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A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF FACULTY IN RESIDENCE

A DISSERTATION APPROVED FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND POLICY STUDIES

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DEDICATION

To my family for your loving support.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF DIAGRAMS

ABSTRACT

In this hermeneutic, phenomenological study, the Faculty In Residence (FIR) program at the University of Oklahoma is explored through the following guiding research questions:

1. What are the experiences of students and FIRs with the FIR program?
2. What meaning do students and FIRs ascribe to their experiences?
3. How do the students and the FIRs perceive student success?
4. In what, if any, ways do students and FIRs relate the FIR program to student success?

The FIR program melds academic life and home life of both students and faculty members through living together in residence halls. Five themes emerged from interviews with the faculty of the Faculty In Residence program (FIRs): transitions, intangible benefits, relationships, university immersion, and teaching moments. Three themes emerged from student participants including safe haven, mentorship, and activities.

The FIR program is beneficial for students and faculty members involved in the program to promote relationships between students, faculty members, and students and faculty members with all resulting in enhanced university community. In addition, the FIRs transferred their student experiences in the FIR program to their classroom and beyond in the university community. The overall result of the FIR program is a stronger university community that is nurtured through four concepts: building relationships between students and faculty members; exposing faculty members to university operations; providing a bridge between the classroom and life experiences; and

establishing an early intervention program. In addition, student success is fostered through the FIR program.

For these reasons, FIR programs are extremely valuable in institutions of higher learning. They promote student-faculty interaction and provide both students and faculty members benefits including those found in this study: the relationships, the gratification of teaching moments, the safe havens for open for debate and experimentation, and activities that provide common bonds between students and faculty members. The FIRs, students, staff, and environment are not mutually exclusive. All are dependent upon each other; all become one as the university community.

CHAPTER I: AN INTRODUCTION

An Initial Perspective of Faculty In Residence

The university was planning and building Faculty In Residence (fondly referred to as FIR and pronounced at the study's institution as *fur*) apartments in the residence halls when I started working full-time as a residence hall coordinator after completing my master's degree in 1996. Over the years, the campus community has distinguished the faculty members of the program and the FIR program with the term FIR implying the faculty members assigned to FIR apartments and the FIR program meaning the program as a whole. Specifically, the FIR program includes all people involved with the program including the faculty participating as FIRs, support staff, and students; the activities hosted by the FIRs; the apartments; and other procedures and processes related to the program. This same language is used throughout this study to denote specific areas of discussion.

At the onset of the FIR program, the FIR apartments were renovated utilizing student office and lounge space. Although the offices and lounges were relocated, student morale about the FIR program appeared low. Many students perceived the FIR program as taking over their student-centered space, from offices and lounges to parking spaces immediately outside of each FIR apartment. Students could be heard discussing FIR topics such as, "They're taking more of our parking. I bet they get that free, too." Student space, from the lounges to parking, was reallocated to the FIR program, a new program that few understood. Few students appeared to understand the educational investment of the FIR program and most appeared to see only the expense.

The thirteenth president of the University of Oklahoma, David L. Boren, initiated the residence hall changes and other changes across campus. The new president, I had been told, wanted the residence halls to provide a culture similar to that found at Oxford, Harvard, and Yale where students and faculty engage and learn together in a communal space (Schoem & Pasque, 2004). The new president was changing the culture of the institution. For example, public art and historical photographs appeared across campus and landscaping became lush through redesigns and annual tree-planting activities. Further, the president announced new, endowed professorships in addition to the renovations and refurbishments of many campus buildings, providing inviting, scholarly environments.

While many changes occurred on campus, the FIR program appeared to be one of the most predominant changes because of the direct involvement between students, faculty, and staff and the daily presence of faculty members and their families living in the residence halls, which were formerly homes only to students. Incorporating the FIR program was more than an aesthetic change to campus. The financial and space commitment to the FIR program by the administration and faculty implied long-term transformation.

Each of the FIR apartments in six separate residence halls consisted of three bedrooms, two bathrooms, a laundry room, a kitchen, and furnished entertainment area. The entertainment area was large with warm, neutral tones on the walls. Some of the FIRs were invited to select their furniture provided by the institution and received assistance from the university interior designer to aesthetically reflect their style. The FIR choices diversified the characteristics of the FIR spaces with some apartments

boasting red couches and others providing modern environments with furnishings such as light, banana-yellow chairs. Regardless of which apartment I entered, I felt as if I were at home. There were no feelings of being in an institutional setting when inside of the apartments as the apartments seemed to symbolize the warmth of the faculty members.

The faculty received the apartments at no cost, a full meal plan, monthly stipend, no utility bills, parking, cable television, Internet, and a budget to host student activities. As the FIR apartment construction was completed, FIRs and their families moved into university housing. One family in particular drew my attention. The family consisted of two parents, two small children who bounded about, and a baby with a grin that went from ear to ear. The thought of a mom, dad, and three children living with about 1,400 college students interested me. How would this traditional family survive in such a non-traditional environment? How would the students react to the apartment built in a once-loved student social lounge, decked out with beautiful, university-purchased furniture? How would the faculty family and students blend together in this new living-learning environment? What benefits would the faculty and students receive?

Shortly after the students and FIRs moved in that academic year, it became quite obvious that small children lived in the building. Chalk drawings decorated the sidewalks with colorful suns and rainbows. Children's toys, tricycles, and pedal cars were scattered around the lawn. In addition to the toys, a miniature Superman occasionally made an appearance in the first floor lobby, streaking around columns, couches, and pool tables to save the world. The FIR's inside-door, the door that opened from their apartment into a new student lounge adjacent to the main building entries, was often open. With the FIR apartment door open, sounds of children's piano practice and

the smell of baking cookies greeted undergraduate students. I had lived and worked in these residence halls for more than five years. Not only was the culture of the institution changing, the environment of the residences halls was changing as well.

I recall the culture of the residence halls changing just as vividly today as when I experienced it years ago. One event in residence life I recall with great clarity occurred on an autumn afternoon shortly after the FIRs moved into the residence halls. As I walked through the elevator lobby for a daily building check, students were coming and going as usual. A group of voices sounded above the daily noise. I could not tell exactly where the students were located, around a corner or in a lounge, but "colorful metaphors" not suitable for public conversation sprang from their mouths and echoed through the lobby. As the group continued to talk about an event with extreme animation, another student voice in the crowd rose above the conversation and said, "Hey! Watch your mouths! Little kids live here!" The colorful conversation immediately ceased. It brought a smile to my face. At that point, I knew the FIR family influenced their surroundings, even though I could not articulate how. My FIR experience led to my interest in this research study.

In the next section, the problem statement and significance of the study are discussed. Ensuing the problem statement and significance is a brief summary of the historical context of student-faculty interaction, the purpose of the study, and the questions guiding this study.

Statement and Significance of the Problem

Astin (1993) defined student-faculty interaction as contact between students and faculty members during situations or events that are not necessarily classroom-related. For example, a student visiting a professor's home, working on a research project with a faculty member, assisting in teaching a class, and spending time with faculty members are considered student-faculty interaction.

Often when student-faculty interaction is discussed, the benefit of the interaction appears student-centered. However, student-faculty interaction benefits both faculty and students. For example, Vito (2007) posits that faculty participation in a Faculty Fellows program, a program in which student-faculty interaction outside of the program is arranged, correlates with higher levels of satisfaction, engagement, and loyalty from the faculty members to the institution. Moreover, faculty members are sometimes paid for student-faculty programs such as their participation with Faculty Fellows and FIR programs, although, the money does not retain faculty in the programs.

In Vito's (2007) study, faculty members appreciated the financial incentive by the institution, but it was not significant considering the amount of their time invested in the program. Instead, the money represents to the faculty the value of student-faculty interaction as recognized by the institution. In short, the money signifies the institution's appreciation of the faculty members' involvement with students. Through this involvement, faculty members report a greater understanding of the students as people corresponding with higher levels of faculty satisfaction, engagement of the faculty, and loyalty from the faculty with the institution. Loyal faculty members can be compared to loyal business employees who, in a loyalty-based system, provide outstanding services to

their customers, creating loyal customers and lower customer and employee attrition rates to comparable services (Reichheld, 1996). In addition, loyal faculty members likely invest in their students, creating positive experiences for the students and related student benefits.

Student benefits of student-faculty interaction are well documented (Astin, 1993; Chickering & Reisser, 1994; Gaff, 1973; Kuh, 1996; Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, Whitt, & Associates, 2005; Lundberg & Schreiner, 2004; Pascarella, 1980; Pascarella, 1985; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Sax, Bryant, & Harper, 2005; Vito, 2007). Student benefits of student-faculty interaction, for example, are positively correlated with the overall college experience, grade point average (GPA), degree attainment, graduation with honors, and enrollment in graduate or professional school (Astin, 1993) in addition to scholarly self-confidence, leadership ability, degree aspirations, and retention (Sax, Bryant, & Harper, 2005). Student-faculty interaction may occur in many different contexts.

Student-faculty interaction is not limited to the classroom and can be viewed from different perspectives based on the nature of the interaction. For example, student-faculty interaction may be strictly classroom-based, it may be based on involvement through a student organization, it may be based on place of residence, or it may be based on another activity involving students and faculty members. Institutions, based on researchers' findings such as Astin (1993); Sax et al. (2005); and Vito (2007), are discovering innovative ways to initiate student-faculty interaction.

Some specific student-faculty interaction programs in residence halls, such as learning communities, have been well documented (Kuh, Douglas, Lund, & Ramin-

Gyurnek, 1994; Meiklejohn, 1932; Matthews, Smith, MacGregor, & Gabelnick, 1997; Pasque & Murphy, 2005; Pike, 1999; Pike, Schroeder, & Berry, 1997; Schoem, 2004; Washington Center, 2007; Zhao & Kuh, 2004; Zheng, Saunders, Shelley, & Whalen, 2002). Yet, the importance of FIR programs on student and faculty experiences has not been well documented.

Although FIR programs had not been fully studied, the FIR program at the University of Oklahoma was established in order to promote and expand student-faculty interaction for university community development (D. F. Schrage, personal communication, October 27, 2008). As I previously mentioned, I had been told that President David L. Boren desired a residential culture, similar to that found at Oxford, Harvard, and Yale where students and faculty engage and learn together in a communal space, be provided through the residence halls. As a graduate of both Yale University and Oxford University, President Boren experienced similar student-faculty programs and believes in their value.

Further, when President Boren departs from the university, a new president may not necessarily see the inherent value of the FIR program. A new president could jeopardize the strength of the FIR program by redistributing university resources to other areas. For eventualities such as this, assessment of current FIR programs and research regarding FIR programs is critical to the institution's future planning.

First, assessment is important in regard to the future of the current program in that assessment provides information in relationship to the institution's goals with a particular program. In contrast, this study is research-based focusing on the creation and documentation of new knowledge in relationship to the University of Oklahoma's FIR

program (McGillin, 2003). The knowledge derived from this work may influence future research, assessment efforts, and the development of new programming at the University of Oklahoma as well as other institutions. Further, studies such as this may generate information necessary to implement additional research or refine operation of current FIR programs.

Depending upon findings from FIR considerations such as this, institutions may choose to discontinue their FIR programs, enhance their FIR programs, or develop alternative programming with the intentions of utilizing the newly generated information. Institutions have had little information to verify the value of FIR programs to higher education.

Databases were searched for FIR information including the Education Resources Information Center, Dissertation Abstracts, Educational Administration Abstracts, JSTOR, the *Journal of College & University Student Housing*, the *NASPA Journal*, and the *Journal of College Student Development.* I utilized keywords such as *faculty in residence* and *student and faculty interaction*. Few results regarding FIR programs such as the one explored in this study were discovered. For example, articles often appeared related to this study as the term faculty in residence is commonly used as an employment designation for special faculty appointments within an academic department for a particular term, typically for research presentations or teaching in specific regard to the position.

As an example, in a presentation at the Mid-Atlantic Association of College and University Housing Officers annual conference, Robert J. Lackie (2001) cited two sources for his presentation that were not related to FIR programming, yet, may be

perceived in that manner. The first, *Live-in Faculty: A Modest Proposal for Higher Education* by Donald E. Miller in *Futurist* magazine published in 1983, is an article concerned about empty residence hall rooms and the financial impact of the low occupancy on the institutions. The article calls for universities to convert residence hall rooms into faculty rentals in order to provide income for the university and housing for faculty members, not necessarily as a bridge between faculty members and students beyond the classroom. The second article, *Reflections on Faculty in Residence*, by Donna Reiss, published by the Virginia Community College System in *Inquiry* in 1997, involves Reiss's account of being a Faculty in Residence for Instructional Technology, an appointment that enabled her to study the instructional benefits of computers. The article is considered to be about a FIR program based on the title, however, that is not the case. Researchers have offered minimal attention to FIR programs in their studies.

In addition, vagueness surrounds the concept of student success. For example, Yazedjian, Toews, Sevin, and Purswell (2008) posit that student success is narrowly defined. Yet, Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, Whitt, and associates (2005) provide a broad definition of student success by students benefiting in college in desired ways, finding satisfaction with college, and graduating. Clarity is not found in definitions of student success yet it is a commonly discussed topic.

By examining FIR programs using an exploratory, qualitative approach, such as phenomenology, researchers and educators may better understand the experiences of both faculty members and students in the FIR program as well as how these participants perceive student success. Further, the findings may offer a deeper and broader understanding of FIR program contributions to the university community, that is, student-

faculty interaction and the potential influence on the campus environment. Through these understandings, researchers may also better isolate variables to contribute to future quantitative research. With information garnered from research studies such as this, institutions may better assess investments in their programs and funding priorities as well as consider the influences of FIR programs on their overall campus environment.

Significance of the Study

In the history of American higher education, student-faculty interaction in campus living settings has varied from extreme student-faculty involvement, for example, beginning classes before daybreak and ending near sunset in colonial times (Brubacher & Rudy, 1999; Lucas, 1994; Rudolph, 1990) to professors withdrawing from students and focusing on their own research studies post-1850 (Brubacher & Rudy, 1999) to recognition in the 1930s that the collegiate way (Rudolph, 1990) was lost and measures taken to re-establish it through residential colleges (O'Hara, 2007; Seymour, 1933). The role of student-faculty interaction has ebbed with collegiate tides of context and the willingness, or unwillingness, of faculty members to be involved with students in their education beyond the specific studies of the faculty members as enrollment in North American colleges increased.

Enrollment has increased dramatically since the first American universities, Harvard and William and Mary, were established in the 1600s (Lucas, 1994; Brubacher & Rudy, 1999). As institutional sizes have increased, methods to decrease the perceived institutional size have been implemented. Student-faculty programming is one method institutions have employed to reduce the perception of size (Kuh et al., 1991) and develop relationships between students and faculty members. Cornell University (2007), for

example, has implemented several different types of faculty programming within the residence halls, including Faculty In Residence, Faculty Fellows, and Dining Fellows; programs designed for student-faculty interaction through faculty members living in residence halls, faculty members adopted to participate in regular programming within the residence halls, and faculty members volunteering to eat with students, respectively. "Goals for the program(s) include the exchange of ideas, intellectual development, career exploration, fellowship, personal connections, and shared experiences" (Cornell University, para. 3, 2007).

Cornell is not alone in the development of FIR programs. I conducted a search for contemporary student-faculty interaction programs in residence halls on over 25 higher education web sites and found that most FIR programs presented similar programming goals [see Appendix A]. A FIR at Boston University, for example, joined the program "to help the University build bridges between professors and students" (Boston University, para 4, 2007). For New York University, the Fellow in Residence program, another designation for faculty in residence, was developed to "integrate students' academic experiences with their residential lives" (New York University, para 1, 2007).

While there is an understanding that student-faculty interaction positively correlates with outcomes such as institutional satisfaction, GPA, scholarly self-confidence, and degree aspirations (Astin, 1993; Sax, Bryant, & Harper, 2005), it is not yet understood what influence FIR programs specifically have on students' experiences within the university. Yet, institutions spend thousands of dollars and countless hours on FIR programs annually. Understanding student-FIR interaction is valuable in order to

add to the existing and limited literature, to possibly establish a new line of thinking, and to study a program that has not been studied before (Creswell, 1998). In addition, it is costly not to complete.

Specifically, without this phenomenological research study, future FIR programs may not be supported financially or through space allocation because of a lack of information concerning the program and its value to student and faculty experiences. More specifically financially, based on my calculations, the FIR program costs approximately $105,864 annually as outlined in Table I.

Table 1.

Estimated Annual Financial Costs of the FIR Program.

Item	Quantity	Cost Per	Annual Cost
Monthly Stipend	6 FIRs 10 months	$300/month	$18,000
Parking Permits	6 FIRs 2/FIR	$222/year	$2,664
Programming Budget	6 FIRs	$5,000/FIR	$30,000
Cable TV, Phone, Internet	6 FIRs 12 months	$150/month*	$10,800
Utilities – Electric, Water, Trash	6 FIRs 12 months	$150/month**	$10,800
Gym Membership	6 FIRs 2/FIR	$240/year	$2,880
Meal Plan	6 FIRs 2 adults/FIR 10 meals/week/adult 32 weeks annually	$8/meal***	$30,720
TOTAL		year	$105,864

*Items provided by institution. Cost is based on similar, local service.
**Utilities based on my household of similar FIR apartment size.
***Meal cost based on combination of breakfast, lunch, and dinner prices in campus cafeteria.

An annual cost of $105,864 may not seem significant in the annual operating budgets of universities. However, in this world of ever-increasing funding needs, this

could fund a faculty member's salary and benefits for a year or it could fund approximately six graduate students for a year. Both investments could result in significant scholar recruitment for the institution. Also, a graduate student investment such as this often relates back to the undergraduate experience as many graduate students instruct undergraduate classes. In addition, an investment such as this would be a direct investment into those graduate students' campus experiences and professional development.

By examining FIR programs using an exploratory, qualitative approach, such as phenomenology, researchers and educators may better understand the experiences of both faculty members and students in the FIR program as well as how these participants perceive student success. Further, the findings may offer a deeper and broader understanding of FIR program contributions to the university community, that is, student-faculty interaction and the potential influence on the campus environment. Through these understandings, researchers may also better isolate variables to contribute to future quantitative research. With information garnered from research studies such as this, institutions may better assess investments in their programs and funding priorities as well as consider the influences of FIR programs on their overall campus environment.

Since the founding of institutions of higher learning, faculty members have interacted with students in various contexts with ever-changing roles. Faculty members' capacities in higher learning since the first days of formal education to today have included lecturer, disciplinarian, academic adviser, coach, and researcher (Brubacher & Rudy, 1999). In this chapter, I have outlined an early perspective of faculty roles in the FIR program, the statement and significance of the problem, and the significance of the

study. To fully understand the FIR program and faculty members' roles in education today, the history of student-faculty interactions in higher education must be reviewed. The following section is a brief history of student-faculty interactions from the beginning of formal lectures to faculty programming in today's universities. Subsequently, the purpose of this study will be explored in greater depth.

A Historical Observation of Student-Faculty Interaction

Brubacher and Rudy (1999) state that student life in America is often considered in two distinct periods, before and after approximately 1850. During the first period, morals, religion, literary societies, and student rebellions were dominant characteristics of student life. During the second period, intercollegiate athletics and Greek-organizations provided new outlets for student energies. Scientific advancement, the withdrawal of faculty into their studies, and the students' desire to study practical applications marked the second period (Brubacher & Rudy, 1999). These distinctions are important as the historical context unfolds for they provide insight into the common student living experiences of the time. In this section, a brief temporal analysis of student-faculty interactions is explored.

Sophists of classical Greece were the first full-time instructors who accepted money for education (Lucas, 1994). Courses were designed by the sophists to teach practical skills in oratory and rhetorical persuasion, as well as disciplines like history, music, and mathematics. Sophists educated small groups of students, typically teaching without formal accommodations. Classrooms and residence halls were nearly non-existent. Classes often met in markets and temples. Since these were not permanent accommodations, classes were easily moved as needed (Lucas, 1994). One sophist,

Isocrates, believed students learned better in schools and, for this reason, built his own school with living accommodations (Marrou, 1982). Schools and living arrangements would eventually develop for more students. By the twelfth century, many formalities of higher learning were established, from academies with physical structures to recruiters meeting students in the streets (Lucas, 1994).

The Parisian riots of 1229 caused scholars to flee Paris and move to Oxford. Pressure for student housing mounted as unruly students needed a supervised place to live to reduce and, hopefully, eliminate student debauchery. Drinking and disrespect for the community and other students often resulted in poor relations between the students and the towns. In approximately 1250, Oxford realized the need and provided housing for senior students lacking accommodations. Institutions and students recognized the benefits student housing offered from sharing rooms and rent to supervision, resulting in fewer disciplinary issues. Institutions began to use dormitories for instruction. The convenience of dormitories for classes evolved into the formation of residential colleges within institutions. Oxford and Cambridge were two of the first institutions to establish residential colleges, a supervised living and learning system (Lucas, 1994). Residential colleges like Oxford and Cambridge were highly respected and replicas were sought in North America during colonial times (Lucas, 1994; Rudolph, 1990).

As higher education was established in North America, the residential college concept of Oxford and Cambridge was incorporated. The "collegiate way" was desired. The collegiate way is,

> the notion that a curriculum, a library, a faculty, and students are not enough to make a college. It is an adherence to the residential scheme of things. It is respectful of quiet rural settings, dependent on dormitories, committed to dining halls, permeated by paternalism. (Rudolph, 1990, p. 87)

With the development of the colonial colleges, the country's founders sought the collegiate way.

Harvard, the oldest institution in the United States, was established in 1636 by vote of the Great and General Court of the Massachusetts Bay Colony (Harvard, 2007). Harvard was founded to develop future leaders as "…the state would need competent rulers, the church would require a learned clergy, and society itself would need the adornment of cultured men" (Rudolph, 1990, p. 6). William & Mary, founded in 1693, was also intended to supply the colony with public servants. North America continued to expand its higher education system on similar premises. By 1770, North America had expanded its higher education system to include Yale, New Jersey, King's, Rhode Island, Queen's, and Dartmouth (Rudolph, 1990).

Early American colonial colleges attempted to be residential colleges, modeled after Oxford and Cambridge. Residential colleges were the center of English education, "designed to bring the faculty and students together in a common life which was both intellectual and moral" (Brubacher & Rudy, 1999, p. 41). Colonists attempted to duplicate the educational methods they knew. However, American circumstances, such as poverty, the construction costs of quadrangles, and colleges not clustered around a common university center, prohibited exact replication of English residential colleges in most colonies (Brubacher & Rudy, 1999). Some collegiate acquaintances, administration, and graduates argued that dormitories were not appropriate for student living due to vices such as drinking and swearing. Others argued that constructing quadrangles was too expensive. The funding used to build quadrangles could open more institutions of higher learning for more people. Yet, the political arena and aristocrats

strove to govern institutions of higher learning and restrict entry to college to preserve the uniqueness of education. Harvard and Yale, as private institutions without the degree of public control as public institutions, formed residential colleges similar to those of Oxford and Cambridge (Brubacher & Rudy, 1999; Lucas, 1994).

During the early North American colleges' years, most college administrations wanted to control every minute of their students' lives and constructed dormitories as a means to student control (Lucas, 1994). Parents also believed that with student control came manners and morals they had difficulty instilling in their adolescent sons. Further, receiving an education was becoming more and more perceived as a means to life success. Society was moving away from owning land and passing it to sons as a way of life to a "heterogeneous, mobile, and secular society" (Vine, 1997, p. 117). Through education, elite males received an education and social connections to allow them to prosper. Graduation ceremonies were a means of introducing students into the community, a way for students to gain employment, and a method for the institution to gain recognition for its role in "uniting culture" (Vine, 1997, p. 121) and public service. Graduation was a celebration for obtaining a degree that was challenging to earn.

Graduation was, however, difficult to obtain with the grueling schedules the institutions provided. Students with strict schedules were less likely to encounter discipline issues and more likely to adhere to the moral education. The students' schedules were rigorous. For instance, at Dartmouth, school days often began before dawn with breakfast delayed until after the first round of classes. Further, classes typically lasted into the early evening with study halls immediately following. For example, Oglethorpe University students' classes ended at 5:00 p.m., but that did not

signal the end of the day. The students faced hours of studying and the dinner meal, if they chose to partake in the meal. Students at these early American institutions also often complained about the food and sometimes accused the providers of offering beef that was gained through the untimely death of the animal or feces in the hasty pudding. With nearly every hour of the day consumed with classes, unsuitable food, and homework which often required great amounts of memorization, student life was not easy (Lucas, 1994).

Students were not the only ones who experienced difficulty while at school. Faculty living in the dormitories with students faced many challenges including student discipline and rebellion. As live-in faculty, the faculty served many roles in their positions from housing coordinators to instructors to disciplinarians. In addition, the faculty members were often targets of student uprisings due to the living conditions, meals, and general dissent toward the institution. As time progressed, faculty positions became overwhelming with the many activities and various responsibilities that spanned beyond academics including working with athletics, quelling riots, and Greek life (Brubacher & Rudy, 1999; Lucas, 1994).

Football, for example, quickly grew from a student-organized game to a public spectacle, filling hotels in New York City in 1883 for the annual game between Yale and Princeton. Running parallel to the phenomenon of football and the growth of other student activities was a change in faculty attitude and their role outside of the classroom.

> Preoccupied with their research and writing, professors balked at taking class attendance, at sharing responsibility for monitoring student conduct outside the classroom, or otherwise helping to sustain the old paternalistic style of student supervision. In a very real sense, the attitude of turn-of-the-century professors toward students was more consistent with that of German colleagues and, more generally, with longstanding European traditions of indifference to students'

> discipline or welfare outside the prescribed limits of the academic sphere. By the same token, the primary loyalty of a professor was more likely to be to a discipline and to a set of professional standards than to an institution. (Lucas, 1994, p. 180)

Also running parallel to the increasing popularity of football and the decline of faculty interest in students was the increasing number of institutions and students due to the Morrill Acts of 1862 and 1890 that provided a means of education for the industrial classes. Further, the Land Grant College Act of 1862 promoted the development of institutions in each state. The land-grant institutions began producing respectable graduates at the turn of the century. As the collegiate-student population increased and faculty withdrew from student-faculty activities beyond the classroom, administrators were appointed to oversee the aspects of student life that were not perceived as directly related to academics. By the 1930s and 1940s, academic advisers had taken over many of the complexities of student life outside of the classroom (Lucas, 1994). Slowly, a decline in student-faculty interaction took place. No longer were faculty members connecting with students through residence halls, academic advising, and student life beyond the classroom (Lucas, 1994).

Harvard and Yale were the first to recognize that the collegiate way was being lost in the United States. Larger student bodies meant larger classes and, therefore, less student time with faculty (O'Hara, 2007; Seymour, 1933). In the 1930s, Harvard and Yale re-established residential colleges because of the educational opportunities associated with students living and learning with faculty in an environment smaller than the college as a whole (O'Hara, 2007; Seymour, 1933). At Yale, a donating alumnus provided funds for residential colleges that had been planned by a faculty committee. Each college included a specific degree program, residence hall, and dining hall. Faculty

members recognized their influence over students beyond the classroom from conversation at the dinner table to classroom discussions spilling into late-night conversations and role modeling (O'Hara, 2007; Seymour, 1933).

Current day FIR programs are similar to the collegiate way concept developed in early residential colleges. These programs increase the potential for student-faculty interaction through residential proximity to students and common goals established within the residential community such as community service and educational programming. Programs such as these may be accomplished without FIR programs or residence halls. However, the depth and breadth of the programming may be lost. More specifically, with FIR programming and residence halls, students and faculty may further develop relationships outside of the classroom. FIR programming is a unique opportunity for student-faculty involvement that has received little attention from researchers. In the next sections, the purpose of the study and guiding questions for the current research study are discussed.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this phenomenological, hermeneutic qualitative study is to explore the lived experiences of both students and faculty participants in the FIR program at the University of Oklahoma and their perceptions of student success in order to better understand the FIR programs on campus communities. The following orienting research questions are used to guide this study:

1. What are the experiences of students and FIRs with the FIR program?
2. What meaning do students and FIRs ascribe to their experiences?
3. How do the students and the FIRs perceive student success?

4. In what, if any, ways do students and FIRs relate the FIR program to student success?

Phenomenology is utilized for this study because qualitative studies tend to rely on few cases and many variables (Creswell, 1998; Ragin, 1987), where as quantitative studies tend to work with many cases and few variables. The potential for student-faculty interaction and the means of the interaction are nearly boundless for a study such as this that focuses on the experiences of those involved with the program. Within such a seemingly boundless environment, examining FIR programs using an exploratory, qualitative approach, such as phenomenology, researchers and educators may better understand the experiences of both faculty members and students in the FIR program as well as how these participants perceive student success. Further, the findings may offer a deeper and broader understanding of FIR program contributions to the university community, that is, student-faculty interaction and the potential influence on the campus environment. Through these understandings, researchers may also better isolate variables to potentially contribute to future quantitative research. With information garnered from research studies such as this, institutions may better assess investments in their programs and funding priorities as well as consider the influences of FIR programs on their overall campus environment.

In this chapter, I have outlined a brief overview of my experience and perspective of the FIR program; the statement and significance of the problem; the historical context of student-faculty interaction; the purpose statement and orienting research questions; the significance of the study; and an introduction to the research study. The next chapter presents a thorough review of the literature. Methodologies and methods will be

explored in Chapter III. Chapter IV and V reveal the data and concepts garnered from the participant interviews including brief analyses with specific attention to the emergent themes of Transitions, Relationships, University Immersion, Teaching Moments, Mentorship, and Activities. In Chapter VI, a discussion of the conclusions, implications, and recommendations ensues.

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Faculty in residence (FIR) programming is distinguished from most other collegiate student-faculty interaction programs on the research campus through its physical location in university housing where faculty and their families live in apartments in undergraduate residence halls and eat with students in the dining halls. FIR programs were created in order to increase student-faculty interaction (Cornell University, 2007, para 1). Currently, it is known that student-faculty interaction positively correlates with student outcomes such as institutional satisfaction, GPA, scholarly self-confidence, degree aspirations and graduation (Astin, 1993; Sax, Bryant, & Harper, 2005). Yet, there are no research studies that focus on the life experiences of FIR or student interactions with FIR and how these life experiences and interactions may relate to student success, which leaves a gap in the literature that this study seeks to address.

The purpose of this phenomenological, hermeneutic qualitative study is to explore the lived experiences of both students and faculty participants in the FIR program at the University of Oklahoma and their perceptions of student success in order to better understand the FIR programs on campus communities. The following orienting research questions are used to guide this study:

1. What are the experiences of students and FIRs with the FIR program?
2. What meaning do students and FIRs ascribe to their experiences?
3. How do the students and the FIRs perceive student success?
4. In what, if any, ways do students and FIRs relate the FIR program to student success?

For the purpose of the literature review and to guide this study, successful students are identified as "…those who persist, benefit in desired ways from their college experiences, are satisfied with college, and graduate" (Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, & Whitt, 2005, p. 8). It is important to note that student success is not a term that may be defined and easily transferred from one institution to another (Kramer, 2007). For this reason, student success is defined for this study first by the literature, and later by the participants themselves.

Some researchers believe that a literature review prior to conducting a study may hinder research by tainting the researcher's thoughts and processes during data collection and analysis (Patton, 2002; Jones et al., 2006). I believe the literature review creates a base on which to build my study (Glesne, 1999). Literature reviews conducted prior to the research inform the researcher about other relevant studies, help to focus the study, and inform the research design and interview questions (Glesne, 1999).

As Hart (1998) suggests, I developed questions to guide my literature search through related topics. My first question related to the structure of knowledge (Hart, 1998) on FIR programs and student success and other studies conducted with this specificity. In other words, I sought to understand how studies related to my research study uniquely intertwined with each other to better illuminate FIR and student success as it relates to student-FIR interaction. Using relevant key words, phrases, and variations of the key words and phrases, I searched for studies and texts in databases including the Education Resources Information Center; Dissertation Abstracts; Educational Administration Abstracts; JSTOR; the *Journal of College & University Student Housing*;

the *NASPA Journal*; and the *Journal of College Student Development*. Few results regarding FIR programs such as the one explored in this study were found.

In a separate but similar search, I sought information regarding student success such as graduation, student departure, and persistence; student development; student-faculty interaction; faculty programming in residence halls such as residential colleges and faculty fellow programs; and environment theories that address the interaction which takes place in university housing. These subjects are foundational topics to FIR programming when considered in conjunction with each other. That is, student-faculty interaction of every nature may be important when considering student-FIR interaction in addition to knowledge derived from similar programs such as faculty fellows programming. In addition, environmental theories are important as they guide this study through an understanding of the behavior observed through the FIR apartments.

As I searched the literature, the themes relating to the orienting research question continually emerged and a saturation point (Jones, Torres, & Arminio, 2006) was reached. In addition, as themes emerged from the study's data, I reviewed the relevant literature and assessed its position within this chapter. As a result, the review of the literature consists of the themes and sub-themes outlined in Table 1 below. In the following sections, each of these areas is discussed.

Table 2.

Themes and Sub-themes of the Literature Review.

Theme	Sub-themes
Student-faculty interaction	Benefits of student-faculty interaction
	Residential student-faculty programming
Student development	Psychosocial theories
	Cognitive-structural theories
	Typology theories
	Person-environment theories
Student success	Graduation rates
	Persistence
	Student Departure

Student-Faculty Interaction

Due to the minimal literature directly related to FIR, the broader topic of student-faculty interaction expands this review of relevant literature. Student-faculty interaction dates to the beginning of educational institutions as described in Chapter I. To illuminate student-faculty interaction in relationship to this study, I asked questions to orient my exploration of the literature including: How is student-faculty interaction defined? What is known about the influences of student-faculty interaction outside of the classroom? And, since this study focuses on a program within the collegiate living environment, what

residential programs exist that promote student-faculty interaction, including FIR? Through these exploratory questions, pertinent literature was identified. This section describes aspects of student-faculty interaction including its definition to types of student-faculty interaction and the benefits of the interaction to both faculty and students.

Astin (1993) defined student-faculty interaction as contacts during situations or events. More specifically, student-faculty interaction may be viewed from many different perspectives, from interaction in the classroom to advisement to seminars presented within the faculty member's field. Gaff (1973) found that the more influential college teachers were more likely than their colleagues to try to make their classes interesting, to talk to students about contemporary issues, and to interact with students outside of the classroom. In fact, "the single biggest difference between influential faculty and their colleagues is the extent to which they interact with students outside the classroom" (Gaff, 1973, p. 609). Through interaction, relationships between faculty and students are developed and serve as important means of effective education (Wilson, Woods, & Gaff, 1974).

More specifically, Wilson et al. (1974) defines six roles in which faculty influence students including educational adviser, career adviser, counselor, instructor, campus citizen, and friend. Some faculty in this study discouraged interaction outside of the classroom with students by subtle cues that implied learning was a function of formal classroom assignments, learning facts, and comprehension of other areas within the subject. However, students perceived faculty who integrated their course content into other fields of study, current topics, and history as more open for discussion. The same holds for faculty who tended to administer essay questions; essay questions, which relate

to what one has learned, have the ability to be open-ended and, therefore, open for discussion. In out of the classroom contacts, the roles of friend, career adviser, campus citizen, and counselor all appeared to be influenced by the perception of faculty accessibility (Wilson et al., 1974). Wilson et al.'s study may prove helpful with the current study if the findings are applied. For example, through student-faculty interaction facilitated by the FIR program, students may be better able to participate in academic discussions, develop their speaking abilities, and perhaps translate those skills to exams, such as with essays discussed above. Further, FIR program participation by students may ease informal student-faculty interaction as Pascarella (1980) studied.

In a related study, Pascarella (1980) identified factors that influence informal student-faculty contact. First, each new student holds different experiences and possesses qualities unique to that individual. The extent of student-faculty contact and some collegiate outcomes are at least a factor of the incoming characteristics of the individual. That is, if incoming students, for example, had good student-teacher relations in high school, they may be more willing to engage with faculty members in college on account of their past, positive experiences. However, predicting which new student variables most influence student-faculty informal interaction is, at the very least, difficult. Pascarella hypothesizes that what happens to a student after arrival on campus is more important in relation to the extent and quality of student-faculty contact. "Faculty culture, classroom experiences, peer-culture involvement, and institutional size and organization" (p. 561), also play a major role in the student-faculty interaction experience.

Faculty culture and classroom experiences are influenced by faculty characteristics, which may be based on attitudinal and social-psychological factors (Pascarella, 1980; Wilson et al., 1974). Social-psychological factors include individual characteristics and interpersonal styles that may influence faculty members' abilities, desires, and willingness to interact with students (Wilson et al., 1974). In addition, Wilson et al. (1974) found that faculty who are more involved with students than their colleagues

> seem also less likely to favor the status quo in higher education. They not only are more likely to report favoring changes within their institutions, but to favor changes in a direction compatible with their own teaching behaviors, style of interaction, and attitudes toward students. … a majority of these faculty say they would like to "increase"… the amount of student-faculty interaction, the number of interdisciplinary courses directed at social problems, and the extent to which students help determine the content of classes. (p. 90)

The culture that each faculty member creates as well as the culture created collectively by an institution's faculty may influence the overall student perception of accessibility to faculty.

As Pascarella (1980) points out, it is highly likely that a student's peer culture experience influences student-faculty interaction. Peers either condone or reject behavior. With students typically seeking peer acceptance, peer influences are important to take into account in the student-faculty relationship (Pascarella, 1980). Considering Pascarella's study, the potential is present for peer relationships to negatively or positively influence student-faculty interaction. More specifically, students may or may not condone attending FIR activities or interacting with FIRs. Such behavior could be beneficial or detrimental to the FIR program and student-faculty interaction in the residence halls.

Institutional size and organization may also impact student-faculty interaction (Pascarella, 1980) due to redundancy. Redundancy is where "… the number of persons for a given setting exceeds the opportunities for active participation in satisfying experiences…. It is ten players per tennis court, a thousand golfers per golf course, ten thousand visitors per city park" (as cited in Chickering & Reisser, 1994, p. 268). Chickering and Reisser (1994), using the definition of redundancy from Gump (1964), hypothesize that "… as redundancy increases, the development of competence, mature interpersonal relationships, identity, and integrity decreases" (Chickering & Reisser, 1994, p. 268). Through redundancy, conduct becomes more standardized, experience is limited, testing one's self is restricted, and dealing with the consequences of one's actions is easier because the student may not have to face the same people as often as in a smaller institutional environment (Chickering & Reisser, 1994).

Pascarella's (1985) study of students' affective development also concluded that institutions with large enrollment and high faculty to student ratios negatively influence social integration with both faculty and peers. In large institutions, students have a greater likelihood of being anonymous and isolated. As institution size decreases, students have a "more psychologically manageable setting, in which the opportunities for social integration are enhanced" (Pascarella, 1985, p. 657). Further, "[s]tudents attending the larger colleges and universities often have difficulty becoming full participants in college life because they have only limited opportunities to identify with other students" (Astin, 1985, p. 161). Residential colleges, such as those of Oxford, Harvard, and Cornell, in which faculty are a key component of student community (Brubacher & Rudy, 1999; Lucas, 1999; Rudolph, 1990), are one effort institutions have made to make

the large university seem smaller and increase student-faculty interaction (O'Hara, 2007; Kuh et al., 2005).

To further the importance of student-faculty interaction, Chickering (1969) and Chickering and Reisser (1994) presupposed that faculty members were key components to student development. "When student-faculty interaction is frequent and friendly and when it occurs in diverse situations calling for varied roles and relationships, development of intellectual competence, sense of competence, autonomy and interdependence, purpose, and integrity are encouraged" (Chickering & Reisser, 1994, p. 269). Once students redefine relationships with their parents while moving through autonomy toward interdependence, they become more open to support from other adults and, therefore, influenced by other adults (Chickering & Reisser, 1994).

Student development is not the sole benefit to students in student-faculty interaction. The following section is dedicated to the benefits of student-faculty interaction for both students and faculty members.

Benefits of Student-Faculty Interaction

Astin (1993) summarized faculty interaction with students as contacts during situations or events such as being a guest at a professor's home, working on a research project with a faculty member, assisting in teaching a class, and spending time outside of class with faculty members. Student-faculty interaction most often occurs in the classroom, during the faculty member's office hours, or during other structured, class-related activities unless other methods, such as FIR programs, have been implemented to promote student-faculty interaction beyond the classroom. Through student-faculty interaction, both students and faculty members receive positive benefits.

Benefits to Students

For students, student-faculty interaction has positive correlations with characteristics such as overall college experience, college GPA, degree attainment, graduating with honors, and enrollment in graduate or professional school (Astin, 1993). Students who interacted with faculty had positive correlations with self-reported intellectual and personal growth as well as personality and attitudinal outcomes including intellectual self-esteem, social activism, leadership, artistic inclination, commitment to promoting racial understanding, participation in environmental programs, and contributions to science (Astin, 1993). Students who frequently interact with faculty are more likely to express satisfaction with friendships, course variety, the institution's intellectual environment and administration than other students (Astin, 1984). One of the strongest predictors of student learning as a composite variable of twenty-five items including understanding art, good health habits, developing own values and ethics, understanding self, analyzing quantitative problems, etc. is the relationship with faculty (Lundberg & Schreiner, 2004). More specifically, learning is not constituted by one single variable of ability or practice, but by a multitude of indicators that together provide a more comprehensive perception of the learners.

Astin (1984) concludes that finding ways to encourage student-faculty involvement could be highly productive. In a similar study, Sax, Bryant, and Harper (2005) found that students' interactions with faculty positively impact scholarly self-confidence, leadership ability, degree aspirations, and retention. Sax et al. (2005) caution, however, that faculty should be aware of their actions, verbal and non-verbal, when working with students and how their actions, intentional and unintentional,

influence students' perceptions of their place in the world. Communication is critical in interactions between faculty and students.

Jaasma and Koper (2001) qualitatively reduced six categories of student-faculty interaction: course-related, self-disclosure, small talk, advice, intellectual ideas, and requests. In an earlier study, Jaasma and Koper (1999) studied out-of-classroom communication and instructor immediacy, trust, and conversation control, and motivation. The study indicated that the frequency and content of office visits were different from informal contacts. This is an interesting point of reference as the FIR program may further develop relationships in both contexts. Further, Jaasma and Koper (1999) posited that faculty with characteristics which promote trust, closeness, and equality, are related to student satisfaction with out-of-class communication.

Benefits to Faculty

Few studies report the interaction experiences of faculty in the student-faculty relationship (Wilson et al., 1974). One of the first studies identified for this literature review was that of Kratcoski (1972). Kratcoski studied job satisfaction of faculty members at Catholic colleges. In Kratcoski's study, positive job satisfaction correlated with opportunities for meaningful relationships with students. Wilson et al. (1974) later found that out-of-classroom interaction gave faculty members more enjoyment, a greater sense of accomplishment, and better insights into their students' strengths than their colleagues who did not experience as much interaction with students. A few additional studies have been completed which simply recognize modern methods of advisement, career services, and programs, yet the recent literature remains limited with information regarding faculty benefits of student-faculty interaction.

A reflective example of faculty benefits comes from Terrence Joiner (2004), an African-American pediatrician who teaches the Health Care, Privilege and Community course in the Michigan Community Scholars Program (MCSP), a living-learning community at the University of Michigan. Joiner strives to promote diversity through education and community service and writes, "It is important for me to teach in the MCSP to watch diversity work. I have benefited from diversity as a physician, and others have benefited by knowing me as a doctor and faculty member" (p. 113). In addition, student-faculty interaction is the impetus behind Joiner's dedication to students and MCSP. He recalls the adult relationships he encountered through community service as a college student and the importance of the education he acquired through serving others. Reflecting on his commitment to students, Joiner (2004) shares, "The opportunity to have students for an entire semester, 14 weeks, is a precious opportunity" (p. 117). As a faculty member in the MCSP, Joiner continues benefiting through personal growth and assisting his students in their personal growth.

Most recently, Vito (2007) studied the impact of student-faculty interaction programming from the viewpoint of the faculty and their satisfaction, engagement, and retention. Although faculty members are sometimes paid for student-faculty programs such as their participation with Faculty Fellows, a program in which faculty members are assigned to residential communities, but do not serve in a live-in capacity, and FIR programs, the money is not what retains faculty in the programs. Faculty members reported the added incentive was appreciated, but it was not much considering the amount of time invested in the program. Instead, the money was representative of the value of the student-faculty interaction as recognized by the institution. Faculty members

reported a greater understanding of students as people through student-faculty interaction programming. The interaction corresponded with higher levels of satisfaction, engagement, and loyalty from the faculty with the institution. These studies demonstrate how student-faculty programs are statistically and personally beneficial. Yet, none of these studies focus on FIR programs specifically. This adds to the problem of limited literature on FIR programming. The following residential programs outlined below may influence the quality of student-faculty interaction and provide further background information on FIR programming.

Residential Student-Faculty Programming

One of the most important and pervasive environmental factors is the place of residence. Astin (1993) identified three factors that are positively and directly related to living in a campus residence hall: completion of bachelor's degree, satisfaction with faculty, and willingness to re-enroll at the same institution. In addition to these factors, living on campus is positively related to retention (Astin, 1977; Astin, 1982; Astin, 1993; Chickering, 1974). Residential students may have more time and opportunities to become involved on campus and have a greater chance of identifying with and attaching to the institution, due to not commuting to campus or having other obligations, such as the upkeep of property while living off campus. This section will describe three types of residential programs: learning communities, residential colleges, and faculty in residence.

Learning Communities

Learning communities are characterized "… as groups of students, faculty, and staff who are organized for the purpose of achieving specific learning objectives

(Masterson, 2008, p. 21). Learning communities are developed to restructure students' time, academic credit, and learning experiences so that community is built between students, students and faculty, and faculty and faculty (Washington Center, 2007). The structure encourages students to connect ideas from different disciplines and links the students socially resulting in a community based on academics (Zhao & Kuh, 2004).

Tinto's (1993) theory of student departure supports programs such as learning communities because of the intentional social and academic natures of the programs. Students are less likely to leave an institution if they become connected to the institution through academic and social integration. The quality and quantity of faculty and peer interaction were found to be the most important factors in encouraging students' engagement in their institution (Astin, 1993). Learning communities marry the concept of social integration with peers and academically engaging students in their institution.

According to Tinto (2000) from a study of three institutions' learning community programs, students benefited from learning communities in five ways. First, learning community students developed self-supporting groups more than students in typical classes that extended beyond the classroom. Second, learning community students became more actively involved than other students in classroom learning, even extending the learning after class. From this interaction, a bridge was built that connected academic classes and social conduct. In other words, the classes continued after class on the floors of the residence halls because of the social affiliations created in class. Third, the learning community enhanced the quality of learning because everyone was learning together and the perception by the participants was that everyone's understanding and knowledge was enriched. Fourth, students in learning communities persisted at as much

as a 25% higher rate than other students. The students perceived themselves as learning more as they became socially and academically engaged. Finally, students felt more responsible for not only their learning, but for that of others.

Student engagement in academically-related activities, both in and out of the classroom, influence student learning, personal development, and educational effectiveness (ACPA, 1994; Kuh, 1996). Tinto (2000) describes learning communities in their most basic form as a program that involves linked courses or a curriculum block for a defined set of students. The classes that students schedule are not coincidental as they are typically organized around a theme, the focus of the learning community. Learning communities alter the way students experience classes. The classes are typically collaborative learning experiences of at least two linked courses. To be successful, students must not only learn the material for themselves, but they must participate in the group and assist peers in the learning process. This basic definition and method not only define today's learning communities, but one of the first living-learning communities, the Experimental College.

Experimental College, a learning community within the residence halls at the University of Wisconsin, was developed in the 1920s by Alexander Meiklejohn. The college was established to facilitate students' exploration of values and to encourage student-faculty interaction through faculty collaborating in regards to the coursework, joining learning and community together (Meiklejohn, 1932; Schoem & Pasque, 2004). Meiklejohn (1932) wrote, "the collective intelligence of the faculty shall find expression in a concerted plan of action, which, in his own way, every teacher shall accept and every student follow.… a college is a group of people, all of who are reading the same books"

(p. 40). Reading the same books and enrolling in some of the same classes has recently gained popularity, continuing Meikeljohn's pursuit of cohort classes and student-faculty interaction. One effort to strengthen the undergraduate experience was the implementation of residential learning communities (Pasque & Murphy, 2005).

Living-learning communities, residential learning communities, or residential colleges are included under the umbrella of learning communities. Although each institution may have a different way of implementing its program, living-learning communities are most often associated with clustered courses (Washington Center, 2007). This formation of a seamless learning environment, an environment in which learning in the classroom is complemented by activities outside of the classroom (Kuh, 1996), encourages learning during all hours of the day and night. Learning community implementation may be difficult as successful learning communities require the dedication of numerous campus departments and financial resources (Schoem, 2004).

Schoem (2004) outlines some of the characteristics of successful living-learning communities based on a review of programs that have sustained over time. The characteristics include commitment from the program director; faculty involvement; strong ties between academic and student affairs; key administrators, such as the provost or vice president for student affairs; program quality; and student leadership. Through these characteristics, sustainable programs have been able to adapt to changing university environments.

In a different study, Pike (1999) considered the effects of living-learning communities and traditional residential living arrangements by using the 1990 College Student Experiences Questionnaire (CSEQ). Pike's study supported that students living

in residential learning communities had higher levels of involvement, interaction, integration, and gains than students living in traditional residence halls. In another study, Pike, Schroeder, and Berry (1997) studied data from 2,678 students living in residence halls. In this study, students living in living-learning communities did not experience any greater success in academic achievement and persistence than non-learning community students. More recent studies also indicate participation in a learning community, including a living-learning community, is positively related to academic success and intellectual engagement (Zheng, Saunders, Shelley, & Whalen, 2002; Pasque & Murphy, 2005; Zhao & Kuh, 2004).

Academic-theme residence, such as a living-learning community, is associated with gains in "critical thinking, intellectual development, and aesthetic appreciation" (Kuh, Douglas, Lund, & Ramin-Gyurnek, 1994, p. iv). Living-learning communities positively impact first-semester grade point average; retention; and academic behaviors including more contact with peers, working on group projects, studying more hours, and the perception of a positive learning environment (Stassen, 2003). Positive results were also found for academic achievement and intellectual engagement (Pasque & Murphy, 2005). In the next section, I discuss residential colleges, institutional efforts that take the living-learning community to a deeper level of academic involvement than living-learning communities by incorporating intentional, organizational structure that integrates academic life and social life often including the integration of academic advisers and degree-granting programs.

Residential Colleges

Residential colleges are a form of a living-learning community. Upon comparison of residential college programs and living-learning communities, I have found that residential colleges take the integration of academics and socialization further than most living-learning communities by incorporating more structure. That is, the faculty most often lives within the residence halls and student support, such as academic advising, may be present within the same residence hall. Residential colleges are permanent, faculty-led communities within a larger, degree-granting institution. In some cases, the residential colleges themselves are degree-granting (University of Michigan, 2008). In developing residential colleges, O'Hara (2007) recommends that residential colleges enroll about 400 students from a cross-section of the student body. The students as well as academic administrators, such as a faculty master and dean, live in the residence hall. Many living-learning programs do not have the live-in component of faculty or dean. The faculty master is responsible for reporting to the provost and academic affairs while the dean is responsible for advising and welfare.

O'Hara (2007) advises that the faculty and dean should establish a social rhythm or framework of events that are cyclical such as orientations to campus history, weekly meetings, newsletters, weekly teas, annual social gatherings, and other events that create community. In addition, the community usually adopts traditions, such as a coat of arms and commonplace books, which may be passed on from year to year. These social traditions complement seminars and other academic-based lectures and classes of the residential college or house.

For example, "The Harvard Guide: History, Lore, and More" (2007) website describes the Harvard house system of residential colleges which are overseen by a senior faculty member and/or senior administrator known as the Master, Associate Master, or Co-Master. The House office includes an Allston Burr Senior Tutor. This person is responsible for the academic and personal well-being of each student in the house. Each house includes a live-in and live-out staff, which may include masters, tutors, scholars, professors, and community members. The house members participate in house activities. In short, residential colleges are communities built on common values with programming, academics, and administrative roles to increase involvement between faculty and students. It is important to recognize the integration of live-in faculty in the residential colleges as that live-in component is an important characteristic of FIR programs.

Faculty In Residence (FIR)

FIR programs, based on my review of FIR websites discussed below, are unlike residential colleges in that they typically involve a faculty member and their family living in campus housing without the academic responsibility of a learning community or residential college. That is, they are not required to teach classes in campus housing and student participation is voluntary. However, FIR programs offer support and structure for student-faculty interaction.

FIRs create programs and opportunities for interaction rather than having academic credit reinforce the student-faculty interaction. While these programs are formalized with established apartments in residence halls and programming budgets, they

are informal in that student participation is optional. To date, this voluntary student participation in the FIR program has not been explored in the literature.

Little research exists specifically for FIR programs related to this study. After reviewing the literature, including journals, books, and dissertation abstracts, I found that the best supporting evidence for the programs is outlined in the *Student-Faculty Interaction* and *Learning Communities* sections of this review of the literature. To supplement the small amount of empirical research on FIR programs, I reviewed over 25 FIR programs throughout colleges and universities within the United States. The review provided information on common practices and program goals of FIR programs as seen in Appendix A. As I reviewed the institutions' FIR information, common themes emerged and reached a saturation point (Jones et al., 2006). The themes of the practices and goals of FIR programs include community development, intellectual discussion, career exploration, creative thinking, lifelong learning, and learning in a seamless environment.

Elon University (2007), for example, represents the commonalities of FIR programs in that Elon University's program "encourages and maximizes the quality and quantity of student-faculty interaction on campus and outside of the classroom by having faculty members live in apartments located within the residence halls" (para 1). In addition, the Elon University (2007) FIR program assists in learning outside of the classroom and encourages student interaction with faculty. Students living in the same residence hall have the opportunity to develop friendships and mentoring relationships with faculty members and their families. Faculty members interact with students in an

informal setting, provide informal academic advising, and maintain home/office hours each week in the residence halls.

Columbia University's FIR program (2007) reflects Elon University's FIR program with the addition of resident professors inviting students to their apartments for dinner, providing special programs about interesting topics, presenting opportunities for academic growth and challenges within the residence halls, and helping students establish academic contacts with other institutions in New York City. The same program characteristics of Elon University and Columbia University are evident from Boston University and Oregon State University, as well.

In student-faculty interaction, the student is part of the equation. Understanding the student is paramount in the development and understanding of student-faculty relationships. Exploration of student development theories may illuminate developmental commonalities among students, which may ease an understanding of student-faculty interaction through institutional programs intended to develop these relationships, such as FIR programs.

Student Development

The journey into adulthood is marked by great transformations through personal development in which the person learns to take responsibility for one's life (Baxter Magolda, 2002). Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) summarize student development as passing through different, yet sequential and increasingly complex, levels with changes in development generally being attributed "… to biological and psychological maturation, to individual experiences, to the environment, or to the interaction of individual and environment" (p. 19). Understanding student development theories enables university

administrators to identify and respond to student needs by designing programs, such as faculty in residence (FIR) programming, developing policies, and creating healthy environments to foster positive, personal development (Evans, Forney, & Guido-DiBrito, 1998).

Knefelkamp, Widick, and Parker (1978) identified four categories of student development including psychosocial theories, cognitive-structural theories, typology models, and person-environment interaction models, which overlap to varying degrees (as cited in Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; as cited in Evans et al., 1998). Some researchers, such as Chickering and Reisser (1993), do not view typology theories and person-environment theories as theories for student development as they do not have milestones of development, ways to measure development, or methods to foster development. More specifically, these models do not describe stages for or progression through development. Instead, they reflect upon an individual's current characteristics or environmental situation. For the purpose of this study, I align myself with the position of Knefelkamp et al. (1978), as I believe each category for student development relates to students and their progression through college. However, I provide a brief overview of these theories as they may prove important to FIR programming, particularly due to the placement of FIR apartments in the students' environments.

Student development theories are important to this study as they may explain particular behavior in relationship to the FIRs and the students' experiences with FIR programs. Further, student development theories are a foundation to studies such as this for considering students as whole individuals. That is, student development theories provide information that is not necessarily discovered during data collection and review,

but is a critical lens when considering the data. The major contributors to the field of student development were compiled as their names continually emerged from books and journal articles on developmental theory and a saturation point was reached (Jones et al., 2006). In this section, I briefly describe the four categories of student development including psychosocial theories, cognitive-structural theories, typology models, and person-environment theories.

Psychosocial Theories of Student Development

Erik Erikson (1968) established the groundwork for psychosocial theories (Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Evans et al., 1998; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Erikson's epigenetic principle lays the foundation for psychosocial theory by stating that everything that grows has a trunk from which branches extend. Each limb develops at its own pace, time, and order to form a "functioning whole" (p. 92). This principle "… implies not only sequential, age-related, biological and psychological development but also the view that the individual's environment shapes the particular character and extent of development in important ways" (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005, p. 20). Through this implication, FIRs may influence student development. Erikson (1968) views development through crises, or situations requiring significant decisions, which result in "…progression, regression, or stasis" (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005, p. 20). Erikson's dominant developmental task for traditional college age students is the identity versus identity confusion crisis during which students form their identity in relationship to characteristics such as gender, sexual orientation, and race and ethnicity (Erikson, 1968; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005).

Psychosocial theories of development are generally regarded in two categories, which reflect Erikson's foundational perspective: overall development and identity formation (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Erikson's overall identity development is incorporated in Chickering's Model of Student Development. Based on the review of the literature, I have chosen Chickering's model from which to discuss overall psychosocial development and Astin's involvement model since the FIR program offers opportunities for students' institutional involvement. These models are reflective of the FIR program and foundational models. After describing each of these models, I will briefly discuss identity development as it pertains to student development.

Chickering's Model of Student Development

Arthur Chickering (1969) is one of the most influential psychosocial theorists who conducted research on college student development (Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Chickering first outlined seven vectors of student development in 1969 and chose "vectors" because each student development dimension he observed seemed to have its own magnitude and direction. Later, Chickering partnered with Linda Reisser to review research that had been conducted since his 1969 publication. Upon completion of their review, they reordered and modified the vectors (Chickering & Reisser, 1993).

Chickering and Reisser (1993) view psychosocial development as a series of seven vectors. Development across the vectors takes place at different rates and interacts with the movement of other vectors. While movement tends to be forward, backward movement may occur where the individual returns to familiar circumstances. The vectors serve as a highway for students to find their unique selves as well as toward working and

living with others in society. The seven vectors include: developing competence, managing emotions, moving through autonomy toward interdependence, developing mature interpersonal relationships, establishing identity, developing purpose, and developing integrity.

In the first vector, developing competence, students gain experience and begin mastering skills in order to better comprehend observations and experiences. Chickering and Reisser (1993) identify three types of competence: intellectual, physical and manual, and interpersonal. Intellectual competence includes mastering content, gaining sophistication, building a base of skills in order to better comprehend, analyze, and develop responses to life. "Increasing competence leads to increasing readiness to take risks, to try new things, and to take one's place among peers as someone not perfect, but respectable as a work in progress" (Chickering & Reisser, 1993, p. 82). With the development of competence as a base, the student becomes better adept to managing emotions.

The second vector, managing emotions, develops when students exercise appropriate action for irritating challenges before they become explosive. Students learn to deal with their fears before the fears become paralyzing and they learn to heal emotional wounds before they impact other relationships. In this vector, students begin to identify their feelings and accept them as "normal reactions to life experiences" (Chickering & Reisser, 1993, p. 97). Consider the range of emotions a student may experience when a relationship ceases due to improprieties from the significant other. The student may encounter feelings of guilt, anger, sadness, and other deep emotions.

This experience may result in physical altercations. During the second vector, the student recognizes the feelings and channels them appropriately.

Moving through autonomy toward interdependence, the third vector, occurs when students realize surviving alone is not possible and that greater autonomy enables healthier forms of interdependence. In other words, students recognize the need for community and society, and simultaneously, realize that self-sufficiency and ability to take responsibility for pursuing their chosen goals imparts diversity into the community and society. Students become less bound by others' opinions.

Developing through the fourth vector, mature interpersonal relationships, students cultivate a tolerance and appreciation of differences in others. As tolerance and appreciation of differences increase, the possibilities for deeper friendships and significant others increases. Students share and explore friendships. As the capacity for intimacy develops, students have better self-awareness, self-confidence, and vulnerability. Development occurs when the need to control and depend on others for happiness is relinquished, the elements that shape beliefs are understood, it is recognized that current friends and significant others are often sought to fill a void left from a past relationship, and self-assessment is done so as not to project baggage upon future relationships.

As identity is established, the fifth vector, students become comfortable with their bodies and appearances. Their lifestyle is clarified including sexual orientation and comfort with gender. In addition, students feel more stable and gain a sense of self as they receive feedback from others whom they respect. As their self-esteem and sense of identity progresses, they move toward developing their purpose.

The sixth vector is developing purpose. The students have an understanding through their autonomy and interdependence that they need society and society needs them. In this vector, they develop a sense of purpose that complements their identity. One's purpose includes career plans and aspirations as well as personal interests and family commitments.

The final vector, developing integrity, has three prongs. The first prong is developing humanizing values in which the person balances self-interests with those of others. Personalizing values, the second prong, involves affirming one's core values while respecting the values of others. The last prong is developing congruence. That is, personal values are matched with those that are reflective of socially acceptable behavior and this completes the psychosocial development at that point in time.

Utilizing the seven vectors as a basis, student attitudes, values, plans, and intellectual interests change the most during the first and second years as the students form new friendships and reference groups (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). With the FIRs as a part of the twenty-four-seven, student environment, particularly during the first year of college, it is possible that FIRs influence student attitudes, values, plans, and intellectual interests. Further, the FIRs may influence student involvement during the first year of college.

Astin's Involvement Theory

Affective development includes self-concept, values, attitudes, beliefs, drive for achievement, college satisfaction, personal habits, hobbies, citizenship, and interpersonal or social relations (Astin, 1993). In short, affective development encompasses the characteristics of everyday behavior, which are often honed outside of a structured

educational experience. Structure, however, may be incorporated into an environment to positively promote affective development by offering activities and programs, such as the FIR program, in which to become involved.

Astin (1984) proposed a model for involvement based upon collegiate involvement. The model involves elements of both psychosocial and person-environment theories. Involvement was defined in Astin's model as the physical and psychological energy placed into the collegiate experience. Involvement includes academic and social activities on campus. Astin's involvement theory encourages institutions to concentrate on student motivation and the time and energy the student allots for the educational process. Importantly, this suggests that student time may be more precious than other institutional resources since it is time that enables students to become involved in institutional activities and develop through those experiences.

Students who take time and participate in leadership programs, for example, show growth in civic responsibility, leadership skills, diversity awareness, and personal and societal values (Cress, Astin, Zimmerman-Oster, & Burkhardt, 2001). Students who participate in student organizations by their junior year excel in development compared to non-participants in developing purpose, educational involvement, career planning, lifestyle planning, life management, cultural participation, and academic autonomy (Cooper, Healy, & Simpson, 1994). FIR programs are often a method for students to become involved within their residential community and, therefore, may influence their development. As students excel in psychosocial development, they also build their identities.

Identity Development

Identity development models usually "… describe a process of increasing differentiation in the sense of self and the integration of that growing complexity into a coherent whole" (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005, p. 23). Areas of identity development typically include gender, race, ethnicity, and sexual orientation. Most developmental models only address one dimension of identity (Jones & McEwen, 2000), neglecting other identity orientations common to college students described by McEwen (1996) such as "… social class, religious, geographic or regional, and professional identities" (as in Jones & McEwen, 2000, p. 405).

Of particular interest to this study are the results Jones and McEwen (2000) found when they developed their conceptual model of multiple identity dimensions. Jones and McEwen interviewed ten college students ranging in age from 20-24. Through in-depth interviews, a conceptual model of identity was established that incorporated contextual influences and identity dimensions. The contextual influences include family background, sociocultural conditions, current experiences, and career decisions and life planning. The core attributes include personal attributes, personal characteristics, and personal identity (Jones & McEwen, 2000). The contextual influences and the core attributes described by Jones and McEwen (2000) are college-student specific and possibly reflective of the students in this study.

Numerous identity development theories exist for each area (race, ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation) of identity development (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). A full description of each identity development theory is beyond the scope of this review of the literature, but may be found elsewhere (Evans, Forney, & Guido-DeBrito, 1998).

Cognitive-Structural Theories

Cognitive-structural theories "… seek to describe the changes in thinking and the evolving frames of reference that structure values, beliefs, and assumptions" (Chickering & Reisser, 1993, p. 2) such that individuals find meaning in their lives (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). This section is important to this study as FIRs may spur students to think about life matters in different ways, challenging students to think beyond the experiences with which they grew up with under their guardians' guidance.

Many educational theorists believe in the separation of cognitive development and psychosocial development. However, King and Baxter Magolda (1996) believe that psychosocial development and cognitive-structural development cannot exist without each other and are part of the same developmental process. Cognitive-structural theories have several commonalities. First, the developmental process is a hierarchical series of stages with movement generally progressive and not regressive. For example, a first-year student during a Presidential election year may examine her/his past political views and realize a shift in beliefs on current issues due to a lecture s/he heard in a political science class. The student is not likely to retreat back to former views, but may build on them and alter perspectives according to new information and methods of thinking. Second, the focus is on the structure of meaning, not necessarily what is known or assumed (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). More specifically, the structure of meaning is based on how the individual arranges and interprets the arrangement of knowledge and assumptions.

Jean Piaget (1948) describes three principles of cognitive-structural theories. The first is cognitive structures that each individual forms to make sense of their experiences.

The cognitive structures provide reference points for creating meaning, choosing behavior, and problem solving. The second principle is developmental sequence, which is a predictable, yet unevenly paced, sequence that occurs as cognitive structures evolve and become more complicated. Finally, the individual develops when the cognitive structures are challenged through interaction with the environment (Kolb, 1981). Through challenges, the individual constantly searches for equilibrium by changing cognitive structures (Chickering & Reisser, 1993).

Religion, for example, is often challenged in college. As children are raised, their cognitive structures are established through their experiences and what they learn from their parents. As students progress through high school, their experiences and life reference points become more complicated. Finally, beliefs and reference points are challenged in college by other students; faculty, such as the FIRs; and cultures. The student attempts to find equilibrium, creating new reference points for life.

Students and FIR through programs and discussions in the residence halls have many opportunities to discuss and examine belief systems, which may challenge and concurrently influence life reference points. As such, I bring forth a brief outline of the cognitive-structural theories because of the potential for FIR to influence and challenge the belief systems students bring with them to college.

While cognitive-structural theories have similarities, each remains distinct. The most influential cognitive-structural theorists include William Perry, Lawrence Kohlberg, and Carol Gilligan (Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). I describe these theories in consideration of FIR programs as FIR programs may contribute to experiences that influence development through these theories.

Perry

William Perry (1970) studied Harvard students during each year of their college career to establish landmarks in the development he had observed. Through interviews, students were found to incorporate evolving cognitive structures that created their world vision, or position (Chickering & Reisser, 1993, Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Perry established nine positions as a developmental sequence.

Positions one through five are dominated by dualistic cognitive structures. The students perceive challenges or situations as right or wrong, black or white, or good and bad with knowledge perceived as derived from authorities. Perry's positions one and two include dualistic or black and white thinking. The shift out of dualism leads to increased tolerance because the individuals understand there are multiple shades of gray. This coincides with Chickering and Reisser's (1993) fourth vector, developing mature interpersonal relationships. Chickering and Reisser's seventh vector is mirrored in Perry's move through multiplistic and relativistic positions (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Chickering & Reisser, 1993).

After the fifth position, students perceive relativism, or acceptance of different points of view and varying degrees of validity of knowledge (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Students in positions six through nine relate directly to Chickering and Reisser's (1993) fifth vector, establishing identity. Students in these positions are able to commit to religion, careers, relationships, values, and ideas (Chickering & Reisser, 1993).

Kohlberg

Lawrence Kohlberg (1969) developed a cognitive theory with three levels of moral reasoning. Each level of moral reasoning has stages. Each stage concerns the

principles of justice. Kohlberg defines the difference between rules, which require action, and principles, which assist in making choices between potential decisions. Proceeding through the levels and stages leads individuals to defined sets of principles and senses of justice. While selfishness and materialism dominate the earlier stages, a set of moral principles guide decisions at the end of the continuum (Kohlberg, 1969; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005).

I experienced an example of Kohlberg's cognitive theory as an administrator with a university judicial system in student housing. First-year students were often quick to point out that they could participate in certain, undesirable behaviors, such as hosting loud parties, because they claimed it was not written in the rules that they could not participate in that behavior. As an educator, I attempted to help them journey from selfishness to an understanding that their behavior influences many others living in their community. I explained that written rules were not the spirit of the law with the spirit of the law being that which guides decisions. Students with repetitively poor behavior choices had not, yet, developed the skill to recognize community living principles. FIRs may also rationalize rules and policies through such conversations with students.

Gilligan

Carol Gilligan, who was greatly influenced by Kohlberg, brought forth the issue of gender-bias with prior studies of moral development, including that of Kohlberg. Gilligan (1993) finds great disparity between "women's experience and the representation of human development" (p. 1) in psychological literature. Women have been expected to fit into the psychological research and this process has failed. Gilligan

proposes that women do not adhere to psychological literature because the literature's concept of the human condition lacks a feminine viewpoint (Gilligan, 1993).

Gilligan posits that men view progress through moral development with a lens of justice whereas women's moral reasoning tends to be with a caring lens. Gilligan's moral reasoning develops through three levels. The first level, orientation to individual survival, focuses on the self and one's desires or needs. The second level is goodness as self-sacrifice. During this level, the woman feels accepted through caring and responsibility for others. Morality of nonviolence is the final level. During this level, a balance is found between individual needs and caring and being responsible for others (as cited in Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; as cited in Evans et al., 1998). Gilligan's works reinforce that it was important to maintain an open-mind toward the differences between men and women in this study due to potential differences in interaction and development. Through my experiences, I have encountered the lens of justice within men and the caring lens in women. More specifically, I recall a sexual assault situation in which the survivor's female friends gave her comfort as she reported the incident to the police department while her assailant hired a bodyguard for fear of retribution. During this study, I was cognizant of potential differences between the treatment of male and female participants within and by the FIRs and students.

Typology Theories

The family of typological models emphasizes "stable differences among individuals and categorizes individuals according to these distinctive characteristics. These 'type' models focus on differences in the ways individuals perceive their world and respond to it" (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005, p. 45).

Common themes emerge among typological models. First, individual traits are usually established early in life and vary little over time. Second, some individuals may have a dominant type, but may exhibit behavior from other types. Third, these models tend to describe group characteristics rather than individual characteristics or eccentricities. Finally, these models usually do not explain change or development in students. Instead, these models tend to address learning styles, vocational preferences, personality types, and cognitive styles and enlighten individuals on their tendencies in these areas (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Evans et al., 1998). Through an understanding of an individual's characteristics, typology may be used as a framework for psychosocial and cognitive-structural development (Evans et al., 1998). For example, understanding another person's type, such as with Myers-Briggs personality types, students may better understand themselves and may better appreciate others (Evans et al., 1998).

Person-Environment Theories

Environment arrangement is one of the most powerful techniques for influencing human behavior (Moos, 1976). With the FIR program as a permanent fixture within the student living environment, it is important to consider person-environment theories in this study. Through person-environment interactions:

> Colleges and universities establish conditions to attract, satisfy, and retain students for purposes of challenging them to develop qualities of the educated person, including a capacity for complex critical reasoning, communication, leadership, a sense of identity and purpose, an appreciation for differences, and a commitment to lifelong learning. (Strange & Banning, 2001, p. 2)

Person-environment theories focus in detail on environmental influences on behavior through environmental interaction with characteristics of the individual (Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005).

Lewin (1936) was one of the first psychologists to assert that one's behavior is a function of the person and the environment. In other words, attitude, character, intelligence, and all of the components that create an individual interact with their space, their environment, from room layout to the intended function of the space to the interior design. Based on Lewin's work, Stern proposed a further explanation for the interaction between the person and environment.

Stern (1970) used the need-press theory and how it equates to culture to explain the relationship between the individual and the environment (as cited in Walsh, 1978). In the theory, needs are tendencies of the person that guide their behavior. Press consists of continuity and expectations to be met by an individual. Press includes conditions that represent obstacles to a need as well as those obstacles that are likely to facilitate the need's expression. These conditions establish what is commonly referred to as the climate or atmosphere of an institution. The climate or atmosphere is found in the structure created or tolerated by others (Stern, 1970), the culture. Stern's (1970) model illustrates that needs can be measured by perception of satisfaction and the ability to share the satisfaction or gratification with most members of the same group. Stern (1970) established the Activities Index (AI) in which needs are reflected in behavior. Through the AI, self-reported interest or activities are used to estimate actual behavior. Stern had set out with his study to investigate need-press factors for classifying schools; however, he learned that schools have their own niche from liberal arts schools to engineering.

To summarize Stern's point, there is a give and take between people who form the environment and the environment itself (as cited in Walsh, 1978). In other words, the existing environment can change individual attitudes and behaviors just as individuals

can change the existing environment if it does not suit their needs. For the current study, the students or the FIRs or both may change the existing environment. I visit this concept further in the study's discussion.

Since environments tend to influence the behavior of the people occupying them (Barker, 1968; Barker & Associates, 1978) and evidence suggests that people impose their ideas and interpretations of life on the environment (Huebner, 1980), the conclusion can be drawn that the physical structure and occupants of an area, like FIR and students, influence the outcome of that environment. The following section on student success is presented to provide background information as part of the study's guiding questions include the definition the FIRs and the students attribute to student success and the influence of FIRs on student success.

Maslow's Needs

Abraham Maslow (1943) presented a theory of human motivation that continues to be a definitive theory today about individuals' priorities of needs. Maslow presents five basic needs in order of greatest relevance to most humans: physiological, safety, love, esteem, and self-actualization.

Maslow's (1943) physiological needs are those basic needs such as food, water, and sleep. Safety needs include those feelings of security, such as living without a feeling of bodily threat. In the case of most students and those living in residence halls, these needs are often provided through campus services. Therefore, these needs are not necessarily relevant to the current study. The remaining needs, however, of love, esteem, and self-actualization are needs that may or may not be met by first-year students.

Without the fulfillment of love, an individual strongly feels the absence of friends, belongingness, or the feeling of being a part of a community. With esteem, an individual strives for respect from self and others. Finally, with self-actualization, the individual finds happiness and contentment through doing what the individual enjoys from painting to writing to curing others' ills.

Through community living, particularly community living involving FIRs who can facilitate a feeling of community belonging, respect, and promotion of self-actualization, Maslow's theory of human motivation may prove helpful as this study's data is reviewed.

Student Success

Yazedjian, Toews, Sevin, and Purswell (2008) posit that student success in college is often narrowly defined. Yet, Kuh et al. (2005) offer a very broad definition of successful students by describing them as "those who persist, benefit in desired ways from their college experiences, are satisfied with college, and graduate" (Kuh et al., 2005, p. 8). This description further opens the discussion of defining student success by begging the questions, "What is persistence?" "What does it mean to benefit in desired ways from college?" "How do you convey satisfaction?"

Differences in the perception of success may vary from student to faculty member to parent to institution. In a recent qualitative study about student success by Yazedijan et al. (2008), responses from students resulted in three themes defining the meaning of student success: "'good grades,' social integration, and the ability to navigate the college environment" (p. 145). Kramer (2007) in his book *Fostering Student Success in the Campus Community* states, "this book makes no attempt to define what student success is

or should be for all institutions. Not all conditions and indicators of success… are readily applicable or transferable from one institution to another" (p. xxxiii).

The vagueness of current definitions of student success led me to include as part of this research the meaning of student success as defined by both the FIR and the students. As a precursor, the following sections on graduation rates and persistence were chosen for review, as they emerged from the literature review as two of the primary factors identified as determining student success. Further, as a university administrator, I often hear the terms "success," "persistence," and "graduation" used in discussions about the advancement of students. Therefore, I provide these sections as they may provide foundational materials for interpreting this study's data.

Graduation Rates

Graduation rates are often viewed as a measure of success for an institution. These statistics are reflections of the educational factory's product – college degrees. They are often used in various college rankings and are reviewed as institutions undergo the reaccredidation process during which the institution must "demonstrate the institution's accomplishments and exhibit the level of quality of areas of operation" (World Wide Learn, para 6). A good graduation rate may attract top students and faculty members. In addition, good graduation rates influence placement on lists such as *U.S. News and World Report*'s college rankings. Top-tiered institutions receive positive publicity concerning their educational product, adding value to the degrees generated by these schools.

When first-year students arrive on campus, the idea that they may not finish their degrees is nearly unthinkable. However, statistics indicate that nearly half will not

graduate. *The Chronicle Almanac* reported in 2005 that the six-year graduation rate for first-year students entering college during the 1996-1997 academic year was 54%. Graduation rate statistics like these are compiled each year by colleges' institutional research departments. Statistic development for most institutions is guided by the Department of Education through the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). Graduation statistics for four-year institutions include categorizing each student into a cohort and following the student through six years of college. Many obstacles to graduation may occur to a student during six years including financial concerns, family emergencies, and poor performance in the classroom, all of which may produce irregularities in reporting data. IPEDS (2007) outlines how to express data that does not seem regular.

Once a student has been assigned to a cohort that is determined by the summer or fall semester of the student's first year, the student is always in the cohort. The student does not leave the cohort even if the student transfers to another institution, becomes part-time, drops out, stops out, switches to another program, or has not fulfilled the institution's requirements to receive a degree or certificate. Leaving the cohort has few exceptions. The exceptions include death, becoming permanently disabled, military service or active duty, foreign aid service of the federal government, or serving on an official church mission (IPEDS, 2007). Guidelines such as these are strict. The Department of Education implements strict guidelines to provide consistency from institution to institution. This six-year graduation determination is the standard as it recognizes undergraduates' needs to often attend school part-time (Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, & Whitt, 2005).

Attewell and Lavin (2007) argue that graduation rates are disjointed for institutions serving working-class and minority students. Working class students and students of color often drop out, stop out, or take classes so slowly that they will not graduate in six years, falling out of their cohort group. For example, working class students and students of color often stop out of college for a while to take a new job, earn money for rent and food, or to care for a child. In Attewell and Laven's (2007) study of female college students and their children, they found that 30 years after starting college in the City University of New York system from 1970 to 1972, 70% had earned a degree with nearly 75% of those earning a bachelor's degree. Attewell and Lavin (2007) compared their findings with 2,000 students tracked nationwide for 20 years and the graduation rate was 61%. These findings beg the questions, "Of what value is it to compare graduation rates?" "Why is the magic number to graduate six years?" "Is there an assumption that all students are on the same timeline to graduate with their degrees?"

Glenn (2007) states that since colleges have different missions and student bodies, it is impossible to compare graduation rates. For example, comparing the graduation rates of an Ivy League school versus those of rural America is not a fair comparison considering the Ivy League school's resources and student body. The rural-America school is more likely to have students who are less prepared for college classes.

Muraskin and Lee (2004) found commonalities among institutions with higher graduation rates than others. Many of the commonalities are services or policies that are not classroom-related. The commonalities included: intentional academic planning, small classes, special programs, a dedicated faculty, educational innovation, developmental education, geographic isolation, first-year student live-in requirements,

shared values within the student body like small-town backgrounds, modest selectivity, financial aid for high achievers, and retention policies. Studies on improving graduation typically result in many of the same recommendations as those for improving persistence. Graduation is secondary to persistence, without the latter there is no graduation.

Persistence, Retention, and Student Departure

As discussed in the *Graduation Rates* section of this study, graduation rates are dependent upon the equation used. Graduation rates do not include students who have stopped out for a variety of reasons and finished their degrees after an extended leave. The same issues face discussions and studies of persistence and student departure. For this study, persistence and student departure, while each opposes the other, generally have the same meaning; they are two sides to the same coin. Persistence is progressing through the educational system from year to year. Student departure is leaving the individual institution or higher education system (Tinto, 1993).

The issues that define graduation rates are quite similar to those that define student departure. Tinto (1993) outlines the controversial issues with defining student departure as

> what percentage of entering students complete their college degree programs within a six-year period. What proportion of those students complete their degrees within their first institution and what proportion transfer to another institution? To what degree do those proportions change when one extends the time period beyond six years? (p. 1)

Tinto's statement begs the same questions Attewell and Lavin (2007) sought to answer.

While it is recognized that persistence or student departure is influenced by factors such as academic performance, cost, and career plan changes (Panos & Astin, 1968), factors of student engagement are most critical to student success (Kuh et al.,

2005). Student engagement may occur during programs with faculty members, such as through the FIR program. Through engagement with faculty members, students may develop affectively, as described by Astin (1993), through testing and evaluating their self-concepts, values, attitudes, beliefs, personal habits, citizenship, and other activities, which encompass the characteristics of everyday behavior. Through affective development, students may better engage academically. In this way, student success is not limited to academic success. Kuh et al. (2005) outline student success as persistence, positive benefits from college experiences, satisfaction with college, and ultimately graduation. "What students do during college counts more for what they learn and whether they will persist in college than who they are or even where they go to college" (Kuh et al., 2005, p. 8). This statement is of great importance to this study as I focus on student success in relationship to faculty, specifically, student-FIR interaction.

In a different approach to student success, Astin (1984) based his developmental theory on involvement. He defined involvement as

> the amount of physical and psychological energy that the student devotes to the academic experience. Thus, a highly involved student is one who, for example, devotes considerable energy to studying, spends much time on campus, participates actively in student organizations, and interacts frequently with faculty members and other students. (p. 297)

In his theory, Astin proposes five principles of development. The principles include involvement as an investment of physical and psychological energy; a continuum where the investment is different for different people and different for the same person at different points in time; quantitative and qualitative; proportional to the amount of student learning and personal development in projects; and as related to educational policy or practice effectiveness.

Astin's (1984) principles can be associated with out-of-the-classroom activities, such as student involvement with FIR. Involvement in activities, such as through the FIR program, attaches students to the collegiate environment (Christie & Dinham, 1991), creating an atmosphere of community, of belonging. Further, involvement creates the individual's personal-environment through which interaction with the environment influences behavior based on the characteristics of the individual (Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005).

Kuh, Douglas, Lund, and Ramin-Gyurnek (1994) outlined activities associated with persistence. Of particular interest to this study are the positive associations with persistence and living on campus, student-faculty interaction, student-student interaction, a sense of community, and extracurricular activities. Students living in residence halls have greater opportunities for social interaction with other students, faculty, and their institution (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). In addition, students in residence halls have a higher rate of persistence (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). As Astin (1993) found, student-faculty interaction also positively impacts persistence.

Summary

Student involvement supports retention and persistence, which are common determinants of student success (Tinto, 1993; Kuh et al., 2005). Through FIR, students are exposed to a practice of informal and formal interaction with faculty members and other students. As such, this engagement or expenditure of psychological and physical energy assists the student in developing their social integration skills (Astin, 1984; Braxton, Hirschy, & McClendon, 2004). In Tinto's (1993) longitudinal model of student departure, social integration influences academic integration, and vice versa, when a

student considers institutional departure. The FIR program has the potential to meld academic integration with social integration. In this sense, FIR programming has the potential to directly influence students' collegiate success.

I enter this study with an open-mind in order to harness the true essence of the student-FIR relationship and their perceptions of student success. Further, I seek to uncover the perceptions and descriptions of the study's FIR program and the connections within student-FIR relationships. The following chapter outlines my approach to this study.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGIES AND METHODS

Jones, Torres, and Arminio (2006) state that the framework for a research study, the research design, includes epistemological perspective, theoretical perspective, methodological approach, methods, and how these four areas interrelate to reflect congruency. Independently, Creswell (1998) outlines five philosophical assumptions, which guide researchers, and discusses how theory relates to phenomenological research. Creswell's five philosophical assumptions are: ontological, epistemological, axiological, rhetorical, and methodological. The works of the authors complement each other. I combined their perspectives to form the elements of my research design: philosophical assumptions, theoretical perspective, methodological approach, and methods.

This chapter includes each of these elements in addition to a discussion of data verification, the delimitations and limitations, and an account as to the final decision for utilizing qualitative inquiry for this study. An analysis of the research questions is presented first as the questions guided the research design and the decision for a hermeneutic, phenomenological qualitative study (Moustakas, 1994).

The Research Questions

The research questions direct the research design (Moustakas, 1994). Therefore, before I discuss the research design, I will dissect the research questions as LaCourse (as cited in Moustakas, 1994) describes in her article *Phenomenological Research Methods*. The following orienting research questions guide this study:

1. What are the experiences of students and FIRs with the FIR program?
2. What meaning do students and FIRs ascribe to their experiences?

3. How do the students and the FIRs perceive student success?

4. In what, if any, ways do students and FIRs relate the FIR program to student success?

Following LaCourse's example, the major terms of the questions were extrapolated and are "how," "perceive," "describe," and "student success."

Each major term has specific meaning in the research question. The term "how" was used to express my openness to any data which may emerge during interviews with FIRs and students (Moustakas, 1994). "How" represents the consideration of any discussions, drawings, or other forms of data without bias. "Perceive" is an ontological assumption reflecting my approach that all of the participants have differing perspectives of the FIR program or different natures of their realities (Creswell, 1998). Meaning was derived from participant descriptions as is indicated by the use of the word "describe." For example, FIRs and students may use different terms to discuss like topics or themes. I ascribed meaning to the like topics.

Finally, "student success" is an elusive term. Kuh et al. (2005) state that successful students are those who acquire desirable benefits from their collegiate experiences, those who persist, those who are satisfied with their collegiate experience, and those who graduate. This description is elusive in that desirable benefits and satisfaction are difficult to define for all institutions and all students. Kramer (2007) in *Fostering Student Success in the Campus Community* does not attempt to define student success because "not all conditions and indicators for student success… are readily applicable or transferable from one institution to another" (p. xxxiii). Therefore the meaning of student success for this study was developed from the study's participants themselves. The definitions are presented in Chapters IV and V from the views of the

FIRs and the students, respectively. A discussion and comparison of these definitions is presented in Chapter VI. Through these definitions, participant perceptions and descriptions, the uniqueness of their lived experiences, and interpretations of their lifeworlds (van Manen, 1990) are understood.

Research Design

Examining the lived experiences of FIRs and students engaged in FIR programming to the fullest extent requires attention to the specific elements of the research design for this study. As I discussed earlier, the design is derived from a combination of the designs of Jones, Torres, and Arminio (2006) and Creswell (1998). The elements of the design include philosophical assumptions, theoretical perspective, methodological approach, and methods. A discussion of each aspect of the research design is included in the next two sections.

Philosophical Assumptions and Theoretical Perspective

Researchers enter a study with their own assumptions or beliefs that guide their study, known as a paradigm or worldview (Jones et al., 2006; Creswell, 1998). One's worldview may be expressed through five philosophical assumptions Creswell (1998) adapted from Guba and Lincoln (1988): ontological, epistemological, axiological, rhetorical, and methodological. In this section, I describe each assumption and reflect on how this assumption relates to this specific research study about the FIR program and the perspectives of FIRs and students on the FIR program and student success.

Ontological, Epistemological, Axiological, and Rhetorical Philosophical Assumptions

Ontology is the nature of reality characterized by subjective and multiple realities as seen by study participants. Multiple realities exist in this study including the realities of myself as a researcher, FIRs, students, and each reader or audience member reviewing the study. This may be reflected in different perceptions of data and the circumstances of the FIR program. Based on my experiences, an outside audience member may perceive the FIR program as an elaborate, expensive program that provides great monetary benefit to each FIR family with little benefit to the community. Another perspective may be that of a FIR who offers many hours of participation with students living in the residence halls beyond time in the classroom. Further, the faculty member has the experience of comforting a group of students during a stressful time in a student's life, such as the death of a parent. In this regard, the FIR understands that the student and the community may not have been such a cohesive unit without the FIR interaction and may have resulted in student departure, thus justifying all monetary costs of the program and presenting non-monetary benefits to students.

Other realities could also be viewed in the research, such as the FIR program's support from the institution's administration. Realities of specific topics may be communicated by participants and inductively developed into themes yet each participant is able to possess their own diverse perspectives (Creswell, 1998). A research study such as this one may result with a variety of themes as the data is inductively processed. As I reviewed all of the data and contributed my knowledge to the interpretation, themes emerged that reflected all of the interviews. Further, due to my position with this study

as interpreter and as the one who develops new meaning for the experiences, the study is hermeneutic and constructivist, an epistemological assumption.

The epistemological assumption refers to the acquisition of knowledge (Jones et al., 2006) or the relationship of the researcher to the participants (Creswell, 1998). With epistemology, the "researcher attempts to lessen distance between himself or herself and that being researched" (Creswell, 1998, p. 75) by spending time with the participants. For the purposes of this study, I spent time with participants during interviews and their data after the interviews in order to interpret their experiences with the FIR program. Since I was the interpreter of the interview data, although verification methods were employed, the study is hermeneutic (Schwandt, 2001). The term *interpreter* is important to hermeneutics because no phenomenon can be *uninterpreted*, "… the facts of the lived experience are always already meaningfully (hermeneutically) experienced" (van Manen, 1990, p. 181).

"Constructivism seeks to understand individual social action through interpretation or translation" (Jones et al., 2006, p. 18). More specifically, constructivism concerns the individual and the knowledge within the individual as translated by the researcher through the researcher's "lived worldview" (Jones et al., 2006, p. 18). I developed the themes and meaning for this study from a constructivist viewpoint through stories conveyed by participants explaining their experiences (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

More explicitly, implications existed for axiological assumptions, such as the role of my values in the research, time spent with the participants, experience with FIR, knowledge of FIR, and my role in the research as researcher, interpreter, and constructivist. Axiological assumptions often arise because of prior knowledge and

experiences and may "… predispose us to interpret the nature of the phenomenon before we have even come to grips with the significance of the phenomenological question" (van Manen, 1990, p. 46).

Creswell (1998) states that rhetorical assumption is the use of specific terms and personal and literary narrative by the researcher. For example, Lincoln and Guba (1985) state that instead of using terms such as validity, the qualitative researcher may utilize terms such as credibility (as cited in Creswell, 1998) and terms that may emerge or evolve during research (Creswell, 1998), that is, using the language of qualitative research. In this study, I utilize the terms of qualitative research and provide explanations for my choice of language.

Methodology

In a study such as this where little to no research has yet been conducted on the FIR program, a quantifying study may be resisted because participants may view the numbers as standardized and impersonal (Patton, 2002). The openness of qualitative inquiry

> communicate(s) respect to the respondents by making their ideas and opinions the important data source for the evaluation. … [R]ather than imposing on people or a program some predetermined model or hypotheses, the results unfold in a way that takes into account idiosyncrasies, uniqueness, and complex dynamics. (Patton, 2002, p. 176)

Therefore, this phenomenological study likely resulted in a better understanding of the FIR program through FIR and student experiences and descriptions of the FIR program than the yield of a quantitative study.

Further, qualitative inquiry was chosen to provide a deep, rich description of the lived experience of a small sample rather than an analysis of fewer variables or variables

compacted into predetermined response categories for a large group as in many quantitative studies (Creswell, 1998; Moustakas, 1994; Patton, 2002; Ragin, 1987). When evaluating the different disciplines within qualitative methods, I explored the five traditional inquiries outlined by Creswell (1998): biographical, phenomenological, case study, ethnography, and grounded theory. Phenomenology lends itself to observations as well as interviews of lived experiences in relationship to the FIR program and student success. Through this study, I sought to understand how FIR and students perceive and describe the FIR program, student success, and how the FIR program influences student success. In this way, the study of the lived experience or lifeworld through phenomenology (Creswell, 1998; Moustakas, 1994; Jones et al., 2006; Schwandt, 2001), best fit my research questions. I chose to study the life experiences of FIRs and students to construct a better understanding of the FIR program.

Phenomenology was developed by Edmund H. Husserl (Moustakas, 1994; Creswell, 1998; Patton, 2002; Jones et al., 2006). When Husserl coined the term phenomenology, he intended "the study of how people describe things and experience them through their senses" (Patton, 2002, p. 105). At its most basic philosophical framework, phenomenology focuses on knowledge derived from experiences. Patton states,

> Initially, all our understanding comes from sensory experience of phenomena, but that experience must be described, explicated, and interpreted. Yet, descriptions of experiences and interpretations are so intertwined that they often become one. Interpretation is essential to an understanding of experience and the experience includes interpretation. Thus, phenomenologists focus on how we put together the phenomenon we experience in such a way as to make sense of the world and, in so doing, develop a worldview. (2002, p. 106)

Phenomenology, moreover, suggests that if we remove our personal experiences temporarily from a phenomenon and then revisit an immediate experience of the phenomenon, there is potential for us to assign new meaning to the phenomenon or to affirm past meaning (Crotty, 1998). The goodness of new meanings in qualitative studies "does not come from an authoritative objective truth waiting to be discovered, but rather from the understanding we gain when engaging in our work" (Arminio & Hultgren, 2002).

By examining the University of Oklahoma's FIR program using a phenomenological approach, researchers and educators may better understand the experiences of both faculty members and students in the FIR program as well as how these participants perceive student success. With information garnered from research studies such as this, institutions may better assess investments in their programs and funding priorities as well as consider the influences of FIR programs on their overall campus environment.

Methods

This study takes a constructivist approach through phenomenology to explore the experiences of FIRs and students in relation to the FIR program. Patton (2002) asserts that qualitative methods tend to be more humanizing than quantitative methods. In this section, I describe the methods used in this study including participant selection, data collection, organization of data, and data analysis.

Participant Selection

Kramer (2007) states that student success is difficult to define due to the uniqueness of each institutional campus and culture as well as the differences in how

student success is perceived by each institution. For this reason, this study focuses on one institution's FIR program to offer consistency of the campus living environment including opportunities for student-FIR interaction, study sessions, special seminars, and guest speakers.

Both FIRs and students were interviewed for the study because I sought to understand the experiences and descriptions of the FIR program through both lifeworlds. More specifically, I sought to understand the FIR program from the perspective of the FIRs and the students as each group has varied life experiences and educational levels. Most students, for example, reflected on the FIRs and the FIR program through their experiences during their undergraduate years, in particular, their first year, when they were first introduced to the FIR program. The FIRs, in contrast, reflected on the FIR program and their experiences with students based on their own educational experiences, family involvement, and life experiences. The populations required two different methods for sampling: purposeful and snowball.

Faculty In Residence participant selection. Purposeful sampling, "selecting information-rich cases for study in depth" (Patton, 2002, p. 46), is used when participants are chosen based on their relevance to the research question rather than a population (Schwandt, 2001) and to garner rich information about the phenomenon (Patton, 2002). The relatively small number of faculty members who have participated in the FIR program at the institution's study lent itself to follow such "purposeful sampling" techniques. It must be noted that faculty members self-select for the FIR program. Therefore, these participants were intentionally invited to participate in the study.

To portray the lived experiences of the program, fourteen FIRs of twenty-six total FIRs were interviewed. The anonymity of each participant has been protected by using names from the Social Security Administration's top 100 baby names. Names were also given to family members and pets, if the FIRs discussed them during their interviews, or names were omitted in direct quotes from the participants and clarification of the person, animal, or place has been set in brackets. Because FIRs and their families may be easily identified, their background information is not discussed in detail but presented collectively as a group.

FIR participants ranged in age from 33 to 75 years old. Twelve of the participants were white with one of the twelve characterizing himself as "Northern European." Two of the participants were African American. Eleven of the participants were males and three were females. Of the fourteen FIRs, four consisted of two married couples, resulting in a total of twelve households being represented in the interviews. The FIR partners of each couple were interviewed independently. All of the FIRs were married to opposite-gendered partners. Nine of the households had children while participating in the FIR program with ages ranging from newborn to approximately 20 years old. The academic departments represented by FIRs included Political Science; African and African American Studies; Social Work; Philosophy; Botany-Microbiology; Zoology; Modern Languages, Literature, and Linguistics; Nutritional Sciences; Human Relations; Health and Exercise Science; Chemistry and Biochemistry; and Journalism and Mass Communications.

The FIR program at the study's institution was established in the mid-1990s. Since its establishment, nearly twenty faculty families have participated. Most of the past

and present FIRs were contacted through the purposeful sampling method previously discussed. The FIRs were contacted in small batches at a time, although individually, so as not to overwhelm the interview schedule. Approximately five FIRs were contacted with the first group in June 2008. Delays in interview scheduling were anticipated due to summer break, however, most FIRs responded within a day or two of the initial contact. After interviews neared completion for the first group, a second group was contacted and interviews arranged. Again, no delays were experienced in interview scheduling.

After the interviews for the second group, a saturation point was reached (Jones et al., 2006). FIR responses became increasingly predictable. The third and final group of FIRs was contacted and interviews arranged. Only two FIRs requested to be contacted after the beginning of the fall semester. Although a saturation point had been confirmed by approximately the eighth interview, all interviews that had been extended were completed. Twenty-six FIRs have participated to date in the FIR program. Fourteen interviews were completed of fourteen FIRs contacted for the study. The fourteen FIRs were selected based on current availability. Several FIRs have left the institution for positions at other institutions, as far away as Hawaii. Funding was not available for my travels to such locations. Since I preferred to meet with the FIRs face-to-face so as not to lose the essence of the interview, particularly that of body language, local FIRs were selected. At the conclusion of each FIR interview, I requested the FIRs' assistance in identifying student participants.

Student participant selection. Students were selected by "snowball sampling" procedures, also known as chain sampling (Patton, 2002). To implement snowball sampling, I asked FIRs, residence life staff members, and student participants to identify

current students who were perceived as involved with the FIR program. That is, I requested the names of students who had attended FIR programs and/or who had developed relationships with the FIRs. I also requested that the students identified be diverse academically, such as engineering students and education students, and from both genders. As I explored methods of recruiting students and discussed possibilities with student affairs staff prior to completing the Internal Review Board research request, I understood that those who would assist in participant selection were not comfortable seeking candidates of specific ethnicity. The expressions were that ethnicity does not necessarily relate to skin color and they wished to avoid asking students to identify their ethnicity prior to requesting assistance in this research study. There was concern from the staff that those selected for contact for the study may, in the future, have concerns in talking to university staff and that the staffs' efforts to assist with the study may be misconstrued by the students. Therefore, academic diversity was sought. As potential participants were discovered, I made contact. Over twenty-five students were contacted with twelve students agreeing to participate. Interviews were arranged as students agreed to participate.

Twelve interviews were completed with the saturation point reached at approximately the eighth interview. Of the twelve participants, eleven identified themselves as white or Caucasian with one identifying as Multi-Racial. The average age was twenty years old with four being nineteen years old, three being twenty years old, two being twenty-one years old, two being twenty-two years old, and one being twenty-three years old. The twelve consisted of seven women and five men. Since the interviews were completed at the beginning of the fall semester, only sophomores and

above were interviewed as the incoming first year students had not had enough time to fully experience the FIR program. Five of the participants were sophomores, four were juniors, two were seniors, and one was a recent graduate starting graduate school. All reported interaction with the FIRs during their first year, eight students reported interaction during their sophomore year, four reported interaction during their junior year, and one reported interaction during the senior year. The average self-reported GPA was 3.46 with seven being above 3.5 including one 4.00. The students' majors included Education, Letters, Biochemistry, History, Microbiology, Health and Exercise Science, Music Education, Performance, Psychology, and English Writing. As with the FIRs, the students could be easily identified on campus, particularly by residence life staff as they assisted in participant identification. For this reason, more specific information about individual participants has been withheld.

Data Collection and Analysis

In qualitative research, there is not a clear line between data collection and analysis. The two typically take place in tandem, beginning in the field (Patton, 2002). Van Manen (1990) proposes six themes for performing qualitative, phenomenological research activities: turning to the nature of the lived experience, investigating the phenomenon as it is experienced, reflecting on essential themes, writing and rewriting, maintaining a strong and oriented relation, and balancing the research context by considering parts and whole. These themes represent the beginning of data collection to the final presentation of analysis. Van Manen (1990) explains that gathering and analyzing material are not separate processes. I will discuss them separately for ease of

communication and implement them together in the analysis. In this section, van Manen's first two themes regarding data collection are of primary importance.

Van Manen's first theme is turning to the phenomenon in which the researcher continually returns to the research question with deep interest and concern to fully explore the research project's scope (Jones et al., 2006; van Manen, 1990). Husserl (1970) states that bracketing is often used during returning to the research question (as cited in Jones et al., 2006). To explain further, researchers tend to have emotions and feelings about the topics they are studying which could be imposed on their study. "Bracketing… describes the act of someone suspending one's various beliefs in the reality of the natural world in order to study the essential structures of the world" (van Manen, 1990, p. 175).

Bracketing, or reduction, while a part of data analysis, is critical during data collection to assist me in distinguishing between preconceived thoughts and emotions about the phenomenon and removing those thoughts from studying the phenomenon (van Manen, 1990). To accomplish bracketing or reduction, the researcher must develop a sense of wonder about the phenomenon. Second, the researcher must identify and overcome preconceptions about the phenomenon in order to experience the phenomenon as it is lived. Third, the researcher must remove all theories and preconceptions about the phenomenon, which may hinder the researcher from seeing the true phenomenon. Fourth, the researcher must see through the lived experience of the individual participant such that the lived experience is expressed as a collective experience from all participants (van Manen, 1990).

While some researchers, such as Moustakas (1994), believe bracketing is important, van Manen (1990) argues it is impossible and supports simple disclosure of prior knowledge that may influence the study. Therefore, it is fair to disclose that I entered this study with the assumption that the student-FIR experience is useful based on the literature of student-faculty interaction (Astin, 1993; Chickering & Reisser, 1994; Gaff, 1973; Kuh, 1996; Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, Whitt, & Associates, 2005; Lundberg & Schreiner, 2004; Pascarella, 1980; Pascarella, 1985; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Sax, Bryant, & Harper, 2005; Vito, 2007) and my own experience with the program. However, I was open to the possibility that the student-FIR interaction experience was not necessarily positive for all. Further, I attempted to bracket my experiences through journaling as a point of reflection throughout the research process. I offer the reader insight to my FIR experience in Chapter I and provide additional disclosure of my prior FIR knowledge later in this chapter.

Van Manen's second theme is to investigate the phenomenon as it is experienced (van Manen, 1990; Jones et al., 2006). Phenomenological data may be obtained in many ways including through interviews, artwork, observation, and writings such as written responses, journals, biographies, and autobiographies (van Manen, 1990). In this study, I used a combination of artwork, writings, and interviews and describe each below.

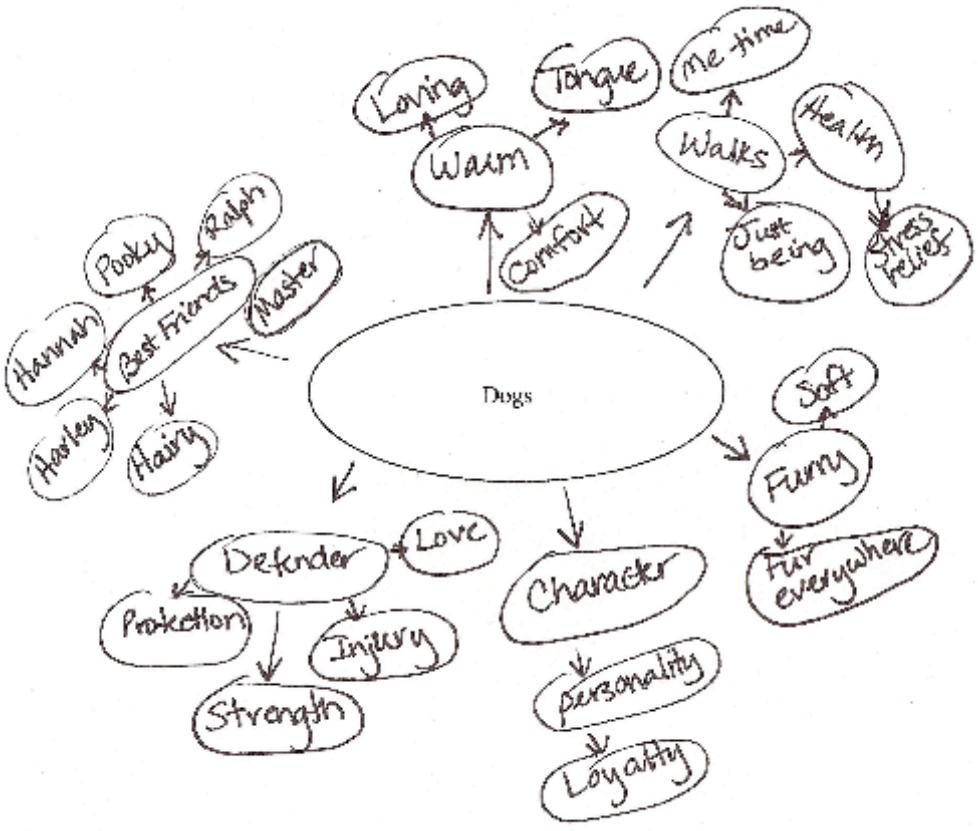
Data collection for each participant began with the clustering process and ended with an interview. Rico (2000) introduced the clustering process as a way for writers to brainstorm and develop their thoughts. Clustering is similar to free association as it creates nonlinear associations with a given topic and allows patterns to emerge. Participants are able to convey images and emotions through clustering (Karpiak, 1990).

In this study, participants were shown an example of a completed cluster diagram based on the topic of "Dogs" (Diagram I) and were read a script (see Appendix B). Each participant was then given a sheet of paper with the words "Faculty In Residence" written at the center for the topic. The participants were instructed to develop their own clusters as related to their experiences with the FIR program for a period of no longer than ten minutes. Time was limited so that the larger topics surfaced first.

The clustering process proved beneficial. First, through clustering, the participants focused their thoughts on the task at hand. All understood the ten-minute time limit and seemed to abandon their current pressing thoughts of the day to participate in the clustering process. Second, the activity served as an icebreaking activity to discuss the FIR program. More specifically, this process helped FIRs recall their experiences and warm-up to this particular interview experience through free association. The free association enabled the participants to briefly relive their memories of the FIR program without regard to following a designated outline or given set of structured interview questions. The clustering process was beneficial to the data gathering process as it encouraged the participants to relive their FIR experiences in their own minds without interruption and share it in a way that made sense to them. Finally, the specific information pertaining to the clusters provided a foundation for discussion during the question and answer process of the interview.

Diagram 1.

Example of Clustering Based on Life Experiences with Dogs.



After the clustering exercise, I engaged each participant in an interview related to the outcomes of the cluster diagram. In hermeneutic phenomenological studies, interviews serve two distinct purposes: to explore and gather experiential narratives and to discuss the meaning of an experience (van Manen, 1990). Based on the participants' clusters, I asked questions pertaining to the experiences and the meaning of those experiences to explore each experience to its fullest. As van Manen (1990) discusses, silence and patience may be better than asking many questions. For this reason, I used

open-ended questions and limited my involvement in the discussion. The questions asked are listed in Appendix B.

If the participant began to generalize about an experience during an interview, I turned the questioning back to concrete experiences about specific events (van Manen, 1990). The cluster diagrams offered structure to the conversational interview. Patton (2002) states that conversational interviews are more easily matched to each individual and circumstance and an outline, such as the clustered diagram, increases data comprehension and the ability, using logic, to anticipate and correct gaps in the interview.

Interviews of FIRs, FIR alumni/ae and students occurred in mutually agreed upon locations on the University of Oklahoma campus. Most participants were interviewed in a conference room located in the residence halls or in the Student Affairs conference room located at the Oklahoma Memorial Union. A few interviews were conducted within the Recreational Services conference room while some occurred within my campus office, particularly with students due to their class schedules and the availability of convenient conference rooms.

Fourteen FIRs and twelve students were interviewed. In-depth interviews were conducted until a saturation point was reached, that is, until new primary themes ceased to emerge (Jones et al., 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2008) and I was able to offer reasonable "depth and breadth of understanding" (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 149) about the meaning of the student-FIR relationship and how the FIR program facilitates students' experiences within the university. Saturation points were obtained for both participant groups by about the eighth interview. By the eighth interviews, I was able to predict most responses in subsequent interviews. The additional interviews allowed for

confirmation of the saturation point. Further, if I had requested an interview and the participant agreed to do it, I did not turn the interview away even when the saturation points were confirmed.

Each interview was digitally recorded and immediately transcribed by a third party. I audited each transcription using the digital recording to ensure accuracy. Participant identities were coded according to faculty or students along with a numerical code. Each code was then assigned a first name from the Social Security Administration's top baby names from 2006 found at http://ssa.gov/OACT/babynames to provide an additional step of security for participant identification. Actual names, rather than codes, may also assist the reader to better experience the phenomenon through the deep, rich text I provide in the following chapters. Participants and participant information was treated with great respect, confidentiality, neutrality (Jones et al., 2006; Patton, 2002), and in compliance with the institution's human subjects review board.

Fieldnotes were written after each interview. I refrained from writing notes during the interviews as it might have been distracting to the interviewee and I may have "miss[ed] fleeting expressions, subtle movements, and even key content" (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995). My field notes focus on concrete sensory details such as the interview setting and the interviewee, which may not be related through the transcriptions, so that I am better able to communicate their stories with thick, rich description (Emerson et al., 1995) as I present the phenomenon.

I also wrote journal entries about my thoughts, feelings, and observations throughout the study to assist with data analysis. I relied on "… intuition, imagination, and universal structures to obtain a picture of the experience" (Creswell, 1998, p. 52). I

found a quiet place where I focused on the first-year experience associated with living in residence halls, on the faculty experience of living in the residence halls, and on how I view student success. I documented these reflections in a researcher journal and reviewed the reflections often. Journaling and fieldnotes were critical as I moved through van Manen's third through sixth research activities discussed in the next section.

Data Analysis

At the conclusion of the interviewing phase, the researcher reviews the transcriptions and the study's methods and procedures of phenomenological analysis (Moustakas, 1994), a portion of the third research activity van Manen outlines. For this study, I reviewed 10 pages of fieldnotes, 21 pages of journal entries, 150 pages of single-spaced transcription from FIR interviews, 87 pages of single-spaced transcription from students, 14 pages of cluster diagrams from FIRs, 12 pages of cluster diagrams from students, over 25 websites about FIR programs, and multiple personal communications, out-of-date FIR application information packets, and marketing materials about the FIR program at this institution.

The third research activity van Manen (1990) outlines is reflecting on essential themes in which the researcher reflects on and clarifies the meaning of the lived experience (Jones et al., 2006; van Manen, 1990). I conducted this process through thematic analysis, considering the structures of the phenomenon, during which I repetitively read, wrote, and discussed the phenomenon with colleagues (Jones, et al., 2006). More specifically, I used the detailed reading approach outlined by van Manen (1990) in which I considered every sentence or sentence cluster and determined what the sentence or sentence cluster revealed about the described phenomenon or experience.

I used open coding to label the data, a process of brainstorming to unveil all of the "potentials and possibilities" within the data (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Conceptualizing the data reduced the amount of data I worked with and provided a common language for discussion (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Themes, or concepts, arose out of the data (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

Within this third research process, I wove in the fourth research process of writing and rewriting during which I underwent a constant, thoughtful writing process of interpreting the essence of the phenomenon (Jones et al., 2006; van Manen, 1990).

Throughout the research process I strove to maintain a strong and oriented relation, the fifth research activity (van Manen, 1990). Specifically, I maintained focus and concern throughout the research such that the final products effectively communicated the importance of the research in my world (Jones et al., 2006; van Manen, 1990). Finally, as I strove to maintain a strong and oriented relation to the phenomenon, I also strove to maintain balance between the pieces of the phenomenon and the phenomenon as a whole, the sixth research activity. More pointedly, I did not become too engrossed in one or two elements of the study where the various elements that comprised the study as a whole were not balanced or evenly considered in the final result (Jones et al., 2006; van Manen, 1990).

Finally, the physical data, for example the electronic transcripts, were maintained on private computers and secured-access university servers. Paper transcripts, journals, and fieldnotes were maintained at my secured home. All efforts were made to ensure safety and security of the data.

Verification

Substantiation, trustworthiness, or verification? Some researchers prefer the term verification and some prefer substantiation while others prefer trustworthiness. Schwandt (2001) prefers the term substantiation because a researcher demonstrates the likelihood that a conclusion is correct whereas verifiability implies strict acceptance, or not, of an argument in social science. Glesne (1999) refers to trustworthiness as a characteristic of qualitative research that is established through careful attention to researcher behaviors such as personal biases and subjectivity. Full approval of an argument in social science is impossible (Schwandt, 2001). For this reason, Schwandt argues that the use of the word verification is "disturbing" (p. 271). Creswell (1998) uses the term verification and acknowledges the varying interpretations of the term verification. Regardless of the researcher and the term used, the underlying theme that emerges is establishing quality research. For this study, I followed Creswell's (1998) verification guidelines.

Creswell's (1998) approach to verification includes using at least two verification procedures of the eight he proposes: triangulation; peer review or debriefing; negative case analysis; clarifying researcher bias; member checks; rich, thick description; and external audits. For this study, I use peer review; member checks; rich, thick description; and triangulation.

Peer review occurs when a colleague reviews and questions the researcher about methods, interpretations, and meanings while also providing the researcher with an outlet for discussion (Creswell, 1998; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Scwhandt, 2001). Peer reviews were performed by two of my colleagues. We met at various points in the process. I prepared and delivered a selection of writing for discussion to my colleagues 48 hours or

more prior to our meeting. Meeting times and locations were determined by our schedules. I compared my colleagues' comments to my original intent of the writings. As needed, I rewrote the selections to ensure my thoughts and ideas were appropriately and clearly communicated. Also during the meetings, I appreciated my colleagues playing the roles of "devil's advocates." In other words, I expected that my colleagues questioned all aspects of my work to help me ensure that I was able to offer insightful responses supported by the data, the literature, and logic. At times, I did not meet directly with my colleagues. Instead, we emailed our thoughts and ideas, particularly over academic breaks, such as the winter vacation. Further, I wrote journal entries following discussions and maintained email files of the electronic communications.

In addition to peer reviews, member checks were performed. Member checks occur when the researcher presents the participants' with the findings and interpretations and requests their judgment for accuracy and credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Creswell, 1998). Member checks were completed by participant verification of interview transcripts. Participants were provided a transcript of their interview. Members were asked to return the transcript in either a stamped, addressed envelope or by hand delivery, as they chose. None of the participants requested to meet again to clarify their interview and few changes were noted in the transcripts. Of the twenty-six interviews conducted, verifications of nine participants' transcripts were not received from the participants; three from FIRs and six from students. Alterations to the transcripts typically involved clarification of names and locations of which the transcriptionist was not familiar and used phonics to decipher the audio recording. Other changes I made included punctuation. No changes were noted that included alterations to the comprehension of

the original interviews. Appendix C contains a letter to the participants regarding member checking and the process involved.

I also used rich, thick description to describe the experiences conveyed to me during interviews (Creswell, 1998; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Rich, thick description "takes the reader into the setting being described" (Patton, 2002, p. 437). Through the description, the reader is able to make a decision as to whether or not findings are transferable (Creswell, 1998).

Finally, I used multiple forms of source triangulation, strengthening the study by combining methods (Patton, 2002; Creswell, 1998; Schwandt, 2001). Patton (2002) states that triangulation is a method of testing for consistency in findings. The first triangulation was through member checking. In addition, I consulted my journal and fieldnotes. Specifically, after completing the thematic analysis, I reviewed my journal and fieldnotes in order to determine consistency and to further examine the outcomes.

Delimitations and Limitations

By identifying limitations prior to a study, the researcher lends credibility to the study and develops the ability to respond to arguments that may attack the findings (Patton, 2002). Current limitations of this study include its limitation to one institution, my previous relationship with the FIR program, and student sampling. In this section, I will discuss each limitation.

First, the study is limited to one institution due to the inconsistencies of FIR programming and university resources between institutions. From residence hall size to apartment location to institutional expectations, FIR programs vary from institution to institution. These different behavior settings (Barker, 1968) could obscure the findings.

Further, as this program has not been studied prior to now, exploratory research was needed. This study will provide an informative base that may provide elements for consistency for future multi-institutional studies.

The second limitation may be my past involvement with the FIR program. For nearly four years, I was directly involved in the implementation of the FIR program – from establishing the budget to interviewing potential FIR candidates. It is important to note that at the time of this study, I am not affiliated with the program other than as a staff member at the institution in a different department. My past involvement may be of great value and/or detriment. I have established trusting relationships with FIRs, have witnessed the FIR program at the institution from its establishment, and have actively participated with the program. This involvement with the FIR program enhances my understanding of the institutional context. I had feared that my involvement with the FIR program might result in apprehension of the participants to interview with me since I am still employed at the institution (Spradley & McCurdy, 1988). During each interview, I disclosed my past involvement with the FIR program as well as my current position at the institution. While I believed apprehension was not a concern because I have no authority over the FIR program, I was aware of this possible perception of past FIRs. I found that the trust that was developed over the years overcame any apprehension and FIRs who did not know me did not seem influenced by my past or present status at the university.

Finally, student sampling was completed by following the snowball sampling procedure in which FIRs, residence life staff, and student participants were asked which students interacted with the FIR program and the best way for me to contact those students (Patton, 2002). While a sample set of this nature may be judged based on

recommendations of probability sampling such as logic, purpose, and recommended sample size, it is important to note that "samples should be judged according to the rationale of the study" (Patton, 2002, p. 245). Studies of this nature are expected to be "information rich, that is, good examples for study, good interview participants" (Patton, 2002, p. 243). In this way, the results are not easily generalized to all students, yet, it provides important insight into the experiences of students who actually did participate in this program.

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the FIR program through the lived experiences of both students and faculty participants in the FIR program at the University of Oklahoma and their perceptions of student success. The sample for this study, by nature, was limited because of the student population targeted by the study and the relatively small number of FIRs, both past and present, associated with the program.

The Decision for Qualitative Analysis

In this study, the establishment of FIRs at the University of Oklahoma and the implementation of the FIR program prompted the research questions. The research questions and the lack of background information on FIR programs then cued this study into the qualitative direction. In this section, I explain my rationale for determining to use qualitative methods rather than quantitative methods.

Comparing my study to my hobbies of gardening and photography has enlightened me about many of my life preferences. In a way, that comparison relates to the reasons I chose qualitative research methods over quantitative research methods after composing the research questions. More pointedly, when I stand at the edge of my gardens in late spring, I marvel at all of the plants that break through the ground, grow in

a miraculous fashion, and bloom. Sections of my garden are dedicated for specific uses. Some portions are planted strictly for bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds. Another area, although woven in between annual flowers, is dedicated to tomatoes and sunflowers. Finally, the area with a birdbath is a very special area; only two plant varieties grow there each year. Grand tulips amaze me each spring and my zinnia seeds sprout, taking over the display from the tired tulips in late spring and bloom through the beginning of fall. This same tulip plot is where the ashes of previous four-legged friends have been taken back to the earth.

From a bird's perspective, my garden is generally green and colorful, but I find the most beauty in the small sections I have created and the individual plants. My wide-angle lens, a lens that enables me to take photos with a periphery of nearly 180 degrees, does not lend itself to capturing the essence or meaning of my garden. While I do use those types of photographs to compare my planting stations from year to year, my breath is taken away by using another lens: a lens with the power to gaze into the smallest details of a flower. With this lens, I am able to focus on the single petal of a tulip or the delicate construction of the anther, stamen, stigma, or pistil.

There are many similarities between my garden and my research. Student-faculty interaction is such a wide topic that photographs would be panoramic views, leaving FIR to be one tulip in an expansive photograph that includes many varieties of plants. Consistent with a phenomenological approach, I strive for an up-close view of student-FIR interaction with student success narrowing my view even further.

When developing the concept for my study, I started with a fascination of the influence of faculty on students. The idea of quality time spent with faculty members,

regardless of the immediate relationship to a students' degree, and the magnitude of the interaction with students (Astin, 1993; Chickering & Reisser, 1994; Kuh, 1996; Kuh et al., 1991; Kuh et al., 1994; Kuh et al., 2005) intrigued me. As I studied student-faculty interaction, the FIR program maintained my interest. The literature rarely addressed student-FIR interaction and how the relationship influenced students or how FIR programs influence faculty. The big garden of student-faculty interaction became narrowed to student-FIR interaction and faculty within the FIR program, just as my garden does each spring when the tulips rise in one section.

Quantitative studies tend to work with many cases and few variables. Qualitative studies tend to rely on few cases and many variables (Creswell, 1998; Ragin, 1987). A qualitative research model was determined for this exploratory study in reflection of the research question. I seek more than numbers can represent for a subsection of the collegiate way, with a very small sample of student-faculty interaction in residence halls. I believe the experiences that may play into each student-FIR interaction are too elusive to capture in a quantitative study. The boundaries of the interaction are nearly endless due to the potential for interaction with any situation at any time. Within this seemingly boundless environment, I seek to understand how FIR and students perceive and describe the FIR program and how student-FIR interaction influences student success.

Summary

Student-FIR interaction is an area of student-faculty interaction that has not been extensively studied. This study contributes to the literature base of student-faculty interaction through exploration of the complexities of the relationships between faculty and students in residence halls. Further, I sought an understanding of the student-FIR

relationship and the FIR program and its influence on student success. A hermeneutic, phenomenological methodology using interviews with FIRs and also with students was used to study the phenomenon. FIR participants were selected through purposeful methods. Student participants were selected through snowball sampling methods. Interviews were guided by open-ended questions with the option to ask deeper questions, as I viewed necessary. Thematic analysis was used to synthesize the description of the essence of the student-FIR relationship and its influence on student success. As phenomenological themes emerged, additional literature was reviewed, as necessary, and utilized in congruence with the data (Glesne, 1999) to develop a conclusion.

In the following chapters, I present the data with illustrative examples, analysis and synthesis for the FIRs (Chapter IV) and the students (Chapter V). The final chapter (Chapter VI) presents a discussion of the data including a summary, conclusions, recommendations, and discussion for future research.

CHAPTER IV: THE FACULTY IN RESIDENCE EXPERIENCE

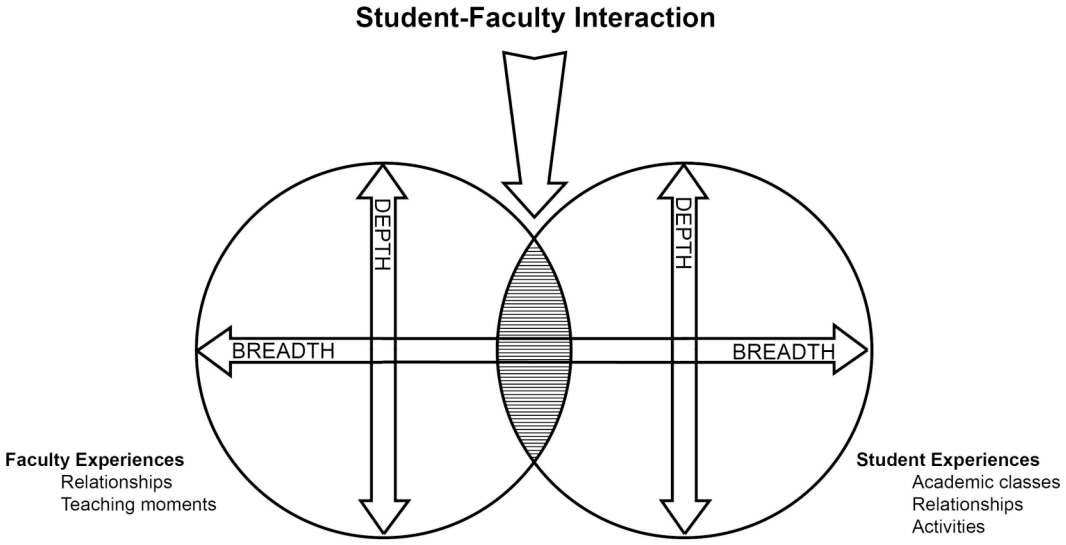
> There's some sort of cultural value of being embedded. I was thinking of the journalists who have gone into war zones who have been embedded. They come away knowing a lot more about war than you would if you were sitting back reading about it or hearing about it. You're just right there. I feel like I've got the pulse of the university down in a lot of ways that I would never have had before. I think our [children] do, too, which is interesting when you look at them growing up. We're a five-year family at the university. From a personal point of view, I think that's been very helpful. I have the rhythm of the university down I think in a way others wouldn't.
>
> -A reflection from Dan, a Faculty In Residence

Most Faculty In Residence participants (FIRs) offered similar accounts as this reflection provided by Dan. Their faculty experiences prior to the Faculty In Residence (FIR) program were not nearly as involved as during their service as FIR. That is, the FIRs experienced broader and deeper experiences, particularly with students, than as faculty members prior to becoming FIRs.

When President David L. Boren developed the Faculty In Residence (FIR) program at the University of Oklahoma in 1995, he recognized the potential of the FIR program "to foster faculty and student interaction and encourage intergenerational friendships" (University of Oklahoma's *Community Impact Report* of 2008, p. 1). However, was it anticipated that faculty members would experience the "cultural value of being embedded" as described by Dan? Diagram 2 outlines student-faculty interaction without the FIR program. The reader explores the faculty half of this diagram through the experiences of FIRs.

Diagram 2.

Student-Faculty Interaction without the FIR Program in the University Context



This phenomenological study was designed to yield a better understanding of the FIR program through FIR and student experiences and descriptions of the FIR program, such as those in Dan's reflection. In addition, this study expands the knowledge base in the field of higher education on student success and FIR influences on student success.

Relationships was the primary concept that emerged from this study from both the FIRs and the students' perspectives. Additional themes that emerged from the faculty included Intangible Benefits, Transitions, University Immersion and Teaching Moments. The students' additional themes were Mentorship, a form of relationship, and Activities. This chapter and Chapter V are dedicated to presenting and describing these themes which emerged from the faculty of the FIR program and student interviews, respectively. In each chapter, I provide an initial analysis, which is furthered in Chapter VI.

In this chapter, I first present the tangible benefits of the FIR program. Tangible benefits include elements of the FIR program that create its structure, such as the rent-

free apartment, a $300 monthly stipend, and dining plan. Tangible benefits are not considered a theme in this study as they are essential to the FIR program implementation and all FIRs experience these benefits. Therefore, they are not information that has surfaced from this research, but rather foundational elements established from the beginning of the program. After this foundational material is established, I then explore and analyze the FIRs' experiences as related to the specific research questions. The FIR experiences are explored through the five themes, the meaning of student success, and FIR program influence on student success. In this way, Table 3 outlines the structure of this chapter.

Table 3.

Structure of FIR Experiences.

Tangible Benefits	Rent-free apartment Paid utility bills Telephone, Internet, Water, Waste, and Electric $300/month stipend Campus eating plan $5,000/year programming budget Campus recreation membership
5 Themes	Intangible Benefits Human kindness Student culture Student interaction Professional development Campus social status Transitions Awareness and entry into the FIR program Emotions of becoming a FIR Misconceptions of FIR environment Relationships Students Mentors Othermothering Adult relationships Resident Advisers Students' parents FIRs University faculty and staff Faculty guests Families University Immersion Student culture Experiential learning University community-at-large Adaptation University support Teaching Moments Informal-learning opportunities Formal-learning opportunities
Student Success	Meaning of student success Recognition of one's potential Achievement of one's potential Individualization Equates to happiness FIR program influence on student success

The Tangible Benefits

For this study, I did not consider tangible benefits a theme although almost all of the FIRs discussed the tangible benefits of the FIR program. This deliberate decision was made due to the tangible benefits being provided to all faculty participating in the FIR program and being essential to the FIR program structure. In this sense, this section is more of a reflection of FIRs' perceptions of the programmatic elements rather than an emergent theme about programmatic experiences.

Specifically, FIRs receive a rent-free apartment located within student housing with no utility, local telephone, and Internet connectivity bills to pay, a $300 per month stipend, meals provided at the cafeteria and about campus, a programming budget of $5,000 per academic year, and the expectation of student-FIR interaction. The apartments are approximately 1,800 to 2,200 square feet with two to three bathrooms.

Josh, one of the first FIRs to join the program, described the misconceptions he and his wife thought about the apartment prior to being accepted, "We both were picturing living in a dorm room. I meant, that's what we thought, it was like, 'Ah, it's okay. How bad can a dorm room be?', you know, 'cause we just thought it sounded like fun." Isabella laughingly reminisced about her family's decision to move into the residence halls, "I pictured it as they would take, you know, two dorm rooms and knock out the wall between them, and you'd be there living in the dorm experience, and that was not appealing to me at all."

Gabe had a very exciting experience prior to moving into his apartment as he spent time in the empty apartment with President of the University of Oklahoma David L. Boren and First Lady Molly Shi Boren. The Borens shared with Gabe their expectations

of the space and sent him on a journey to select furniture that would become a part of the apartment and that fit Gabe's personal style. Gabe had never had an opportunity to create such a space for himself. As he told me about this experience, his eyes and face brimmed with enthusiasm as he remembered the details.

> It was the nicest space I'd ever lived in, in my life, okay? … It's a big apartment… the space was very attractive and I enjoyed the aesthetics of it. It was very convenient all the way around. It was a hospitable space…the way it was done and when Molly and David [President and Mrs. Boren] came down to look at it with me, we talked about the importance of this space being welcoming. I'm kind of interested in space anyway, spatial arrangements, and it was done very well, I thought.

In addition to the apartment, the amenities include meals at the cafeteria and at food services facilities across campus, a gym membership to the campus facilities, and on-campus parking. Michael, a FIR with two children, described his family's cafeteria experiences.

> The cafeteria was a huge part of the experience for us. It was far and away the single biggest perk for us of the program that, with two kids, we could come home, everybody would come home from work and school and we could just walk to the cafeteria and at least one picky eater we would just say, "Go," you know, "find something out there that you like to eat and come back" and the kids loved it. It was incredibly convenient for us.

The cafeteria was an excellent experience for many of the FIRs. For them, it was a luxury to have a large selection of wonderfully prepared food so easily available. The many options available at the cafeteria, including a line with only vegetarian fair, often provide taste palettes with opportunities to explore new foods. Will spoke of the cafeteria in terms of trying new foods that, eventually, influenced his family's decision to become vegetarians.

> That [eating at the cafeteria] was an experience that let us eat more at the veggie station, and we became vegetarians I think in part because of that. So, there's some healthy living things that have come out of it for us.

Although Isabella and Chris no longer live in the residence halls, they express fond memories of the cafeteria, as Isabella recounts.

> Chris and I often still joke about just sort of, you know, we should have had a tray and a conveyor belt installed in our home because it became such a part of our eating life to, especially for dinner, was to go to the cafeteria. Just sort of down there and off it goes. You know you don't have to deal with it anymore, fantastic!

The FIRs appreciated the good food and convenience of the cafeteria. The Couch Restaurants were not only a place to dine for the FIRs, but they were a convenience that saved time through fewer trips to the grocery store, food preparation, and clean-up. Further, it assisted many FIRs in learning more about students and the student experience by sitting among them and living part of what the students lived.

Beyond the cafeteria meals, the FIRs receive a gym membership to the campus recreational center and on-campus parking. Designated parking spaces are located within a few steps from FIR front doors. While parking is a great benefit, it has not been uncommon at the beginning of each academic year for the FIRs to experience parking issues when first-year students do not abide by the designated parking signs. As Anthony explains,

> It [parking] was painful, at least the first year, because there were many more students that were in resident housing than there were spots. And being the Faculty In Residence, we had three spots. Well, we had two cars, so that means that leaves one [parking spot] perpetually open. The first year, there was a consistent problem with people parking [in the open spot]. Of course, if one person parked in that open spot, that wasn't a big deal because you don't have a lot of visits [that require a parking spot]. But that wasn't the problem. The problem is that if my wife or I left, that meant it left two spots, but then many times there would be two people, which would mean that we couldn't park there. That makes me remember the time that we had just had our new baby, literally less than six months old. My wife went to the grocery store, came back. It was in February or so. It's cold; it's raining. She had no place to park. That was very irritating.

Gabe further explained the parking situation and shared how his inconveniences began an educational process for the students about parking and signage in addition to an awareness of the FIR program.

> And the parking… that was a very interesting phenomenon… I mean we had to do this parking thing for six months before it ever got sorted out. But, we did a lot of negotiation. We had to establish rules and it was a process of getting people conscious of this thing and it wasn't onerous or anything like that, but, I'd go out and somebody would be parked in the space. Then, I would get a hold of them and they would always be apologetic and just didn't know. So, we improved our signage and things like that.

While parking proved an inconvenience for a short time, it was a nice financial addition to the FIR benefits. Today, FIRs save $222 annually with this benefit and more through other FIR incentives.

The financial incentives for FIRs are appealing and may financially impact the FIRs for the short and long term, for example, with retirement. Dan summarized the benefits and spoke of how important they were for his family with both quality of life from moving from a high-paid position outside of the university to a professor's pay scale to planning for their future.

> It's a wonderful financial package if you think of it. There's no salary, but the amount of money that you gain by having rent-free housing. And it's very nice housing; it's really nice. You have food available. You have your utilities available. Then you also have the stipend so you can do programming with it. You can't beat that. It really gives you a chance as you plan, even faculty in residence, to develop a financial plan that will help you to move further on. Faculty members are not overpaid typically. I came from a fairly high salary range when I came to the university. I was used to making a lot of money. So when I first started teaching as a professor I thought it would be fine. But I realized, hey, wait a minute. This is not the same cash flow that we used to have. For me, it was a time to regroup and do some planning for our future, which has been still really helpful today. That's been a big deal for us.

Ethan and his family have lived in two different FIR apartments over the years. Their perspectives are based on not only the different communities, but also on the

physical arrangements of those communities and their apartments. Ethan and his family could have easily left after their first year when they were informed they would be moved at the end of the spring semester to another FIR apartment. Their building was due for renovation. The family decided to serve as FIRs for another academic year. Ethan conveys a similar importance of the FIR benefits and, further, states that the apartments and tangible benefits were so enticing that he may not have decided to accept being a FIR without them. Ethan said,

> There are some real benefits. The saving money is just great – the meal plan. The apartments themselves, we've lived in two. They did a great job putting them together. They're very comfortable. They're not loud. The maintenance staff is attentive and quick. When I tell people about this, this is other faculty or my friends, this is the first thing that I say, "We don't pay to live there, we get free bills, free meal plan." I think it is a very, it's a very attractive benefit for us since we didn't own a house before we moved in. We don't own a house. We don't want to buy a house – given everything in the economy and just our personal situation. The benefits are an important thing and I would be honest to say that without the benefits I just named, the meal plan, the stipend, the free rent, I don't know if it would be worth it because it is a lot of work, but those benefits are not the only, even benefits, we get out of it.

In addition to the tangible benefits, Ethan refers to other rewards of the FIR experience. In fact, the FIRs were more likely to speak of the non-tangible benefits of the program rather than the financial benefits. More specifically, many FIRs spoke of the human kindness they witnessed that touched their lives and how the FIR program positively changed them. In the next section, I will discuss the emergent, intangible benefits including human kindness, student culture, the ability to interact with students, and social status on campus.

Themes of the FIR Experience

In examining each cluster diagram and reviewing the interview transcripts repeatedly, themes began to emerge in relation to the guiding research questions.

1. What are the experiences of students and FIRs with the FIR program?
2. What meaning do students and FIRs ascribe to their experiences?
3. How do the students and the FIRs perceive student success?
4. In what, if any, ways do students and FIRs relate the FIR program to student success?

In this section, I discuss and analyze the emergent themes of Transitions, Intangible Benefits, Relationships, University Immersion, and Teaching Moments of the FIR program and the FIRs' perceptions of student success.

Transitions

The FIRs discussed three points of transition, each of which evolved from the narratives. The first was how FIRs became aware of the FIR program and accepted an offer to be in the FIR program. The second was the emotions the faculty members felt when they realized they were to be FIRs. Finally, was the misconception of the FIR environment. In this section, I discuss the three points and offer a brief discussion of the expectations of being in the FIR program versus the reality of being in the FIR program.

When Jacob and his wife attended an annual, university event, they did not realize they would start on the journey toward becoming a FIR family. The campus holiday lighting ceremony held each year at David A. Burr Park is a time for the university community to come together to celebrate the season. Jacob recalled a holiday lighting

ceremony during which he and his wife discussed the FIR program and his consideration of the park as his "front yard."

> We heard about it [the FIR program] – we heard about the program in general and we would always take our kids down here to the tree lighting ceremony at Christmas time…. He [Gabe] had only been here a few months. It was his first semester that he was asked to speak at this Tree Lighting Ceremony about the community down here. Of course, he's such a dynamic guy anyway and he talked about what it was like living down here. He said, "This is my front yard," and I kind of joked to [my wife] knowing that they were building other apartments and stuff like that and I said, "How would that be if this was our front yard? Would this be quite a place to raise kids?" We had our kids with us. We saw other families here and while we were kind of in that—and [my wife] looked around and – I'm not sure if she thought at the time, but, that sort of planted a seed in it. So, when the opportunity came, as apartments were being built, I expressed an interest to President Boren. He was thrilled. I mean it was his program. He was so big into it… I think he was kind of excited that I thought it was kind of a neat program, too, and so he asked us when [our building] was completed, if we'd move in. So that's how that came about.

Other FIRs knew of the program through faculty members within their department or coincidental meetings with faculty members who were participating or had already participated in the program. Through word-of-mouth or casual conversation, information about the FIR program traveled to other faculty members. The FIR information had to be accepted by not only the faculty member, but also, as Jacob mentioned, the faculty member's partner. Further, the timing of the opening in the FIR program had to be considered by the faculty members and their families. As Michael mentions below, he thought the program was interesting, but he was working toward tenure and did not want any interference with that goal. Once he received tenure, he and his wife became interested in the FIR program.

> The very first Faculty In Residence was a colleague of mine…. I heard [him] rave about it. He thought it was fantastic…. I heard about it from him when it first started. Sounded interesting, but, I had just gotten here. I was on the tenure clock, wasn't remotely interested in it then. And then, gosh I don't know, I

> remember thinking about it again several years later, maybe reading an article in the school paper about it or something…
>
> I told [my wife] about it and [my wife] got much more excited about it. She thought it would be really interesting, you know really sort of interesting and of course there were, you know, the financial inducements were pretty significant. I wasn't – I refused to do it before I got tenure. So we talked about it back and forth and I said, "Look, I got tenure," and so immediately [my wife] said, "Okay now let's go find out about it." And that's where the story picks up.

Anthony spoke of a coincidental meeting of a FIR on an airplane. The conversation drew him toward the program before he started his employment with the university. When he and his wife arrived at the university to begin his faculty appointment, he visited the FIR he had met on the airplane, became more interested in the program, and expressed that interest to the director of Housing and Food Services.

Other faculty members suggested Ethan and his wife investigate the program. He said, "I had a few people suggest that we might be interested in it and after their suggestions, I requested information from someone in housing and from that point he told me how I would apply and we applied."

While faculty and the student newspaper spark interest in the program, President David L. Boren of the University of Oklahoma continues to be one of the primary motivators in recruiting faculty members to enter the program. Chris's and Isabella's intrigue with the FIR program began with a trolley ride with President Boren. Chris recalled the day during his interview.

> We went on a trip. We were taken on a bus ride with [another faculty couple] and the President and, at that time, the VP for Student Affairs… and some others. We weren't sure what we were in for, but we went on this trolley ride. We started at Boyd House and then we went down and toured the first two FIRs…. just put the hard sell on. We weren't sure what it was. That was the first time. The President, of course, was extremely welcoming and supportive and Isabella and I started to think about it.

President Boren continues to support the FIR program. For example, he expressed his support and dedication to the program in the University of Oklahoma's *Community Impact Report* of 2008 in his opening letter by recognizing the FIR program and its commitment "to foster faculty and student interaction and encourage intergenerational friendships" (p. 1). President Boren is also diligent with FIR selection as he reviews faculty members who wish to become involved in the program. His personal dedication is evidenced by his involvement with the development of the FIR apartments as previously described by Schrage and Gabe, the *Community Impact Report*, FIR selection, the continuous development of the program, and his participation in FIR programming through events such as *Pizza with the President*. Presidential involvement enhances the program and establishes its sustainability on campus as well as expresses the high expectations of the FIR program and the faculty participants to the university community. High expectations may develop nervousness and anxiety in those trying to meet them. For example, would each FIR meet the expectations of such an involved university president and the university community?

Once FIR candidates considered the program and were accepted, emotions of the transition came upon them. Emotions ranged from excitement to anxiety to humbleness. For example, the FIRs became excited because they realized they were going to be a part of a high priority program at the university. They became humbled at the thought of all that was in front of them including moving, developing FIR programs, establishing their lives on campus, leaving their known comforts, and meeting the expectations of President Boren as observed through his own involvement. Jacob described his feelings of becoming a FIR.

> You know, it's an honor to be a FIR. It's one of the things that I look at, as far as those three years, were probably the best growing years as a faculty member on campus. We were overwhelmed. As much as we wanted to do it, I'll tell you we were scared to death, Amy. We did not think we were up to the task and I remember my wife, as soon as we moved in, she looked at me and she goes, "You know, we don't deserve to be here." And I said, you know, "You're probably right," because it was – the expectations for that and they were the biggest expectations that we put on ourselves, and we knew what the program entailed and we wanted to give it our all. We did give it our all, for better or worse, but it meant there was a lot of responsibility to have with the students. We wanted to create an atmosphere where students felt like they were a part of an OU family, a larger family. And when you move into a dorm room you've got 1,200 or 1,300 students, that's bigger than a lot of these towns where some of these students come from, you know, but you've got to create this sense of community. It was an overwhelming responsibility, but at the same time a great honor to be part of something so big like that.

Andrew described his stress with moving into the FIR program in relationship to his neighborhood. He said,

> One of the really stressful things about it for me and my wife was the decision to do it…. Leaving our neighborhood – we just moved into this neighborhood and met a lot of people and made friends.

FIRs also experienced anxiety through self-doubt and fear of not being accepted by the students. Michael and Isabella had similar thoughts prior to moving into the program. Michael said,

> I was scared. I wasn't sure it was something I was really going to be good at or really wanted to do. It sounded like it was a great thing for the right kind of person. I didn't know if I was that kind of person…. It was scary, well, probably because just out of ignorance. I really didn't know what this would be like. I didn't know what it would be like to live in a building with hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of undergraduates. And I want to say I didn't know how I would be at relating to them in this very different way. Hadn't really ever done it. I mean I'd been an undergraduate with other undergraduates and I'd been a teacher, grad student, and a professor, and you know I thought of myself as fairly easy-going, easy to get along with person, but you know I didn't know how I would be at doing that.

Isabella was also concerned about being accepted by students as previously discussed. She said,

> I was absolutely terrified of students and thought I was just way too nerdy and way too square and way too old and that they would hate me. I was sure that they would hate me; and, in moving into the dorms at that same time, just spending time with students and seeing what they care about and what their lives are like and that they're really human and they're not just, you know, perfect cool teenagers. It changed my career in ways that I think I would have been a completely different teacher and a completely difference faculty member, if I hadn't had that early on in my experience.

Once she better understood the student culture, that she had a misperception of students, and she realized that students were human and they accepted her, her anxiety eased. Further, the FIR program changed how she relates to students today. Isabella feels that the FIR program helped her to become a better instructor and, therefore, faculty member.

The third and final point of transition was the misconception of the FIR environment. FIRs did not experience some of the issues they anticipated prior to moving into the residence halls. Emily described what other people had expressed to her and how differently her experience compared to her initial expectations.

> Actually, a lot of times people think, "Oh, what a drag… these students are going to impinge on your privacy," and that was not the case.

Isabella also expressed what others thought about the FIR program prior to moving in and how differently her experience compared to expectation. The first misconception was the physical arrangement of the apartment and the FIR's duties. First, the apartments were conceptualized as two residence hall rooms joined together. Second, it was thought that the FIRs would provide residence hall policy enforcement. Neither count was accurate. Isabella professed,

> I think it was because I pictured it as like they would take two dorm rooms and knock out the walls between them and you'd be there living in the dorm experience and that was not appealing to me at all. A lot of people think that you're job is going to enforce the rules, and that would absolutely – that would have driven me away immediately. I wouldn't have enjoyed that at all. But, to how, to be just a place where you could interact in sort of every aspect of your

> everyday life, formally and informally, that was what was so cool about it. That was what changed my life so dramatically – to make me be much more comfortable around students than I ever would've been.

Upon Isabella's departure from the FIR program, she returned to the cafeteria, but did not experience the sense of belonging as she experienced while she was living in the residence halls.

> We went for lunch one time and it just didn't feel the same anymore. We don't feel like we belong anymore, to me. I mean you're over on that part of campus, and you have connections to that part of campus, but it's like once we lost our connections, it's just you feel conspicuous, again, in a way that we used to feel conspicuous before we went over there and then we felt like it was our home. And, then after we left, we sort of lost our connections with it. It's like you go back to sort of feeling that like you're not really or you don't belong anymore.

Isabella related that she felt a loss in the connections she has made in the campus housing area.

While Isabella felt a loss in that area of campus, she reported a gain in the way she interacted with students overall. Other FIRs, such as Jacob, felt that the program introduced them "to a whole new part of campus that you wouldn't be familiar to." The FIR program presents stresses to the participants. However, the narratives, just as described in Jacob's statement, indicate the benefits and life experiences far outweigh those stresses and that the stresses pass and, for most, develop into fond memories. Therefore, this transitional phase of entry into the FIR program is a time for the faculty members to explore and reconsider their own life worlds.

Intangible Benefits

Intangible benefits are non-monetary benefits. FIRs obtain them through experiences with students and the university environment. Through the interviews, five different types of intangible benefits were described including human kindness, student

culture, the ability to interact with students, professional development, and campus social status.

Human kindness is not unusual in the world, but experiencing it has more influence on the spirit of the FIRs than simply listening about it on the local news. For example, throughout Jacob's interview, he spoke of human kindness and how enriching the experiences were to him and his family as a reward of the FIR program. Jacob's expressions during this part of the interview softened as he reminisced about these happy encounters. Further, he discussed how these encounters changed him as an instructor. The student encounters humanized students to Jacob such that he began to recognize them as individuals with their own experiences. The first account Jacob described occurred just as the residence halls were closing for winter break. At this time of year, the residence halls were closed with the exception of a few floors designated for holiday housing accommodations. All of the other students were required to leave for the winter break, taking all of the belongings they would need for their absence. Jacob described his observation of what happened when a student did not have the available finances to fund his trip home and he had not arranged for housing accommodations over the semester break.

> They [campus security] came down to one of the lounges and there was a student there that had some suitcases and was sleeping on one of these couches. They said, "You're going to have to leave. We've got to lock this building." Well, come to find out the student was an honor student, I think from another state – I want to say Louisiana – and did not have enough money to go home. And they said, "Well you can't stay here. You know, we've got to close it, you know. You can go over here for a few more hours, but, really you can't stay here." And he said, "Well, I don't have any money to get home. I don't have any money to go anywhere else." Well, word gets down [to the residence life office], the RA's [Resident Advisers] are all clearing out and Steven [a Graduate Resident Director] was down there and word gets to him and right off the bat he says, "Let me go talk to him." He goes and talks to him. Come to find out Steven had a voucher

> for a free airline ticket. He was wondering, "What am I going to do with this? Where am I going to go?" And when he found out the student needed a ride home, he hurried and found out there was a flight leaving from Oklahoma City to Shreveport or Baton Rouge…. He booked it and told the student, "You know, I'm going to – I've got an airplane ticket here. I'd be glad to have you use it to go back home and see your family." He [the student] says, "I can't pay for it." He [Steven] said, "That doesn't matter." He [the student] says, "I don't have a ride to the airport." He [Steven] says, "Pack your bags, be down here in two hours, I'm picking you up." Those kinds of things we saw a lot of it. It was just students being kind to one another. We saw the best of human interaction down there [in the residence halls].
>
> I am as a faculty now, since that experience [FIR experience], a little more sympathetic to students and their needs. I probably show a little bit more mercy towards students than I did before [becoming a FIR], would have before had that experience because I, you know, I know what their lives are like. Even if they [other faculty members] don't work with students' lives, it is a good life, I'm not saying that but they do have a lot of challenges that they face. There's a lot of pressures that they go through and so I think just being exposed to all that's made me more sensitive to their needs now.
>
> We feel our lives are so much more rich because of the people we met through that program [the FIR program] and still today become, you know, continual friends. The examples of kindness that we saw: students treating other students with kindness. We were there during an ice storm one time and, it was actually a snow storm was what it was, and students just went out and did what they could. They would try to get some shovels and things and they'd help clear this snow. I remember seeing a student on this ice and this snow, [using a] wheelchair trying to get through. He was just having a hard time. Another student comes behind him and takes him where he needs to go… week after week, we would see these acts of kindness there that really touched our lives for the better.

Just as Jacob had life-altering student experiences with human kindness, Emily also spoke of her experiences with students performing community service. She and her faculty husband, Dan, organized community service events for residence hall students. Her animation and facial expressions relayed how endearing these projects were to her heart. Not only did Emily recognize the many benefits the students provided for families in need, she recognized the personal rewards to her in watching the students become

involved in their community, "they truly gave back and I thought, that was – that was one of the most rewarding things that we could do."

Living with students also helped FIRs to become more knowledgeable about student culture. In Jacob's experience, he became more familiar with the human kindness of student culture. Will experienced a more trendy aspect of student culture through Facebook and text messaging. By being more knowledgeable about student culture, Will translated his own experiences from the residence halls into his classrooms.

> [Being a FIR helped me with] just knowing a little bit more about what the student experience is here [at OU], and also being reacquainted with what student challenges are and things that students are thinking about.
>
> And I even listed Facebook here [on my cluster diagram], which is something that we picked up here through the students. And text messaging, you know, little things like that. But those kinds of things have given you a better feeling for just where the students are coming from that I have in my classes, for example.
>
> I guess I take things from every experience that I'm in, and that informs about how I think about things and how I treat different situations. And clearly this was, you know, a fairly influential experience. It was something we did for three years. We were immersed in it, so that had a big influence.

Isabella also became immersed in the FIR-student culture and, eventually, became quite comfortable in the role of faculty member. However, Isabella welled with emotion as she recalled her first thoughts of how students would perceive her. As she spoke about her experiences with students, her eyes watered and filled with emotion. When she became a FIR, she had lived in Norman, Oklahoma for less than a year. She did not have much experience with students, she had moved to Oklahoma from a coastal state, she was newly married, and she had just finished her doctoral degree. Not only had Isabella just experienced some of life's greatest stresses, but she found herself doubting her abilities to

interact with students. Through the FIR program, she realized that the student culture was caring and human rather than her contrasting idea of students.

> I was absolutely terrified of students and, um, thought I was just way too nerdy and way too square and way too old, and that they would hate me. I was sure that they would hate me; and, in moving into the dorms at that same time, just spending time with students and seeing what they care about and what their lives are like and that they're really human and they're not just you know perfect, cool teenagers.

Later in the interview, Isabella smiling and laughing about what she thought the FIR apartment would look like, unexpectedly said,

> But, to how to be, um, just a place where you could interact in sort of every aspect of your everyday life, formally and informally, that was what was so cool about it. That was what changed my life so dramatically. To make me be much more comfortable around students than I ever would've been.

Isabella spoke of what she called the "indirect effects" of the FIR program. The indirect effects included how the FIR program and the interaction with the student culture enabled her to better relate to students not only while she was in the program, but to the present day. Isabella transformed her previous image of student culture through her experiences as a FIR and continues to apply her experiences to the classroom. She labeled these indirect effects as "by far the most significant and ongoing" of the FIR program on her. Further, she explained how the FIR program not only benefited her and the students she knew while in the FIR program, but now years after her departure from the FIR program, how the program has enabled her to relate better to current students.

> I have helped so many students just with study skills or with confidence, uh, students who enrolled in my classes that I have helped, that I think I would have been scared of and would not have been able to help that effectively had we not done that [FIR program]. So, that's sort of an indirect spin-off that isn't as specific as a student who came to our [FIR] apartment, but it's still to me, is a direct result of my experience in the FIR program.

Several FIRs mentioned their fears or misunderstandings of students. Through the FIR program, the FIRs realized their fears and misunderstandings were unfounded. This personal growth overlapped the FIRs professional development.

Isabella spoke of how her involvement with the FIR program influenced her professional development.

> It changed my career in ways that, um, I think I would have been a completely different teacher, and a completely different faculty member, if I hadn't had that early on in my experience. So, that [the FIR program] was absolutely transformative for me.

Career development for faculty members may include orientations to working with students. However, the transformation would not likely compare to that Isabella described. The depth and breadth of the FIR experiences introduces faculty members to the lifeworlds of students. These experiences cannot be translated into faculty orientation presentations.

While many of the FIRs spoke of the intangible benefits as ways they were transformed by the FIR program, others spoke of how they perceived a status change on campus when they became FIRs in addition to the transformation career development benefits. The status change perception was the result of invitations to special events such as President David L. Boren's foreign policy dinners, scooping ice cream for students on residence hall move-in day, and socializing with other faculty and staff with perceived university influence. Dan explained the benefits he and his family perceived.

> I'm not sure that everybody that thinks about Faculty In Residence really understands that when you go into that setting, something really good happens to you. I mean personally, professionally, because if you're a Faculty In Residence – this sounds kind of self-centered – but you really do have an enhanced status. There are only a few families that are selected for Faculty In Residence. You're recognized by the university as from the very top and you're invited into an inner circle of those kinds of faculty members who have the ear of the president or have

> access to other people in responsible roles. That doesn't necessarily happen in any faculty position. I think of that as a real social status for you as a faculty member. That's good.
>
> There's some sort of cultural value of being embedded. I was thinking of the journalists who have gone into war zones who have been embedded. They come away knowing a lot more about war than you would if you were sitting back reading about it or hearing about it. You're just right there. I feel like I've got the pulse of the university down in a lot of ways that I would never have had before. I think our [children] do, too, which is interesting when you look at them growing up. We're a five-year family at the university. From a personal point of view, I think that's been very helpful. I have the rhythm of the university down I think in a way others wouldn't.
>
> But our sense of loyalty really increased exponentially, I would say, as we became a real part of, as President Boren likes to call it, that OU family. I really felt that happen. And it still happens. It's been several years now since we were in it [the FIR program], but that kind of loyalty remains. You sit on campus during the football games and you just see the crowds swelling around your house and it's like, hey, I'm part of this, too. You really get into that excitement. That's always great.

The benefits of the FIR program span beyond financial gain and often result in personal development, professional development, lifelong changes, and an expanding list of relationships. The information presented to this point was utilized to paint the image of the FIR program in relation to the FIRs themselves. That is, the transitions and the intangible benefits. While they bleed into all of the themes and observations, the transitions and intangible benefits focused on the FIRs' own experiences. In the following sections, I introduce the remainder of the FIR themes, which emerged from the transcripts and cluster diagrams including Relationships, University Immersion, and Teaching Moments. These reflect the FIRs' themes not only for themselves, but also more through their interaction with others than the previously discussed themes. Further, I discuss student success from the FIR perspective and analyze data as it is presented. In the following section, the FIRs' experiences with campus relationships are explored.

Relationships

Relationships was the dominant theme among student and faculty participants. The faculty discussed a broader range of relationships on account of the FIR program. The FIRs possessed a greater scope and understanding of the university than the student participants. Further, they indicated during the interviews that they had gained great knowledge of the university and established a greater number of relationships through the FIR program. In comparison, the students focused on their FIR relationships specifically in regards to the FIR program. The FIRs focused on relationships with students, resident advisers (RAs), students' parents, other FIRs, university faculty and staff, faculty guests, and their own families. In this section, these FIR relationships are addressed.

Students

Of all of the relationships discussed during the interviews, FIRs discussed student relationships most often. Student relationships were built through many different methods such as extending an in-class relationship into the FIR program, introducing themselves to students outside of the FIR home, and providing the time, place, and manner for students to meet the FIRs and each other.

Josh presented ways in which the student-FIR relationships developed in his community and the benefits he observed from the program. He outlined several ways in which the relationships developed including creating opportunities and a place for social interactions; extending his home as a home for students to visit, providing a safe place for students to discuss sensitive issues; and enabling students to know a faculty member on a personal level.

The FIR program provided opportunities for social interactions within the FIR apartments. Each FIR home has a large living area for entertaining guests. Josh felt that through the FIR home, he and his family were able to enhance social life for students by not only getting to know them and vice versa, but introducing to them to each other. They invited students to dinner or they baked cookies and allowed the aromas to draw students to their door for these types of socials. Josh recalled the student encounters.

> Socializing at dinner [was not] just about family, you know – "How's your mom and dad? Do you have any siblings?" Just whatever – clearly not what I would call academic. It's just getting to know people. We had at least once a month what we called "cookie night," but it again, was food – was a way to bring people together who didn't really know each other very well and help them get to know each other. You know, it's like, "Joe, do you know Susie?" And invariably it'd be, "No," and so they'd start chit-chatting. And so providing a place for students to congregate to get to know each other and become friends [was important].

The FIR apartment was not just a place for students and faculty to meet each other, according to Josh. The apartment was also a place where students could have a "home away from home." Josh's concept of a home away from home was that of comfort, safety, encouragement, and a place to provide some necessities. Josh said of his home,

> There's some comfort, some familiarity. And so a student could come in and be nurtured a little bit so that if they needed somebody to say, "You're doing great," Who else are they going to tell that they got an "A" on an exam? Nobody, nobody cares. But we care, and they know that, and so they'll come in and say, "Hey, I got an 'A' on that test that I've been studying for," and just to say, "Hey, that is awesome!"

Josh furthered his comparison of a home away from home by discussing how he could assist students in ways that their parents would have helped if the students were at their own homes.

> If they [students] needed something sewn up, if they needed something repaired – you know I have gone out and helped clean off battery cables or whatever. Somebody to jump-start a car – they know they can ask me and I've got tools, I've got pliers and such. And so that is – things that they could count on at home, and they can count on them at our place. They know where they can go to get

> that. We have a stove, and we are, if we're asked, they can come and cook up something if they want to try something…. If somebody forgets to pick up ketchup at the McDonald's, you know, and they get back and they say, "Hey, you have any ketchup?" "Yeah, I got some ketchup" – that kind of thing. It is an interesting dynamic, but students often are looking for someone that they can confide in that they trust, that is not gonna go blah, blah, blah about whatever it is. So, if it's problems with a boyfriend or girlfriend, and if it is problems with a parent, if it is problems with – I mean, we've had all kinds of stuff – drugs, alcohol discussions, just things – things that they want to get off their chests, that they want to, I'm calling it a counselor, a confidante, or an advisor.

Strange and Banning (2001) discuss person-environment interactions.

> Colleges and universities establish conditions to attract, satisfy, and retain students for purposes of challenging them to develop qualities of the educated person, including a capacity for complex critical reasoning, communication, leadership, a sense of identity and purpose, an appreciation for differences, and a commitment to lifelong learning. (p. 2)

The FIRs promote the conditions Strange and Banning outline by serving as resources for students such as the counselor, confidante, and advisor Josh described. Further, environments such as those described by the FIRs provide an environment conducive to supporting the satisfaction of Maslow's needs (1943). The FIR program provides a sense of safety through provision of resources and family-like inclusion. The needs of love and belonging are supported through the FIR program by the FIRs' efforts to receive students and serve in capacities not necessarily as friends, but more as mentors and advisers. Through receiving and interacting with students, students are provided with opportunities that may increase self-esteem, confidence, respect, and achievement. Finally, with these needs satisfied, the FIR program assists students in moving toward self-actualization.

Finally, Josh spoke of how through the FIR program he strives to get to know students so that they know a faculty member on a personal level. In this way, he attempts to humanize faculty members with students and reduce their anxiety in and out of the classroom when interacting with their professors. Josh stated he

> [wanted to continue] increasing the comfort level with faculty so that they [students] would know a faculty, at least one, on a personal level. And so by doing that they suddenly see faculty as human beings instead of some kind of space alien or whatever I used to think that they were. And, therefore, in the classroom they're more likely to raise their hand, they're more likely to ask questions, they're more likely to make comments.

Josh's perspective of creating a home away from their home to relate to students was not unique. All of the other FIRs extended their homes to students while others also extended their view of home into the students' lived worlds. Students' lived worlds spanned beyond the classroom to the residence halls. Two of the FIRs specifically mentioned they experienced students both in their homes and during time not spent in the classroom. Emma said,

> FIR-student interaction is different than your traditional faculty-student interaction, at least in my experience. When I come to the FIR apartment it is like almost a parallel universe. I'm seeing them playing tennis, table tennis, pool; they're kind of just walking around eating, lounging, and you get to see a side of them that you don't see, of course, when you're in a classroom or they're coming to your office during office hours. And I think that interaction is mostly like providing an opportunity for them to define how they want that to be as opposed to a set "this is what your role is, this is what my role is." It's really more fluid.

In comparing Emma's observations to Josh's observations, Josh attempted to humanize faculty members to the students whereas in Emma's experiences, the students humanized themselves to her. Chris also expressed a similar realization when he said,

> I think one of the most noteworthy things is the talents of students that you don't get to see when they're in your classes. Sometimes some of the students who are in the back of the class might be a really outstanding pianist or something like that. We learned about these talents by being there.

Further, Isabella mentioned how she became more comfortable with students when she discovered, "… that they're really human and they're not just, you know, perfect cool teenagers." Developing relationships with students was easier for some FIRs compared to others.

Unlike Emma and Chris, developing relationships was uncomfortable for some FIRs such as Anthony who said, "… maybe this is personality-wise for me, but it was difficult to really build relationships with students." To initiate relationships with students, FIRs often became creative in their introductions. One FIR wore a maid's costume with a dress, apron, and a feather duster. She went from room to room on move-in day and asked the residents if she could dust their rooms. While dusting the rooms, she eventually revealed her identity. Other FIRs played their instruments throughout the residence halls on move-in day, concentrating their performances on elevators and in the lobbies. Those not inclined to dress up or play the ukulele established other methods of introducing themselves to students. Gabe described how he introduced himself to students in the residence halls and cafeteria.

> The reason you're doing this is students. You're not doing it to get a clever apartment for a while, although it was a beautiful place to live, and a very quiet place, I never had a moment's trouble with it; but the reason you do it is students. And so I liked to go out into the recreation area. Sometimes I would just go and sit down and people are busy, they might not come up, somebody might. I'd go to the cafeteria; and I would often at the cafeteria just see students and go over and deliberately sit with them and that sort of thing. And therefore it was to me totally a – how should I say this, totally an effort to make faculty available, accessible to students and the students were just great.

Gabe mentioned the FIRs had to make effort in their introductions to students. As previously mentioned in regards to Isabella and Michael, employing effort to make an introduction was most likely a stressful situation at the beginning of their FIR tenure due to their uncertainty of students accepting them. Once their confidence was solidified, FIRs could focus on developing the relationships beyond the introductions.

Dan spoke of the depth of relationships and the meaning of student-faculty interaction. All of the FIRs recognized that some students established stronger

connections to the FIRs and the FIR program than others. Dan's description of a relationship continuum was consistent with relationship descriptions from other FIRs.

> I think, in terms of the numbers, it's mostly just friendly and not very involved. But I think there are other relationships with students that go all the way on the continuum, so that they're much more integral to that student's life and it becomes part of your life as a faculty member. I think it's quite a range of continuum. I also believe strongly that it must have a lot to do with the personality of the faculty residents. Some Faculty In Residence remain aloof; they are not really as willing to get elbow-to-elbow with students. That's fine. I think both kinds of models work. For me, I was always very shoulder-to-shoulder-involved with students on a daily basis whether in the gym or in the dining room or in our home.

Dan also spoke of some FIRs remaining "aloof" to students, above, as does Josh, below. This was not a common theme, but one of noteworthiness because it may be their observation of FIRs who have not, yet, developed the confidence or ability to receive student acceptance. That is, most of the FIRs mentioned that the students accepted them. Perhaps the FIRs Dan alluded to would not, for their personal reasons or abilities, receive the students' acceptance. To be a FIR, each faculty member had to demonstrate proficiency in communication, teaching abilities, and their ability to relate to students. These proficiencies and skills, however, were demonstrated in the classrooms, laboratories, and through campus involvement in relationship to the FIRs' academic knowledge. In the FIR program, daily social situations must parallel academic knowledge and scholarly proficiency. The FIR program forces faculty members to extend themselves beyond their studies. Depending upon the individual, this may be uncomfortable, particularly to the new FIR.

Josh, a FIR of several years, discussed who should initiate interaction based on maturity of the faculty members versus the students.

> First of all, because we're Faculty In Residence, it means informal. It means 24/7. It means when the opportunity arises, you seize that opportunity; you do not put it off. You do not brush it aside. You do not ignore it. When there is an opportunity for student interaction you take it, and that's my job, if you want to call it a job. And this is a job, this is part of my work, and I take that part of it seriously, that I have a responsibility to the Faculty In Residence program to do my job. And so in that sense those interactions, I should initiate them more than the students should initiate them. You cannot expect a student to be mature enough and extroverted enough and whatever else it takes enough, savvy enough, to initiate the interaction. The Faculty In Residence should take it upon themselves to know that's their job to initiate the interaction.

Josh expressed great confidence, but did not take into account that all of the FIRs may not be as confident as him. Eventually, all of the FIRS discovered that confidence and indicated that seizing the opportunity to interact with students was something that most FIRs possessed a tendency to act upon and, further, considered their actions in role modeling or mentoring capacities.

Three sub-themes within this overarching theme of relationships with students developed. This includes mentoring, othermothering, and adult relationships.

Mentoring

The words role modeling and mentoring are often used interchangeably (Sands, Parson, & Duane, 1991). The term mentoring denotes greater social status and intellect including the primary element of role modeling, that is, demonstration through performance (Sands et al., 1991). Mentors may assume up to ten different roles including: teacher, guide, counselor, motivator, sponsor, coach, advisor, role model, referral agent, and door opener depending upon the needs of the mentees. Further, characteristics of successful mentors include being supportive, patient, respected, people-oriented, motivating, an achiever, and receptive to others (National Institutes of Health, 2009). Erkut and Mokros (1984) state that male college students tend to prefer male

faculty models due to the perception of men possessing greater status and power while women tend to seek faculty models who demonstrate being a "professional woman with an attractive lifestyle and interesting outside activities" (p. 413).

Through the increased student-faculty interaction of the FIR program, FIRs were able to offer elements of mentoring that students may not have otherwise encountered. For example, James spoke of how the FIR program not only shows the humanity of FIRs, "that faculty are not automatons," but also introduces students to the challenges and issues they will face beyond college and that the challenges and issues can be overcome. James said,

> They [FIRs] have a family and they have all the same sorts of issues that young adults will soon face themselves within just a few years, and that it's doable. It's doable. You can have academic success and you can do these sorts of things at the same time.

James mentors by allowing students to see his daily life and interacting with them. Many students have separated families and may not recall a household with their biological mother and father. Through James' family, his wife and two small children, students have the opportunity to observe a young family. Further, they have an opportunity to watch siblings at play if they do not have their own sibling. Finally, students have the opportunity to see how family and employment balance and support each other.

While Ethan also values family, he distinguished mentoring from student friendships.

> I don't think that I should be their friend. As a matter of fact, that's not, I don't want to be their friend. They have plenty of friends. I think our role is to just give them access to the wider university community…. Their faculty mentor is what I want to be more than anything and we try to be that on every occasion.

Ethan focused his mentoring on students trying new activities at the university. Gabe used mentoring to reach out to a specific student and developed a long-term relationship.

> I had a student who had a personal crisis in his life and he came to me and just, you know he was in disarray basically and so we talked that night and I elicited from him a promise that he would come and see me once a week for the rest of the semester. And I said, "You might be here five minutes, it's your time, I'm not saying you're obliged, I just want to have contact with you." And so what was fascinating was to watch him work those problems through; and it had to do with a death in the family and so forth and related complications. But he worked that through very well and I didn't do a great deal, I just – it's having, it's that availability, it's being there and I didn't go out and solicit that, he just showed up at my door, he was really disturbed. Now that was worthwhile.

From a student working through a family death to a student wavering on career ambitions, one of the critical elements of the FIRs was their time and perseverance in mentoring to see the student move forward with their personal development. The mentoring relationship, while not *in loco parentis*, may have some parental characteristics. Emily, an African-American female FIR also displays these characteristics, yet, in a specific, or a bit different, manner. Mentoring, for example, provides a vision of guiding a student into positive directions. Othermothering, however, includes these elements of mentoring, but also evokes a vision of protection for the perceived vulnerable students and nourishment; the way mothers protect and nourish their children. Emily's description is reflected in the term "othermothering" by Douglas Guiffrida (2005).

Othermothering

Emily described how she influenced African-American students through the FIR program.

> I'm not sure how racially mixed all the groups were that went to FIRs' events but ours were and we found that – because I got the impression that sometimes Black students may not have gone to as many events in some other homes, but the Black

> students just skipped to that point where they were coming to our house. And I remember some particular things like when we were having a Christmas party and my Christmas decorations were really multi-racial, but I would tell—and of course the guys never said anything, but the women would come and go, "When I'm married I'm going to have," you know, "decorations like yours." And they'd be talking about the Black angels and that might seem a little thing but it's actually not when you're Black or you're African-American and you're in a predominantly White university, you really need to have – feel welcome and also see yourself reflected and they did in our home and that was very important to me. So, I think we really had students from many different – from all different disciplines and all different kinds of people.

In Emily's narrative the feeling of family is described. Emily mentions how the African-American students sought out her and her family and became influenced by the environment created through the FIR apartment. That is, the students felt welcomed and wished for "decorations like yours" when they had their own families. "Decorations like yours" implies a feeling of home, a feeling of family. Through this statement, the students made a familial connection to Emily.

Douglas Guiffrida (2005) developed a concept called "othermothering" that occurs between African-American students and African-American faculty members at predominantly White institutions. Specifically, Guiffrida explored the concept of "student centered." He found that African-American students at a predominantly White institution, such as the one for this study, perceive faculty who are "student centered," or who provide "othermothering" to offer "comprehensive advising regarding career guidance, academic issues, and personal problems" (p. 708). Through the FIR program, African-American students found a student-centered faculty member and perhaps found a connection to the university community they may not have otherwise found. As with all students, African-American students embark upon developing adult relationships with their FIRs.

Adult Relationships

The connections FIRs have experienced with students are often in the form of mentor-mentee moving toward adult relationships. Chris explained many different facets relationships with students could involve.

> There is a whole gamut of relationships. There are some students that just needed to have someone, have a touch of home, were insecure, that would come. Sometimes they were challenging, but we also know that we were probably beneficial to them.

Student-FIR interactions vary from addressing deep, personal issues as Gabe and Emily previously described to participating in students' thoughts about career aspirations to mentoring a student who wishes to be the President of the United States. Throughout the various types of interaction, FIRs recognized that students were developing adult relationships with them.

Students establishing adult relationships with FIRs signifies development through the environment as discussed by Erikson (1968). Further, the establishment of relationships with the FIRs signifies the integration of a student into the university. Evans et al. (1998) state that when individuals enter into a transition, such as the first year of college, preoccupation with the transition is followed by integration of the transition. Further, Schlossberg, Waters, and Goodman (1995) present four methods of coping with transitions: Situation, Self, Support, and Strategies. Situation and Self include the situation in which the individual becomes involved such as the timing, situational assessment, and stress, and the personal characteristics and psychological resources the individual possesses. FIRs often experienced student development through transition and actively participated as both the Support and Strategies. Specifically, FIRs provided Support through affirmation, honest feedback, and assistance while students developed

their Strategies, or coping modes, through information seeking from the FIRs. Josh spoke of a student in transition, as did other FIRs, who each seemed grateful for the FIRs and the environment provided by the FIR program.

> There have been – and again there's one in particular that I'll think about that was homesick. And he latched onto us, and he would come and talk to us, he would sit with us at dinner, and you could just tell that it meant something to him to have somebody who was an adult that he could interact with who would care about him and care about what he was doing at the university. And I'll for all my days believe that he stayed at this university because of us; that he would have gone home and gone to some junior college, if that, you know – or more likely worked on a road crew or something like that. And so that has always meant something to me.

Josh also spoke about not possessing preconceived ideas of students as he does not know about their past and does not judge them on their past. Instead, he views all students as starting a new life upon their arrival to campus with the present and future as the new building blocks of their lives. Josh's viewpoint is demonstrative of other FIRs as well as an adult-mentor relationship.

> Where they come to you, you don't have a history with them, you get to know them for who they are right now. If they were a troublemaker in high school, I don't have any idea. If they were a cheerleader and the most popular kid in school, I don't have any idea. If they – you know, whatever it was, I don't have any idea.
>
> So not having a history helps define my relationship then with the student because it's a fresh start for whatever it is, you know. And I am not judgmental – just, that's it.

Will also spoke of students establishing adult relationships with him as a FIR and the safety the students felt.

> There were students who came to us, for example, might come from a very small town or very firmly held religious beliefs, or things like that, and were finding college a time where they were being exposed to different ideas and different beliefs, and finding that challenging. And so we have long discussions with some students, and I think they were working through things and it was useful for them to have sort of a neutral objective adult. Students are adults as well. But someone

> they could bounce things off of. Work through things with and not be judged like they would by a parent necessarily, or someone else from their background.

Josh and Will represent the FIRs well with their accountancies of their adult relationships with students. The relationships were built on the FIRs not being judgmental, providing a safety zone for students to openly talk about themselves and their thoughts while being provided with feedback from sources they trusted and admired. Adult relationships may be referred to as friendships. However, "friendship" may not fully describe or may overly describe the budding adult relationships between FIRs and students.

The term "friendship" was used by some FIRs to define their relationships with students. Most FIRs distanced themselves from the term. Will explained, "… obviously, there's a big age difference there, so there's a limit to kind of how deep those friendships go." Dan experienced very close relationships with students that he defined as "friendship." He elaborated on the meaning he attributed to those relationships and how the relationships my have influenced the students.

> It was a friendship. It wasn't like a teacher-student relationship. They were friendships where we would laugh together and know more about each other's personal lives, particularly. You know, there's an age difference so there's always that kind of gap, I think. But they were real, live friendships where you just sit and visit and be playful, hang-out-kind-of-feeling. There were a few relationships that seemed to me to develop more as mentor-mentee. In fact, I think my wife and I both had students that followed from Faculty In Residence and came into our department as students, and often were attracted by some of the things we had talked about or just the sharing of experiences together when they were in our home as Faculty In Residence. There were probably four or five of those students that I remember in my own experience, and my wife had some, too.

While the FIRs assisted students in developing adult relationships, they also assisted parents with the transition of their children from high school to their first year experience in college.

Parental Relationships

FIRs interacted with parents on occasion, particularly while students moved into the residence halls. During first year move in, the FIRs are highly visible as they welcome the new students and their families. They often open their doors and serve refreshments to give students and their parents a place to take a break away from the chaos of moving belongings into the residence halls and the scorching Oklahoma summer. Through these encounters, FIRs begin building the relationship foundations with students and provide parents with a sense of comfort. Chris mentioned, "It's [the FIR program] something that parents really like, as well as students." Michael outlined a situation in which the parents contacted him rather than the housing office.

> It was interesting the way we would occasionally get involved with students' parents. We got phone calls occasionally. I remember one time this mother called and she said, 'I know you guys aren't the people to call, but my daughter and I, well, we had a fight and she's not returning my calls and I just want to know that she's okay.' So, we found out what floor she was on and talked to the RA [Resident Adviser] and everything. But, and then on move-in day, we'd always be out there and parents would come up to us and talk to us, so that was kind of interesting, too…. They were thrilled to think that there were actual legitimate adults in the building… they had no idea how little we actually had to do, that we weren't going to influence or control their children in anyway… And we end up talking to them and kind of hearing a little bit about what they were concerned about and stuff about their kids in college.

Parents were comforted by the perception that their students were living with adults, regardless of how little control the FIRs had over their students. Perhaps it was not a lack of control over the students the parents appreciated, perhaps it was, once again, the environment created by the FIR program. The FIRs are able to assist students with Support and Strategies, two of the four methods previously discussed for coping with transitions as outlined by Schlossberg et al. (1995). Parents most likely recognize the support offered to students during their transition year by the FIRs.

African-American parents promoted the othermothering concept of support provided by the FIRs as previously described with students. Emily, one of the African-American FIRs, had several deep experiences with African-American parents of daughters. This piece is lengthy, yet vitally demonstrative of othermothering and the importance of FIRs in students' lives.

> I think that ones that I remember most were African-American parents who would come down. They would see me and it was like they wanted to talk to me before they left their child and I think they – well, I don't just think I know that they were parents that had really protected their children as best they could and here they were suddenly leaving them at a large White, you know, predominantly White university and they would come down and they would talk to me and sometimes the kid would be sitting there – I can picture daughters sitting there and it's kind of like they've been so protected they really didn't know what they were in for, but the parents did, and basically they just wanted to know that I was going to be there and that I would look out for the daughter. And it wasn't with guys, it was with daughters and, you know, sometimes people, when they think about the FIR program they think that you're a dorm mom and you're involved in discipline. And we go, "No, no, it's nothing like that." We got involved with the fun stuff and put on programs and the academic programs, the fun programs, the football games and so on. But there really was this other thing where I think that I took it seriously that some of these parents were saying, "Be there for my kid."
>
> I remember an example would be where I almost felt like the mom and dad and I were talking in code and the daughter sitting like, "What are they talking about?" But six months later, that daughter, maybe not even six months, maybe three months later, that daughter came downstairs to me and she'd had a situation where her roommate was being fine with her, her White roommate, but with the roommate was getting a bunch of static from her friends like, "Why are you hanging around this Black girl?" And suddenly the penny had dropped for this young woman and she was facing something that I think she had either dealt with before with her parents or was protected by them in that regard, but she came down and I was really glad she was—she felt that she could come down and she knew the conversation I'd had with her parents and here was a time when she did need to come down and talk to me.
>
> … And I do remember one time a woman came to me, a young woman, who was no longer in [my residence hall], by this time she was over in one of the other dorms.… she said, "I don't know how to tell you this and please don't tell anyone. Don't tell anyone that I told you this but," and she mentioned a friend of hers whose mom had just died and I had met the mom and the dad and the student when she had moved into [the residence halls]. And they were some of the

> parents that were wanting to be sure that I was watching over their child. And she said the mom just died and she said, "I don't think my friend's handling it very well." And she says, "I don't know what to do, but you need to know." And so I wasn't really sure what to do exactly because I was in this situation where she was asking me not to say anything. But I felt for the young woman so I was trying to work out what I would do. And literally two days later, I got a call from this woman…. and it was after 10:00 [p.m.], which never happens. Students never called at that time…. And she said, "I want to come over and bake cookies" and I knew it wasn't about baking cookies. But she came over--and I said sure, "come over" and she did. We'd bake cookies together and really all we did was talk about her mom and talk about her loss and something like that was very, very meaningful and it's an example of how you could really give some good support to students. She left some cookies with us. She took my plate with cookies and went off and she was making some cookies for her friends…. I didn't see her again until just before Christmas and she said, "I have some cookies for you," and so she brought back the plate with some cookies that she baked…. But this was also just before she was going home for the first time, not to be with her mom at Christmas.

Through these experiences, Emily's established relationships with parents and students placed her in othermothering situations. The parents felt as if they were transferring partial care of their daughters to Emily and she felt a sense of responsibility, in that regard, although she knew of the overall impossibilities. That is, she could never protect their children the way that the parents had in the students' years before college. Instead, Emily understood she was a student resource, not a resource of complete student protection, but a resource of assistance to students. For example, the student who came to bake cookies one late night knew she could talk to Emily and process her mother's passing. When the student returned later in the year with a plate full of cookies, it was her way of saying, "Thank you" to Emily for being supportive, as most mothers would be, during her time of need.

While this study was not designed to address the topic of "othermothering," it presents itself as a point of discussion for the final chapter. In addition to students and

parents, the FIRs also commonly identified another student relationship with the Resident Advisers (RAs).

Resident Adviser Relationships

Resident Adviser (RA) relationships with FIRs are different than most of the FIR relationships in that RAs are not first year or, typically, transfer students. Before becoming an RA, students must successfully complete the Resident Adviser Training Class, a class taken for academic credit and to complete a requirement for applying to the RA position. RAs are student, housing staff members who live in the residence halls and develop and lead communities for an academic year. RAs are required to present programs such as discussions or activities on various subjects throughout the year. One of their required programs is an event with their building's FIR. RAs tend to build relationships with their FIRs not only through the required programs, but also through interaction arranged by the FIRs and residence life professional staff members. For example, FIRs may meet their community's RA staff through a staff meeting or cookout.

The RA-FIR relationship is not a relationship that is anticipated by FIRs when they enter the program. Emma, for example, said, "I guess I've been pleased and maybe surprised to see a lot of the mentoring happens with the RAs." Opportunities for RA-FIR relationships occur in many situations. Jacob spoke of RA staff meetings in his FIR apartment and how he and his family came to know not only the individual RAs, but also his community's staff and how they work together.

> Those students [RAs] are ones we think about a lot because they were so good with our kids. They were like an extended family – this is relationship with children, time spent with them. We saw them very much as an extension of our family. They were like older brothers and sisters to our kids. Activities with the RAs, you know, just doing things with them. They would plan. We got to know them each individually and then collectively. It was fun. Each year there was a

> group of RAs… and they had their own chemistry, their own makeup. The groups were different and these meetings were just priceless. We'd have regular RA meetings in our apartment…. I think they were a weekly meeting. Sometimes – I remember one time they felt like maybe it would be good to meet without the FIRs there because sometimes they had to talk about some things maybe they'd think we wouldn't want to hear or maybe it was about us…. We loved those meetings in our apartments because when they got together in that group, the chemistry came out, the humor between them, the way they would kid each other, we would just laugh.

FIR relationships with RAs were critical to the success of the FIRs within the community. The FIRs not only become mentors to the students, but also to the RAs. In turn, the FIRs depend to a degree upon the RAs assisting them in building relationships with students in the community. Chris said, "… we found in our experience that the RAs were a really important key to student participation, especially in things like lecturettes." Will's view below represents the majority of the FIRs and expands on Chris and Jacob's recollection of how the RAs provide a connectedness within the community.

> Twenty-years later or after getting out of school yourself, you pick up on things you've forgotten about. You meet students. Sometimes you end up performing a counseling role and usually, that – a lot of that was through RAs and other students you got to know better. It wasn't something that would happen right away. It was some student you got to know.
>
> So you also have friendships with students, relationships with students. A lot of times, that was through the RA…. Because your contacts with RAs were a lot more extensive, I think, than most of the other students on an average…. So a lot of the closest interactions were students who were RAs or students who were kind of in leadership positions.

RAs are important in networking the residence hall community. Building relationships with RAs enables the community to become more cohesive and supportive of the FIR program. Michael represented other FIRs when he described how helpful a particular RA was to him in the FIR program.

> He [an RA] participated a lot with us and brought a lot of his folks down to do things with us… we felt like he really participated with us a lot and helped make

> our programs better and he was one of those RAs, and a lot of them were like this, who really wanted his students on his floor to come down and do things with us. He thought it was a good thing for them, which made us feel good… [he] communicated to the people on his floor and so a lot of them did come down, so he was somebody pretty special.

While the FIRs appreciated the assistance the RAs offered in introducing students to their programs, Ethan presented a different viewpoint on RA involvement.

> We find that they're the people [RAs and other student housing staff] we have the most interaction with, which I said is good and bad. It's good in a sense that we get to know them. They're students and we can develop relationships with them and here I think that we do do a fair amount of mentoring hopefully with the RAs. But, also, at sometimes they seem to be kind of between us and the students because they're the only way we can get to the students. We feel that sometimes, if they don't work with us, we'll never see the student.

Ethan, rather than feeling the RAs assisted with student involvement in the FIR program, felt that his programs were dependent upon RA involvement for attendance. The RAs seemed to serve in a gatekeeper role. That is, if the RAs were not happy with the FIR programs or did not attend the FIR programs, the residential students in that community may not interact with the FIRs. Through this narrative, Ethan felt as though he relinquished self-sufficiency with his FIR programming efforts. This feeling of dependency upon the RAs could emerge from the physical environment in which Ethan's apartment is situated.

Anthony and Andrew had similar comments to Ethan regarding their residences. Anthony had been a FIR in the same apartment as Ethan and Andrew had been a FIR in an apartment complex with his FIR apartment separated from those of the tenants. Both FIR apartments are located in village-like residential complexes in which the apartment is not on the typical student's path to and from class or on the students' paths to their

rooms, a different environment than the majority of the other FIR apartments which are situated in more traditional residence halls.

At the time of the FIR apartment construction in Ethan's community, the location was the best available. The residential complex consisted of five separate, but small, residential buildings. Currently, one building is being converted to office space. The primary sidewalk through the complex and to the other residence halls is at one end of Ethan's building and Ethan's door is at the other end. Ethan's building consists of four "houses." Members of each house typically enter through their house's door. Ethan's door is in the foyer of the fourth house, furthest from the primary sidewalk that leads to food and classes making it highly unlikely for students to casually visit or notice the FIR residence.

The FIR residence in this location does not fit into Barker's (1968) behavior settings in that a standing pattern of behavior and milieu are not established for the entire community to experience the FIR apartment due to the distance from the primary sidewalk. For example, walking by the FIR apartment's front door with the specific behavior comprised of the pattern of foot traffic and the milieu consisting of the location of the FIR apartment and its accessibility. Ethan must rely on the RAs in his community to connect with students and introduce them to FIR programs since his door is not on most students' daily paths to class, food, and other necessities.

Andrew's FIR residence was also in a complex with separate buildings. The buildings were built over 50-years prior to the FIR apartment. The complex's layout did not lend itself to creating a standing pattern of behavior and milieu. Andrew recognized

that the location of his apartment was not as inviting as other FIR apartments and conveyed that during his interview while discussing student-FIR interactions.

> We didn't get to know them [residents] very well, but – so, FIR-student interactions were sort of the day-to-day ones with people that are really close to where we lived and then the periodic – like once every couple of weeks or months – when they would have events at the house.

Of the fourteen FIR interviews, only Andrew and Ethan discussed the location of their apartments while Anthony spoke of his apartment's location indirectly when referring to advertising and the difficulty of it in his complex. Their apartments represent two of the six FIR apartments and are the two that are not immediately connected to their community's residents as they are removed from the primary patterns of travel through the communities. With the community structure, only costly demolition of existing buildings and new construction would rectify the challenges. Due to the physical locality of the apartments, the RAs and residence life staff are described as critical to the success of the FIRs. Further, FIRs are important to other FIRs in regards to the success of their programming.

FIR-FIR Relationships

FIR relationships with other FIRs are also critical to the success of the FIR program. The FIRs support each other in the transition of becoming a FIR. James, representing discussions with most of the other FIRs during the interviews, described his experience with the other FIRs and the benefits he received from them as a new FIR.

> FIR interaction again is what we have in mind when we think of the relationship that we have with other FIR families, and one good thing about it is that there is usually a time lag with those who come into the FIR program. In other words, we as a new FIR faculty family… were then one of five or six Faculty In Residence families, but we all didn't start at the same time. So there's kind of an overlap in terms of experience there, so those who had come before us were there to help us deal with all sorts of things – programming issues, how to deal with living in the

> fishbowl which is Faculty In Residence and they were also good with helping us with programming ideas, what kinds of programs do work, what kinds of programs don't work.

The FIRs have the support of the university administration to assist them with their transitions into the FIR program as well as their needs throughout their FIR tenure. The FIRs recognize the program structure, the strong-administrative support, and appreciate all of the people behind the support from maintenance employees to housekeepers to financial officers. However, when the FIRs seek reality of the FIR position, they seek one another. Experienced FIRs are able to offer their FIR colleagues insight into such topics as student behavior, how easy or difficult it is to use a purchase order at a local market, or whether or not a particular FIR program was well-received when previously presented.

While the university administration offers support and continues to develop the FIR program, the administration has not lived the FIR experience and is not able to speak to actual events and emotions that create a unique connection among FIRs. Isabella described her interactions with other FIRs.

> We would have periodic meetings. We would sometimes run joint programs. We would just informally meet to share ideas and experiences and this was within the Faculty In Residence that were in our same sort of generation and also ones that came after us, and ones that came, there weren't too many, that came before us. But, you know some of the people that came before us and then people who came after us, it's interesting that we sort of lost touch with the lineage…. We don't know anybody anymore and so it's almost like you know with generations of families you sort of lose, you might know your grandparents and you may know your great grandparents, but you don't know anybody you know on that, you don't really have a connection to. It's kind of like that. It's like we used to be really connected to it and now we're not connected to it all anymore…. It's just really compressed. If your generations are only three years long it doesn't take very long before you're, you know, removed from it entirely.

Isabella compared the FIRs to generations of a family and placed the generations at approximately three years apart, a common time frame for FIR tenure. With six FIR apartments and approximately two FIR families leaving annually, the FIR program tends toward regeneration every three years with the exception of one FIR who has lived in his apartment since construction. Considering the regeneration of the FIRs, Isabella's point of quickly becoming disassociated with the FIR program is easily understood. During a FIR's first year, they are more likely to reach out to those who currently live in the FIR program and have been active longer than the others. Their proximity to current FIRs, their neighbors, promotes their interaction and separates them from past FIRs. For some FIRs, their FIR neighbors were similar to extended family and provided comfort to immediate FIR families.

FIR-Family Relationships

The FIRs established an extended family network among themselves and developed memories of their own families. Sometimes, the FIR relationships developed because of the FIRs' families such as between FIRs with children; proximity of being close in the residence halls, that is, they are neighbors; and the milieu of the program as previously described. FIRs spoke of how the FIR program influenced their own families.

Anthony reminisced his experience of having two young children while in the FIR program.

> Both of my kids were born in the FIR. And then, something that comes to mind is walking on campus with the babies because it was always funny. Because as you would walk on campus, there's lots of people and just talking, but never making one's head turn because everyone talks. But, if there's a unique or new sound that people weren't used to, even if it was very quiet, it would turn heads. I remember my son on Sunday evenings over eating there in Cate [a food establishment in the residence halls], and he'd, a lot of times, ride his Big Wheel in there… it was kind of funny how that worked out like that.

Anthony's family became known in his community in part because of his children. They were unique to the environment and a reminder to students that they have a greater life to strive toward than the collegiate life they are currently living. That is, there is life after college. Sophia, a student in Anthony's community, echoed the importance of the proximity of FIR families. She said, "It was kind of refreshing to realize there's little kids out there in the real world. Yeah, well, this isn't really the real world, yet, is it?" The proximity of students to the FIR families could be construed as a reminder of the circle of life and those who are and will be important to them in their own lives.

Jacob conveyed two specific events in which his family and the students benefited from his children living in the residence halls. The experiences included the opportunity for a student to practice part of her academic program on one of his children, a piano concert by his daughter in the residence halls, and growing relationships between students and the children such that the family perceived one of the students to be more of a nanny rather than a babysitter.

> One student… was down and noticed we had a piano and come to find out she's in the Piano Pedagogy [a specific area of study for a Bachelor of Music] for them to teach children. So we said, "Well, [my daughter] needs to learn piano" and so we hired her. She would come down to our house and teach… piano and then [my daughter] would go out and have a little concert on the piano… by the lounge area there. And [my wife] would make some cookies and brownies and the students would gather around. It would just be simple little songs but they would all clap and [my daughter] just thought she was like Liberace on stage or something, you know, and they would serve cookies so good friendships there.

Performances as this not only instill pride in the piano player, a unique experience for the FIR family, but also in the student who taught her to play. Further, incorporating children into the living environment provides unspoken reminders of the value of life and the time and distance the college students have traveled to be in college in addition to

providing a vision for their future. For the FIR families, the interaction of the FIRs' children with students provided experiences very few children experience. The children were center-stage to thousands of students and received attention from and interaction with many of these students. Students may also relate to the FIRs through their children because they may have left a child at home or the FIR's children may remind them of their siblings.

> Another time a girl… came down and knocked on our door and she said, "I just want you to know, you know, I don't know if you ever need, but I do baby sit." And we said, "Yeah, sure," so we hired her to baby sit and she became like a nanny because she would – she was so good and mature, the kids loved her and we saw her more as a nanny-type person than as a babysitter and it was just wonderful to have her and we stayed in touch with her. On and on I could talk about students that have come down that we still see. Again, an important – oh, impact on our family. Yeah, they had an impact on our family.

Through Jacob's family, this student found a niche, a comfortable place for her. Jacob's family received a loving babysitter who influenced the FIR family's lives through interaction with them. This study cannot ascertain whether or not the contact with Jacob's family specifically helped the student complete her college degree, but the experiences can be compared to other psychosocial foundations such as Erikson's epigenetic principle. The environment, such as the FIRs' as part of the student environment, helps to shape the character and development of the students and the family members (Erikson, 1968; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). The narratives presented in this section provide examples of how the FIRs provide a familial atmosphere. Through the FIR program, the students experience feelings of normalcy, feelings they felt in their own homes prior to moving to college.

Further, students are provided opportunities to interact with and to be admired by the FIR families. Through these activities, FIR families and students are able to

participate in meaningful activities that shape their character through unique experiences on a college campus. They are able to develop their own identities including those positive experiences. The FIR program also helps to shape the university environment through FIR interaction with other faculty members.

University Faculty Relationships

FIRs often seek other faculty members from various departments to assist them with FIR activities or to attend FIR activities. By incorporating other departments into the FIR program, opportunities for the university to benefit arise through the informal education provided to the students, the relationships developed between faculty members, and the relationships developed between students and faculty members. For example, Jacob spoke of how he incorporated his department and other departments into the FIR program.

> Faculty tend – when we come in [to the university] we're pretty isolated. We get involved with our departments. We know everybody in our department pretty well but we have little interaction outside of that. Once and a while, if the departments are located closer together, you know, we might see somebody and become friends that way. We might know somebody because we play racquetball… with them or whatever in another department but we don't get to know them like that. The fact that this Faculty In Residence program really opens up this world where you do get to know a lot of faculty from other departments. You invite them into your programs and that's really interesting.
>
> One of the things when we started putting programs together we would say, "What do we want to—what do we think would be interesting?" And I say, you know, "How about, you know, something about art, you know?" Okay, well we'll call somebody to talk about art or art history and they'd come over and we get to know them a little bit. And the students like it, too. It benefited them and we got to meet other people.

Through the FIR program, relationships build across campus. As Jacob mentioned, faculty members learn about other departments such as other academic research and experiences of other faculty members.

In addition to the FIR program benefiting the FIRs, students, and the university, it also benefited the other faculty members. For example, Dan incorporated faculty into his programs and watched them benefit over time due to their FIR experiences.

> I know also that we used that venue as a way to introduce some faculty members to OU. I can think of at least two professors that we gave a teaching time for. We had a dinner and they came and they presented their subject. I can think of three or four. It really made a difference in their career development and what they were doing here at OU. Two new hires came in. One person really got involved more in the university. It was those good things that happened, not only for us as faculty, but for some of those that we provide a setting so that they could do their thing. It was pretty good.

Perhaps participating with the FIRs assisted these other faculty members through increasing university recognition as discussed in Intangible Benefits or perhaps it assisted them with developing their own confidence with students as new FIRs often experience. In all regards, their participation was a form of faculty professional development. Chris witnessed guest faculty members and students benefit by developing relationships through programming and said,

> We had a lot of students just engage in bull sessions with some really prominent thinkers and some of our guests got great new ideas from our students. I imagine some students may have changed some of their career thinking based on this.

In addition, the participation of faculty members and departments with the FIR program provides opportunity for more faculty members to become interested in becoming a FIR. Isabella spoke of how she and her faculty husband hosted receptions for their departments in the FIR apartment. She said, "… occasionally we would host a faculty reception in our department. So, if we had a seminar speaker that one of us would sponsor, we would have a reception at our apartment. And, then other faculty from our departments would come and see what our place was like."

Relationships: Summative Comments

The relationships, in general, that the FIRs experienced through the FIR program were positive for all of the FIRs. Jacob, for example, said that to "just to be able to have those friends that we would have never met in the program otherwise" were valuable in that they provided opportunities for him and his family to experience living with students and witness human compassion.

The relationships were built through a socializing organization, the FIR program. Pascarella (1980) discusses how viewing colleges as socializing organizations may provide an important perspective from which to view student outcomes such as behavior, attitude, and educational advancement. The outcomes are influenced by the size of the institution, living arrangements, policies, curriculum, and through interaction with "agents of socialization" (p. 546) such as peers, faculty, and administration. The FIR program is a part of the "interpersonal environment" (Rossi, 1966) of both students and faculty. The interpersonal environment is the unmediated stimuli presented from those in the environment (Rossi, 1966) and "… presents the individual with a climate of opinion, values, attitudes, behaviors, and performances which are held or practiced by the socializing agents with whom he or she is in direct contact" (Pascarella, 1980).

Theoretically, individuals change to reduce dissonance, the differences between themselves and what they view as the beneficial stimuli in their environment (Rossi, 1966). The FIRs viewed the students as beneficial stimuli. Perhaps this explains most of the FIRs receiving the students' acceptance. That is, when most of the FIRs entered the FIR program, they feared not being accepted by students in the residence halls. They soon found that the students accepted them and the FIRs received the numerous

intangible benefits previously discussed. In addition, the students receive benefits from the FIR program. Pascarella (1980) furthers this theoretical base by stating that it may be anticipated that faculty members who become part of students' interpersonal environments may significantly influence the students' attitudes and intellectual values to be more like the faculty members' attitudes and intellectual values.

In the next chapter, I present how the students' experiences with the FIRs complement Pascarella's assertion of the influence of attitudes and intellectual values primarily through the students' theme of Role Modeling. First, University Immersion of the FIRs and Teaching Moments as well as student success from a FIR perspective must be discussed. In the next section, I will address the knowledge of the university gained by the FIRs through their experiences, incorporation into university culture, and the university support they received through the FIR program.

University Immersion

When faculty members enter an institution, their knowledge of the overall institution is limited. Typically they have completed their undergraduate and/or graduate studies at another institution. In addition, completing a doctoral degree typically places a substantial number of years between the undergraduate students and the faculty member creating generation gaps. Faculty members near to the age of their undergraduate students or who have been at the institution for several years may experience cultural differences based on age and differences between institutions. Although faculty members were all students at one point, they are not necessarily aware of students at this campus and at this point in time. For this reason, I compare faculty members at the study's

institution to travelers. In this way, the faculty members revisit a destination that they once knew that has changed since their last visit.

Travelers on their journeys often experience differences between the people they encounter and their own way of life at home. In order to blend into a culture, travelers may learn some basic language and cultural skills and learn about the area's resources and attractions (McLaughlin, 2002). Most faculty members are similar to travelers to campus each day in that they travel or commute to the institution. Faculty members are aware of the whole campus to an extent. They are aware that staff supports the academic function of the university, there is a cafeteria and other eating establishments, there are residence halls, a student newspaper is printed regularly, and there are, of course, classes. Similar to many travelers, faculty members are aware of the institutional culture enough to navigate through it. However, it is fair to say based on discussions with faculty members for this study, that most faculty members are not aware of student experiences beyond the classroom.

Faculty members are not aware of student culture. "Rarely do we hear about innovative ways that teachers can learn more about other times, places, or people, or about the connection between teachers' life experiences and what they offer their students in the classroom" (McLaughlin, 2002, p. 372). The FIR program provides opportunities for faculty members to experience student culture in a time and place different than the classroom.

Emma voiced the difference of the classroom versus non-classroom student life she observed as a FIR.

> When I come to the FIR apartment it is like almost a parallel universe. I'm seeing them playing tennis, table tennis, pool; they're kind of just walking around eating,

> lounging, and you get to see a side of them that you don't see, of course, when you're in a classroom or they're coming to your office during office hours.

Faculty members in the FIR program are similar to travelers who have chosen to stay for an extended period of time in a foreign country, but not in a resort that shelters them from that cultural experience. The faculty members become immersed in the student culture by living, eating, learning, and playing with students. Further, they become involved with the university through special events, such as with visiting dignitaries and the pomp and circumstance during first-year student convocation every August and Graduation ceremonies in May. Jacob summarized his experiences by stating, "… one of the things the Faculty In Residence program does is it introduces you to a whole new part of campus that you wouldn't be familiar to." FIRs become a part of campus, both day and night all year long. Dan shared his experience of being "embedded" as a FIR.

> There's some sort of cultural value of being embedded. I was thinking of the journalists who have gone into war zones who have been embedded. They come away knowing a lot more about war than you would if you were sitting back reading about it or hearing about it. You're just right there. I feel like I've got the pulse of the university down in a lot of ways that I would never have had before…. From a personal point of view, I think that's been very helpful. I have the rhythm of the university down I think in a way others wouldn't.

Through the FIR program, Dan was able to experience the university campus differently than most others. In this way, faculty members participate in experiential learning.

Kolb (1984) discusses experiential learning as occurring through four abilities of the learner: concrete experience abilities (CE), reflective observation abilities (RO), abstract conceptualization abilities (AC), and active experimentation abilities (AE). He writes,

> That is, they must be able to involve themselves fully, openly, and without bias in new experiences (CE). They must be able to reflect on and observe their experiences from many perspectives (RO). They must be able to create concepts that integrate their observations into logically sound theories (AC), and they must be able to use these theories to make decisions and solve problems (AE)…. Thus, in the process of learning, one moves in varying degrees from actor to observer, and from specific involvement to general analytic detachment…. Learning is the major process of human adaptation. This concept of learning is considerably broader than that commonly associated with the school classroom. It occurs in all human settings, from schools to the workplace, from the research laboratory to the management board room, in personal relationships and the aisles of the grocery. It encompasses all life stages, from childhood to adolescence, to middle and old age. (p. 30-32)

Most of the FIRs worked through these four modes by experiencing the university campus beyond the classroom, reflecting on their observations, and developing their experiences into theories they used to solve problems.

For example, Emily explained how her knowledge of the university increased over time through the FIR program, although she had university experiences at other institutions.

> But, I see the Faculty In Residence situation opening up layers and layers of the university that you haven't known about before because; I'd been faculty, it is now at OU for three years at that point, but I had also taught at Columbia and I had also taught at the University of North Texas and I knew the lay of the land in terms of for faculty now, but there are all these different layers that you don't know. I didn't know anything about – and partly, of course I have not been an undergraduate in this country, otherwise I would have known more about dorms and things but I didn't know – I've been a graduate student in the United States but, I haven't been an undergraduate, so I didn't know that kind of scoop either. But, I guess that being in Faculty In Residence, I got to know all about the RA system, all about the dorm system, but also about the issues around the cafeteria, about the guys that moved the furniture when they came to set us up for an event…. It also put you on the list for being invited to, you know, lots of events hosted by the President and his wife…. I don't know how to put it, maybe you become on the "A" list for invites, invitations so you learn that level. You're dealing with budget staff… [and] the people who are doing the gardens and it just gives you a view into the workings of the university that faculty don't ordinarily know.

Most of the FIRs echoed Emily and Dan's university experiences and the learning processes they encountered. The FIRs worked through the four modes set forth by Kolb (1984). Emily, for example, mentioned her original faculty experiences prior to becoming a FIR. Through her experiences as a FIR, she reflected upon her prior experiences and realized she didn't know the intricacies of the university. Through her FIR experiences, Emily developed a new knowledge base of institutions of higher education and the operation of those institutions including operations beyond her academic realm.

Further, Will used the knowledge he gained through the FIR in his academic department's activities.

> One big thing I picked up is just an insight into some general OU operations that as a faculty member you may not see quite so quickly. It would take a lot more time to figure some of those things out. And that does influence decisions I make for service type activities in the department at the university.

The FIRs not only gained knowledge of the university, but they became incorporated into the university culture through adaptation.

Jacob and his family adapted to their environment. He said, "There were other things that happened that we became more a part of the community-at-large and that was a neat experience. We wouldn't have had that same opportunity otherwise." Ethan expanded Jacob's comments to encompass the feeling of being a FIR and the responsibility associated with the position and incorporating himself into the university culture.

> It makes a very intense lifestyle. Very university-based, centered, for nine months a year especially, but I like that. I like the fact that I have connections with a larger part of the university than if I was just teaching or just doing research, which I still have to do and I'm still doing, but working with the RAs, working, getting to know the students, the freshman, inviting other faculty down

> that maybe I don't know, but I know that doing something – I'll call up, I'll say that I know that you're working on this, or you're a professor of. We had a journalism professor I never met before. "I know you're working on this, would you come down and talk to your students."

Ethan recognized his larger part within the university as a FIR. He also recognized that he must extend himself to others to support the FIR program. Through these extensions, from the university and the FIRs, community among faculty members and students and between faculty members has opportunity to grow. Further, Ethan spoke of how being a professor can be isolating.

> It's pretty isolating being a professor. You do a lot of your research on your own. You teach your classes that you get students there, but other than that you're just kind of reading in the library. So, we don't have labs, we don't have a lot of contact outside of the house, so I enjoy having that connection to the university's larger, broader, areas.

Michael, within the Transitions theme, indirectly spoke of being isolated as a professor seeking tenure. Recall that Michael would not express interest in being a FIR until he received tenure. He did not want activities outside of his department to interfere with his ultimate goal of tenure, therefore, isolating himself. Michael was asked to clarify whether or not his decision to wait to express interest in the FIR program was due to perceptions of his academic department and the FIR program. Michael responded,

> I don't have an unequivocal answer to your question. The department never had an "official" position on the matter. However, my Chair made it very clear that, in his opinion, being FIR definitely did not count toward any part of my university distribution requirement. His thinking was that, since I got "paid" to do it… I was already compensated for doing it. I don't really know what other faculty in the department thought about it.

The discouragement of such university activities as the FIR program for faculty seeking tenure creates further isolation for faculty. Jacob, Ethan, Michael, Isabella, and Dan all shared that many faculty members have a tendency toward isolation and that the FIR

program assisted them with incorporating themselves into the university's culture and toward personal success.

All of the FIRs mentioned during their interviews that the support provided by the university made the FIR program, and them, successful. The support assisted the FIRs in immersing into the university culture. Support generally emerged as two categories: presidential support and support from other faculty and staff members. As Schrage (personal communication, October 27, 2008) described (see Chapter III), the President of the University of Oklahoma, David L. Boren, has been highly involved from the concept of the FIR program upon his arrival to campus in 1994 to its current implementation and oversight. As mentioned, President Boren continues to support the FIR program "to foster faculty and student interaction and intergenerational relationships" (University of Oklahoma, 2008). Chris spoke of the President and how he implemented the program at the University of Oklahoma.

> I linked that right to Boren because it really was his brainstorming that got it going. I think it is one of those things that sort of sets OU apart. I could have linked that all the way over to something like national reputation, in fact. But I think it was done right. I think there are other programs that maybe tried to go a little bit on the cheap and maybe don't have as strong the chance of success as this one seems to have had.

Further, James explains how the program is appealing to faculty members beyond the compensation package previously discussed.

> Another administrative interaction, which is positive, is that we always have good response time when we have physical issues or security issues at the house. And that just shows President Boren's commitment to creating a Faculty In Residence program that's sustainable and will not scare faculty away or may actually help bring them there. And the other administrative interaction that we've had that's positive and that first popped into our mind is that we are very well funded to put on almost any kind of programming that we want. So it's more than just lip service that we have a Faculty In Residence program here at OU. The President

> has committed. In our experience – let's put it this way – we've never not been able to fund what we've wanted to do.

President Boren has not only established the FIR and provided operational mechanisms within the university to provide for its success, but he often also supports the FIR program through activities based in the FIR apartments. Emma described how President Boren spoke at her apartment.

> President Boren made a visit here and he spoke so eloquently about his vision for America, and by that time his book had been recently released. It was spellbinding, and when he shared with the students about their responsibilities, it was very inspiring.

Through President Boren's continued presence in the FIR program, faculty members and students gain the perspective of how important the program is to the university's mission of providing "the best possible educational experience for our students through excellence in teaching, research and creative activity, and service to the state and society." Through the FIR program, President Boren personally demonstrates his belief that learning occurs both in and beyond the classroom and, therefore, supports the concept of university immersion for the faculty members.

In addition to President Boren, other campus employees, such as the Athletic Director, Financial Aid Director, and housekeepers have also supported the FIR program and learning beyond the classroom through activities at FIR apartments. One FIR, Josh, described his role for guest speakers as "a conduit or a mechanism to have administration interact with students in an informal way." The FIRs and students both benefit from these administrators' presence in the FIR program. The students receive information that directly relates to their university lives, such as receipt of financial aid. FIRs learn about student interests such as university expectations of students and student resources.

The housekeeping staff, for example, offered a very important service to the residence hall students and supported the FIRs. Jacob spoke of his experiences with the housekeepers and explained his family's relationship to the staff as indispensable to his success as a FIR and described their assistance "as a team." Further, Jacob mentioned how he as a FIR was able to influence the housekeepers' jobs.

> I remember one time… some of the ladies were called back to do some cleanup after a weekend… and they weren't scheduled to come in, but this was a, you know, they had to clean it up for something. My wife felt terrible about this, that students weren't keeping up with things…students could have done certain things and they just would leave things…. [We told the housekeepers that], "Every week we'll go and judge that [cleanliness] and whatever floor does [the best], we'll throw a party down in our apartment for them. And also maybe it would be good if the students knew who you [the housekeepers] were. I mean if they can put a face with you. You're not just a cleaning person, you know, you're an actual—you have your own interests, your own family" and so all the housekeepers made a posters with their picture on it, their interests, "I'm glad to be here working with you," and put it up on all the floors…. and I remember the ladies that took care of the house cleaning came down later and said, "Thank you very much. It just made my job easier. Students are saying hello to me now, calling me by my name."

Through the FIR program, Jacob and his wife were able to educate students about the people who keep their community clean resulting in a more positive environment for the students, the housekeepers, and the FIRs while immersing themselves into the work culture of the housekeepers.

Jacob and the other FIRs not only experienced the four modes of learning or adaptation by Kolb as discussed earlier in this chapter, but they also had opportunities to provide teaching moments outside of the classroom through the FIR program. In the next section, informal teaching moments and the more formal teaching moments, more specifically, structured learning opportunities through FIR programming, will be discussed.

Teaching Moments

The FIR program provides opportunities for students to develop adult relationships and expand their education beyond the classroom through teaching moments. Teaching moments in this study include both informal and formal learning opportunities. Informal-learning opportunities are defined as those unplanned moments in time during which a learning opportunity presents itself. Formal-learning opportunities are those moments for which the FIR has planned a program. Programs may range from lectures from other faculty members to speaking about the FIR's area of study to planting pansies together.

The FIR program facilitates informal-learning opportunities through social experiences between students and faculty members by providing avenues for building student-faculty relationships and further placing learning in the students' environments twenty-four hours per day, seven days per week. Through the continuous presence of the FIR program, opportunities present themselves for learning. Dan described the FIR program as

> an enhanced social experience on campus that I don't think enough universities emphasize. I think if the Faculty In Residence programs were becoming more of an institutionalized feature of various universities, I think it would really start to improve the social climate and social life on campus.

Dan believed that learning often occurred during informal FIR interaction. For example, students met each other through introductions by the FIRs and may develop valuable relationships through those introductions. Further, through informally interacting with the FIRs, students may learn of important deadlines or how to better navigate through the university. FIRs presented many points of informal teaching through their narratives. Some of the contact bordered or overlapped between informal and formal learning

opportunities. However, my definition of informal teaching relies primarily on unplanned moments in time. For example, Chris discussed holding review sessions. When Chris was a FIR, he used one of the large social lounges in the residence halls to hold exam review sessions for his first-year class, a class in which the majority of the students lived in the residence halls. While the planned review sessions are considered formal learning opportunities, Chris mentioned informal teaching opportunities, as well. He said,

> It certainly never hurt me at all to be able to hold review sessions, sometimes on the spot. It helped my reputation as a teacher. It helped my clout with the students just having a certain cachet there in the dorms.

Emma also spoke of informal teaching opportunities that evolved into formal learning opportunities. One of Emma's programs developed once students built trust in her and her family. She said,

> So we have study break programs, we have library research rescue, and then there was one of our favorite programs, Angola Night, which really was an extravaganza. It was all about Angola, and it was educational, entertaining, but it came out of the fact that there were a group of Angolan students staying in the dorm their first year here at OU and they just kind of clustered together. And we started talking to them and because they didn't have a place in the organized-international-programs-thing we offered them an opportunity to showcase their culture and their home. And they took after it like gangbusters, and so we felt that that was a way of just supporting them in their new home here in the United States and at OU and in Norman.

Through Emma's informal interaction with Angolan students, she and the students learned about each other and were able to structure programming to display the Angolan culture, which, in turn, provided structured learning opportunities for other students. Yet, other interactions were held private between the student and the FIR.

Anthony spoke of informal-learning through a career discussion with a particular student. Through the discussion, he helped the student arrive at his own decision to attend Vanderbilt for medical school.

> There certainly were some times and situations where I was able to talk to students about – it wasn't life or death, but about what they're going to do with their career. Should they take the acceptance to Vanderbilt Medical School or go somewhere else or some things like that a bit.

FIRs, at times, serve as mediators. Anthony, for example, mediated the student's own thoughts about medical school. He questioned the student and provided points for thought so that the student was able to fully consider his options.

Jacob had similar experiences with mediation. Jacob spoke of one of his and his wife's informal teaching moments as mediators in a couple's relationship. As with many of the informal teaching opportunities, Jacob's experience also displays the students' trust through confidence. More specifically, the students chose to contact the FIR and his wife to confide in them, an act of trust. Jacob described the experience,

> One time there was a lovers' quarrel. I remember two students. You had a guy and a woman over here and they were fighting. So, the guy comes down. I take him in one corner and I'm talking to him over here and [my wife's] talking to them here and our kids are asleep... And we were just talking about relationships.

Through this informal contact, Jacob and his wife were able to discuss with students the meaning of loving relationships.

The FIRs spoke fondly of their informal teaching moments, however, they were more verbal about their formal learning opportunities. Chris explained his perception of why he focused on academic programs and how he brought them "South of Lindsay" or, more specifically, from the academic side of campus across the street to the residence halls.

> I think that a lot of the spirit behind the program is to break down some of the walls between faculty and students and bring some of the academics South of Lindsay. We would do lecturettes where we would bring in faculty members. Oftentimes we would have a visiting professor that would come to our campus and we would have them over. We'd call up catering and arrange for a dinner, sort of a small lecture with lots of discussion over a meal.

Developing programs was, at times, a challenge for some of the FIRs, however, they also spoke of how the programs extended students' collegiate experiences beyond the classroom. Anthony said of programming,

> It was also exciting planning the events. It's kind of like two sides of the same coin, in a way, because it was stressful, but it's also exciting and stimulating and interesting – planning and executing events.

James spoke of both the challenges and the benefits of programming to students.

> So when I think of programming there's all sorts of challenges involving timing as well as the substantive program that you're having. If you have a program in dissecting frogs, you're not going to have a lot of turnout, except if it was dissecting frogs with free pizza. Then you would have a lot of turnout. And with programming, too, the other kind of stem from programming is that whether it's successful or not. It still, in many ways, provides students at the end of the day with unique academic exposure to things that they don't get inside the classroom.

James and Anthony recognized the need to present interesting programming for the students. James also recognized along with almost all of the FIRs, that students are often looking for food at programs. Throughout the FIRs' and students' interviews, food was mentioned repeatedly. Food was used as a conduit by FIRs to build community. At times, programs evolved solely around food and socialization. Pancake Breakfasts or Midnight Breakfasts were often referred to by both FIRs and students. They are events, typically in the late evening hours, held nearly every year by each FIR family where the family and staff cook pancakes and other breakfast foods. They are observed by both students and faculty members as a way to socialize with each other. The FIRs had to

assess what types of programs they felt would be accepted by both students and presenters and they also had to advertise.

Chris and his family developed a programming model such that the task was organized and simplified.

> We actually had a nice model where we would take two floors and we had them all pick times throughout the semester, and they would pair up and recruit students to these activities. It was also part of the RA programming model, so it was a win-win on both sides.

In Chris's account, he presents efficiency by combining residence hall floors to participate in the programming and he incorporates the RAs so that they not only attended the event, but they advertised the event. The RA programming model for RAs includes credit for FIR programming. Therefore, in return, the RAs received credit from their supervisors for completing a program with the FIRs. Chris developed a method to ease the requirement for both the FIRs and the RAs.

For Anthony, time was spent planning the programs and advertising for them. Anthony's apartment was one of the apartments not on a regular path through the residence halls, as previously discussed. His apartment was located in one of six buildings in his community. Further, his apartment was at the end of a row of houses, the greatest distance from the main sidewalk. Therefore, advertising for his programs was more complex than in the residence halls where all students shared a common entryway. While he was dependent to an extent on the RAs for promoting his programs, he attempted his own method of creating publicity. Anthony and his son, likely on his Big Wheel, were easily spotted in his community. By hanging flyers for his programs, he enforced the importance of the programs to the students as well as, indirectly, expressed caring for the students by taking time to hang the publicity.

Ethan concentrated his family's programming efforts on structured learning opportunities, specifically academically formal activities. He viewed structured activities, in a sense, as formal and informal. In Ethan's view of informal programming, an event may be planned, but he perceives little intellectual substance to the program. He and his family would prefer to provide academic-type programs, however, he has become aware of his community and the student desires for non-academically inclined activities. Through his interview, Ethan appears to have balanced his academic objectives with student desires.

> That [activities] is what we do the most of. I mean, that is our big role – is – we see our role as backing residents – is to put on various and good and worthwhile activities, so, I kind of broke them down into categories the way that we think about the lifestyle, meaning, trying to model behavior for the students. And we do a lot of food activities just because that's our interest and I think that's where we bring a lot of experience, so we do cooking exercises….
>
> … the other two that are important to us are cultural events and academic events. Cultural… we do a lot of international events and that to me is, once again, our particular interest is in international culture and getting students from Norman, from Oklahoma at OU, to know what it's like to live outside the United States, outside of Oklahoma, so we bring in student groups. We brought in the Iran Student Association, the Arab Student Association, the Italian student group comes in very often to do international events.
>
> Academic, this is the model I had because I was a graduate student at a place that had a master's program… that this program is directly modeled on. And that most of the events that they did there that I participated in were almost strictly academic. And that doesn't work as well here for various reasons. Also because there freshmen through seniors live in the colleges they call them whereas here it's just freshmen. So it's a less mature student, but I still do academic events although they're sometimes not well attended.
>
> And we also do home, what I call comfort events, where we'll just let students come in, sit on our couches, we'll make cookies, have tea, just so that they'll have a place other than their dorm room to relax and maybe be around some adults too and we keep it quiet, we don't play games, we don't watch, we don't play video games, we don't watch TV, we just have students reading, knitting, playing with the cat, things that maybe they might do with their parents at home, who knows. But that's our idea.

> And then I put pizza party because those are actually the events that we don't like to do. We do them because students want them, RAs want them, but we feel that it's a waste of our time to do that event that there're plenty of football watch parties, movie parties happening around campus. There's a lot of events around campus and we feel that it's not a good use of our time to do those, but we do them to show the RAs that we're willing to work with them.

While Ethan preferred not to host events such as movies and football games, Emma found value in those interactions. She is also a proponent for educational programs, but found that relaxed programs promoted relationships with students. Josh also spoke of how he not only held programs within his apartment to build relationships, but he also helped students expand their scholastic experiences of campus by exposing them to the campus in addition to doing simple programs like tie-dying t-shirts. More specifically, Josh said,

> There are things that we can introduce to students in an informal setting that are different than what you can do in a classroom. And even if it's kind of the same content, there's a different delivery and a different reception when it's done in the context of being in your residence sitting on couches and such.
>
> …And then another thing that I thought was important to academic enhancement was awareness of the academic – the richness of our campus. So museums, like the art museum, the natural history museum, our libraries, to let them know about the Western History library, of course the main library…. But we would take students to musicals, plays; we would go to recitals to encourage the things that the students were doing that they were involved in, in the arts, because many of them were not art majors.

Not only does Josh mention taking students to university events, he also mentions how attending those events supports students. Josh incorporates formal learning opportunities with building relationships among and between students.

Through FIR activities, students build relationships with the FIRs and develop, as described by the students and discussed in Chapter V, a feeling of safety with the FIRs, a mentoring relationship built through formal and informal FIR activities. Similarly,

Jaasma and Koper (2001) qualitatively reduced six categories of student-faculty interaction: course-related, self-disclosure, small talk, advice, intellectual ideas, and requests. These categories of student-faculty interaction are echoed in this study. Further, Jaasma and Koper (1999) studied out-of-classroom communication and instructor immediacy, trust, and conversation control, and motivation. Informal contacts were found to differ from office visits in frequency and content. In addition, faculty members with personal characteristics which promote trust, closeness, and equality are related to student satisfaction with out-of-class communication. This is an interesting point of reference as the FIR program may further develop relationships both in the classroom and out of the classroom by establishing a bridge between the academic realm of campus and co-curricular activities, such as those provided through the FIR program.

Summative Statement: Themes of the FIR Experience

The FIR program provides learning opportunities and support for students both in and out of the classroom. Further, it provides the environmental milieu (Barker, 1968) to enhance student-faculty interaction across campus through relationships and teaching moments. In addition, the FIR program introduces students to faculty and offers students a glimpse into the lives of faculty members through FIRs living in the residence halls. That is, students observe that faculty members and their families participate in activities typical to most other families from children participating in piano lessons to decorating their homes for the holidays. The FIR program punctures an invisible barrier between students and faculty.

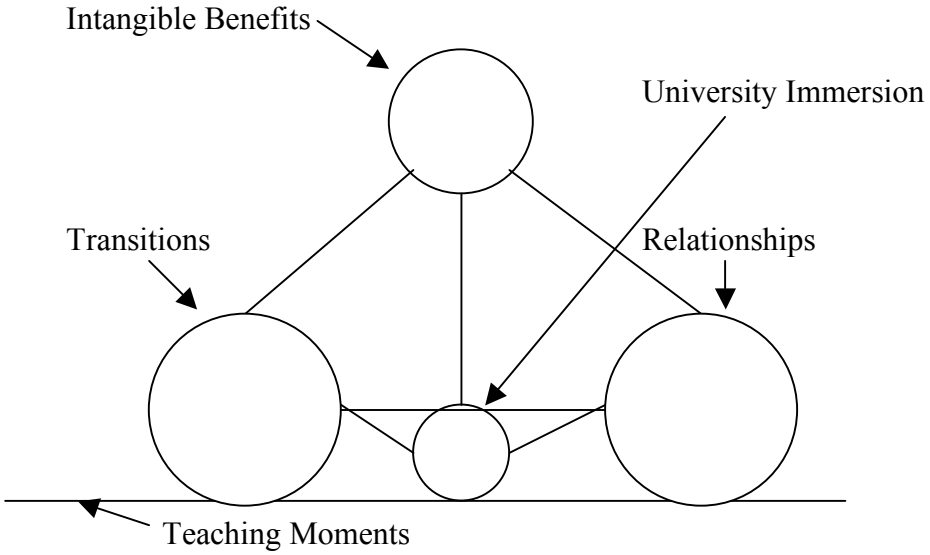
Just as Josh describes above, his involvement with students promotes relationships, teaching moments, intangible benefits, and university immersion. These

characteristics of the FIRs' experiences are sometimes difficult to distinguish in the FIR program as the themes co-exist and interrelate. Diagram 3 demonstrates the interconnectedness of the FIRs' various experiences. The experiences create a pyramid with teaching experiences as the foundation upon which the other themes build. Teaching moments is the foundation as it is the common thread between students, faculty, and staff as defined by the mission of the university: The mission of the University of Oklahoma is to provide the best possible educational experience for our students through excellence in teaching, research and creative activity, and service to the state and society (The University of Oklahoma, 2006). Therefore, teaching moments are a commonality among FIRs and faculty who have not experienced the FIR program. However, the FIR program builds upon that foundation.

The emergent themes are added to this foundational element in order to visually show the thematic facets of the FIR program and the FIR experiences. Intangible benefits of the FIR program are included in the top of the three dimensional pyramid. The intangible benefits are developed through the remaining themes and, therefore, dependent upon those themes. Without one point of the pyramid, the experiences reduce to a triangle. Thus, without the full experience of the FIR program, faculty experiences lose depth.

Diagram 3.

A Pyramid of FIR Experiences.

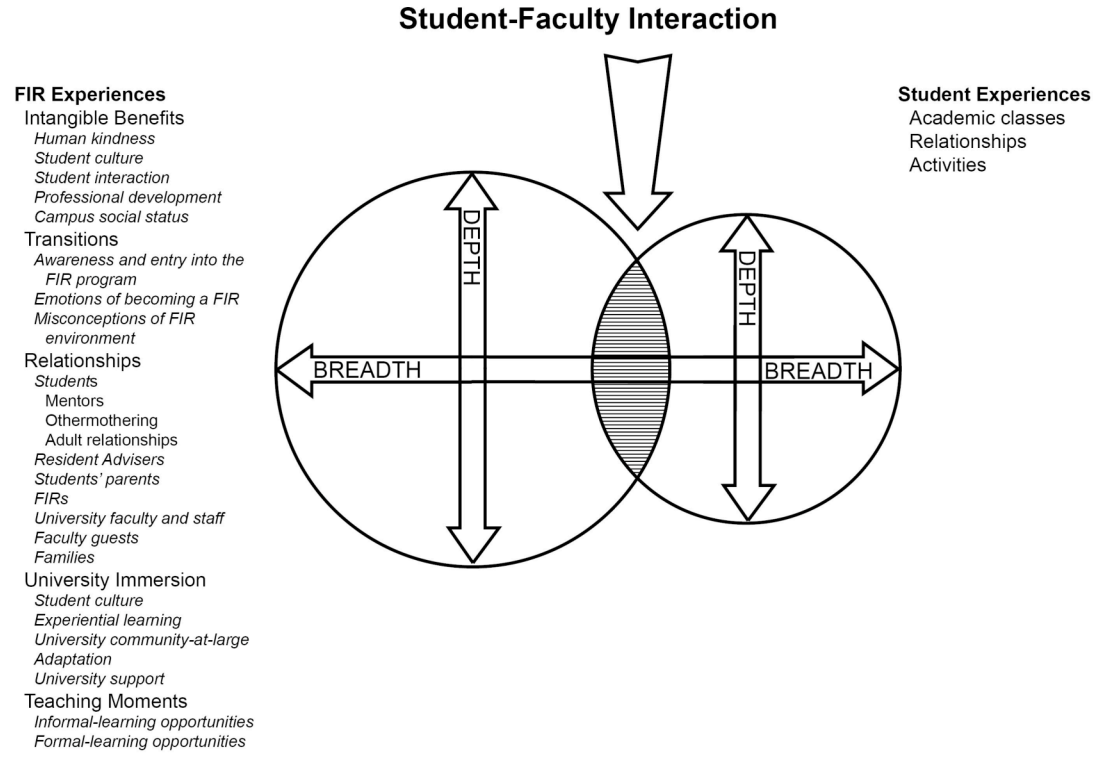


Through Transitions, Relationships, and University Immersion in the FIR program, the FIRs receive Intangible Benefits. The Intangible Benefits create the point of the pyramid, yet they also contribute to the base and vice versa.

Diagram 4 demonstrates a connection between the FIR experiences and student experiences. The two interconnect in their depth and breadth. The FIR experiences are outlined in Diagram 4 as they have been discussed throughout this chapter. The FIR experiences are deeper and broader than prior to their FIR experiences. The student experiences due to the FIR program have been withheld from this diagram. They will be discussed in Chapter V and presented in a composite diagram.

Diagram 4.

Deepening and Widening FIR Interaction within the University Context.



Without the FIR experience in its entirety, the student experience is reduced, for example, by lowering the number of opportunities for student-faculty involvement outside of the classroom. Based on student involvement theory (Astin, 1993), students who participate with the FIR program likely experience greater collegiate success. Further, factors of student engagement are the most critical to student success (Kuh et al., 2005). The FIR program provides students with opportunities for campus involvement, both in and out of the classroom, with faculty members who are often perceived as student mentors. In this study, FIRs also explored the meaning of student success and how the FIRs believe their program may influence student success. In the next section, I discuss the results of the student success discussions based on the FIR experience.

Student Success: Achieving Potential, Individualization, and Happiness

In the literature review, student success was discussed and how it is often narrowly defined (Yazedijan et al., 2008). For example, Kuh et al. (2005) described the characteristics of successful students to include persisting, benefiting in desired ways from their collegiate experiences, expressing satisfaction with college, and graduating. Yazedijan et al. (2008) in their qualitative study found three themes that defined the meaning of student success including grades, social integration, and navigation through the college environment. Alternatively, Kramer (2007) states in his book *Fostering Student Success in the Campus Community* that no attempt to define student success, what student success is, or what it shall be is made in his book since the conditions and indicators of success are not all applicable or transferable between institutions. Therefore, the vagueness of current definitions of student success led me to explore the perceptions of student success by the FIRs and students as well as the influence of the FIR program on student success as part of the research question.

Learning about student success from the perspective of the FIRs is important. Their perspectives are assumed different than any other perspective from the university because of their lived experiences with students. They have grown to know students through the classroom and with all of their complexities of life outside of the classroom such as relationship disputes, financial concerns, and homesickness. While the FIRs have an interest in supporting students through graduation and likely take pride in high graduation rates, their primary experiences with students are with first-year students in the residence halls and students in their academic classes. In this section, I discuss the

meaning of student success as defined by the FIR participants and how the FIRs relate their experiences in the FIR program to student success.

Common themes emerged from twelve of the fourteen FIR interviews. Although each FIR expressed their responses differently, three student success themes emerged including recognition and achievement of one's potential, individualization, and the equation of happiness. Isabella's comment reflects these themes.

> Student success means that students would be able to recognize what their potential is and to be able to achieve that potential. I think that's the most success that we could hope for is find where our talents are and be able to develop them, and use them to succeed at whatever tasks set before us.

Will voiced a similar view of Isabella's summary by stating,

> I define success more broadly as reaching a sense of balance and setting goals that enrich that person's life and the lives of people around them. And then working toward those goals."

Isabella and Will both refer to student success as excelling in one's goals. In addition, Isabella comments on the recognition of one's potential or talents.

The recognition of one's talents and pairing the talents with a degree and subsequent career can be difficult for many students. Most students attend college primarily for career preparation (Astin, 1993). For a traditional, first-year student, preparing for a career may be a daunting task considering the many developmental stages of students (Astin, 1984; Astin, 1993; Cress et al., 2001; Chickering, 1969; Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Evans et al., 1998). As students develop, they may change their primary foci when considering and prioritizing elements in life that are important to them. For example, students must develop priorities when determining how to achieve their personal goals. Progress through student development

is influenced by personal experiences and through environmental experiences such as described in Astin's input-environment-output model (Astin, 1993).

Environmental factors have been found to have many positive effects on academic outcomes. When Alexander Astin (1993) revisited *What Matters in College*, he developed environmental factors to investigate. One of those factors was "Student Orientation of the Faculty" (p. 47-48). This factor represented faculty concern for students through interest in student's academic problems and personal problems, commitment to the institution's welfare, sensitivity to minorities, accessibility to faculty outside of office hours, opportunity for student-faculty involvement, and personalization of student treatment. Astin found that Student Orientation of the Faculty had more "substantial direct effects on student outcomes than almost any other environmental variable" (p. 342). This environmental factor as a whole has tangible and intangible positive effects on academic outcomes including bachelor's degree attainment, scholarship, and self-reported gains in writing skills, critical thinking abilities, and analytical and problem-solving skills. Further, Student Orientation of the Faculty has indirect positive effects on commitment to developing a meaningful philosophy of life, self-reported growth in foreign-language skills, leadership abilities, general knowledge, and public speaking skills.

FIR programs may further the positive influences of Student Orientation of the Faculty. More specifically, through FIR programs, students are exposed to faculty members who have moved into the residence halls. Through the faculty members' actions of moving into the residence halls, they have demonstrated their interests in students' academic and personal lives as well as their commitment to the university.

Further, through the FIR program, students are afforded opportunities to interact with faculty members outside-of-the-classroom in everyday life. That is, students may observe and join faculty members and their families eating dinner in the cafeteria or swimming at the recreation center. Through these deeper and broader student-faculty interaction experiences, students may recognize and achieve their potential greater than without the FIR program.

For example, James said, students must find "… something that they not only can do well but that they like, that they enjoy." Michael, as did other FIRs, further explained the concept of recognizing and achieving one's potential and added that students must ultimately achieve happiness. In addition, Michael considered the individual's circumstances.

> [Student success] to me depends tremendously on the individual – depends on what they want and what's good for them. For some people, really applying themselves and succeeding academically is the most important thing because of whom they are and what they want to do. For other people, maybe learning to adjust to a different kind of environment than they've ever been in or finding out who they are and what kind of person they're going to be out of the shadows of their family and so on. There's a million ways to be successful and… [success] really depends on their circumstances.

Michael's quote is demonstrative of the responses from the other FIRs. Graduation from college and grades were never the focus of the meaning of success for the FIRs. While FIRs often mentioned these types of perceived academic success, their focus widened to student success as well-rounded individuals. Josh, for example, spoke of success in terms of enrichment, confidence, and preparation for life beyond college.

> Student success – to define student success means that when they leave this university they are enriched. They are enriched in the sense that they know better, or are better – no. They are better equipped to think for themselves, to be creative, to solve problems, to interact with others in the workforce, but also in the community. That they have a greater confidence in self – in other words, a

> student – a university should provide for a student a place where they can grow emotionally and equip them with the skills – and that doesn't mean knowledge – the skills that they need to be successful in life.

The FIRs expressed three concepts of student success: achieving happiness, recognizing one's potential, and attaining one's potential. These three concepts can be reflected in the statement: student success is an individual achieving happiness by recognizing and achieving one's potential in a desired objective.

While most of the FIRs mentioned success in the greater context of life, Gabe spoke directly of how students must navigate through the collegiate system. Gabe described and illuminated a conversation he had with a student prior to this interview.

> I said, "If you're going to work in this system, you're going to have to comply with the system's agenda sufficient [enough] to get through it. You may not like everything, I don't myself, and you may want to be critical of some things; but you have got to roll with it to get your education. That's No.1." And then I give them three strategies and one is become ignorant, discover that you don't know very much, really, and that if you're ever going to know much, you're going to have to do a lot of work and that knowing things is useful. And then the second one is the beginning of that process is self-knowledge and that's what we don't know, we don't know ourselves. And I said, "And that's not just true for young people, I know people my age who have not paid attention to their own lives." And then finally you have to discover being a decisional person.

Gabe's statement can be summarized as work within the system, understand that you do not know as much as you think you do, discover yourself, and become a person who is able to make decisions. This attitude fits well with Astin's Student Orientation of the Faculty factor (1993).

The attitudes of the FIRs and the placement of the FIRs and the FIR program into the students' environment may enhance Astin's (1993) Student Orientation of the Faculty. While the faculty address Astin's descriptors, they are not likely aware of Astin's study or how their role as a FIR can have such an influence.

FIRs were also asked to describe any relationship between the FIR program and student success, if any. The FIR responses reflected an optimistic uncertainty that they were helping students succeed. Most referred to the value of the relationships they built with students through the program. For example, Gabe described that he cannot be confident he influences student success through the FIR program.

> That's difficult to measure…. Now let me tell you why I think it's difficult to measure. It's incremental; it's not a big "Ah-ha" for most people at all. It's the same way that I had to learn what teaching is like. "Am I making a difference that is positive for my students as I work with them in class?" Well, on any given day you have no idea; even if they ace the class you have no idea because it's an intangible, but, you have to trust that you're building relationships, you're building relationships between you and the student, between the student and the subject matter, between you and the student and the subject matter and you're working your life out in that environment. It's incremental, it's gradual and you have to let go of it at some point.
>
> Now, applying that to FIR, in the FIR program it was simply being there in it's day-by-day – and I believe that having the presence of faculty humanizes them. I had a student once run in to me at Safeway when the store down here was Safeway on Lindsey, and he came around the corner and he saw me and he said, 'Doctor Gabe, you're buying groceries,' and I said, 'Yeah.' He says, 'Yeah, I guess so.' And I realized that I don't know what they think. They just think I disappear into a cloud and then come back and teach them. And therefore FIR, you're right there, you're eating dinner with them, you have house cats and the whole nine yards and I think that's good. It humanizes professors and allows them to become real rather than a false elevation. You know I don't want students to be intimidated or to be – we all should be respectful, but we need to be respectful of students as well.

Gabe illuminates the point that even within the classroom, an instructor faces uncertainty as to whether or not that particular class influences student success. Further, he applies uncertainty of understanding whether or not the FIR program influences student success. Gabe's uncertainty as to whether the FIR program influences student success based on student interaction both in and out-of-the-classroom being "incremental" is reflective of the FIR population.

The responses from the FIRs were primarily that of optimism; that they influence student success through the relationships they build through the FIR program. Perhaps the optimistic hesitation for FIRs to specifically state that they influence student success is their own research training. Many of the FIRs would not recognize student success in relationship to the FIR program because they did not have quantifiable data affirming their optimism about their influence on student success as FIRs. However, they expressed an openness that the positive atmosphere produced through the FIR program may influence student success. Chris explained the atmosphere or social phenomenon he and his spouse experienced.

> The faculty members [FIRs] are pretty good catalysts or connectors of resources on the campus. I think they are in special spots. Once they learn how the student affairs sides of things work and learn that culture and are willing to embrace that part, and if student affairs is willing to also understand a little bit how the faculty world works. Then, yeah, I think that the FIR interactions can offer tremendous connections for students and help student success by all these things, just greasing the skids in the right spots to writing letters of recommendation to just talking and trying to explore ideas. "Is that really what you want to do? Have you ever considered this?" I think faculty have the ability to see a whole lot of different possible pathways that often students have no idea about. It doesn't have to be the FIR. It can just be someone they bring to the program.

In Chris' account, the FIR program serves as a catalyst for student success through assisting student in maneuvering through the university environment and helping them with self-discovery.

The FIRs commonly perceive that the FIR program creates a campus environment that offers an enhanced social phenomenon and the opportunities for students to build lifelong relationships with FIRs. These relationships further the possibility that the FIR program enhances Astin's (1993) Student Orientation of the Faculty and is a factor in Astin's I-E-O model. As reflected in the overall narrative by FIRs, the FIR relationships

directly and indirectly influence graduation rates, scholarship, and self-reported gains in writing skills, critical thinking abilities, and analytical and problem-solving skills in addition to developing a meaningful philosophy of life, self-reported growth in foreign-language skills, leadership abilities, general knowledge, and public speaking skills.

As described by the FIR, the FIR program influences the institution through relationships between faculty members and students, parents, university faculty and staff, and visiting faculty members. Further, the FIR program relays an understanding of the institution by faculty members and creates teaching moments which extend beyond students to faculty members. FIR experiences are, therefore, expanded beyond the experiences of holding the position of faculty member. Through the FIR program, FIRs gain experiences such as the intangible benefits of the FIR program, the relationships developed with students, faculty, staff, parents, visiting faculty, and their families in the collegiate environment in addition to greater opportunities for informal and formal-learning opportunities.

In this chapter, I have presented the FIR program from the faculty perspective and the concepts that emerged from the research questions: Transitions, Intangible Benefits, Relationships, University Immersion, and Teaching Moments. In addition, I have discussed student success and that the FIRs perceive student success as finding happiness recognizing one's potential, and achieving that potential in relationship in respect to one's personal goals. These findings hold great value in the development of programming and the university environment for students and faculty members at institutions of higher learning. In addition, these findings may further higher education through orienting faculty members in efforts to improve the Student Orientation of the

Faculty and promote an environment of mutual learning between students and faculty members. In the next chapter, student experiences through the FIR program are addressed.

CHAPTER V: THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

FIR and student interviews were conducted to explore the guiding research questions:

1. What are the experiences of students and FIRs with the FIR program?
2. What meaning do students and FIRs ascribe to their experiences?
3. How do the students and the FIRs perceive student success?
4. In what, if any, ways do students and FIRs relate the FIR program to student success?

To reiterate faculty and student experiences without the FIR program, Diagram 2 in Chapter IV must be considered. In this diagram, student-faculty interaction typically takes place in the classroom and during office hours. The FIR program, however, extends student-faculty interaction experiences beyond formal academics, influencing both faculty members and students. These FIR experiences are illustrated in Chapter IV, Diagram 4. In addition, Chapter IV explores themes of the FIR experience including Transitions, Intangible Benefits, Relationships, University Immersion, and Teaching Moments. Further, I discussed the FIRs' perceptions of student success and their perceptions of FIR influence on student success.

In this chapter, I explore the student themes that emerged directly from clustering diagrams and in-depth interviews with students through the hermeneutic, phenomenological process used for this study. Student themes included Safe Haven, Mentorship, and Activities. These themes are shared as well as the students' perceptions of student success and how they interpret the FIR program in regards to student success.

Themes of the Student Experience

The students' experiences of the FIR program were not as descriptive as the FIRs' experiences. The FIRs developed an interest and were accepted into the FIR program prior to living the experience. The FIR program became the center of their lives when they committed to the program and this experience included their curiosities about the program including the living conditions of the apartment and living with students. Although unknown experiences were in front of the FIRs, they had the comfort of having been accepted into the program by the administration. In addition, they trusted that the university would provide their most basic needs to be successful within the program.

To the contrary, students typically experienced the FIR program when they met a FIR, heard about the program from other students, or noticed a FIR door or some other physical element of the FIR apartment. The FIRs entered the program with the objective to interact with students. Students did not enter the residence halls with their primary objective to meet the FIRs living in their community. However, once the student participants engaged with the FIRs, their experiences with the FIR program developed and resulted in the three concepts explored in this chapter: Safe Haven, Mentorship, and Activities. Each theme is explored in the following sections outlined in Table 4.

Table 4.

Student Participant Themes and Sub-Themes of the FIR Experience

Themes	Sub-themes
Safe Haven	Trust Student interest Encouragement
Mentors	People to be respected and admired Commitment Availability Family involvement Teachers or guides Moral-support providers
Activities	Community involvement Entertainment Social opportunities Exploratory experiences

Safe Haven

Throughout the student interviews, a commonality among all of the student participants was an expression of feeling safe with the FIRs. This safe haven with the FIRs was perceived in different manners including the comfort of the apartments, the mental and emotional support from the FIRs, and the availability of FIRs as resources. Many of the student participants expressed a feeling of sanctuary when visiting the FIR apartments. They felt as though they could openly and honestly discuss academics as well as personal issues with the FIRs with no fears of retribution. Further, the FIRs and their apartments generated feelings of trust, personal interest, and encouragement. In these ways, the FIRs were one of the first means of university support and attrition intervention for first year students. In this section, the safe haven of the FIR program is explored through the student participants' experiences.

Ava recalled her first year in the residence halls and her discovery of the FIRs, which was similar to many of the other students' experiences. Within the first few weeks

of class, Ava was curious about the FIR's door downstairs, but she did not know where or to whom it led. Eventually, she learned it was a FIR home but it was not until her resident adviser took her community to a FIR program that she understood the concept. Ava said,

> At first I didn't even necessarily understand the concept, I just knew that there was this random door leading to nowhere in the bottom of my building and then I learned after a while what it was and then we attended an event that they put on… that's when I realized the parental or familial aspect of things…. I don't want to say the parent because that's not their job, but it definitely had that kind of vibe connected to it, that their house was your house, come on by if you need something.

At that point, Ava felt a connection, a connection that felt like home, where she felt safe and that she belonged. Later in the interview, Ava mentioned how welcoming the FIRs were to students and that they offered that "safe-haven-kind-of-thing."

Ava is not alone in her account of feeling safe with the FIRs. Most of the students identified a sense of feeling safe through their experiences with the FIRs. For example, Landon represented most of the students when he said, "I know that I could go to them with anything, if I had to." Landon and Ava, as well as almost all of the other students, expressed that the FIRs provided a sense of comfort. FIRs also offered a sense that students' physiological and safety needs, at least in part, were provided through the FIR program. In addition, the FIRs provided mental and emotional support. Trust emerged from these foundational characteristics.

Trust, according to Gavin and Caleb's statements, may be initially established with the FIRs because they are part of a high-profile university program and recognized, therefore, as respectable people. Caleb described his perception of the FIRs as,

> You can show up there and know that there are Faculty In Residence and so you're already looking up to them with a kind of respect, and so they can already influence you. You're like looking up to them as a role model.

Alex, a Resident Adviser (RA), had similar sentiments of the FIR program and expressed the trust of the FIRs through the FIR program involving FIRs as "distinguished" families, community leaders, and people who promote a comfortable atmosphere.

> It makes me think of a distinguished family…. Just how they're leaders in the community and they're trying to foster an atmosphere that promotes fellowship of the RAs who link the other students.

Gavin had similar sentiments as Caleb and Alex. However, Gavin also recognized that the FIRs live in the residence halls with purpose and maintain their individuality.

> They're interested in what I'm doing throughout college. They make sure I'm feeling comfortable with things like campus involvement and that can even be community involvement within our tower and make sure I'm feeling comfortable with my grades and that I have good relationships with the professors. I've had conversations with both my Faculty In Residence about how comfortable I'm feeling on campus. Another warm personality [characteristic] is that they're very outgoing. Now, to live with over hundreds of students, I guess you kind to have to be – you can't be a wallflower. And so they're – they are outgoing. They're very easy to talk to. I feel like I could knock on their door because they, of course, they live in the towers, but I can knock on their door and ask them any question that I have and they would be more than willing and happy to help me out. And all that of course means that they're – that they're likable.

Gavin discovered common ground with both of the FIRs he came to know through the FIR program. As with most of the other student participants, Gavin first became aware of the FIRs and their apartments during his first year. The University of Oklahoma enforces first-year students living in the residence halls. President David L. Boren emphasized the importance of living in campus housing in a note posted on the Housing and Food Services web page. The note, in part, reads,

> A great university is a true community where people of many different backgrounds and academic interests get to know each other and form bonds of friendship and mutual respect.

> We do not grow personally and intellectually if we only live together with people we already know who come from the same cultural background and geographic area as ourselves.
>
> Learning is not confined to the classroom or laboratory. We also learn from our peers. One of OU's greatest assets is the number of outstanding students from across the United States and from around the world who are enrolled here. Living together in close proximity during the freshman year helps form important and lasting bonds. (Housing and Food Services at The University of Oklahoma, para 6, 2009)

President Boren sets the tone of the campus community through his beliefs in community development. His beliefs in living in residence halls during the first year and incorporating FIRs into the residence halls provides students opportunities to connect with peers and develop "intergenerational friendships" (Housing and Food Services at The University of Oklahoma, 2009).

On-campus housing is a method to satisfy Maslow's (1970) Theory of Hierarchy of Needs. The hierarchical needs are often diagrammed using a pyramid consisting of five layers. The base of the pyramid holds the most basic of needs, physiological needs. Physiological needs include many items provided by student housing including food, water, and shelter. The layer above physiological needs is safety needs. In the collegiate setting, it is unlikely that a student is hungry due to deprivation or holds the fear of being the prey of a saber-toothed tiger. However, as Maslow (1948) asserts about children, students "generally prefer a safe, orderly, predictable, organized world, which he can count on, and in which unexpected, unmanageable or other dangerous things do not happen" (p. 378). With the prior hierarchical needs fulfilled Maslow's other needs may be sought such that students are open to relationships that fulfill the feelings of love and

belonging, the third tier on the pyramid, including those built through student-FIR interaction.

Ava mentioned a feeling of parental involvement when she spoke of the FIRs. Abigail also mentioned that the FIRs offered comfort when she said, "that they are very nurturing, because they are a family." Perhaps through these types of feelings due to the FIRs, students are assisted in moving up Maslow's pyramid through the need of love, affection, and belongingness. The second need from the top of Maslow's pyramid is the need for esteem, that is, the need for self-esteem and respect or esteem from others.

As an example, Gavin reflected, "They're interested in what I'm doing throughout college." This type of phrase repeatedly arose during the students' interviews. Students perceived the FIRs were interested in them and encouraged them to take, as Madison voiced, "the right direction." The FIRs promoted self-esteem as well as displayed respect for the students. With adequate self-esteem, students are then able to move forward into Maslow's last need, the need for self-actualization. Through self-actualization, the individual finds "what he is fitted for" (Maslow, 1943, p. 382). Maslow asserts that if a person does not find what creates happiness for them, "discontent and restlessness will soon develop" (1943, p. 382). Perhaps this discontent is observed in students as they seek a major field of study and attempt to find their true selves. The FIR program can be highly important in the development of these individuals and their journeys toward happiness by offering support through the safe haven of the FIRs.

In addition, satisfaction toward Maslow's physiological, safety, love, and esteem needs of students may be furthered by the following two themes, Mentoring and Activities. Through mentoring, students may harbor senses of safety, love, and esteem

through the family-like relationships many described having with FIRs. Students further explore their academic talents and their places in the world. Through Activities, students may also develop a sense of belonging by being with others, esteem by learning with others and asserting their own knowledge in what is felt to be a safe environment. In the following two sections, Mentoring and Activities from the students' perspectives are explored.

Mentorship

In Chapter IV, I discussed how the words role modeling and mentoring are often used interchangeably (Sands, Parson, & Duane, 1991) and that I prefer the term mentoring to denote greater social status, intellect, and role modeling, that is, demonstration through performance (Sands et al., 1991). Mentors may assume different roles including teacher, guide, counselor, motivator, sponsor, coach, advisor, role model, referral agent, and door opener depending upon the needs of the mentees. Further, characteristics of successful mentors include being supportive, patient, respectable, people-oriented, motivating, an achiever, and receptive to others (National Institutes of Health, 2009).

All of the students identified characteristics of mentorship in the FIRs and most identified the FIRs directly as mentors. For example, Olivia shared a common view with the other students when she said, "They were my mentors…. They would have an open door policy. If I needed something, I could knock on the door." The students and FIRs agreed that the FIR doors were to be opened for students. That is, the doors represented the availability of the FIRs. The students, through their comments such as Olivia's, perceived that the FIRs were resources for them. That is, they were teachers, guides,

counselors, motivators, sponsors, coaches, advisors, and referral agents. By Olivia's expression, she portrays a feeling of safety with the FIRs, as described in the prior section, as well as the sense of her FIR as a mentor.

In Olivia's narrative, the mentor concept emerged throughout most of the other student interviews. Further, the ways in which the students described mentoring provided three sub-themes. The following are the emergent themes of the students' accounts with the FIRs as people to be respected and admired, teachers or guides, and moral-support providers.

People to be Respected and Admired

The title of this sub-theme, People to be Respected and Admired, could be descriptive of most professors on campus. However, in this case, the meaning is broader and deeper than the appreciation of the average professor's presence on campus. The students in this study recognized the FIRs' dedication to students through their commitment of living in the residence halls, their availability to students, and the involvement of their families beyond the professor who commutes to campus each day. In this section, I explore the meaning of People to be Respected and Admired through commitment, availability, and family involvement.

Commitment

As mentioned, the FIRs made a commitment to be in the FIR program. The FIRs entered an unknown experience, breaking from many of their comfort zones by moving into the residence halls with students. Students recognized this commitment; they respected and admired the FIRs for it. Throughout the interviews, students often mentioned this commitment and perceived it as a commitment to them as students.

For example, Gavin said,

> I almost hated to put job description [FIR activities in the cluster] just because there are so many different things that Faculty In Residence can do with their jobs. I'm sure it's not a contract, "You have to do this and this and this." But they take it on…. I'm sure the university wanted this to turn into a mentoring situation.

Olivia described the first time she realized faculty members lived in her building and her surprise that they would choose to live with students.

> I got to know some of my classmates and I got to know the FIRs. The FIRs were – they were amazing people. I'm really glad I got to know them…. They were very open. I didn't expect professors to be so openly inviting into their home or I didn't really expect faculty to live with students. That was kind of new. When I moved in I didn't realize that's what that – downstairs – I didn't know what FIR meant. So I saw the door one day and I was like, 'Faculty does this. Wait, like professors live here?' And one of my floor mates was like, 'Yeah.' And it was fun. It was a different experience.

Gavin and Olivia both recognized that the FIRs were not required to commit to the program and deduced that the FIRs committed to be in the program due to their desire to be involved with students. With this recognition, the students felt instantly welcomed by the FIRs and accepted; Maslow's third tier in the hierarchy of needs. The students felt as if they belonged with the FIRs; they felt a sort of love and affection from the FIRs for the FIRs' commitment to living in the residence halls and the desire to interact with students. The different FIRs had different approaches to showing this commitment.

As a sophomore, Gavin has had the experience of living in a residence hall with two different FIR families. Gavin spoke of how the FIRs have different methods of interacting with students.

> I've had the privilege of being under two Faculty In Residence and I think they have different approaches to students for interaction. My freshman year, that was achieved through programming and through this open house sort of atmosphere and it was very informal. But as my sophomore year, it's more of like a stricter-mentor-technical relationship, where I know that if I were having any problems

> with anything, as far as, like even, scholarship problems or anything like that or problems with professors, that I could go to them and see kind of what concrete thing I could do to get stuff resolved.

Gavin furthered his account of the FIRs by mentioning the comfort they have brought to him in many aspects of his life, from academics to being involved on campus. Gavin's FIRs assisted him academically when he asked them questions and provided tutoring as well as guiding him in his on-campus involvement. Gavin expressed confidence in the FIRs he has encountered and describes the interactions as relationships, more specifically, mentor relationships. With the commitment of living in the residence halls also came availability. In the next section, the commitment to students through availability is discussed.

Availability

Part of being respected and admired for the students was the availability of the FIRs. Many faculty members were available to students, particularly during class and during scheduled office hours. FIRs, however, had greater availability because of their proximity to students through the physical arrangements of most of the apartments within the respective communities. As I discussed in the last chapter, the arrangements of the FIR apartments within the communities enhance the behavioral milieu (Barker, 1968). The apartments are easily identifiable by the woodwork, residential lights, or signage, which indicates a FIR lives in the space; the apartments are convenient; and I posit that the students possess some trust in the FIR position because they recognize the amount of trust the university has placed in the FIRs through their participation in the program.

For example, Abigail felt her proximity to the FIRs, their availability, and being able to talk to the FIRs when needed, assisted her. Abigail said,

> Having someone that you can respect living there… an authority figure, but also someone who's there to try to help you. You have access to them because they live in the same building as you and I think that's beneficial…. I'd probably mostly say just talking…. You know, nothing too exciting. It doesn't have to be a huge event all the time, just them being around and you able to approach them is the main thing for me.

Abigail's account of availability provides a foundation for student-faculty interaction to occur. That is, the FIRs availability to students is the first step in encouraging student-faculty interaction.

Tyler described the FIRs' behavior that informed him they were available in his building. Almost every student mentioned during their interviews that FIRs conveyed their availability to students verbally. Tyler's description of his FIR's actions are most likely indicative of other FIRs' behaviors and actions that non-verbally communicate to students their availability. The following is Tyler's account of the non-verbal behaviors the FIRs displayed which conveyed their availability.

> Availability was the capacity to just have the door open, really, for the most part. They took the role of being a Faculty In Residence to the next level by being in residence, actually having the door open, dog coming in and out to play with the kids. Just the things they would do that weren't required of them I think was – this is kind of the external variable factor. And I just highlighted that with cookouts, movies and games, tailgate parties, and pancake breakfasts – some of my favorite aspects.

Both Ava and Elizabeth mentioned when they spoke of availability that if the FIRs did not like students, they would not be there and that they, as Ava said, "… would be living somewhere else that's probably more quiet." Students recognized the need of families for family-time and mentioned how the FIRs have spouses and that some have children and pets. With this recognition, arose the following Family Involvement section.

Family Involvement

The student participants' experiences with the FIRs and their families demonstrate a home-like atmosphere created by the FIR program. Without the FIR program, the students would not have opportunities to interact with faculty members and their families on a regular basis in addition to having opportunities to observe the faculty members with their families in everyday settings such as the cafeteria and playing in the courtyards. Abigail, as did most other students, described the FIR program and the family involvement during her interview.

> The whole set up is like a little house inside your bigger house. It makes it really – a really good way to help students adjust, you know, 'cause it's an extension essentially of their home and having this other home within it, it helps them see that there's a family in there and there's a place that they can go that's more homey. And some of the FIRs have pets. Some of them have – you know, well, they all have a real kitchen and a relaxed environment in their living rooms and everything.

Further, Abigail described the home-like environment of the FIR apartments. With FIR families often observed in the students' lifeworlds, students are able to recognize that life extends beyond college. As Sophia said, "It was kind of refreshing to realize there's little kids out there in the real world. This isn't really the real world, yet." The home-like atmosphere coupled with the prestige of the faculty members at the university may contribute to students' and FIRs' better understanding each other.

Olivia discussed how knowing the professors and their families helped her better understand faculty members in that they had priorities other than their classes, as well. Olivia's statement echoes that of most of the other students.

> It was just really fun to go down there and you get to see everybody and hang out with my classmates and they have kids. The FIRs I lived with had a little boy and a little girl. They were so, so sweet and they were fun to play with. And it was just – really happy to go there…. It definitely gave me a new outlook on my professors. It was definitely more human – human to see professors in their own home being people instead of just professors and it kind of reminded me that, yeah, professors have a home life, too, and they're not just all about, you know, work, study, work, study, grade papers.

Through the FIR program, students recognize that faculty members are more than faculty members, they are also mothers, fathers, devoted parents, and they possess interests beyond the classroom and their research. In addition, the students recognized the FIRs as teachers or guides beyond the classroom.

Teachers or Guides

Most students experienced the FIR program as a bridge between faculty members in the classroom to co-curricular activities. Some students clearly expressed the link of faculty involvement between classroom and non-classroom activities using words such as "bridge" while others indirectly expressed their recognition of the bridge through realizing the FIRs typically spend their days in academic classrooms and evenings in the residence halls. Ava, for example, recognized the FIRs spend their day with their studies and return home to be with students. Ava's statement implies how the faculty members extend being faculty beyond the classroom.

> I just can't imagine – I know so much of the faculty here, you leave a day that was a 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. or whatever and you're completely beat and couldn't handle any more student interaction; but the Faculty In Residence actually feel exactly the opposite and after their day of classes or whatever they've had going on, they still go home to even more student interaction and even more campus life.

Ava recognized that the FIRs' participation in the FIR program and their dedication to being faculty members were their passions. Ava learned through her observations that happiness and passion toward a career is important. The learning process between

students and FIRs, therefore, is not always a direct experience. For example, Ava did not discuss her intended career or life passion with her FIRs. However, through observation of the FIRs and her own life experiences, she determined that happiness and passion in life for how one earns a living is important. By incorporating the FIRs into the students' lifeworlds, the students' experiences expand within the university context; FIRs influence their views of life. Through the FIR program, students develop a better understanding of the campus as a whole, the faculty roles within the institution, and their own involvement within their community.

Tyler, for example, spoke about the "bridge" and how the FIR program is an effort to create a whole-campus atmosphere.

> I think every time I hear FIR or Faculty In Residence, I think of, I guess, an attempt to build bridges between the two entities and trying to make the campus more whole.

Alex did not use the term "bridge," instead he used the word "mesh" to demonstrate how the FIR program intermingles the student experience through their lifeworlds.

> I would just say that it's given me another aspect of university experience and I would keep going back to that, but it really is, because they are – you know, teacher/faculty members and it really meshes us, you know, housing into the academic division of the school, and it has been a really interesting experience getting to know the families, getting to know just different people and their experiences and everything.

Alex's quote mirrors that of most of the FIRs, where FIRs mentioned getting to know students outside of the classroom and how much they learned about student life by participation in the FIR program. The FIR program provided the environment for the interactions to take place. The doors of the FIR apartments represented not only a residential door to a caring family, but also to the greater academic world of the university. Entering through the FIRs' doors, the student participants discovered a

unique environment. The environment was, as described by the student participants, "safe," "home-like," and "relaxed." Through the environment, the FIRs were able to develop relationships with students that would not have developed so fully in the classroom and during office hours alone. Students and faculty members built relationships, as Madison said, "on a whole different level." Tyler described the difference the FIR program made to him when he said that interacting with the FIRs "gave me the confidence in knowing that we can interact with each other in a professional or a casual basis" and that "those relationships can exist and that's just as much a part of the educational experience as is going to class."

The students learned more about the FIRs and the FIRs learned about the students. As discussed, the FIRs taught informally through the program. For example, Jacob described he and his wife meeting with two students who were dating each other and in a dispute. The students had arrived at the FIR apartment searching for assistance. Jacob sat with the male on one side of the FIR apartment and his wife spent time with the female. Together, Jacob and his wife educated the students about the complexities of relationships. FIRs often taught students about life, work ethic, and family through their presence and the environment created by the FIR program without any formal programs.

The FIRs also taught actively through formal, or planned, activities. For example, Dan sometimes took students scorpion hunting, teaching them hunting methods as well as educating the students about the scorpion's role in nature and his research. The student participants often described the FIRs' influences or their families' influences on them through the informal activities.

Olivia, for example, described a turning point for her that was facilitated by interaction with a FIR. The FIR's advice to Olivia made her consider her involvement with the university and her community. Not only was this a mentoring experience as a mentee for Olivia, but she became a mentor, as well.

> They told me about how they contribute to university life and go out and be part of it and take command of it and get out there and do something with it because it's not going to – university isn't going to make me do anything. So, I have to go and put myself in it…. I do remember them telling me that the best way to be involved with the university is to join clubs and get into organizations and get chair or a position of some kind. That way I feel like I contribute – contributed more instead of just being a member. And find something that I really, really enjoy, not things that just would look good on my resume…. I ended up applying to the University College to be a Peer Mentor so now I have about 30 freshmen that I mentor and I love it a lot.

The FIRs informally taught Olivia through their daily routine. They also taught formally by mentoring her about involvement within the university and guiding her toward activities that would make her happy and have a positive residual on her community. FIRs also helped students with their academics through interacting with students and their families.

Madison's experience with her FIR's family helped her with her teacher aspirations. She watched the FIR family interact amongst themselves and became involved in their lifeworlds through which she learned more about children, her own aspirations of becoming a teacher and her fit in the profession, in addition to learning more about families other than her own.

> I want to be a teacher and they gave me more of an idea of how two-year olds and infants, like how they interact with each other or how they act on a normal daily basis, because I had never actually interacted with them that much.

Students like Madison, once again, found comfort in the FIR's home and with the family, a safe haven. Student participants also often received educational experiences. In

Madison's case, she learned how to work with children, vital information for a future teacher. The FIR and the FIR family, therefore, assisted Madison with her career development. While Madison did not say it directly, her experiences indicate that she enjoyed going to the FIR's apartment, as did all of the other students. Landon specifically spoke of going to the FIR's apartment. Landon said,

> You know, having someplace to go, and, you know, just people to watch a movie and eat gelato was nice… I learn things when I go there, and that's always a good thing…

Landon's experiences imply consistency of the FIRs, his comfort of spending time with adults other than his family, and his openness to learn from the FIRs. Landon was not alone; Olivia also described the FIR apartment as "someplace to go."

Olivia used her FIR as a campus resource during her first year. She said, "They knew everything…. I mean, I lived in the dorms my freshman year and so I didn't know anything." To Olivia, the FIRs were teachers and guides to campus life. Just as Olivia and Landon, students described being open to the learning opportunities the FIRs provided. Further, interaction with the FIRs, at times, made students re-evaluate their own beliefs.

Abigail, for example, spoke about how her conversations with FIRs increased her knowledge of things and "shifted some viewpoints." She explained,

> All of the FIRs that I know have been very intelligent professors, and so they have lots of knowledge on their topics. And they are a good resource for academic advising and stuff like that, and what classes to take. And they're also good at giving life advice and stuff. So they're just a really good resource for any conversation.

Abigail perceives the FIRs as resources and is comfortable in discussing most topics with them. Through Abigail's relationship with the FIRs, she is able to re-evaluate her beliefs

on specific topics discussed with the FIRs. Experiences, which may shift viewpoints, are indicative of cognitive development.

Cognitive-structural theories "… seek to describe the changes in thinking and the evolving frames of reference that structure values, beliefs, and assumptions" (Chickering & Reisser, p. 2, 1993) such that individuals find meaning in their lives (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). FIRs may spur students to think about life matters in different ways, challenging students to think beyond the experiences with which they grew up with under their guardians' guidance. For example, Madison's experience with her FIR's family taught her more about children and how to work with them in her future career.

Jean Piaget (1948) describes three principles of cognitive-structural theories. The first is cognitive structures that each individual forms to make sense of their experiences. The cognitive structures provide reference points for creating meaning, choosing behavior, and problem solving. The second principle is developmental sequence, which is a predictable, yet unevenly paced, sequence that occurs as cognitive structures evolve and become more complicated. Finally, the individual develops when the cognitive structures are challenged through interaction with the environment (as cited in Kolb, 1981). Through challenges, the individual constantly searches for equilibrium by changing cognitive structures (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). Through Abigail's "shift[ing] of viewpoints," it can be posited that the FIRs influence the cognitive development of students by mentoring.

Through respect, admiration, availability, and teachers or guides, FIR mentoring is well established. This mentoring process continues into the realm of providing moral-support to students.

Moral-Support Providers

Students perceive the FIRs as safe, people to be respected and trusted, and concerned and involved in students' best interests. That is, the student participants expressed that they were safe in open discussion with the FIRs and trusted them. For example, Landon described his FIRs as "not a friend, still an authority figure, but a close one." His experience describes the experiences of most of the other students, although many used the term "friend" to describe FIRs. Students also perceived the FIRs as supportive and interested in each individual student. Avery's statement is representative of many student quotes when she talks about how the FIRs expressed their openness to "hang out" with students.

> [The FIRs said,] "If you," to all the students. They were like, "Oh, if you just want to come and hang out, you know you're more than welcome." And then also since they have a dog and they'll let the residents walk it, that could be kind of like the home away from home.

A home-away-from-home with the support of parents, yet not *in loco parentis*, is what students as Olivia and her residence hall mate experienced. That is, the FIRs advised, they did not give parental-like commands. In addition, the FIRs did not stifle the perceived freedom of the students, as students may perceive parents to do. Instead, the FIRs assisted students in evaluating their thoughts and offering support when appropriate. Several students spoke of FIR support during holidays.

For example, Olivia was not able to go home for Thanksgiving because her family lived too far away. The FIRs offered a Thanksgiving meal to students, which helped Olivia fill the void of missing the holiday with her family. Not only did Olivia feel support from the FIRs for the holiday, but she also witnessed the FIR changing the life of one of her residence hall mates. Olivia's residence hall mate's boyfriend was not

desirable according to Olivia. He did not treat Olivia's friend well, he displayed poor public skills, and he was controlling. The following is Olivia's account of Thanksgiving at the FIR's home and the confrontation of the FIR with the unruly boyfriend.

> I didn't get to go home for Thanksgiving because my family is kind of far away. My family is from Chicago. So, I didn't get to go home. So, it was really nice to have like a family-type setting even if it was, you know, the FIRs, and half of my classmates. It was an odd Thanksgiving…. My dorm mate – I think it was her boyfriend or something at the time – they were at the table with us and they were bickering about something and finally she just gave up and just quit – just put up with it and blah, blah, blah, blah. And she [the FIR] walked up to him and it was like, "You need to leave. You need to leave her alone and leave." It's like, "You're not going to do this in my house. Please leave." And, I think that kind of woke her up to how not good this guy was.

Olivia mentioned later in the interview that she believed the FIR's intervention as moral-support providers helped clarify the relationship for her residence hall mate and gave her more strength to end the relationship. Through the experience with the FIR, the students who witnessed the FIR confront the boyfriend observed in that quick instance a mentor, how to process conflict, and standards for how one should/should not be treated. In that one dinner, the FIR offered an alternative to Thanksgiving dinner, provided a student more strength to resolve a poor relationship, and educated other students in believing in themselves and the way they should be treated by others.

Madison also experienced Thanksgiving dinner at a FIR's home. When asked to describe the FIRs, she mentioned they were like family and without hesitation discussed Thanksgiving dinner.

> Family because they are like extended that, if you couldn't go home for the holidays, like I couldn't go home for Thanksgiving one time and so they're like, "Yeah, come down, we'll have dinner," and then like you could go down and talk to them whenever you wanted to about like anything. I just, I really like that.

Madison furthered her explanation of what she liked about the FIRs. The FIRs offered support for classes and when she applied for a campus job, they assisted her in processing the possible outcomes of applying. The FIRs helped her think about how she would respond to receiving the job in regards to her academics and not receiving the job and how she would react. The FIRs demonstrate moral-support by being involved with students; questioning students about their academics, activities, and personal life and genuinely expressing care for them. Madison's account continues,

> That's what I loved about them is that they were just very – what's the word I'm looking for? Involved with the students and always trying to push them in the right direction. It didn't matter what it was. It was like, "Oh, you can get it, you're going to do it. Even if you don't get it this time, you'll get it eventually."

While the FIRs help to fill the void of missing families for students as moral support providers, they do not take over in the parents' roles. Instead, they assist students in developing themselves and encouraging them in the "right direction." FIRs assist students in the various student development models presented in Chapter II, depending upon the circumstances. For example, the FIRs may at any point in time influence a student within Chickering's seven vectors to move toward a new vector. The push for development may influence the students' decision-making processes and worldly-awareness resulting in influencing their affective and cognitive development. Not only do students have opportunities to learn from the FIRs during informal activities, such as the relationship advising Jacob and his wife gave to a couple, but also during scorpion hunts when students may realize the fragile ecosystem in which they live.

The FIRs provide the students with feelings of being "warm and fuzzy" with their support. Gavin's quote is offered below to provide a summary of the FIRs as moral support providers and, in the larger scheme, mentors.

> The personalities – they've shown a lot of caring. To me, as a student, they're interested in my life and they're very outgoing, easy to talk with…. Personality, like I said, all of my FIRs have been so caring. They've asked me about my day before which just shows to me how, how, how involved – how involved they want to be in my life in my college career. And ask me about my day and they also remember my name whenever I see them, if they're off campus, as well. So, that just makes me feel all warm and fuzzy.

While mentoring was a primary theme from the students' interviews, much of the mentoring began through FIR programming or activities when students first met their community's FIRs. In the next section, Activities from the students' perspective are discussed.

Activities

Residence hall programming has long been a standard by which residence life staff plan their academic years. The programming assists students in becoming involved in their residence community (Astin, 1993) and provides educational opportunities. For example, programming in February may relate to Valentine's Day and/or a discussion on the psychology of love or focus on February as the American Heart Association's Heart Health Month and why cardiovascular health is important. In the residence halls at the University of Oklahoma, the residence life staff, the housing student government, and the Faculty In Residence provide community programming.

Throughout the student interviews, the FIRs' activities and their entertainment values emerged. That is, the students often mentioned that they enjoyed the FIR programs as if the programs were intended for entertainment purposes, such as movies. In addition, students identified with the educational aspects of the FIRs' programming, such as through cultural exploration. More predominantly, the students identified with the entertainment and social aspects of the activities such as Superbowl parties, quaint

dinners, and community service. FIR programs enable students to experience ideas and concepts they may not experience otherwise, as well as to develop relationships with students and FIRs. In this section, the theme of Activities is explored through the students' perspective of activities

Sophia, for example, mentioned how the FIR programs make her happy and that she has a continued desire to attend their events. Further, she recalled how she came to attend her first FIR event and the awkward feeling she experienced at the thought of going to an event in a professor's home. She quickly overcame the feeling when she met the FIRs and the activity began.

> I hear the word FIR and it makes me really happy. I still see the FIR events and I always want to go to FIR events. I had such a good experience with my FIRs that I'm just like, "Wow, that has to be so much fun because the FIRs are throwing it…."
>
> My first program – I didn't want to go because I didn't feel like I wanted to be in my professor's house. He wasn't my professor but a professor's house. It seemed kind of weird. But, one of my floor mates was a year in front of me and she's like, "Aw, c'mon, it'll be fun, it'll be fun." So, she dragged me down there and it was a lot, a lot of fun. I think the first time we made scarves. It was kind of getting to the autumn and the cold was coming soon so we made scarves and it was really fun. It took about 20-minutes to make the scarves, but we were there for hours just talking and hanging out and they had drinks and snacks for us. It was just fun.

Alex said the FIR program was how he met other students in his building in addition to the FIRs. Through the FIR's activities, he has become more involved in his community and he feels fulfillment through participation. Alex said of the FIR program,

> It's made me want to be involved in my tower more and just visit more with my friends…. It makes me feel more fulfilled doing all these things. Just getting out and being about.

FIR activities offer unique opportunities for students to become involved in their communities in addition to increased student-faculty interaction. As Astin (1984)

posited, students who are involved in college tend to devote energy to their academics, they spend more time than uninvolved students on campus, and they participate in student organizations and activities. Therefore, involved students learn more than uninvolved students in both academic and social experiences.

FIR activities provide students such as Alex and Sophia with opportunities to become involved in their communities and with faculty members in ways that, without the FIR program, they may never become involved or may find greater difficulty in becoming involved. Many of the students reported being drawn into FIR programs by food. A few of the students mentioned pancake breakfasts hosted by the FIRs. Further, nearly all of the FIRs mentioned hosting midnight pancake breakfasts and how they met many students through those programs. Although only two students of the twelve specifically mentioned the pancake breakfasts, it is noteworthy based on the effort the FIRs described in planning the events and the time commitment at a time of the evening that many of the FIRs would be in bed. For the FIRs, midnight pancake breakfasts continue to be opportunities to introduce themselves to students. For students, midnight pancake breakfasts introduce them to the FIRs and demonstrate their willingness to invite students into their homes. Caleb said,

> The food definitely pulled me in. It was either that or I was walking by and I saw a bunch of people there. I was like, "What's going on?" And they're like, "Pancake dinner." I was like, "Oh, pancakes, okay." And so that's what pulled me in over there.

Many of the FIRs also mentioned that food at events helped their attendance. Food is often associated with socializing. Perhaps students interpret food at FIR events as equivalent to the entertainment factor of the activity. This study is not focused on this particular aspect of the FIRs' experiences, however, it may be a question for future

research. While food was important to FIR activities, so was the involvement of Resident Advisers (RAs).

RAs are very important to the FIRs' programming success. The FIRs mentioned repeatedly about how the RAs assisted them with programming, particularly in assisting with program attendance. FIRs often depend upon the RAs to assist with programs, from planning the programs to distributing advertisements. Most of the FIRs host events for RAs in their apartments to build those relationships. Two of the students interviewed for this study were RAs, Avery and Tyler. They both portrayed their experiences with the FIR program as RAs. The RAs also recognized their importance in FIR programming as well as their relationships with the FIRs. The RAs understand that the FIRs are better able to meet students through them. That is, the RAs facilitate the meetings through introducing their communities to FIR programs. Before the RAs are able to promote the FIRs, they must know the FIRs. Avery described a staff dinner with the FIRs that evolved into RA staff development for her RA community. Avery said,

> When they had the staff dinner it was just for RA staff and they just, like, mingled with everybody, and just, you know, they just made sure that you were welcome and they started building those relationships, because it was at the beginning of the year and so we had new staff members. And so, they didn't know them and they were like, "Hi, to all you old people and glad you're back and all you new people just coming out with us." At the beginning of that meeting, everybody went around and said what they were thankful for and so they initiated staff bonding. And it was supposed to be us bonding with them, which did happen, but then they made it into staff bonding, and it was just really cool.

Tyler spoke of how the FIRs helped him as an RA develop relationships with his residents as well as with the FIRs. Tyler had facilitated his community's attendance to a FIR function. Through the FIRs, Tyler felt he was elevated to a better role with his residents such that he felt as if he was a better influence on his residents.

> I think the first time I had a significant amount of residents attend a FIR program - that was a big deal because it was almost like we were getting to know - I was getting to know my residents on a different level. It was during a – I think it was during Bangladesh night and I had to drag most of them downstairs and they didn't really want to go. And, in my programs I've had with them, it's more of we're peers, but, I'm a little bit older and it's still kind of awkward. But, then we got down there and we were just – we got to wear the different clothes and things of the Bengali people, and understand their culture.
>
> I think once we took the whole leader-mentor relationship out of perspective and just became – we both started learning at the same time, then it was one of those things that changed the whole dynamic of the floor and put us all on equal level. And I was a community development leader instead of just, I don't know, a dorm cop or whatever you would call – whatever the connotation is.
>
> So, I think just small programs like that, and maybe the Super Bowl program they had downstairs where we'd just watch it on the HD projection screen, where we can just enjoy things like that without the context of me being an RA really changed the dynamic of the hall and made it to where we're – I could have more influence on them. They would respond better to what I asked of them and things like that, and really increased the harmony of the hall without – I mean, it was an inadvertent thing. The FIR program wasn't meant to improve my hall in that way, but that's just how it kind of happened, and one of the many positive effects from it.

Community building and socialization through activity attendance occurred with all of the students. In addition to community building, most of the students shared a common bond in that they experienced cultural programs through the FIRs, which either touched their lives or those of their friends. Through the common peer experience of attending FIR programs, the students were better able to connect with each other as well as the FIRs.

Common peer experiences reaffirm for students how similar they are to each other and enable their bonds to strengthen, resulting in greater peer support and confidence. Additional support and confidence promotes trust and self-disclosure (Blimling, 1998). Peer groups are the most influential group in regards to student values, career aspirations, and overall adjustments (Blimling, 1998). Through the FIRs developing relationships

between RAs as Avery described above and with RAs and their students, positive peer relationships develop. Further, since "most students do not identify directly with the larger culture of the university," these peer relationships provide an intermediate social environment through which the students identify with the larger university's environment (Blimling, 1998, p. 88). In the following chapter, I will discuss in greater depth the importance of FIR relationships with students, including an expanded discussion of peer relationships strengthened by the FIR program. Until then, student cultural experiences through the FIR program are shared.

Cultural Exposure Through FIR

Landon spoke of a FIR family in which the FIR had spent a great amount of time overseas. The FIR's spouse was Syrian. Together they enlightened students about Syrian culture with small dinners of about eight students. Landon's experience is similar to that of another student's in this study in which she and a small group of students had dinner with the same family.

> And so when we had the dinner we had Syrian dishes, and we got to learn a little bit about her culture, and just from talking to her, you know, we learn what it's like over there. So, it's good…. Just different ways that cultures do things and look at things. And I don't know how to describe Syrian culture or anything, but just on a more reserved -- that's not the right word…. just like more respectful and elegant than I would imagine…. so just I guess you could say that I had certain opinions of it, and then I got to find out what it was really like – not as much as if I had gone there. But, I at least get hear from someone who has been there and lived there.

Sophia spoke of a friend who was greatly influenced by the FIRs and a study abroad program.

> One of my friends, it had to do with all the Italy stuff, she wanted to study abroad. She hasn't done it yet, but we did the – this was all within one year – we did the study abroad thing, and then there was this one on Italy. And she actually ended up taking Italian…. I don't think she would – she wanted to study abroad, but I

> don't think she would have known how to if that program had – if the informational program hadn't been going on. I don't think she would have thought, "Oh Italy. That's a really good idea. I think I'll take the language."

Tyler, also, described how the FIRs presented cultural programs.

> They would do different things, even have Sunday night cultural presentations where it'd be watching a movie, bringing something in maybe from, like, the Spanish culture or various different things. They'd have a Bangladesh night where they had – the Bengali students would come in and actually present what it is their culture and traditions were all about, and I learned so much just about their alphabet. They fought a war over their alphabet. And so that was pretty cool, like, bringing – and there was actually journalists actually from Bangladesh that came. But they've also had student organizations. They're from Senegal, have Senegal night, different things like that. It usually just basically involved organizations either trying to exhibit their culture or maybe to discuss different things, like religion and things like that, culture clash stuff. And they invited those almost on a weekly basis, and they would be just right next to where they lived and stuff. So that was kind of a big part of what they were doing as FIRs.

The FIR programs ranged from quaint dinners to programs that expanded beyond the doors of the FIR homes and spilled into the nearby social lounges. Regardless of the size of the program, relationships were built between students and between students and faculty members. Through the FIR program, both the FIR experiences as well as the student experiences expanded within their same university environment, as shown in Diagram 5.

Student-FIR Experiences: A Summative Statement

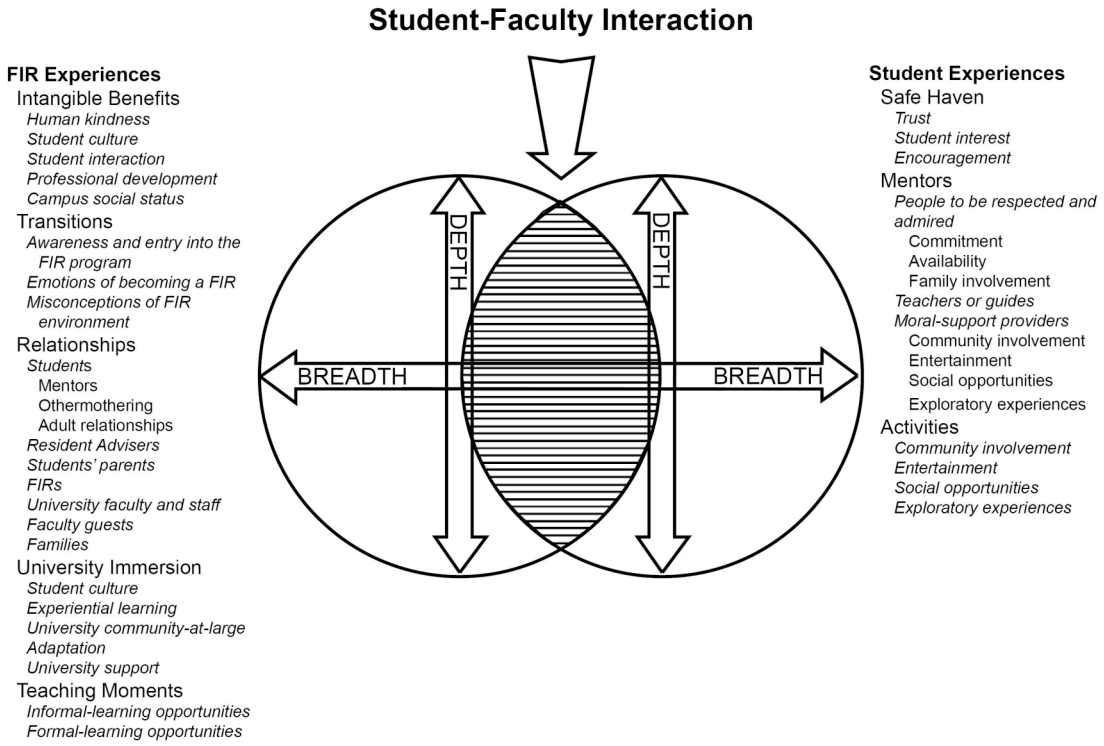
The student-FIR experiences deepened and broadened through the FIR program. As discussed, the FIRs had not experienced the university campus and the students to the extent as that which was provided through the FIR program prior to becoming a FIR. The program offered deeper and broader experiences as summarized in Diagram 5. In addition, student participant experiences deepened and broadened through the FIR program, also as summarized in Diagram 5.

Considering Diagram 5 and my statements in this chapter and Chapter IV about the FIRs having broader and deeper experiences than the students in the FIR program, one may ask why the students' experiences are represented with the same-sized circle as the FIRs. The answer reflects the earlier discussion of the FIRs *living* the FIR program whereas the students *live with* the FIR program. The environments for the FIRs and for the students are different although the FIR program is consistent. The cultural milieu for the FIRs and for the students is different considering the place in life each finds themselves; that is developmentally and socially such as raising kids; holding a college degree, or two or three; and other related differences. Yet, the circles representing the FIRs and the students remain the same size not because of their differences through the FIR program, but through their similarities. The FIRs and students related because of their commonalities; their commonalities based on the desires to learn at those points in their lives where they interact in the residence halls.

The FIRs had deeper and broader campus and student-interaction experiences through the FIR program than the students. The FIR program brought the FIRs greater meaning in being faculty; in being a part of the institution as a whole. That is simply due to their stations as FIRs; their positions and the associated opportunities. The depth and breadth of the students' campus and faculty-interaction experiences, while not as deep and broad as the FIRs, was no less significant to them. The students' and FIRs' experiences are relative to their positions and, therefore, represented equally in Diagrams 5, 6, and 7.

Diagram 5.

Expansion of FIR and Student Experiences within the University Context.



While the collegiate experiences of the FIRs and students expand through the FIR program, the question remains as to whether or not the FIR program influences student success. To further explore the FIR program, the next section will address the students' perceptions of student success and how they believe experiences with the FIRs influence student success.

Student Success: Achieving Personal Goals

The students were asked to define student success. The answers varied very little. When the responses were first examined, three concepts emerged: grades, experiences, and happiness. As these three concepts were further explored, student success illuminated as the achievement of personal goals and happiness with the consideration

that the goal setting process is fluid. That is, each individual must reassess their personal goals regularly and adjust them, as necessary. Personal goals are evaluated based on new or refreshed information.

Consider this hypothetical example. A student's overall goal and passion was automobiles. The student wished to work in the automobile industry specifically in car design. The student knew that a math class was necessary for an engineering degree. The student had difficulty in high school with mathematics, but thought that college might be different. After all, the student perceived that few in high school respected the teachings of the math instructor. The student enrolled in a collegiate math class with every intention of moving through the mathematical skills deficiency. Unfortunately, the student, once again, realized poor math skills with a "D" in the class and understood that engineers must possess mathematical abilities. Without those skills, the student was unable to become an engineer. Therefore, the student evaluated the goal of becoming an engineer and decided to pursue another passion, automobile advertising and marketing. The student enrolled in an advertising class and was awarded national recognition for an advertising and marketing plan. The student enjoyed the classes associated with advertising and marketing and re-established a personal goal of advertising and marketing in the automobile industry. Through the process of evaluating the engineering goal, the student did not surrender easily to the mathematics deficiency. Goals with happiness do not necessarily equate to the easiest path of acquisition.

For example, Beth defined student success as, "… setting goals and doing everything you can to meet them…. And just finishing what you start and getting to – finding your goal and getting all the way there and not stopping." One of the key phrases

in Beth's definition is "finding your goal." With this statement, Beth implies that, as the student above, a true goal may not be as simple as "I want to be an engineer." Instead, the student may need to examine the bigger picture rather than one path to achieving a goal and happiness. In the engineering example, becoming an engineer was a path to working in the automobile industry and finding happiness in the industry. If the path, however, does not match the student's talents, the path may prove impassible. Often, students must fully explore their personal goals to determine the best path for their talents. In an academic adviser's office, this may be reflected in a change in major.

Prior to students arriving on a college campus, they have experienced life planning to the extent that a college degree is desirable or they would not pursue a collegiate experience. Although they may seek college, they may not have determined a major area of study. Therefore, obtaining a degree becomes a personal goal. The method in which the goal of completing their degree may be considered a smaller goal that leads to the ultimate goal. Other goals may be established to enhance the experience of obtaining a degree. For example, students may choose to become involved in a student organization related to their degree or career choice. Just as activities may be chosen to enhance the achievement of personal goals, classes, activities, and the overall university experience may be assessed and new goals established.

Four students, Alex, Gavin, Abigail, and Avery discussed their grades as being critical to student success. Of those three, only Abigail completely focused on grades. She said,

> Student success means making good grades and studying and investing the time, and knowing that this isn't just a joke. We're here to learn. Just success overall means to try hard and persevere, not let yourself get down. If you made a bad grade on a test, just to try harder next time and to not let grades define you, final

> grades. You've got to be okay with getting a "C" every once in a while. If that's what you put into it, then that's what you're going to get out of it, but you can always get better.

Alex focused on grades, but he tempered achieving high grades with wellness, time management, and a discussion of relationships and their importance.

> I think it's very important to get good grades, try to get as much sleep as one can and – and just try and budget time in the effective manner. And also I didn't really mention what the fellowship – the social aspect of college is very important. Without that, you're going to feel isolated and alone and it's not a good deal.

While Alex mentioned grades and their importance, he placed a great emphasis on being a well-rounded individual. Similarly, Gavin mentioned inclusion and contribution to the community. For Gavin, good grades are the road he must take to reach his ultimate personal goal of giving back to community organizations.

> I feel like student success can be gauged by how involved you are on campus…. Grades, grades, grades, grades are, to me, grades – which is a different principle but grades are why I'm here. I'm here to get my degree and that's achieved by me getting the best grades I can. But once, once, once you get to a point where you're feeling comfortable about your grades and you can reach out to the campus, get involved in different organizations, I really feel that's whenever you've sort of hit a happy place between the university community and your own personal goals where you're going to start reaching out to different things like that. And that to me, that's success. Whatever you're going to start giving back to the community organizations.

These four students concentrated on grades as a path to goal achievement. They recognized that without sufficient grades, they would not graduate and were not able to dedicate time to endeavors other than academics, such as student organizations. Further, each tempered reaching for the highest grade point possible with the recognition that perfection in academics is non-existent. Instead, they each focused on elements of collegiate life such as "grades don't define you," take care of yourself, and get involved. Part of student success, therefore, is knowledge of oneself.

Ava spoke about learning more about herself or "how you're wired," as she described it, for life. Much like the others, Ava views student success through the whole person. She spoke of balance in life between all of the different aspects that create a person from grades to involvement to self-discovery.

> I think it means – or it has a lot to do with well roundedness and I think that success – I definitely don't buy into the idea that success is either making really great grades and leaving and that's all you had or being super involved and you leave and you had like a 1.2. I think there is somewhere in the balance where you sort of learn how to interact with people and you learn how to be a good student and you learn how to study and you learn how to learn. And I think that is when student success is completely sort of personified as opposed to one extreme or another in any of those aspects. I think that – and I think success in a big way really is just learning about how you work as a person because I think that's sort of the whole point of the time as a student is that you figure out how you're wired and what you're wanting to do and how that looks and how you're going to get there and all those things. So I think that the success is better gauged by when you leave what you feel like you took from the whole experience as opposed to one single pocket event.

Ava's account of student success reiterates the definition of student success presented at the beginning of this section that emerged from the student participant interviews. Ava talks about "how that looks" or the goal. Further, she discusses students taking time to find the correct path for them as individuals or "how you're wired." In other words, Ava views student success as a personal journey in which one graduates from college. Landon similarly and briefly summarized student success for almost all of the students quite simply by stating, "I wouldn't think so much about grades, but just identifying who you are and who you want to be, and working towards that."

When the student participants were asked if they felt the FIR program influenced success, nearly all of them affirmed that they believed through their experiences that the FIR program was beneficial to student success. The student participants did not answer with hesitation, as the FIRs answered. Recall that most FIRs were unable to answer this

question directly as they were not able to cite specific research or quantifiable values associated with the FIR program and student success. The student participants, however, affirmed the FIR program's role in student success with confidence. Student participants perceived the desirable student qualities echoed by Strange and Banning (2001) that they believed the FIR program promoted.

> Colleges and universities establish conditions to attract, satisfy, and retain students for purposes of challenging them to develop qualities of the educated person, including a capacity for complex critical reasoning, communication, leadership, a sense of identity and purpose, an appreciation for differences, and a commitment to lifelong learning. (p. 2)

The students also provided examples as to how the FIR program influenced their own success. Alex, for example, believed the FIR program particularly made first-year students, "feel more a part of the community." Alex felt community involvement was a primary element to being successful on the college campus. Maslow (1943) discussed needs of all people beyond basic shelter and nutrition: the fulfillment of love and esteem. By feeling more a part of the community, Alex may feel that first-year students, or himself during his first-year, may be provided with that feeling of love as well as esteem from others. Through the FIR program, students are provided opportunities for being a part of a community in a safe environment. The FIRs help to establish the appropriate community behavior and facilitate programs in which students learn more about each other. The FIRs serve as community role models.

Other students, specifically Gavin and Avery, valued the academic resources of the FIRs with both citing study sessions and academic activities with the FIRs such as information on study abroad and seminars from other professors. Landon said that the

FIRs helped with student success by exposing students to different ideas and people such that students gained insight into themselves.

The comments from the student participants support Astin's involvement theory. Student-faculty interaction has positive correlations with student characteristics such as the overall college experience, college GPA, degree attainment, graduating with honors, and enrollment in graduate or professional school (Astin, 1993). Further, students who interact with faculty have positive correlations with self-reported intellectual and personal growth as well as personality and attitudinal outcomes including intellectual self-esteem, social activism, leadership, artistic inclination, commitment to promoting racial understanding, participation in environmental programs, and contributions to science (Astin, 1993). The FIR program supports student-faculty interaction that influences students in positive ways.

Although several of the study's participants experienced learning opportunities by observing the FIRs and their families, it must be noted that not all students in the residence halls are willing to participate in the FIR program. For example, Tyler explained that while he believed the FIR program furthered student success, he was skeptical about how many students the FIR program reached. He said,

> I think it does. I think it's sad that it's more microcosmic than it could be. I mean, there's so many people that live in the dorms, but such a small percentage actually get to experience the FIR program, and most of that's just because of availability and time and different things like that. People have lives they have to lead, or just choose not to be a part of it. But I think with the people who do choose to use the FIR program, it enhances their life and enhances their university experience and that they – the residence hall situation is not just a peer-to-peer relationship, but they also have this other kind of thing going on with them as well. So, I think it just enhances that whole overall university experience.

Tyler's statement provides a good summary for this section on student success and the FIRs. As Tyler states, most student participants believed the FIR program enhanced student success. The enhancement of student life was through the relationships the students had with the FIRs and the learning opportunities presented by and through the FIRs. Students were able to build community networks not only with the FIRs, but also between themselves through the FIRs and their programs. Further, the FIRs' activities provided opportunities for students to experience events they would not otherwise experience without the FIRs. Through experiences with the FIRs and other students in the community, the student participants were afforded opportunities for self-evaluation and discovery enabling them to better assess their personal goals than without the FIR program.

Developmental theorists such as Chickering and Reisser (1993) allow for self-discovery through experiences such as those encountered through the FIR program. Chickering and Reisser (1993) view psychosocial development as a series of seven vectors: developing competence, managing emotions, moving through autonomy toward interdependence, developing mature interpersonal relationships, establishing identity, developing purpose, and developing integrity. Development occurs across the vectors at different rates and interacts with the movement of other vectors. While movement tends to be forward, backward movement may occur where the individual returns to familiar circumstances. The vectors serve as a highway for students to find their unique selves as well as toward working and living with others in society. Based on the student participants' accounts of student success and experiences with the FIR program, the FIR program promotes development as the FIRs assist students in moving through the vectors

toward developing integrity. In this way, the FIR program supports student success through a consortium of psychosocial development theory and student involvement theory with the premises of the two theories taking place in tandem. The FIR program serves as a base for interactions and development to occur.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, the student participants' experiences with the FIR program were explored. The concepts of the FIR program that emerged from the students included the FIRs as safe havens, mentors, and providers of community activities. The student participants felt safe with and talking to the FIRs. Further, the FIRs were perceived as campus and personal resources. In addition, the FIRs were mentors to students, guiding them and assisting them in life choices, not as parents, but through intergenerational relationships. Many of the relationships formed through the FIR program were established during community activities organized by FIRs. Through the relationships and activities of the FIRs, the student participants felt that the FIR program promoted student success with student success as the achievement of personal goals and happiness with fluid goal setting. In the final chapter, the findings for Chapter IV and V are briefly discussed and incorporated together for a cumulative discussion. Further, conclusions and implications for practice and further research are discussed.

CHAPTER VI: DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study is to examine Faculty In Residence (FIR) programs at the University of Oklahoma. Phenomenology, an exploratory, qualitative approach, assists researchers and educators to explore and better understand the experiences of both faculty members and students in the FIR program as well as how these participants perceive student success.

Literature in the areas of FIR programs and the definition of student success is limited. This study fills a void in the current literature bases of FIR programs as well as student success. In addition, higher education administrators are provided with valuable information about FIR programming through this study for the enhanced utilization of financial and resource investments. Further, this study offers a broader and deeper understanding of student-faculty interaction through FIR programs on college campuses. A better understanding of student-faculty relationships enables college administrators to enhance their collegiate environments in order to better suit the learning needs of both students and faculty. In this chapter, the findings are explored through discussion of a study summary, findings, conclusions and implications, and suggestions for future research.

Summary

FIRs were selected for this hermeneutic, phenomenological study through purposeful sampling due to the small number of available FIRs. Students were selected through snowball sampling. Fourteen FIR and twelve student interviews were conducted with a saturation point established at approximately the eighth interview for each

population. Each participant created a cluster diagram. Each participant's cluster diagram and guiding interview questions, as found in Appendix B, directed their interview. Many of the FIRs had families who lived in the residence halls with them and also interacted with the students. Both the FIRs and the students were academically diverse.

Findings

When I began this research project, I anticipated the depth and breadth of the responses from the FIRs to mirror those of the students' experiences, and vice versa. My shallow forethought of the findings changed as data analysis began. Specifically, the depth and breadth of the FIRs' experiences were much greater than those of the students' experiences. As I considered the depth and breadth differences, the explanation became clear; the FIRs *live* the FIR program whereas the students *live with* the FIR program. The differences in *live* and *live with* the FIR program is observed in the emergent themes associated with each group. The FIRs' experiences offered many more themes to describe their experiences versus the students' experiences. Yet, their experiences are relative to their current, life worlds.

In the following section, a reiteration and further analysis of the findings for the FIRs and students are presented separately to explore the experiences of each group. Although the experiences are presented separately, they have many similarities and differences, which are further discussed.

Themes of the Faculty In Residence

Five primary themes emerged from the FIR interviews: Intangible Benefits, Transitions, Relationships, University Immersion, and Teaching Moments. These themes share an overall observation of the connectedness of the FIRs within the university environment. In this section, a brief overview of each theme is presented.

Intangible Benefits

Intangible benefits include non-monetary benefits the FIRs obtain through experiences with students and the university environment. Four types of intangible benefits were described including human kindness, student culture, the ability to interact with students, and campus social status. The FIRs witnessed students in the residence halls being kind to each other, beyond the realm of everyday kindness. For example, one FIR witnessed students assisting another student using a wheelchair when the sidewalks had not been cleared from a recent winter storm. Not only did they assist their peers on the sidewalks, the FIR later observed the students shoveling the sidewalks. The students engaged with their environment, an example of Stern's (1970) needs-press theory in which the environment influences need-based behavior. In this case a winter storm brought students to respond to their needs and those of their peers by clearing the sidewalk. FIRs believed their observations of human kindness helped them to better understand the student experience and to see that students were more than knowledge sponges. That is, students possess emotions and are willing to engage in their societies based on their knowledge and emotions, just as the FIRs do through the FIR program.

The FIRs became a part of the student culture, another type of intangible benefit.

As part of the student culture, the FIRs engaged students academically and socially between each other and through community service. This involvement enabled the FIRs and students to better understand each other's life experiences through current student-faculty interaction events and reflections. In addition, the FIRs observed students behaving in ways that positively influenced their environments, such as clearing sidewalks for peers and hosting low-income families for the holidays.

As the FIRs explain, by better understanding residence-hall students, the FIRs better relate to other non-residential students. Further, the FIRs' classroom interactions with students improve as the FIRs gain a more comprehensive understanding of students' lives and the complications they encounter. In this manner, as students present their issues to the FIRs in regards to the classroom, the FIRs become more likely to listen to the students and arrange appropriate accommodations due to participation in the FIR program and the subsequent consideration of students as more human rather than as a group; each student with their own needs.

Further, FIRs' social status on campus not only grew with students, but also within the university's administration. FIRs attend special events and utilize priority seating. The attendance of FIRs at such events emphasizes the university's support of the program by placing the importance of the program in public view. FIRs experience this support through introductions to new people and involvement in new social circles. Social circles enable the FIRs to expand their university network and contribute to their campus experiences.

Transitions

Although the FIRs experience an increase in social status while a part of the FIR program, they must overcome the transition of becoming a FIR. Each FIR expresses excitement with the opportunities of the program. However, almost all of the FIRs express anxiety about transitioning into the program. Their fears culminate with moving their families and social acceptance by the students.

Kidshealth.org (2009) cites moving as one of the major stressors in life as it typically involves leaving friends, familiar places, and activities. In addition, it is difficult to pack a home and then unpack into a new location. FIRs and their families may move to the FIR program from another state or they may move a few blocks to campus. Regardless, the surroundings and perhaps the kindergarten through twelfth grades may change for the children. Children who change schools may experience difficulty in receiving educational resources and typically do not perform as well as their peers. The children's records may take four to six weeks for transfer and then await a review by their current school. In addition, children who change schools often encounter behavioral issues (U. S. General Accounting Office, 1994). Moving often solicits an uncomfortable feeling for a child or an adult. It is understandable that the FIRs are protective and express concern for their families. In addition to the move and the transition of the families into a new environment, the majority of FIRs were concerned with being accepted by the students.

Student acceptance was the primary transition concern about joining the FIR program. The FIRs knew that acceptance by students in the program would lead to the development of relationships with students. But, peer relationships can be risky. As

Pascarella (1980) points out, it is highly likely that a student's peer culture experience influences student-faculty interaction. Peers either condone or reject behavior. With students typically seeking peer acceptance, peer influences are important to take into account in the student-faculty relationship (Pascarella, 1980). Considering Pascarella's study, the potential is present for peer relationships to negatively or positively influence student-faculty interaction. The FIRs, however, did not comprehend the breadth or depth of relationships they would establish while living in the residence halls.

Relationships

The dominant themes for both the student and faculty participants are relationships. The FIRs' theme of relationships includes relationships with students, resident advisers (RAs), students' parents, university faculty and staff members, university guests, and other FIRs. The relationships with students, in particular, range from common acquaintances to mentors and mentees to extended family members. The faculty discussed a broader range of relationships in regards to the FIR program than the students. Their scope and understanding of the university is greater before participation in the FIR program than the student participants' participation. In comparison, the students focus on their FIR relationships specifically in regards to the FIR program while the FIRs focus not only on relationships with students, but also resident advisers (RAs), students' parents, other FIRs, university faculty and staff, faculty guests, and their own families. These relationships, in part, were the result of university immersion and the needs and press associated with person-environment theory (Stern, 1970).

University Immersion

University immersion is the term coined for this study to indicate that the FIRs lived in the university culture twenty-four hours per day, seven days per week during their participation in the FIR program. Through university immersion, the FIRs' experiences connect them to the university to a greater extent than if they had not experienced the FIR program. Compared to other faculty members, FIRs experienced student life not only in the classroom, but also in the dining hall and in all aspects of the students' homes and most activities. Further, the faculty members were more involved with the university through the intangible benefits summarized above.

University immersion is similar to cultural immersion one experiences when living in a foreign country. The FIRs offer students opportunities to investigate their own beliefs and to learn more about their immediate community as well as the world-wide community. In comparison, the FIRs are immersed in the student culture and interact within it much the same way aid workers interact in third world countries. That is, the FIRs know that to make a change in the students' lives, the modality must take place within the context of the students' cultural beliefs and behaviors (Henderson, 1989). Interaction with people of different origins leads to learning opportunities, such as the teaching moments the FIRs experienced.

Teaching Moments

Teaching moments include both informal and structured learning opportunities. Informal-learning opportunities are unplanned moments during which a learning opportunity presents itself; for example, a faculty member joins a table of students eating dinner at the cafeteria. Through conversation, students learn about the faculty member's

education and the steps taken to become a faculty member. The students not only learn more about that faculty member, but also about the credentials of faculty members and the perseverance and dedication of faculty members to be a part of the university. Another type of teaching moment is through structured learning opportunities. Structured learning opportunities are those moments for which the FIR has planned a program or activity to promote interaction with students. Programs may range from lectures from other faculty members to speaking about the FIR's area of study to planting pansies together. The activity may be academic-based or life-experience-based. The many different modalities of learning are unique to residential programs involving faculty members. Only in residential programming such as with FIRs are opportunities for learning offered through social programs, resource availability through faculty members, and lecture-type programs twenty-four hours per day.

The FIR program facilitates learning opportunities through social experiences between students and faculty members by providing avenues for building student-faculty relationships, and, further, uniquely placing learning with faculty members in the students' living environments. Through the student-faculty interaction and often through learning opportunities, students involve themselves in the FIR program.

Themes of the Students

Students become involved in the FIR program through programs presented by the FIRs, involvement through their Resident Advisers (RAs), informal contacts with the FIRs such as through dinner at the cafeteria, and other venues. Students are not as invested as the FIRs in the FIR program as they are not *living* the FIR program such as the FIRs. Instead, students experience occasional interaction with the FIRs. Through the

interaction, relationships with depth and breadth between the faculty members and students occur. Three themes emerged through the students' experiences with the FIR program: safe haven, mentoring, and activities. The following provides additional discussion points for each theme.

Safe Haven

Students have a feeling of safety when they are with the FIRs or their families. They feel the FIRs and their families offer safe places to discuss their issues, concerns, challenges, as well as debate topics such as presidential candidates. The family atmosphere of the FIR apartments and the hospitality the FIRs offer create a platform for the development of relationships with other students as well as with the FIRs.

This feeling of safety promotes Maslow's hierarchy of needs through love and respect of others and self (Maslow, 1943). This progression is similar and parallel to that of Chickering and Reisser's (1993) seven vectors of student development. Specifically, as students achieve feelings of love and respect, they develop further toward the seventh vector of developing integrity.

Mentoring

As previously discussed, the FIRs develop relationships through the FIR program with students, parents, Resident Advisers, and other faculty. The relationships from the student perspectives most often take on the description of mentoring specifically with the FIRs. The term mentoring denotes greater social status and intellect including the primary element of role modeling, that is, demonstration through performance (Sands et al., 1991). In this way, students recognize the importance of their relationships with FIRs and the FIR program. Students recognize FIRs as knowledgeable individuals whom they

respect both in and out of the classroom, through the daily lives of the faculty members and their families.

Further, the FIR program has been a balance of male and female FIRs. This fairly even division is helpful in providing opportunities for both male and female students. Erkut and Mokros (1984) state that male college students tend to prefer male faculty models due to the perception of men possessing greater status and power while women tend to seek faculty models who demonstrate being a "professional woman with an attractive lifestyle and interesting outside activities" (p. 413). The FIR program often demonstrates, particularly to women, the FIRs professionally and through special interests or hobbies.

Of further interest in this study is the concept of othermothering. Douglas Guiffrida (2005) developed the "othermothering" concept that occurs between African-American students and African-American faculty members at predominantly White institutions. Faculty members with characteristics of being "student centered" or willing to advise students in regards to careers, academic issues, and personal challenges, much like the characteristics of the FIRs, assist students in connecting to the institution and to the community that they may not have experienced otherwise. Othermothers serve as campus-environment facilitators for students. In this way, students feel as though they have a safety net, protection, as they venture into new areas in their lives. In the FIR program, students most often develop relationships and respect for FIRs as mentors through activities provided by the FIRs.

Activities

FIR programs or activities enable students to experience ideas and concepts they may not otherwise experience. Further, students identify with the educational aspects of the FIRs' programming, such as through cultural exploration. For example, several students discovered study abroad through FIR events. Students also identify with the entertainment and social aspects of the activities and perceive the activities provided by the FIRs more as social events rather than academic events although the topics sometimes include activities such as presidential debates and war. Perhaps an explanation for this perception is the familial FIR environment in which the activities take place, not a classroom. The cultural milieu (Barker, 1968) of the FIR apartments is much different than that of classrooms. Classrooms are designed and understood to be for learning, for classes. FIR environments have been designed for comfort and interaction. The familial environment, such as that of the FIRs, is the environment in which children learn to explore their worlds. The family, similar to the FIRs, provides a basic security that enables students to explore their lifeworlds (Maslow, 1943; Whitaker, 1988).

The FIR program establishes acceptable behavioral milieus (Barker, 1968) such that students are willing to participate in FIR programs without fear or retribution. Perhaps in the classroom, students are more intimidated by faculty through their knowledge and ability to influence the students' grades. Students may also fear faculty members if they are not doing well in the class for embarrassment of "failing" (Whitaker, 1988). The secure environment, a safe haven, of the FIR program fosters the exchange of ideas and learning for both students and FIRs.

The FIR Program and Student Success

Both the FIRs and the students were asked about their experiences with the FIR program and their perception of whether or not the program contributed to student success. The FIR responses indicated optimistic uncertainty; that is, they felt that they were influencing student success through the FIR program, but they had little other than their own intuition upon which to base a claim. The FIRs believed the appropriate mechanisms were in place to influence student success through the FIR program, but they were uncertain as to the influence. For many of the FIRs, that is, they had not measured the influence through an empirical research study, therefore, they were unable to affirm that the FIR program influenced student success. For the FIRs, their "gut reaction" was that the FIR program helped students succeed. The students affirmed their beliefs that FIR program experiences benefit student success.

The students offered strong examples as to how the FIR program had influenced either their own success or the success of a friend. The experiences included the FIR program helping the students to feel a part of and to participate in their community; offering academic resources such as foreign language review sessions, study abroad information, and seminars; and assisting students to gain insight into themselves through exposure to different ideas and people. The opportunities presented to the students through the FIRs helped the students identify and develop themselves.

As mentioned in Chapter II, the term student success is often vague or narrow (Yazedjian et al., 2008) or broadly defined as with Kuh et al. (2005) who describe successful students as "those who persist, benefit in desired ways from their college experiences, are satisfied with college, and graduate" (Kuh et al., 2005, p. 8). Kuh et al.'s

broad definition of student success is in alignment with the logic of Kramer (2007) who posited that not all indicators of student success can be or should be applied to all institutions. Should student success be limited to institutional criteria or can it be brought to the individual level? Student success must be viewed on both the individual and institutional levels.

Institutional criteria for student success may be established by entities such as IPEDS or accrediting agencies. This does not imply that individuals cannot be successful. Colleges, while often viewed as "one," consist of many individuals. Successful individuals create successful institutions. Based on the student responses, the FIR program assists students in their own success as students by supporting them through involvement in their community, introducing them to new people and ideas, and assisting them academically and with the college environment. Tinto (1987) stated, "An institution's capacity to retain students is directly related to its ability to reach out and make contact with students and integrate them into the social and intellectual fabric of institutional life" (p. 204). The FIR program, therefore, may contribute to the university's success as a whole through incorporation of students into institutional life. Understanding the roles the FIR program plays in developing successful students enables universities to evaluate current programming methods and adjust as necessary to incorporate the findings.

For example, the students perceived that the FIR program was important to their success as students through community involvement, academic resources, and insight into themselves through exposure to different people and ideas. FIRs promote student success through student-faculty interaction. As previously discussed, student-faculty

interaction has multiple, long-term, positive influences upon college students including positive correlations with characteristics such as overall college experience, college GPA, degree attainment, graduating with honors, and enrollment in graduate or professional school (Astin, 1993).

In addition, Astin's (1984) involvement theory encourages institutions to concentrate on student motivation and the time and energy the student allots for the educational process. Student time may be more precious than other institutional resources since it is time that enables students to become involved in institutional activities and develop through those experiences. Students investing their time into the FIR program emulates Astin's (1993) I-E-O model. More specifically, the more time students invest in involvement with the FIRs through their living environment, the greater the output of FIR influence is on their lives in the positive manners discovered by Astin (1993).

A Discussion of Faculty In Residence

This study takes our knowledge of Astin's involvement theory one step further by exploring the experiences of students and FIRs. We must recognize that this program reflects the importance of building community within the university among students, faculty, and staff and how each area is interconnected through the FIR program. The theme of relationships was not only paramount for the students and faculty, but also in the overall theme of this research, community. The experiences of the FIRs and students through the FIR program identified the university environment as a community or society, a place where the foundations for relationships are established and dependency upon each other necessary for meaningful experiences, the exchange of ideas, and the

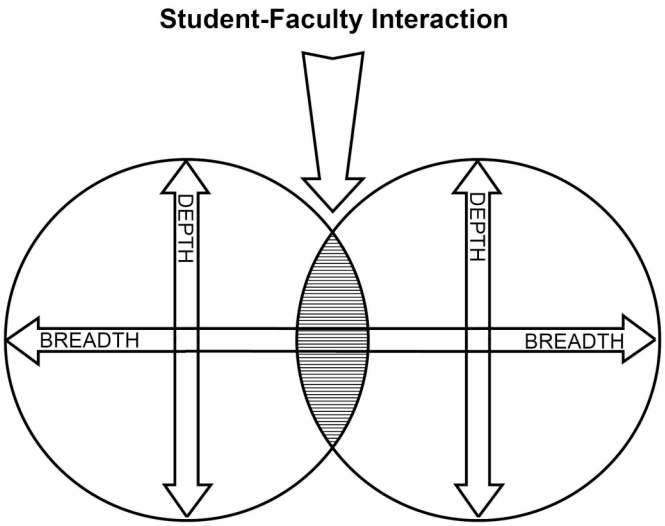
pursuit of knowledge. In this way, the FIR program adds both breadth and depth of campus community experiences for FIRs and students. The progression of student-faculty interaction in this manner is reflected in the changes between Diagrams 6a, 6b, and 6c. In these diagrams, the overlapping interactions between students and faculty members are represented by the shaded areas. FIRs, and students associated with the FIRs, have broader and deeper university experiences through the FIR program as represented by the increasing shaded areas shown in Diagrams 6b and 6c.

Diagram 7 represents the community concept and the interrelating interactions as both FIRs and students become involved with the FIR program. In this diagram, as well as the prior diagrams, the axes remain in the same locations while the circumferences of the circles expand.

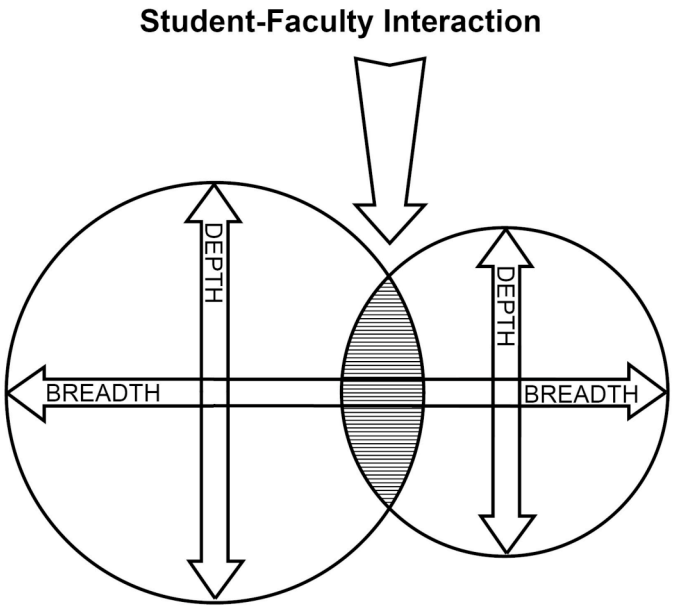
Diagram 6.

Expanding student-faculty interaction through the FIR Program.

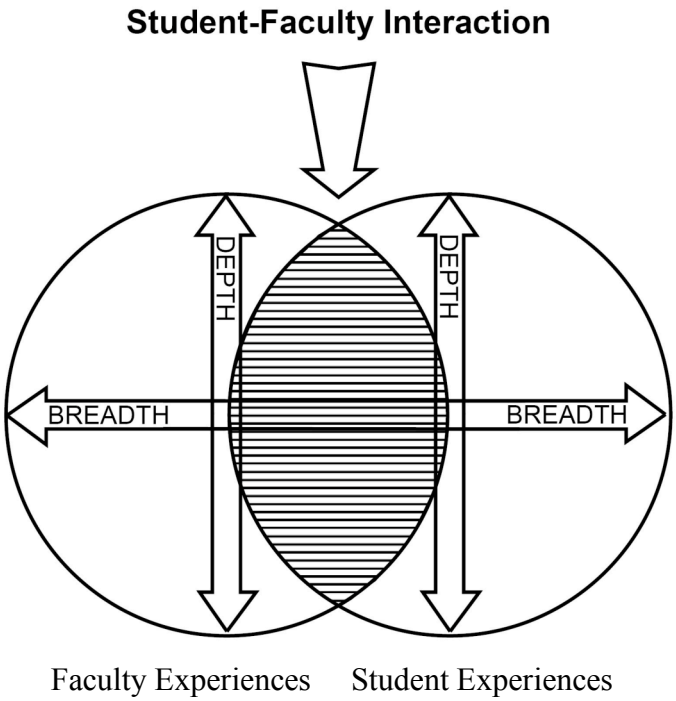
A. Student-faculty interaction without the FIR program.



B. Student-faculty interaction with expanding FIR involvement represented.



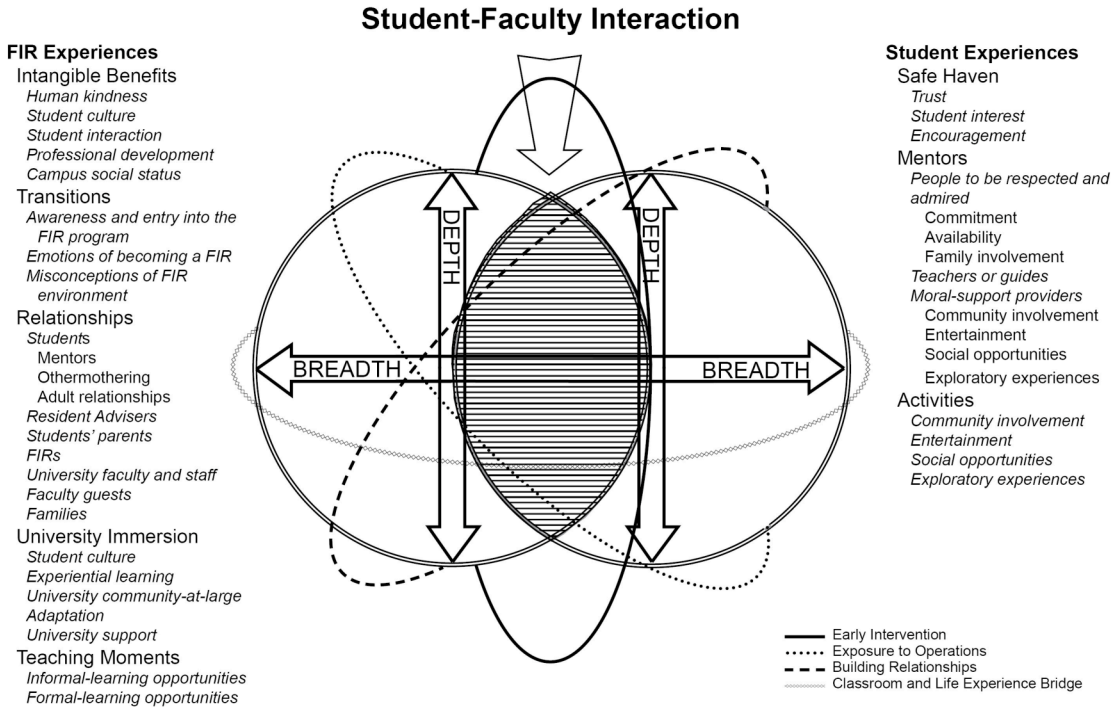
C. Student-faculty interaction with expanding FIR and student involvement through the FIR program represented.



The themes summarized at the beginning of this chapter bond together in one, over-arching construct for this study in regards to the FIR program: university community. Each participant in the study discussed vital elements of community and articulated the importance of the various roles of students, faculty, and staff members at the university and their obvious and hidden, intertwining roles within the greater community. Diagram 7 demonstrates these relationships.

Diagram 7.

University Community Development and the FIR Program.



As Diagram 7 demonstrates, the FIR program facilitates university community through four primary mechanisms:

1. Building relationships among students, faculty, and staff;
2. Exposing faculty members to university operations;
3. Providing a bridge between the classroom and life experiences for students and faculty members; and
4. Establishing an early intervention program for first year students.

These mechanisms are incorporated into the university context and student-FIR interaction. In Diagram 7, the university-community mechanisms are represented by

orbits that embrace the faculty and student experiences. The orbits illustrate the never-ending and all-inclusive nature of the university environment.

University community develops with the development of relationships within the community. The FIRs cited establishing relationships through the FIR program with students, parents, faculty, FIRs, and staff. Students cited closer relationships with faculty members, the FIRs, than through other means of faculty relationships in addition to the FIR program providing opportunities to meet other students. The networks the FIRs and students built through the FIR program provided a foundation for interdisciplinary discussions, opportunities to interact with faculty members not in students' primary field of study, and bonds between faculty members throughout the institution. The benefits of this network ultimately expanded beyond the FIR program as FIRs incorporated the knowledge they gained from the relationships into the classroom. Further, that knowledge remained long after faculty members' participation in the FIR program. For example, several FIRs cited learning more about students and the lives they lead outside of the classroom. That knowledge was translated into the classroom through a better understanding of non-academically related student situations and providing accommodations so that the students could not only focus on their extended situation, but also know they were supported academically by the faculty members.

FIR programming provides a unique platform for student-faculty interaction. Without this platform, students would not have these exceptional opportunities to form relationships with faculty members and reap the benefits of student-FIR interaction. Student-FIR interaction provides similar benefits as those found by Astin (1993).

Further, faculty members tend progress in the characteristics Astin (1993) uses to define his variable of Student Orientation of the Faculty.

Relationship building between students and FIRs signifies development through the environment (Barker, 1968). The establishment of relationships with the FIRs signifies the integration of a student into the university as in Barker's (1968) behavior settings where, in the case of the FIRs, the entire community establishes the standing patterns of behavior and milieu. The FIR apartments integrate into student housing and the environment prompts the behavior of the FIRs as to how they live. For example, the FIRs are incorporated into the community not only through the FIR apartment, but also through a meal plan and membership to the campus' recreational services. Students perceive the FIRs as a part of the community and, therefore, integrate themselves into the FIR program.

FIRs further integrate into the university community through interaction and relationship development with staff members. The FIRs build networks with students and university employees whom assist them in living in the residence halls, particularly in program implementation. FIRs require great resources to maneuver through the intricacies of presenting activities for students, such as accounting staff members who facilitate FIR purchases. For example, the FIRs better acquaint with the intricacies of catering and cleaning of a residence hall floor; they gain a better appreciation for the individuals who provide those services as well as the functions behind the services. In addition, they learn mechanisms for standard university operations, such as purchasing products. For example, FIRs learn that the institution and state law govern purchasing mechanisms.

The relationships the FIRs gain through the role as FIRs increases their total understanding of the university community. In this way, the FIRs serve as conduits between the academic-realms and the academic support areas of campus. The FIR program enables the FIRs to provide educational activities that appeal to students of all majors. In addition, the FIRs present programs at the institution in which students can become involved, such as with study abroad. FIRs present seminars in their areas of expertise. They host dinners from the cultural roots of their families. FIRs provide platforms for other faculty members to present and meet students.

The activities bring together the commonalities between students and between students and faculty members. The students explore their institution through the FIR activities and relationships. In addition, the FIR program and interaction with FIRs enables students to better understand that all faculty members have human characteristics. That is, faculty members are not instructors that simply stand at the front of the classroom conveying bits of knowledge. Faculty members are people with families, hobbies, and pets. In this regard, the faculty members are similar to the families that most residence hall students left when they moved to college minus *in loco parentis.*

In college, students seek to become their own individuals (Chickering, 1969; Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Whitaker, 1988). In addition, students experience moments with FIRs of support and guidance, much like the safety net they experience in their parents, but not directive as parents. Instead, the FIRs often serve as othermothers (Guiffrida, 2005). These relationships break barriers between the FIRs and students and enable the faculty members, beyond their terms as FIRs, to better relate to students and to serve as early intervention to student challenges.

The relationships the FIRs build with students and the inviting atmosphere of their apartments facilitates early intervention for student issues that may lead to attrition. For example, FIRs often serve as mediators of young love or sounding boards in relationships. They offer guidance to students in times of need such as after poor performance on a math exam or the death of a student's parent. As mentors, they are people to be respected and admired by the students. Through their commitment, availability, and family involvement, students feel the support of the FIRs and often act upon their guidance. The FIRs are often able to intervene in student situations before intervention becomes critical. That is, the FIRs are able to assist students in problem solving through connecting students with the "intellectual fabric of student life" (Tinto, 1993, p. 204).

In the three prior mechanisms for building community, the FIRs had to problem solve and learn about the institution in order to process students through early intervention. That is, they had to learn about campus resources they may not have understood as well without the FIR experience.

Implications and Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the FIRs' experiences are more complete faculty experiences than non-FIR faculty members. By analyzing the FIR discussions as how the FIR program assists them through the intangible benefits, relationships, university immersion, and teaching moments; they did not receive the same degree of assistance as faculty members prior to involvement in the FIR program. The assistance the FIRs receive reinforces their understandings of student life.

Many faculty members could gain a better comprehension of student life in order to better understand students in the classroom such as many of the FIRs cited with their FIR program experiences. Faculty members may benefit from overviews of orientations and classes often presented by residence life staff members in regards to housing populations. For example, a new faculty orientation session could include an overview of student development for traditional students. Or, if the faculty members instruct groups other than traditional first-year students, such as those returning to school after job loss or military deployment, orientation sessions could include background information specifically related to the population. Understanding others lessens culture shock of interacting with other populations (Henderson, 1989) and may be useful for FIRs.

In addition, many of the FIRs mentioned a fear of not receiving student acceptance when they entered the FIR program. By better understanding students and the similarities and differences between the faculty members and the students, the fear may be minimized. Orientation for all faculty members on topics such as student development may help to ease faculty stress when becoming involved in programs such as FIR, other faculty-integration programs, or simply the first day class each semester. Orientation sessions are not enough to mimic the FIR experience and the benefits the FIRs receive. Relationship building is paramount to the FIR experience and is the core to building campus community. In fact, "the single biggest difference between influential faculty and their colleagues is the extent to which they interact with students outside the classroom" (Gaff, 1973, p. 609).

FIR alums may also find benefit in maintaining connections to the FIR program. Isabella, for example, has lost her connections to the FIR program. An intergenerational

FIR event honoring and socializing FIRs and their families may be helpful to maintain continuity among FIRs and maintain faculty relations across campus.

Through this study, it is evident that most faculty members are not afforded opportunities to interact with other faculty members and students from across the different academic disciplines and develop their relations with students. Providing inter-disciplinary opportunities in mass may prove difficult and costly. For example, faculty members may choose not to participate in such programs. Regardless, additional FIRs should be combined to the current FIR programming to decrease the ratio of students to FIRs and, therefore, increase the opportunities for students and FIRs to interact. In addition, the diversity of the FIRs should expand so it is more representative of the student body. Further, FIR funding and resources should be increased proportionally to appropriately implement the FIR program with additional FIRs.

With the additional FIRs, FIR teams could be formed within large buildings or between communities. The teams would enable faculty members to learn more about each other as well as the students, creating greater inter-disciplinary interaction. While the participation of faculty members in a FIR program such as this may seem low in comparison to the number of faculty members on a college campus, over time, the experiences would compound and further contribute to the overall campus environment (Schoggen, 1989).

In addition to providing the FIRs a campus community area, resources could also be allotted such that the FIRs plan at least one activity together per semester for their areas and are, therefore, able to interact with entities such as financial support staff, housekeeping staff, Resident Advisers, and each other. This type of programming may

not be feasible at all institutions, however, each institution can build networks between faculty members and students.

Why should we care about student-FIR relationships and community building? Building campus relationships through programs such as the FIR program provides students with campus involvement opportunities, involvement with one's environment, avenues for student development, interaction with students and faculty members. Faculty members are provided opportunities to better understand the student population, to interact with other faculty members, and to gain a broader appreciation for the institution. Both students and faculty members benefit from the relationships that form including mentoring relationships and othermothering. For faculty members, these relationships are assurance of integration within the university community. For students, these relationships represent moral-support. For both students and faculty members, the interaction also represents opportunities for learning, greater personal growth, and social and academic support. While this study reflects many reasons to implement FIR programs at other institutions or adjust FIR programs at other institutions to reflect the characteristics of the program at the University of Oklahoma, limitations for this study must be recognized. For example, this study reflects a FIR program of one institution. In the next section, I recommend future research to reduce these limitations and enhance the generalizations of this study.

Suggestions for Future Research

This study is an exploratory study on FIR programs on university campuses as literature on this topic is extremely limited. FIR programs offer many additional research

topics based on the information garnered from this study. For points of future research, I offer the following discussion.

From this study, it is known that the depth and breadth of student experiences of those involved with the FIRs and the FIRs' experiences are immense. However, due to the limited sample size, the depth and breadth of the program across the student population is unknown and may be qualitatively and quantitatively investigated to eventually transverse multi-university studies. Based on the themes of this research, surveys may be constructed to produce further information on FIR programming, particularly comparing the levels of student involvement with the FIR.

In addition, most FIRs mentioned apprehension of being accepted by students through the FIR program. This apprehension could be explored in greater depth and compared to those of other faculty members. In particular, FIR anxiety at the beginning of the academic year could be compared to all faculty members across campus to investigate the similarities and differences between the faculty populations. Further comparisons of FIRs and faculty members could be investigated, as well.

For example, the majority of the FIRs mentioned that the FIR program assisted them in learning more about student life and that that knowledge guided them to be better instructors. Studies could be conducted to determine the extent faculty members understand student life beyond the classroom. Studies of this nature may, through application, further the student life experience.

Future studies may also include cost-benefit analyses. From this exploratory study, FIRs and students involved with the FIR program both benefited. However, how

does the cost of the FIR program compare to the influence of the FIR program on campus?

Finally, of the twelve student participants, eleven identified themselves as white or caucasian with one identifying as Multi-Racial. For this limited exposure to racial diversity, a potential follow-up study is needed in order to reflect the diversity at this institution. This study not only provided additional research for literature, but it also identified through its findings numerous areas of research to be conducted.

Conclusion

Vito (2007) found that faculty members reported a greater understanding of students as people through a Faculty Fellow program, a type of student-faculty interaction programming. The interaction corresponded with higher levels of satisfaction, engagement, and loyalty from the faculty with the institution. I add to the current literature that FIR programs are beneficial for students and faculty members involved in the program to promote relationships between students, faculty members, and students and faculty members with all resulting in enhanced university community. These interactions develop through university immersion and teaching moments both in and out-of-the-classroom through an environment that promotes such interaction twenty-four hours per day, seven days per week.

This study was not about development of generalizations to be used at other institutions, but about exploration of a FIR program at the University of Oklahoma with FIRs and students involved with the FIR program. I discovered that the FIR program at the University of Oklahoma melds academic life and home life of both students and faculty members through living together in the residence halls. Further, the proximity of

FIRs to students in the residence halls fostered informal student-faculty interaction and formal student-faculty programs. In addition, the FIRs transferred their student experiences through the FIR program to their classroom and beyond in the university community. The overall result of the FIR program is a stronger university community that is nurtured through four elements of the FIR program: building relationships; exposing faculty members to university operations; providing a bridge between the classroom and life experiences, and establishing an early intervention program.

For these reasons, FIR programs are extremely valuable in institutions of higher learning. They promote student-faculty interaction and provide both students and faculty members benefits including those found in this study: the relationships, the gratification of teaching moments, the safe havens for idea debate and experimentation, and activities that provide common bonds between students and faculty members. In addition, FIR programs provide a foundation for development of the university community through faculty and students living within the same, on-campus environment. The FIRs, students, staff, and environment are not mutually exclusive. All are dependent upon each other; all become one as the university community.

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APPENDIX A

Purposeful Search Results for Faculty In Residence Information*

Institution	Select Website Information	Web Address
Elon University	"… [FIR] encourages and maximizes the quality and quantity of student-faculty interaction…" "… a unique perspective on opportunities to interact with students outside of the classroom…" "… leads to: community building, intellectual discussion and growth; career and idea exploration; creative thinking; and practice in lifelong and seamless learning" (para 1-3)	www.elon.edu/e-web/students/reslife/residence.xhtml
Salem State College	"… [FIR] serve as positive and visible mentors to undergraduate students…" "… encourage student intellectual and social development, and provide assistance to students seeking academic support and guidance." (para Faculty-in-Residence)	www.salemstate.edu/reslife/staff.php
Susquehanna University	"… serve as resources people to residents and residence life staff." (para 1)	www.susqu.edu/reslife/reshall_staff.htm
University of California, Riverside	"… plan and promote a variety of programs and educational activities." "… interact with faculty in a familiar and convenient setting." (para 4)	http://housing.ucr.edu/campusliving/academicinitiatives.htm
Columbia University	"… establishing relationships and friendships with residents that often endure long after graduation." (para 2)	www.engineering.columbia.edu/students/resprogram.php
Saint Joseph's University	"… general presence to assist with students' academic and personal formation…" (para 4)	www.sju.edu/residence-life/rl-staff.htm
Boston University	"… to help the University build bridges between professors and students." (para 4)	www.bu.edu/bridge/archive/2004/10-15/faculty.html
Colby-Sawyer College	"… enhance student life by bringing the values of academic life into residence halls through informal interactions with faculty." (para 5)	www.colby-sawyer.edu/currents/news/facultyinresidence.html
Vanderbilt University	"Faculty members have voiced their desire for increased out-	www.insidevandy.com/drupal/node/95

	of-class interaction with their students, and students have expressed their desire to get to know their professors as well," said Susan Barge, associate provost for residential colleges. (para 3)	
Oregon State University	"'I want to help students make connections that will help them achieve academic and lifelong success," says Dale, who teaches in the counselor education program with a focus on diversity competence, play therapy and bibliotherapy. "We are better teachers for knowing the students, their needs, life expectations, and everyday stresses."' (para 2)	http://oregonstate.edu/education/newsletter/spring04/beyondclass.html
Butler University	"These faculty are individuals committed to students and the learning experience that takes place outside of the classroom" (para Faculty-in-Residence, 1)	www.bu.edu/bridge/archive/2004/10-15/faculty.html
University of Oregon	"… provide the opportunity to foster intellectual, personal, and career development for students." (para 7)	http://housing.uoregon.edu/reshalls/academic_programs.php
University of Illinois	"It is a unique experience that encourages a crucial link between students and faculty" (para 3)	www.housing.uic.edu/faculty/index.html
New York University	"… as a way to integrate students' academic experiences with their residential lives" (para 1)	www.nyu.edu/residential.education/community/faculty_in_residence.html
Soka University of America	"Faculty residents have realized enhanced and inspired classroom learning experiences through their academic role modeling within the residential setting" (para 3)	www.soka.edu/page.cfm?p=896
San Diego State University	"… student's connection to enhanced academic potential" (para 1)	www.sa.sdsu.edu/housing/guide-fir.html
Baylor University	"Faculty in the program have a unique perspective on student life and opportunities to interact with students in learning outside of the classroom" (para 1)	www.baylor.edu/cll/index.php?id=41407
University of Connecticut	"… to expand opportunities for students and faculty to interact outside of the classroom in meaningful and enriching ways" (para 1)	http://facultyinresidence.uconn.edu
University of Oklahoma	"Learning is not confined to the classroom or laboratory." (para 8) "…helps promote lasting intergenerational friendships"	http://housing.ou.edu/content/view/969

	(para 9)	
SUNY Brockport	"… developing a sense of community, involving other faculty in residence life, and assisting in meeting the academic and community needs of residents" (para 1)	www.brockport.edu/reslife/fir/index.html
George Washington University	"Students will gain a deeper understanding of academic persistence through mentorship from the Faculty in Residence" (para 4)	http://gwired.gwu.edu/gwhousing/houseli fe/faculty
Georgetown University	"… integrating intellectual thought through informal and formal interactions" (para 1)	http://reslife.georgetown.edu/fir/html
University of Florida	"… [the FIR] has the desire to relate to students in a in a residential setting, outside of the classroom or laboratory" (para 3)	www.housing.ufl.edu/AIE/AIE_facultyinr es.html
University of California – Los Angeles	"… to bring learning experience into the learning environment" (para 2)	www.orl.ucla.edu/academics/fir
University of Tulsa	"Students living in these halls have the opportunity to develop friendships and mentoring relationship with interesting and popular faculty members and their families" (para 2)	www.utulsa.edu/housing/fir
New York University School of Law	"… informal conversations on key issues…." (para 1)	www.law.nyu.edu/depts/housing/faculty/i ndex.html
Duke University	"… to facilitate, strengthen, and expand interaction…" (para 1)	www.aas.duke.edu/fir
University of California - Berkeley	"…he [faculty member] particularly likes getting to know the students -- just listening to them, mostly -- and helping out where he can." (para 12)	www.berkeley.edu/news/media/releases/ 2005/08/25_faculty.shtml
Emory University	"… to strengthen the bonds between students and faculty…" (para 1)	www.emory.edu/housing/fir

*Retrieved on November 17, 2007

APPENDIX B

Clustering Process

This was read to the participants.
The clustering process was set forth by Dr. Gabriele Rico in 2000 in her book "Writing the Natural Way." Clustering can be described as a brainstorming process in which the participant allows thoughts to flow about an experience. Thoughts are "clustered" according to emerging patterns. Let's look at the "Dogs" example I have created.

A page will be shown to the participants with only this "Dogs" diagram.

The following was read to the participants.
As you can see from this diagram, I have many experiences with dogs. As I thought of my current and past dogs, I developed this diagram based on my experiences. Notice that some topics that I drew have topics that emerged from them. This is the nature of the brainstorming process of clustering.

I would like for you to do the clustering process for your experiences with the faculty-in-residence (FIR) program. You will have ten minutes to complete your cluster. After you have finished, we will start the interview.

Do you have any questions? The diagram has been started for you on your background sheet. If you feel that you will need additional room, please turn your page over and begin.

Guiding Interview Questions

These questions guided my interviews.

Questions for students and FIRs

1. Tell me about your cluster diagram. That is, tell me about each cluster, specific experiences related to each cluster, and their significance to you.
2. How did you become involved with the FIR program?
3. What does FIR mean to you?
4. What does student-FIR interaction mean to you?
5. Can you give an example as to how the FIR program has changed you?
6. What does student success mean to you?
7. Do you believe the FIR program influences student success? If so, how?

Questions for FIR

2. Can you describe an experience where you felt you positively influenced a student's life?
3. Tell me about the relationships you have or have had with students you met through being a FIR.
4. What is the most meaningful experience as a FIR that you have had with a student because of the FIR program?

Questions for students

1. Can you describe an experience where you felt the FIR positively influenced your life or a friend's life?
2. Tell me about the relationship you have with the FIR.
3. What is the most meaningful experience you have had because of the FIR program?

APPENDIX C

Letters to Participants

Invitation to Participate Email

Email to FIR/FIR Alumni/ae

Dear (FIR/FIR Alumni/ae),
I am conducting a research study for my doctoral degree for which I request your assistance. Through my study, I seek to understand how FIR and students perceive and describe the FIR program through their lived experiences and how student-FIR interaction may influence student success.

As a FIR, your experience is invaluable. I would appreciate an interview with you to discuss your experiences as a FIR and your thoughts on student success. If you are willing to participate in this research study, please respond to this email so that we may arrange an interview time. If I have not heard from you within a few days, I will call you to follow-up.

Sincerely,
Amy M. Davenport
Graduate Student, College of Education

Email to Student/Student Alumni/ae

Dear (Student/Student Alumni/ae),
(FIR or Residence Life Staff) identified you as a student or alumni/ae who has participated with the faculty in residence program (FIR). I am conducting a research study for my doctoral degree for which I request your assistance. Through my study, I seek to understand how FIR and students perceive and describe the FIR program through their lived experiences and how student-FIR interaction may influence student success.

Your experience is invaluable. I would appreciate an interview with you to discuss your experiences as a FIR and your thoughts on student success. If you are willing to participate in this research study, please respond to this email so that we may arrange an interview time. If I have not heard from you within a few days, I will call you to follow-up.

Sincerely,
Amy M. Davenport
Graduate Student, College of Education

Verification of Transcription

This letter was developed using the letter Moustakas (1994, p. 179) presented as an example. Much of the Moustakas letter was rewritten while other areas were used verbatim from Moustakas.

Date

Dear _____,

Thank you for the time you dedicated to the extended interview and sharing your FIR experience. Without your unique and personal thoughts, feelings, events, and situations, the study would not be nearing completion.

Enclosed you will find a verbatim transcript of your interview. I would appreciate your review of the transcription to see if it has fully captured your experience as a FIR. After reviewing the transcript, you may realize the omission of something important. Please add comments that would further elaborate your experience(s) on the attached sheet, or if you prefer we can arrange to meet again and record your additions or corrections. Please do not edit for grammatical corrections. The way you originally told your story is critical to my research.

Once you have reviewed the transcript and completed any changes or additions, please return the transcript in the stamped, addressed envelope that is enclosed as well as the attached sheet if you included any additional comments.

I have greatly valued your participation in this research study and your willingness to share your experience. If you have any questions or concerns, do not hesitate to call me.

Sincerely,

Amy M. Davenport

Thank You for Participating

Date

Dear _____,

Thank you for participating! You have really added to the knowledge base of student-faculty interaction and residence hall programming through this study. Your contribution will pave the way for researchers in this area. As we discussed, I will email an electronic copy of my final dissertation to the address you have provided.

Sincerely,

Amy M. Davenport