly with one or two.

The sixth vector revolves around developing a purpose. This vector has three major elements: developing clear vocational goals, making meaningful commitments to specific personal interests and activities, and establishing strong interpersonal commitments. The word vocational can be described as paid or unpaid work, but what is important for students is that they follow a career choice in which they feel a great passion. Some factors which can affect these choices relate to parents, friends and family. For students, it can sometimes be difficult to achieve all three goals, so students must sometimes make sacrifices on what values are most important. Going through this

choice process can tell a lot about a person while seeing which values they elect to follow the closest (Evans et al, 2010).

The final vector of the theory is developing integrity. This vector includes three stages: humanizing values, personalizing values, and developing congruence. In the first stage, students start to recognize and consider other peoples values and make an effort to balance their own values with others. During the second stage, students start to establish a personalized value system and begin to affirm their own core values and beliefs while also showing appreciation and respect for the beliefs of others. During the last stage, students start to balance out their own values and beliefs along with those of others while performing a societal responsibility (Evans et al, 2010).

schlossberg's model.

Schlossberg's model shows us common stages which a student might experience during a transition. The model examines four major sets of factors that influence one's ability to cope with a transition: (1) situation (2) self (3) support and (4) strategies (Evans et al, 2010). All four of these factors play a major role for academically at-risk students, and each one affects students differently.

While a student is analyzing their situation, common thoughts which occur can include control, role change, and duration. For example, an academically at-risk student could address all three of these thoughts. An academically at-risk student may feel they are not in control of their transition to being at-risk. Also, they likely do not perceive this role change as positive and might consider how long they will be at-risk.

For self, students analyze their own basic demographics, such as gender, age, health, ethnicity, etc... It is important for students to recognize themselves while transitioning into a new phase of their lives.

Support can be seen through different lenses. The support during a transition can come from a family member or loved one, friends, or even institutional support. It is important however that the student understand if the support has honest feedback or just an affirmation. These support systems can be long lasting and stable, but can also be changing regularly.

There are many different strategies which students can access during their transition. Some students in this stage help themselves and modify their situation, while others either control the problem themselves, or manage the stress of the aftermath. Different ways to cope with these strategies include seeking information, taking direct action, or inhibition of action (Evans et al, 2010). .

CHAPTER III

Methods

The purpose of this study is to investigate academically at-risk second year students' perceptions about campus support services and their use of social media. The present chapter includes the design of study, participants, research site, data collection, and treatment of data.

Design of Study

This focus of this study is to investigate academically at-risk second year students' perceptions about the value of campus support services to gain a better insight of first year students. A qualitative approach was used to collect the data. According to Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun (2011), qualitative research is used to study naturally occurring phenomena in all their complexity. The approach included six separate face-to-face interviews between the researcher and participants. Each participant was a academically at-risk second year student enrolled in a "Strategies for Academic Success" course. The intent of the interview allowed students to describe their perceptions of campus support services and also the role social media plays with these services.

Participants

Using a convenient sampling technique, six first year students were chosen to participate in the study. The students were conveniently chosen from a "Strategies for Academic Success" course and interviewed by the researcher. The course offers students insight into taking personal responsibility, discovering self-motivation and mastering self-management, employing interdependence, gaining self-awareness, developing emotional intelligence, and adopting life-long learning and critical thinking. Possibly

most important, the course allows students to believe in themselves. Students who are enrolled in this class have seen their cumulative GPA fall below a 2.0 for the first time. This class enrolls a large amount of first year students because they have not yet established a GPA, and if these students cannot earn a 2.0 after their first semester, they are enrolled. These students are targeted because they likely have not taken advantage of many of these support services. Participants voluntarily participated in the interview and received an informed consent form. The informed consent form acknowledged the interview as a voluntary action while allowing the participants to withdraw from the interview at any time with no disciplinary action. The participants are students at a mid-sized public university in the Midwest where they are enrolled in “Strategies for Academic Success” course which indicates that these students are at-risk and their cumulative GPA’s have fallen below a 2.0. Participants will be referred to with alphabetized pseudo names. For example, the first participant is given the name Amy, while the sixth and final participant is given the name Felicia.

Amy: Amy is a nineteen year old African American female who was raised in a self-reported middle class family. Amy is not a first generation student and attended a rural high school.

Barry: Barry is a twenty-one year old half Cuban/half Caucasian male who was raised in a self-reported middle class family. Barry is not a first generation student and attended a rural high school.

Crystal: Crystal is a nineteen year old African American female who was raised in a self-reported middle class family. Crystal is not a first generation student and attended a suburban high school.

Dana: Dana is a nineteen year old Caucasian female who was raised in a self-reported middle class family. Dana is not a first generation student and attended a rural high school.

Ethan: Ethan is a twenty-three year old Caucasian male who was raised in a self-reported middle class family. Ethan is a first generation student and attended a rural high school.

Felicia: Felicia is a twenty year old Caucasian female who was raised in a self-reported middle class family. Felicia is not a first generation student and attended an urban high school.

Research Site

The study took place at a mid-sized university located in the mid-west. Although the university is in a rural area, there are three major cities within three hours of the university. The university has approximately 10,500 students consisting of approximately 75% White students, 13% Black or African Americans, 3% Hispanic, and the remaining 9% of students consists of American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, International, Multiple, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific, and Unknown or no response.

Data Collection

The interview took place in a classroom where the researcher currently serves as a graduate assistant. Each interview was approximately 30 minutes long, and was video recorded for documentation. The study consisted of six individual interviews conducted by the researcher. Each interview consisted of open-ended questions which lasted approximately 30 minutes long, allowing the participants time to answer the questions

(see Appendix A). The interviews took place in a classroom which the researcher and student are familiar. Each interview was video recorded and transcribed for verification. The researcher allowed the participants opportunity to give feedback at the end of the interview. Face-to-face semi-structured interviews were conducted and video recorded for documentation. The researcher transcribed the data and labeled them into themed categories. These questions were used to gain students' insight into support services. Students participating in the study were given informed consent forms informing them of their confidentiality. All information including transcriptions, informed consent forms and video recordings are available only to the researcher and participants; to keep confidentiality, no one else has access to these materials. The names of the participants have been kept confidential with pseudo names and coded to help keep participants anonymous.

Treatment of Data

The data was collected by the interviewer after each interview. The interview was video and audio recorded. The interviews have been transcribed on the researcher's personal computer. Participants were given pseudo names to protect confidentiality. Upon completion of the transcribing, the data was copied on to a flash drive and locked in the researcher's personal cabinet at his home. No one other than the researcher has access to this cabinet. After completion of the study, all data will be retained for three years before being destroyed.

Chapter IV

Findings

The purpose of this study is to (1) investigate academically at-risk second year students' perceptions about the value of campus support services to gain a better insight of first year students and (2) to see how these support services can utilize different social media sources in engaging students. This chapter presents the various themes that emerged through the analysis of interviews. The participants are students at a mid-sized public university in the Midwest where they are enrolled in "Strategies for Academic Success" course which indicates that these students are at-risk and their cumulative GPA's have fallen below a 2.0. Throughout this chapter, participants will be referred to with alphabetized pseudo names. For example, the first participant is given the name Amy, while the sixth and final participant is given the name Felicia. Each research question is presented with themes which emerged through individual interviews.

Research Question 1: What are your perceptions concerning campus support services on this campus?

The first theme identified through the interviews was a high level of satisfaction which the students perceived to have with campus support services.

Satisfaction

Participants provided their perceptions concerning campus support services on the campus of study through previous experiences. Through their previous encounters, participants were able to recall experiences concerning these support services. Participants described several subthemes regarding a level of satisfaction.

convenience.

The participants described the overall location of support services to be centrally located, convenient, and within walking distance from their residence and academic buildings. Amy was quoted as saying “I feel the location is good because the campus is not really that big, so everything is within walking distance”. Also, the participants indicated that if they needed to make a trip to a specific support service, the location would not hold them back. When the researcher asked Barry about the location of the services, he responded “yeah, they’re all fine; it is easy to find everything”. Crystal responded saying “they’re not that bad, they’re kind of in the center of campus”.

options.

A common response from the respondents is that there were an adequate number of support services offered on campus. Amy responded as saying “yes, I feel there are, there is enough. They have a lot of people to help in different places, there are multiple services within the human services building; a lot of different services are there”. Barry described the options as “there’s basically something for everything, whatever you have a problem with. It’s just a matter of students using them”. Dana stated: “I think there is enough; they have a service for each category that you would need help with”.

effective.

The participants listed many different services which had positive effects on them in the past. One example includes Ethan stating:

I guess the student success center, I got placed in the class because my GPA was low, but I mean the process of the class has helped me stay focused on my daily every day assignments and stuff, which has helped a lot.

The student success center was not the only support service which was having a positive effect on students, as Crystal stated:

Academic advising, they are providing books online for me. In the success center, they are telling us what we should do, helping us get back on track. The library hours are late to accommodate students. The writing center, they accommodate me personally, because they will help revise my paper.

Research Question 2: What are your perceptions of satisfaction with each individual support service?

Two themes emerged out of the second research question: (1) students were pleased with the support service and (2) student's either did not use the service or did not know what the service provided to students.

Structured Helpfulness

academic advising.

The participants had different comments when discussing advising; however, the most common answer described how helpful academic advising could be. When describing academic advising, Barry stated: "they helped me understand what I am getting into for my degree, they helped me understand what I needed next semester and giving me a clear path". Crystal was quoted as saying:

Well, being in Gateway, I like that we meet more than the normal, our meetings are detailed, and they keep me on track and my advisor will get on me, which I need. Also, I get to register early, but they help you get on track, help you take classes you want, help you if you took a summer class, make sure you get your transcriptions in, so they help.

Dana described her satisfaction with academic advising as: “very, very good, positive. She helps me figure everything I need to do, when I need to do it by; it’s a lot of work to do on your own, I tried and she is very helpful”. Along with academic advising being helpful, the students also pointed out how friendly and nice their advisors were. Dana was quoted as saying “They just always have a positive attitude, they’re friendly, they’re nice”. Felicia described academic advising as: “I like the academic advising, they are nice people”.

career services.

The responses from the participants indicated a level of connectivity. Career services connected student to: 1) majors, 2) fairs, 3) skills and 4) networking while having a positive influence. When talking about career services, Dana said “they have those job fairs, that’s a good thing. Then networking, I also like that. They also have workshops”. When talking about what Dana enjoyed, she stated: “the helpfulness. All of these services make things easier”. Dana also talked about utilizing career services in the near future saying: “yea, I am going to need to visit them because I have not made a resume or anything yet and I am going to have to eventually”. One last aspect which students enjoyed with career services was receiving help with choosing a major. Amy stated:

I like it because they helped me figure out a major. I took the test at career services and it put me in mass communication. I am not really good at public speaking, but there is more to mass communication than just public speaking. I can do radio broadcasting, which is why I am taking my major, that way I don’t have to stand in front of a big audience, so you can’t really see me because it’s the

radio, so I feel that's more in my comfort zone. Career services did a great job helping me with my major

housing.

Another area suggested was Housing. Housing themes discussed were: 1) academic assistance, 2) trained professionals, 3) transitions and 4) targeted interactions. The first assistance nearly every participant talked about was how helpful their resident assistant (RA) was. When asked about resident assistants, Crystal stated:

They are doing a good job; I mean they (housing) are taking my money, so they better be doing a good job. But you know, the RA's have to go through a training, so I feel like they know what they are doing and I am pretty satisfied.

Dana stated: "our RA was awesome, she was so nice and she helped with everything: moving in, getting down into school, adapting to the new lifestyle". Ethan described his resident assistant experience as: "good from what I experienced. Being introduced to the campus and introducing me to people, that sure helped a lot". Another positive aspect which was brought up with housing was their concern for a student when they were falling behind. Dana stated:

They are strict, which I think is good, we needed that as freshman. That is when they go through all the stuff and they start writing you letters and when you start falling off track or get a D in a class, they'll let you know and you'll lose privileges because of it, which I think is rightfully so.

Dana also stated: "they had interviews and meetings when stuff went bad and they talked to you about it, kind of like an academic advisor would, which was kind of helpful".

library.

When discussing the library, the students were all satisfied, along with naming some of the amenities such as: 1) academic resources, 2) quiet spaces, 3) technology and 4) professional assistance. When talking about the resources, Crystal mentioned:

I like the printing of free academic journals. Also, the librarians will help you find books. You can watch movies for classes in those rooms upstairs, they have computers, they have little study rooms, so they have good things for us. So, my satisfaction with them would be good.

Some of the resources which Dana mentioned are as follows:

The library is very helpful, it's a quiet environment to get your stuff done. They have study rooms, so when I have study groups, it's nice to get your own room and talk without interference of anybody walking around, no distractions.

Dana also acknowledged a process to receive books which the library did not own, along with the help the website provides; she stated:

I wish they had better books; well, I guess you can request an order from different libraries and stuff. Their website is really helpful too, the library website where you can click on academic journals and see what those have to offer without paying for them.

Lastly, Felicia generalized her satisfaction with the library as: "the library is awesome, there are resources everywhere, books everywhere, you know..." along with describing the resources available as "pretty much everything; there's people to help you, computers to help you, and books to help you".

student success center.

The overall attitude with the student success center was a positive one. However, students discussed their satisfaction with the success center primarily around the course in which they are enrolled. When Ethan was describing the success center, he stated: “they have helped me a lot. The class they have put me in, it has aided me a little bit with actually graduating”.

The comments from Barry are as follows:

Pretty good. I came into this class thinking it was stupid, which I still do, but there is more, it's like after going through the class, I finally thought, ok, I can actually learn something and get something out of it and actually start trying to get new study habits, organizing my life, and stuff like that. It has made me feel more comfortable honestly. As lame as that sounds, I'm sure most people probably come in here and just throw it off. Like I said, I really just decided to give it a shot.

Two of the other participants described the course as being beneficially different from other courses. When describing the course, Dana stated: “yea, the class has helped me a lot, the information they give us is actually helpful, not just words like every other class”. Felicia also had positive remarks, stating: “I like this class...it gets me thinking, it's not like a regular class”.

writing center.

The participants have acknowledged the writing centers ability to help them in multiple ways, specifically, bridging the gap between what the student doesn't know and what they need to know to succeed in college, whether it be proofreading papers or

helping with an annotated bibliography. When describing the writing center, Amy was quoted as saying:

I can say it has been helpful. They helped me a lot with one paper; I think I got a B. But if I would have done it personally, and not gone to the writing center, I probably would have got an F; because the way she wanted it, with the bibliography, and note cards and all that other stuff, I wasn't used to that from high school; I wasn't prepared for all that, so they like helped me with my bibliography, and getting it in order and all that stuff.

Crystal describes having a positive experience with the writing center as: "The writing center, they accommodated me because they helped revise my whole paper" and "they will help you if you make an appointment time to go over your papers".

Support service underutilized/unknown

counseling services.

The use of counseling services had never been used by any of the participants. When describing the use of counseling services, Crystal stated: "I don't go there. I have a thing, I don't care for counseling services, so it's just like I don't ever think I'll occupy them". Fortunately the counseling center has not had negative impacts on the participants. Crystal stated: "I haven't even gone to be honest, so I can't say like something specific on this campus, I just feel like it is...I don't know, I just don't want to go". While none of the participants had visited counseling services, one student went far enough to say that counseling services is not even needed. Dana described this as:

I think it's not needed. I feel like you should be able to deal with your own problems. I don't know...that's just how I feel about things. I don't believe in

other people telling you how to feel. I think it's just unethical, weird. I am a big girl, I can handle problems on my own.

health education resource center.

When asking the participants about the Health Education Resource Center, the most common answer was either they did not know what resources the HERC had available, or they had never attended or knew where the building was. When the researcher asked Ethan about his satisfaction and awareness of the health education resource center, Ethan responded with: "no clue" and "no idea," respectively. When the researcher asked Felicia about her satisfaction level, she replied: "I don't know, I don't really know a lot about them; my satisfaction would be no affect. I just don't know much about them. They need to reach out to me obviously". Similar to counseling services, Dana did not feel the health education resource center was even necessary. When asked about the health education resource center, Dana replied: "this is another thing I don't think is needed at all. The counseling is more needed than this one I believe, but we are of the age where we know how to be healthy".

Research Question 3: What are your perceptions regarding social media (Facebook, QR codes, texting, Twitter) and its relation to campus support services?

Three themes emerged from the third research question: (1) participants most attractive social media outlet, (2) a text form of communication, and (3) the services effectiveness using social media.

Social Media Outlet

While interviewing the participants, one social media outlet emerged as a prevalent form of communication: Twitter; while surprisingly, Facebook did not receive a high level of satisfaction.

twitter.

Twitter appeared to be the most common choice of social media between the participants. Of the students interviewed, five of the six have a Twitter account. Twitter is appealing to these students because it is easy to understand and information is just posted. According to Crystal: “on Twitter you can just read what people are thinking at the moment”. Felicia said: I like Twitter. It’s just a different world. I am a Twitter girl”. When Amy spoke about Twitter, she stated:

I follow the university on Twitter, and I do read through them (university tweets) and it’s helpful to let me know when we need to sign up for academic advising meetings and activities that happen on campus, like football games and things like that.

facebook.

Facebook did not appear to be a popular choice among the participants. Although all six participants confirmed they had a Facebook page, not all reviews were positive. The negative reviews included Facebook being annoying, distracting, and privacy concerns. According to Crystal, she does not frequent Facebook because her grandmother is on there. Also, Crystal states: “Facebook is just too complicated now; there is just too much going on. They have games that you can play and things like that”. Felicia’s dislike for Facebook comes from a different perspective, as she states:

“Facebook is annoying and I have to hear about people’s statuses”. Although Facebook, which can be a great place to socialize for students, Facebook can also serve as a distraction, and students are aware of the problem. Ethan states he dissatisfaction for Facebook as:

Well, I try and stay away from Facebook as much as possible because it is a huge distraction. I feel if I like it then it will be just another reason to get on and kill time. Once you’re on it, you’re on it for not just a little bit, but you’re carrying out a full conversation of stuff that doesn’t even matter or your looking up stuff that doesn’t matter to anybody ever.

text communication.

Texting is a big form of communication between all students, and these participants are no different. When discussing texting, all six of the participants discussed how texting would be a viable option to communicate with them; however, there were two restrictions regarding texting them: (1) the texting not be overused and (2) the participants have an opportunity to pick which offices would text them. When presenting the idea of a service texting the participants, they were hesitant at first. Dana responded to the idea by originally stating: “I get enough texts as it is and I don’t need my school texting me every second of every day”. However, when asked about given a chance to volunteer for specific services at her own choosing, Dana stated: “O yea, if there were flyers up that said sign up if you want a text report, then I would do it”. When Crystal was originally asked about a text from services, she was also reluctant. Crystal stated: “I just feel like it would be overwhelming. It would be like we’re having a resume building today at 7:30, so come out. I think emails would be fine, but texts, no”.

However, similar to Dana, when asked about choosing a specific service, Crystal stated: “well, if it was voluntary, then yea”. When discussing another potential drawback from texting, the participants indicated too many texts could be a problem. When asked if receiving a text message would discourage her from coming, Crystal responded: “yes, if there are too many. It would get annoying. You already told us one time, we get it, now it is just getting annoying. Two other participants gave an idea of how many texts could be effective. Crystal stated: I would say a little less than once a week, but maybe more than once a month; maybe about one every two weeks, twice a month”. Ethan responded with: “about once a week, maybe giving a list of what is coming up rather than every day”.

Services Effectiveness

When asking the participants about whether support services are effective regarding their advertising on social media, a simple response followed: no. When asking Dana about the presence of support services on social media, Dana replied: “No, none whatsoever, I don’t see them anywhere. The only thing I really ever see is university crime alerts”. Ethan’s response mirrored Dana’s, as Ethan replied: “well me, I am unaware that they are even on Facebook”. Felicia’s response garnered the same answer as the previous two, stating: “no, I never see them on Facebook or anything”. Although the support services have not caught the attention of the participants on social media, they participants did note that they had seen advertising through more traditional channels. According to Crystal,

The health education resource center, I see the posters around. Career services, yea, I used to get emails from them a lot. The success center, you can sometimes

hear about them through word of mouth. The writing center, around campus, I don't see many posters up, but it is advertised throughout the teachers.

Research Question 4: What are your suggestions for how campus support services can utilize social media effectively?

When discussing this question with the participants, the overwhelming response was to create some type of "page," whether it be on Twitter, Facebook, or both. Also, although the question referred to social media, traditional media channels were discussed.

social media.

The participants felt the creation of a Facebook page or Twitter account was a great way to reach out to students. Barry stated: "Facebook. If they have the ads and it is out there for students, they can see. Let's say that you're searching the university's student success center, it would help if there was a page made". According to the Amy:

Just make a page for each service, because they know everybody has something relating to social media, everybody has Facebook or Twitter, and some more stuff, but everybody has them; so just make a page for each one and students will follow, especially if they are interested in it.

Felicia also felt a creation of a departmental page would be beneficial, as she stated: "find out who goes to the university and find them on social media. Try sending out a mass message on Facebook. Get on social media and create a page and get followers". When discussing pages, there are certain descriptions and restrictions which a page must abide by. According to Crystal, she would like for the pages to be very descriptive with what they have to offer; she stated:

First, I feel they should use them so we can know what they are about; I don't know what the student success center is about, obviously to be successful, but

what or how, you know? If they have an event, I wouldn't know what it will be for, it isn't advertised; I feel they need advertisement, getting their names out there; for instance, we all know of these services, but we don't know exactly what they have to offer. So I don't know if people will follow the pages, but maybe on Facebook, but that's probably about it.

In regards to Twitter, Crystal discusses how often a service would need to send a tweet.

According to Crystal:

They would need to send tweets less regularly. Just when events are coming up, not daily stuff, don't blast things, not too much. So every once in a while, maybe a reminder; you're scrolling through your "TL" and you're thinking okay, that's cool, I might go to that.

The overall theme the participants provided was to create some type of Facebook or Twitter page. The suggestions provided puzzled the researcher because every support service had either a Facebook page or Twitter account. Table 1 lays out the university's support services "likes" and "followers".

Table 1

Social media utilization

	Advising	Career	Counseling	HERC	Housing	Library	SSC	Writing
Facebook								
likes (1)	39	491	5	303	1,692	725	99	179
Twitter								
followers (2)	49	-	-	181	353	180	4	221

Note: (1) Retrieved from Facebook website: www.facebook.com, accessed Dec. 18, 2013; (2) Retrieved from Twitter website: www.twitter.com, accessed Dec. 18, 2013.

traditional channel.

Although traditional channels such as passing out flyers, bulletin boards, and emails did not fit the criteria of social media, the researcher would be remiss not to include these thoughts as suggestions. According to Amy, she believes some of the simple forms of advertising works well. She states:

I know people are passing out a lot of stuff on campus. They are passing out flyers and stuff, and you can't walk past them without grabbing one. So different flyers and stuff would be good. Also maybe bulletin boards all over campus, they could pin stuff on the bulletin boards.

Dana also believes that flyers are an effective means of connecting to students; however, these are flyers with a twist. Dana explains: "Yea, I'm telling you these flyers, we have all those nice electronic big billboards around campus, maybe put some advertisement on there". The researcher asked Dana if the electronic billboards were able to effectively catch her attention, and she responded:

Yea, I mean you're looking at them for a good 100 meters because you have nothing else to look at. For example, maybe you just got out of class, and are walking by yourself home; you might as well look at the bright lights.

Dana also suggested an email route:

Well, I guess email. I get a lot of emails from the school and stuff, maybe a short email, because I usually get "semi-novels" and am not reading any of those, but maybe a link or something to click on which can help us figure out what all of these services are and what you can do to get involved with the services. I do check my email a lot, so it would be good.

Research Question 5: How do you see smart phones affecting support services?

While discussing the use of smart phones with the participants, two thoughts were created: (1) students are constantly on their smart phones and (2) the creation of an application would be beneficial.

smart phone frequency.

According to Felecia: “everyone in the world is on their phone 24/7”. With students potentially accessing their phones at that high of a frequency, targeted applications could be a great tool for support services. According to Dana, she is also a victim to constantly using her phone, as she stated: “I have it on me all the time, every day, not a second without it. Even in class I am still on it, I can’t stop being on it”. Ethan also noticed the amount of cell phone use in class; he stated:

I would be on it quite often, I even noticed during class I would be on it, when I started to notice I would start to force myself to leave my phone at home or in my backpack or wherever. But you will see plenty of students, sometimes even an entire class is just on their phones, and there won’t even be a point for them to show up to class.

When Crystal discussed students using their phones, she stated:

If you walk around campus, you see most people on their phones listening to music, looking at social media, texting, checking their email before class, or even googling information for class. I feel like it’s your own mini-computer in your hand.

application.

The thought of creating an application utilized by student services was a recurring theme throughout the interviews. According to Ethan, “an app could consist of workshops or maybe hours of certain offices; possibly post like when the library has their special hours during finals week”. Barry also likes the idea of what an app could do, as he stated: “I think an app could be cool to bring up events”. According to Dana:

An app could have a notification every now and then, telling me what’s up. I feel like we should have a big checklist and mark which services we would want more information about on this checklist. Once we have signed up, they can send an email or send a text. They could send a text when a resume builder is coming up, stuff like that. I would love to be texted every day informing me of an upcoming resume workshop. I would go because I would be reminded because it is right there on my phone.

Research Question 6: Overall, on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the most likely to visit, how likely are you to visit a support service?

When the participants discussed this question, two different themes came up: (1) students would be likely to visit the services if they were pertinent and (2) students were not likely to visit the services if they were not relevant.

pertinent services.

When the subject came up to visit relevant services, the students stressed they would have a desire to utilize that service. When discussing the relevance, Amy stated: “5 if I need help with something. I know that career services would be able to help me with my resume. As long it’s beneficial, I would give it a five. Dana stated: “5

definitely. I at least go to academic advising every semester. Also, I don't know if I would utilize all of them, but I could possibly use the writing center or career services for the resume building". Barry stated:

Give me a 5. The success center is high on my list. Also, the library, it's a nice place to study and it gets me out of my house where I get distracted easy. I just think the support services I have used are good.

perceived irrelevant services.

When the participants discussed visiting perceived irrelevant services, their attitude towards attending services lowered dramatically. According to Crystal, "I would say a 2. It just depends on what they are doing. I feel like they are boring, it is like another class. They are not engaging. If they are boring then I am definitely not going". Felicia also did not speak highly of the services. According to Felicia, she stated: "It would depend on which one, but probably a 2. I would actually just rather go do something else, like hit a volleyball or something". When confronted with the questions, Ethan stated:

I don't know, I guess I am just a guy and I don't want help, I can do everything on my own. Even ever since high school, I didn't get assistance in anything, it's just something I've never really done. I guess maybe I should visit those services and take advantage of them, but for now I guess it's a 2.

Although Amy had shown an interest for attending support services, she had also shown some resistance. Amy stated: "If it was just a visit to visit, a 3 because I do have other stuff to do, so I don't think I'll just personally go in and just see what they are doing".

Other themes emerged outside of the six research questions. These themes corresponded to beliefs the students had concerning support services.

stubbornness/pride.

Throughout the interviews, participants showed a level of stubbornness regarding support services. The level of stubbornness can be articulated to the idea that they do not believe in these services for themselves, however, with these students registering as “academically at-risk,” these services should be one of the first resources the participants take advantage of. According to Felicia:

Some students may need some services; they can use them they are obviously necessary for some students, but, it’s good if you take advantage of them. I mean, I personally wouldn’t take advantage of them, but some kids could take advantage of them to help them out.

When the researcher asked Felicia about the university having an adequate number of resources, she replied:

Yea, I feel like kids can be involved and go try these services; then those services can get you to go to a lot of other things; I guess it’s just your choice, but some kids just take advantage of them, and it’s probably for the better. But I am not really into that stuff, I would rather just figure stuff out on my own.

Dana also shows a pattern of stubbornness by identifying a need for them, however, not for her own use. Dana stated:

Maybe for other people who have issues. I guess if shit happens it’s nice to have someone to talk to, but at the same time, I think it’s not needed. I am a big girl, I can handle problems on my own.

Also, Ethan has shown signs of stubbornness towards support services. As Ethan has stated:

I don't know, I guess I am just a guy and I don't want help, I can do everything on my own. Even ever since high school, I didn't get assistance in anything, it's just something I've never really done.

Summary

Chapter IV discussed the results of in-depth interviews with six students reflecting their on their perceptions regarding support services and social media. Six research questions were asked in order to gain insights on their perceptions.

The participants indicated they were pleased with the structured helpfulness they received from support services. For example, participants indicated that they pleased with academic advising, career services, housing, the library, student success center, and the writing center. Conversely, participants also indicated underutilization or an unknowing for various support services. For example, the participants indicated little use for counseling services and unfamiliarity for the health education resource center.

Social media was popular among all the participants, with Twitter and Facebook being the most popular. The participants suggested that Twitter may be the best mean of social media, while Facebook can be annoying for some of the participants. Text communication was also an effective method of communication between the students. Participants suggested that the support services were not effective advertising through social media. Some of the participants were not even aware that various support services were even on social media.

Overall, the participants felt creating a Facebook or Twitter “page” would be an effective mode of communication between the students the services. These responses were intriguing because all of the services already have some type of social media page. Participants also suggested that traditional methods of advertising can still be effective. Methods such as flyers, bulletin boards, and emails were mentioned as potential methods of advertisement.

The participants discussed how smart phones might affect support services. First, the participants indicated that students are on their smartphones all the time, so involving a method using a phone would be a good idea. The participants also talked about the idea of some type of app for support services.

Chapter V will provide a summary of previous chapters and include recommendations for future research as well as suggestions for student affairs professionals based on the experiences of the participants

Chapter V

Discussion, Recommendations, Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to investigate academically at-risk second year students' perceptions about the value of campus support services to gain a better insight of first year students. The secondary purpose of the study was to investigate how these support services can utilize different social media sources in engaging students. Therefore, the following research questions were asked: (1) What are the perceptions of students' concerning campus support services?; (2) What are the perceptions of students' satisfaction with campus support services including, but not limited to: academic advising, career services, counseling services, health education resource centers, housing, the library, student success centers, and writing centers?; (3) What are the perceptions of students' regarding social media (Facebook, QR codes, texting, Twitter) and its relation to campus support services?; (4) What are the students' suggestions for how campus support services can utilize social media?; (5) How do you see smart phones affecting support services?; (6) On a skill of 1 to 5, with 5 being the most likely to visit, how likely are you to visit a support service? In the present chapter, the results of the study are discussed and compared with prior research, implications for student affairs practitioners are discussed, and recommendations for future research are provided.

Discussion

Chapter IV explored the themes that were found through analysis and comparison of the individual interviews conducted by the primary investigator. In chapter V, these themes will be placed into two categories: support services and social media. Support

service refers to any themes which pertain to the satisfaction of support services. Social media refers to any themes which pertain to the use of social media.

support services.

The participants perceived that there were an adequate number of support services available on campus. Barry described the options as “there’s basically something for everything, whatever you have a problem with. It’s just a matter of students using them”. Dana stated: “I think there is enough; they have a service for each category that you would need help with”. The participants were able to confirm prior research on diverse services. Habley & McClanahan (2004) found several support services include academic advising, career/life planning, residence hall programs, learning assistance centers, and learning communities.

According to Thompson, academic advisors have the tools to help students during the beginning stages of the college process. The participants agreed with prior research. Barry stated: “they helped me understand what I am getting into for my degree, they helped me understand what I needed next semester and giving me a clear path”. Dana stated: “they help me figure out everything I need to do and when I need to do it by”.

According to prior research a career service department is a resource which adheres to students current and future needs. There are two main functions of career services: (1) to assist students in making effective decisions about their major and their career path; and (2) to assist students in obtaining appropriate employment/volunteer activities to enhance their movement towards their career goals (Hammond, 2001). Participants discussed the need for these services, and even suggested utilizing them. Dana planned on utilizing career services soon, stating: “yea, I am going to need to visit

them because I have not made a resume or anything yet and I am going to have to eventually”. Amy suggested a career services aptitude test helped her figure out a major, stating: “I like it because they helped me figure out a major. I took the test and it put me in mass communications”.

Housing was an area where the students spoke positively about the support service, specifically with the resident assistants. Prior research says resident assistants are a resource for students inside the residence halls and serve as role models, counselors, and teachers for students (Roussel & Elleven, 2009). Resident assistants are typically hired because they showcase the necessary characteristics the university respects and considers important. Resident assistants are trained to help students to the best of their ability, but also know to refer students to counseling centers when the time is necessary (Taub & Servaty-Seib, 2010). The participants were able to recognize these characteristics with their resident assistants. Crystal stated: “the resident assistants have to go through a training, so I feel like they know what they are doing and I am pretty satisfied”. Dana stated: “our resident assistant was awesome, she was so nice and she helped with things like moving in, getting down into school, and adapting to the new lifestyle”.

The participants expressed satisfaction with the library. Some of the amenities the students mentioned matched up with prior research. According to Waldman (2003), the library can offer interlibrary loans, a quiet place to study, group study areas, computers to conduct academic research, and a reference desk. The participants spoke of these services available. Dana stated: “I guess you can request an order (books) from different libraries and stuff. Their website is really helpful too. You can click on

academic journals and see what those have to offer without paying for them”. Crystal had also mentioned the amenities the library offers, stating: “I like printing off free academic journals. Also, the librarians will help you find books”.

The participants did show a positive attitude towards the student success center, however, the students only focused on a small aspect of the center. As previously mentioned, the participants were enrolled in a course taught by the student success center; however, these courses across other universities are not always a function of the student success center. Traditionally, some of the main purposes which these centers focus on include: higher course grades for involved students, a central location for students to receive assistance, referral aid to other supporting services on campus, and a location of basic study aids (Arendale, 2004). Once again, the participants were not able to address all the services the student success center offers, just the class which they are enrolled in.

In the interviews, participants discussed their use of the writing center. Crystal stated: “They will help you go over your papers if you make an appointment; the writing center helped me revise my whole paper”. Amy stated: “they helped me with my bibliography, notecards, and all that other stuff. If I had not gone to the writing center, I probably would have got an F (on her paper)”. This aligns with prior research, as Grimm (1996) found writing centers help students through with areas concerning grammar, punctuation, paragraphing, style, organization, and much more.

Similar to the other support services, prior research on counseling services and the health education resource center show benefits for students. For example, the health education resource center has tips and hints on how to stay healthy and sexually safe, along with information concerning alcohol and drug use (Eisenberg, Lechner, Frerich,

Lust, & Garcia, 2012). However, participants either did not know about these services, or just did not want to visit them. When asked about the health education resource center, Felicia responded: “I don’t know, I don’t really know a lot about them”. Ethan responded: “no clue” and “no idea”. With regards to counseling services, Crystal stated: “I don’t go there. I have a thing, I don’t care for counseling services, so it’s just like I don’t ever think I’ll occupy them”. Dana stated: “I think it’s not needed. I feel like you should be able to deal with your own problems. I don’t know...that’s just how I feel about things”.

social media.

According to Jacobsen & Forste (2011) prior research showed that students who participate in social networking sites and texting can have a negative impact on their grade point average. They also found that for every hour of electronic media exposure reported by students on average, GPA was reduced between 0.05 and 0.07 points. While the participants did not say they thought they had been personally impacted by social networking and texting, they may have also suffered from the same effects, as their G.P.A. has labeled them as academically at-risk.

In the interviews with the participants, it was found that all of the participants participated in Facebook. Junco (2013) found that 98% of students participate in online social media sites such as Facebook. However, although all students were online with Facebook, the responses showed a trend away from prior research. According to Roblyer, McDaniel, Webb, Herman, & Witty (2010), social networks can have a benefit for departments reaching students. With Facebook, departments can easily communicate with students. Also, departments can easily communicate with students at an easy, low-

cost method to post announcements and messages, upload photos of events, recruit potential members, and even receive feedback back from students. The participants also challenged Ophus and Abbitt (2009), as they found 86% of students would likely be open to participating in accessing course notes and other materials, 58% of students would likely be open to communicating with the instructor, 64% of students would likely participate in using online discussion tools that included both instructor and students, and 78% would likely join a Facebook group for their course. According to some participants, Facebook is annoying. Crystal stated: "Facebook is just too complicated now; there is just too much going on. They have games that you can play and things like that". Felicia stated: "Facebook is annoying and I have to hear about people's statuses". While these participants might not consider department messages annoying, they are deterred from even checking the statuses because of the feeling towards Facebook. Ethan also states that he stays away from Facebook because of the potential distraction it can cause.

According to Asur & Hubermann (2010), Twitter is a rising trend. Some are using Twitter at conferences using hashtags before, during, and after the event to discuss and share content (Heiberger & Junco, 2011). Twitter can also have a positive effect on student engagement and have the potential to be effective in the classroom, such as giving feedback to an instructor during class or trying to reach out to students. Also, the use of Twitter for educationally relevant purposes has a positive effect on grades (Fusch, 2011; Junco, Heiberger, & Loken (2010). Likewise, five of the six participants in the student stated they have a Twitter account. Twitter was received well by the participants because of the simplicity behind it. This is evident from Crystal as she states: "On

Twitter you can just read what people are thinking in the moment”. Amy also suggested how Twitter can be helpful reaching out to her by reminding her of upcoming events.

Prior research has shown that texting is very popular among teenagers, and possibly addicting. (Junco and Cotton, 2012; Lenhart, Ling, Campbell, & Purcell, 2011) found 72% of teens texted in 2009. Also, nearly half of teens send about 1,500 a month and that one third of teens send more than 3,000 texts a month. Similarly, the participants discussed how they and their peers are similar in that they text often. Dana discussed being on her phone all the time, not going anywhere without it, even during class. Ethan also noticed that his cell phone would be used during class, similar to that of his peers. He also stated that some students shouldn’t have even bothered wasting their time attending class because all they did was frequent their cell phones. This relates to research from Rosen, Lim, Carrier & Cheever (2011) who found that students who are busy texting in class scored lower on tests than students who did not text. Once again, these students may have landed themselves in “Strategies for Academic Success” because of their bad habits with technology.

Prior research shows that QR codes can be practical and beneficial on a college campus for students so they can download content quick and easily. Some services are already including these codes into their operations (Massis, 2011). However, when discussing technology and social media, the participants failed to mention QR codes throughout the interviews.

Recommendations for support services

During the one-on-one interviews, participants were asked to give suggestions on how campus support services could utilize social media. The most popular suggestion

among the participants was for each service to create a Facebook or Twitter page for the students to follow. According to Amy:

Just make a page for each service, because they know everybody has something relating to social media, everybody has Facebook or Twitter, and some more stuff, but everybody has them; so just make a page for each one and students will follow, especially if they are interested in it.

Felicia stated: “find out who goes to the university and find them on social media. Try sending out a mass message on Facebook. Get on social media and create a page and get followers”. However, just because a support service has a page, they need to be specific about what they offer students. According to Crystal:

First, I feel they should use them so we can know what they are about; I don't know what the student success center is about, obviously to be successful, but what or how, you know? If they have an event, I wouldn't know what it will be for, it isn't advertised; I feel they need advertisement, getting their names out there; for instance, we all know of these services, but we don't know exactly what they have to offer.

The next suggestion included services sending out messages through social media or texting; however, the participants were clear that the support services should not abuse this. Ethan responded with “about once a week, maybe giving a list of what is coming up rather than every day”. According to Crystal:

They would need to send tweets less regularly. Just when events are coming up, not daily stuff, don't blast things, not too much. So every once in a while, maybe

a reminder; you're scrolling through your "TL" and you're thinking okay, that's cool, I might go to that.

For texting, the participants had two restrictions regarding texting them: (1) the texting not be overused and (2) the participants have an opportunity to pick which offices would text them. When presenting the idea of a service texting the participants, they were hesitant at first. Dana responded to the idea by originally stating: "I get enough texts as it is and I don't need my school texting me every second of every day". However, when asked about given a chance to volunteer for specific services at her own choosing Dana stated: "O yea, if there were flyers up that said sign up if you want a text report, then I would do it". When Crystal was originally asked about a text from services, she was also reluctant. Crystal stated: "I just feel like it would be overwhelming. It would be like we're having a resume building today at 7:30, so come out. I think emails would be fine, but texts, no". However, similar to Dana, when asked about choosing a specific service, Crystal stated: "well, if it was voluntary, then yea". When discussing another potential drawback from texting, the participants indicated too many texts could be a problem. When asked if receiving a text message would discourage her from coming, Crystal responded: "yes, if there are too many. It would get annoying. You already told us one time, we get it, now it is just getting annoying". two other participants gave an idea of how many texts could be effective. Crystal stated: "I would say a little less than once a week, but maybe more than once a month; maybe about one every two weeks, twice a month".

The next recommendation the participants suggested was to create an application for students to access on their smart phones. According to Ethan, "an app could consist

of workshops or maybe hours of certain offices; possibly post like when the library has their special hours during finals week”. Barry also likes the idea of what an app could do, as he stated: “I think an app could be cool to bring up events”. According to Dana:

An app could have a notification every now and then, telling me what’s up. I feel like we should have a big checklist and mark which services we would want more information about on this checklist. Once we have signed up, they can send an email or send a text. They could send a text when a resume builder is coming up, stuff like that. I would love to be texted every day informing me of an upcoming resume workshop. I would go because I would be reminded because it is right there on my phone.

One last area which the participants recommended was services should continue to use more traditional channels, such as flyers, bulletin boards, and emails. According to Amy, she believes some of the simple forms of advertising works well. She states:

I know people are passing out a lot of stuff on campus. They are passing out flyers and stuff, and you can’t walk past them without grabbing one. So different flyers and stuff would be good. Also, maybe bulletin boards all over campus, they could pin stuff on the bulletin boards.

Dana also believes that flyers are an effective means of connecting to students; however, these are flyers with a twist. Dana explains: “Yea, I’m telling you these flyers, we have all those nice electronic big billboards around campus, maybe put some advertisement on there. When discussing the email, Dana did however suggest specific requirements:

I get a lot of emails from the school and stuff, maybe a short email, because I usually get “semi-novels” and am not reading any of those, but maybe a link or

something to click on which can help us figure out what all of these services are and what you can do to get involved with the services. I do check my email a lot, so it would be good.

Recommendations for future research

During the one-on-one interviews, the participants responded frequently with superficial answers. These answers did not allow the researcher to gain as much insight as he had hoped. Generally speaking, one possible explanation for the superficial answers is that academically at-risk students struggle to articulate or give insightful answers. Also, these students may not have had an opportunity to practice expressing their thought in an academic setting. A recommendation for future research is to conduct interviews in a group setting, where the participants could utilize other participant's answers, or even be reminded of their own ideas from other participant's remarks.

Many of the students included health services when discussing support services, even confusing them with the Health Education Resource Center. The researcher failed to consider health services as academically relevant as other services, therefore, dismissing them from the study completely. Although health services might not have as much relevant academic information as some of the other support services, students visit health services just as much, if not more than many of the other services. Positive ideas and conclusions can be drawn from health services from what they are doing right. Having the participant's insight from health services could have generated more suggestions for improvement.

Similar to health services, many students also included financial aid when discussing support services. Once again, the researcher failed to consider financial aid as

academically relevant as other services, therefore, dismissing them from the study completely. Like health services before, the participant's thoughts and perspectives could have developed more suggestions for improvement.

Conclusions

This study was designed to explore the perceptions of academically at-risks second year students' perceptions of how campus support services engage them via social media. From a research perspective, this study contributed to all the support services in helping them understand what perceptions academically at-risk second year students had of their services and what they are looking for via social media from their services. The results of this study appeared to be more superficial in nature, and not divulging deep answers which would have allowed for the researcher to gain better insight to academically at-risk students.

The participants indicated they were pleased with the structured helpfulness they received from support services. For example, participants indicated that they pleased with academic advising, career services, housing, the library, student success center, and the writing center. Conversely, participants also indicated underutilization of other support services. For example, the participants indicated little use for counseling services and unfamiliarity for the health education resource center.

Social media was popular among all the participants, with Twitter and Facebook being the most popular. The participants suggested that Twitter may be the best means of social media for support services to use, while Facebook can be annoying for some of the participants. Text communication was also an effective method of communication between the students. Participants suggested that the support services were ineffective

advertising through social media. Some of the participants were not even aware that various support services were even on social media.

Overall, the participants felt creating a Facebook or Twitter “page” would be an effective mode of communication between the students the services. These responses were intriguing because all of the services already have some type of social media page. Participants also suggested that traditional methods of advertising can still be effective. Methods such as flyers, bulletin boards, and emails were mentioned as potential methods of advertisement.

The participants discussed how smart phones might affect support services. First, the participants indicated that students are on their smartphones all the time, so involving a method using a phone would be a good idea. The participants also talked about the idea of some type of app for support services.

As the important topic of retention continues to gain popularity, it will continue to be a top priority for universities to look at support services for help. This study could serve as a starting point for universities and support services alike to find out how to serve academically at-risk students better.

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Appendix A

Interview Protocol

1. What are the perceptions of students' concerning campus support services on this campus?
 - a. What are your perceptions regarding location of support services?
 - b. Do you feel EIU offers adequate support services for the students
 - c. What are these offices currently doing which have a positive effect on you?
2. What are the perceptions of students' satisfaction with campus support services?
 - a. Academic advising
 - b. Career services
 - c. Counseling services
 - d. Health education resource center
 - e. Housing
 - f. Library
 - g. Student success center
 - h. Writing center
3. What are the perceptions students' regarding social media (Facebook, QR codes, texting, Twitter) and its relation to campus support services?
 - a. What type of social media attracts you the most and why?
 - b. Would you sign up for a text alert from one of these offices informing you about programs and presentations which are coming up in the near future?
 - c. Do you feel EIU advertises through social media effectively?

4. What are the students' suggestions for how campus support services can utilize social media more effectively?
5. How do you see smart phones affecting support services?
6. Overall, on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the most likely to visit, how likely is the student to visit a support service?
 - a. Please explain why you feel this way.

Informed Consent Form

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Brad Sandefer from the College Student Affairs program in the Department of Counseling and Student Development at Eastern Illinois University. Your participation in this study is voluntary and you are encouraged to ask about anything you don't understand before deciding whether or not to participate. You were selected as a possible participant because you fit the general criteria for students I am evaluating.

The purpose of this study is to explore academically at risk second year student's perceptions concerning campus support services and their use of social media to engage students. This study is being conducted to complete a thesis requirement in the College Student Affairs master's program.

Should you choose to participate in this study, you will be asked to interview with the primary investigator of the study for approximately one hour on the topic of academically at risk second year student's perceptions surrounding campus support services and their use of social media to engage students. A foreseeable risks or ill effect from participating in this study may lead to anxiety from realization of underutilization of some support services. Benefits may include a better understanding of different support services available to you.

The interview will be video and audio recorded; however, the researcher will not place your name on any documents resulting from the interview. Any information obtained during this study will be confidential and will be viewed only by the primary investigator and the thesis advisor. This informed consent document will be kept separate from the interview data. All video and audio recordings as well as transcripts will be kept in a cabinet for three years before being destroyed.

Your participation in this research project will help gather information on academically at risk second year student's perceptions surrounding campus support services and their use of social media to engage students. Your participation is completely voluntary and you are free to discontinue participation at any time. You will receive a copy of this consent form for future reference. If you feel as though you need counseling services following the interview, please contact the Eastern Illinois University counseling center at 217-581-3413. If you have any questions, please contact me, Brad Sandefer, at bmsandefer@eiu.edu at any time.

I, _____, agree to participate in this study. I have had the study explained to me and my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I have read the description of this study and have given my consent to participate.

You may withdraw at any time from this study without penalty or loss of benefits. If you have any questions about the treatment of human participants in this study, you may call or write: Institutional Review Board, Eastern Illinois University, 600 Lincoln Ave., Charleston, IL 61920, 217-581-8576, eiuirb@eiu.edu.

Participants Signature

Date

Primary Investigator's Signature
 Faculty Supervisor
 Dr. Richard Roberts
 Counseling and Student Development
 Eastern Illinois University
 Charleston, IL 61920
[217-581-2400](tel:217-581-2400)/rlroberts@eiu.edu

Date