Differences by Degrees: Providing Services to Adult Students Based on Degree Level Pursued

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DIFFERENCES BY DEGREES: PROVIDING SERVICES TO ADULT STUDENTS
BASED ON DEGREE LEVEL PURSUED

by

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Adult students quickly are becoming the majority population in higher education. The number of these students has increased steadily over the past several years—up 180% since 1970 (Ansalone, 1999; Bendixen-Noe & Giebelhaus, 1998; Donaldson & Graham, 1999; Kasworm, 2003). In 2003 Kasworm reported that it was estimated that "traditional" 18-22 year-old students would represent only 46% of the collegiate population by 2010. Today, 73% of all undergraduate students are nontraditional in some way. The 21st century universities are experiencing a new majority, making these "nontraditional" students the new traditional student (Belcastro & Purslow, 2006; Compton, Cox, & Laanan, 2006).

According to Bash (2003), the proportion of adult students is expected to increase in the future as lifelong learning becomes integrated into the fabric of our culture. Lifelong learning is the concept of adults engaging in continuous learning to keep pace with the changing environments of society and the workplace (Vijayakumar, 2002). Higher education must learn how to serve these learners so that they can access whatever assistance they need on the road to their degrees.

Adults have sought further education (i.e. higher education) since the beginning of our nation. During colonial times, adult students—those who completed the public education available at the time—could be as young as 14 years of age (Kett, 1994). As the years passed, and public education expanded, the typical minimum age of adult students increased.

The theme of the 18th century was self-improvement, taking strides to improve one's station in life and become more cultured and civilized (Kett, 1994). During this time, collegiate education (education at a formal higher education institution, with classes
leading to a degree) and self-education (efforts through self-improvement societies or
published manuals of self-study programs to improve oneself) were seen as
complimentary, not as competing functions. During the 17th, 18th, and part of the 19th
centuries, any further education pursued by post-public-education students who were not
formally enrolled in a college was considered self-improvement (Saunders & Bauer,
1998). It was not until the early 20th century that the first popular use of the term "adult
education" was used. Then it was used to designate students of culture who were not
enrolled in a formal educational institution and was purely non-collegiate (Saunders &
Bauer).

The Chautauqua Movement of the late 19th century was the first integrated core
program of adult education organized on a national scale in the United States as well as
the nation's pioneering adventure in a national correspondence school (Dakin, 1999;
Scott, 2005). Because many of the Chautauqua courses were considered more socially
than academically relevant, higher educational institutions looked upon them with
disdain, and considered them not worthy of college credit (Kett, 1994). As such, the
movement was both a boon and a bane to adult education. It was a boon because it made
education beyond public school available to more people. It was a bane because it set the
precedent for higher educational institutions viewing adult and continuing education as a
less-than-collegiate activity (Dakin; Kett; Scott).

Social change as measured by the views and cultural norms of the general
populace always has been a part of the American educational system (Ansalone, 1999).
The adult education movement often has acted as a catalyst for change in higher
education over the years. As an example, the evolution of academic adult education
(adults taking classes for credit leading to a degree) was most pronounced after World
War II thanks to the G.I. Bill. This bill provided financial assistance for veterans to attend college (Scott, 2005).

As early as 1945 the economic advantage of a college degree was becoming evident. The importance of higher education rose among all age groups. It came to be seen as a passport to success and self-fulfillment (Kett, 1994). Yet, the adult students of today mostly come from a generation in which the assumption that everyone would pursue an undergraduate degree was not so prolific. They grew up in households where a college education was considered a luxury (Hay, 2002).

Today’s rapidly changing environments of both society and work, however, demand continuous (or lifelong) learning (Eastmond, 1998). As Vijayakumar (2002) states, “Higher education is an unavoidable element for social development, production, economic growth, strengthening the cultural identity, maintaining social coherence, continuing the struggle against poverty, and the promotion of the culture and peace” (p. 118). Learning no longer can be confined to traditional phases of education in youth, but must extend over a person’s entire lifetime (Schuetze & Slowey, 2002).

This view is supported by the increase in adult students in institutions. This increase represents their changing beliefs about the importance of a college credential as it is linked to work stability, financial support, and related life opportunities (Kasworm, 2003). There is a growing assumption that an undergraduate degree is essential for financial success (Hay, 2002).

The Marginalized Demographic

The term “marginalized” describes most adult students as well as the programs in place for them. These students often are invisible and taken for granted by higher education. Traditional universities were originally designed to support the operational
and academic needs of the typical college age university population (today that is the 18- to 22-year-old student) (Guvenoz, 2002). Because of this, most four-year institutions' services, programs, and policies for adult students typically occur as peripheral add-ons, as an exception to the mainstream programs. Often they are funded at the minimal level (Sissel, 2001).

Neglect of adult students in terms of public policy, programming, and institutional mission is found throughout higher education. Adult students often represent the primary enrollment for evening, weekend, and distance education classes, yet are denied full access to services both by design and by default (Sissel, 2001). When decision-makers think of the student body, adult students generally do not come to mind (Kilgore & Rice, 2003). Sissel states, "Adult students are often viewed as invisible and of lesser importance to the traditional core student group, as evidenced by higher education mission statements, publicity and image, and exclusion of adult requirements in the shaping of policies, programs, and outreach" (p. 2).

As a result, adult students persist against difficult odds in institutional systems that do not recognize them for who they are and that are not designed to meet their needs. The institutional understanding of the student body runs contrary to the needs and experiences of adult students. Attempts by the institutions to involve adult students in traditional campus activities often are not successful because of the multiple conflicts, time constraints, and limitations that these students have in their lives (Fairchild, 2003; Graham & Donaldson, 1999; Lynch & Bishop-Clark, 1998). Kilgore (2003) states it well, "Adult students present challenges and opportunities to colleges and universities. To serve this large population, we must first recognize that they exist and that they are different (emphasis added) from our conceptions of traditional-aged students" (p. 91).
Adult students often see no desire on the part of the institution to make changes that they request (Horn, 1997). Stemming from a concern that adult-student needs will be very extensive and costly to satisfy, many campuses are reluctant to make greater efforts to meet these needs (Senter & Senter, 1998). In general, the academic community has resisted the introduction of fundamentally different formats for classes and services that might better serve the needs of these students (Newman, 1998).

As previously stated, there is a burgeoning number of adult students on our campuses today (Bash, 2003). Along with the growing numbers, the diversity of students in terms of interests, ages, and ethnicities continues to grow. It is time that institutions of higher education, especially public institutions, step back and examine their students with fresh eyes and open minds to determine how best to serve them (Newman, 1998).

Need for Student Support Services

Offering classes and granting degrees is just part of what is needed to help students successfully obtain their degrees. A large portion of providing what students need falls under the auspices of the division of student affairs. Traditional, four-year (often research intensive) institutions provide support services based on the historical model of delivery that may include residence life, academic advising, health services, and campus-sponsored student activities, most of which are offered during standard business hours (Williams, 2002).

Past research has indicated that the traditional model of support services does not work for adult students (Kilgore, 2003; Kilgore & Rice, 2003). The reasons vary from offering a service which is of no use to the adult student (like residence life), to offering the service in such a way that it is not accessible to the adult student (such as during business hours). Adult students want alternative services (such as access to business
offices after work or a central point of contact) that better meet their needs (Bendixen-Noe & Giebelhaus, 1998; Flint & Frey, 2003; Hay, 2002; Milleron, 2001). Also, they require more flexibility in the scheduling of classes and services in order to make higher education more accessible to them (Hay, 2002; Kasworm, 2003; Kilgore & Rice, 2003; Schuetze & Slowey, 2002; Wagner, 2002; Williams, 2002).

Review of the literature provided several models of, and multiple references to, good practices for providing support services (Butler, 2002; Flint & Frey, 2003; Hadfield, 2003; Kilgore & Rice, 2003; Mosier & Schwarzmueller, 2002), but they reflect idealized goals that, for the most part, do not exist in the reality of today's student services (Mancuso, 2001). Additionally, previous research on best practices focused on either undergraduate students or graduate students and often on traditionally aged students. There is no research that talks in depth with adult students of all degree levels to determine (a) what services are required by such adult students based on the degree being pursued (bachelor, master, or doctorate), and (b) how those services could be made more accessible. Research states it is important to serve the adult student population so that institutions can continue to recruit and retain them in this new era (Hadfield, 2003; Rice, 2003), but it doesn't state specifically how, and it doesn't differentiate between degrees. No studies were found in the literature that examines whether adult students pursuing different degree levels have different needs. This study helps fill that void.

Research Questions

This research examines the delivery of support services to adult students on two levels. First, it identifies the services viewed as essential by adult students as well as how to deliver them. Second, it compares the responses of the students who are pursuing different degree levels (bachelors, masters, or doctorate) to determine if there are
significant differences in the support required for success to degree and, if so, what those differences are. Then, based on the results of the study, I developed an implementation structure for delivering support services to adult students in a manner that will enhance their success to degree based on their experiences and realistic wants and needs. This structure takes into account the level of degree pursued by the students as well as the modality for delivery of services.

The primary question in this research is: To what extent, if any, do the needs of adult students for support services differ based on the degree level pursued—bachelor, master, or doctorate? To answer this question, several areas are examined including the following.

1. Which support services do adult students consider most important to enhance their success to degree?

2. According to adult students, what is the quality level of the current offerings of student services in the areas of (a) administrative services (e.g. admissions, registration, records, grades, etc.), (b) academic environment (e.g. courses, advising, faculty, etc.), (c) academic support services (e.g. library, research needs, tutoring, etc.), (d) student support services (e.g. career counseling, personal counseling, job placement services, etc.) and (e) physical plant/facilities (parking, food services, safety of campus, etc.)?

3. What processes and modalities do students believe would be best for providing the services identified as most important in order for them to be useful and available to adult students?
Methods

This research uses a mixed-method, two phase approach. The first phase is quantitative and consists of an online survey to determine the services that adult students consider most important, as well as the quality level of those services (research questions one and two). Descriptive and predictive statistics were used to evaluate the results of the survey. The population for the survey was adult students (at least 30 years of age) enrolled for classes at the study university (a medium-sized, four-year, doctoral, research intensive university located in the Midwest) in the Spring 2007 semester.

The second phase was qualitative and consisted of interviews conducted with 13 participants; four from the bachelor level, four from the master level, and five from the doctoral level. Interview protocols were specific to each degree level and investigated services that they considered (a) important and well done and (b) important and not well done. Results are reported in two groupings; by dependent variable and by degree level. Also examined during phase two was why, for each dependent variable under student services, at least 69% of survey respondents indicated they had no basis for rating the satisfaction level of the variable, suggesting non-use of the service.

Using the information gathered from both phases, a structure was developed. This structure is proposed as a method to better serve the adult student population that continues to increase in numbers in our institutions.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study comes from four areas (see Figure 1). It begins with the 7 Principles of Good Practice in Student Services as presented by Blimling, Whitt, and Associates (1999). While these practices were developed with the traditional student in mind, they hold for providing services to the adult student as well.
The practices are used in conjunction with Schutz and Slowey’s (2002) institutional factors influencing participation by adult students. These theories, along with Schuh and Upcraft’s (2001) *Assessment Practice in Student Affairs*, were used to determine areas/topics of study for the survey. The majority of the survey questions were suggested by the work of Schuh and Upcraft.

*Figure 1: Conceptual framework.*
The fourth basis for my conceptual framework is the work of Barbara Miller (2007) in assessing organizational performance. While her concept includes seven areas of study, I am using only the area that focuses on customer and stakeholder satisfaction.

These concepts and the models that drive my conceptual framework are discussed in-depth in Chapter 2.

Delimitations and Limitations

Most of the literature defines an adult student as being 25 years or older. However, masters and doctoral students who have not broken their educational path could conceivably fall into that category. For this study I am focusing on adult students who have developed other life roles, and, therefore, the definition of an adult student for this study is one who is (a) at least 30 years of age upon entry or re-entry into his/her current program and (b) has a primary self-identified life role that is something other than student as determined from certain questions on the survey. In other words, the student's primary focus is on career/family/community obligations and activities rather than simply seeking their degree.

This study used students who were registered for class(es) during the Spring 2007 semester at the research university (a Carnegie I research institution with the main campus located in the Midwest), which is both a delimitation and a limitation. Using the student body from one institution limits the generalizability of the study results to other institutions, although it should yield a basis from which other institutions can start in determining their own structure for delivery. However, results of the study are not complicated by students' experiences with services from different institutions. All participants have experienced the same set of service offerings.
Another limitation is that the survey respondents, as well as interview participants, were self-selecting. To minimize this concern, demographic information from the initial list of students was compared with the demographic information from the survey respondents to determine if the sample (those who responded to the survey) is representative of the population (the initial list).

Chapter 1 Summary

Adult students are a growing percentage of the students in higher education. However, their needs are very different from the 18-22 year-old student group that most four-year institutions consider to be their primary market. This study looks at adult students and their needs regarding student support services. These needs are evaluated by degree level (bachelor, master, and doctorate) to determine what support services and methods of delivery will best serve adult students.

All institutions are different; therefore, the results of this study are not an exact fit for other universities. However, the methods can be replicated by those institutions to determine the services important to their students and to design their own structure from those results.

Chapter two presents an extensive review of the literature as it pertains to adult students, their needs, and the implications for higher education institutions if they do not address those needs. Following that, chapter three details the methods that were used in this two-phase study. Chapter four (survey results), five (interview results), and six follow with results, conclusions and implications.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

The adult student of today did not just appear on the educational scene. Adults have been seeking further education (defined as any learning acquired after completing the compulsory grades in school) since the beginning of our nation. In order to better understand the adult student, as well as the cultural development in higher education toward the adult student, a brief history of adult education is provided.

Adult Education Through the Years

While people have sought further education since the beginning of our nation, two things stand out as one moves through time. First, the characteristics of these people have changed. In the early years students in post compulsory school could be as young as 14 or 15, today they are older. Second, it is an educational area that lacks a convenient name (Kett, 1994). Even today those students who do not fit into the “traditional” 18-22 year-old, full-time college student category are referred to as (amongst other labels) adult students, nontraditional students, or continuing students.

The Pre-Chautauqua Years

In the early years (as early as the 17th century) colleges and educators pushed for a liberal education of the arts and philosophies. However, there were autodidacts (self-learners) who were in a pursuit of useful knowledge, which, according to Kett (1994), was defined as: (a) a reduction of speculative truths to practice; (b) the grounding of theories upon experiments; and (c) application of science to the improvement of agriculture, commerce, and the common purposes of life. Such autodidacts generally were not served by the colleges of the day.

Things changed as the theme of the 18th century became self-improvement. Whether in a formal collegiate setting or through self-education, there was a culture of
mutual improvement. It was considered mutual because it was believed that when the individual improved, society improved (Kett, 1994). Towards the end of the 18th century the association between the acquisition of knowledge and the participation in public life sharpened. Indeed, many enrolled in college to prepare for public life.

The 18th century also saw collegiate education and self-education as complimentary, not competing, functions. Because neither the colleges nor the medical schools encompassed the entire range of natural knowledge, even those with degrees engaged in extensive self-instruction (Kett, 1994). The culture of self-instruction manifested itself through a proliferation of intellectual outposts. Many towns and villages initiated library and literary societies. These were first steps in the democratization of education that grew during the 19th century, a time that saw many forms of education.

In addition to the established resident colleges many informal organizations for mutual improvement were founded. These associations took different forms, from literary societies, to mechanics' institutes, to lyceums (Scott, 2005). During that time it was not how you learned but what you learned. In his Lectures on Moral and Mental Culture (as cited in Kett, 1994) Samuel Bates stated, “We have learned to judge the culture of a man’s mind, not by the number of years higher education has been engaged in study, but by what higher education is able to do—by the fruits his mind is capable of yielding” (p. 85).

Lyceums were imported from England during the 1820s. These traveling lecture formats provided opportunities for people to participate in a slightly more formalized training. Started by Josiah Holbrook, the lyceum expanded to 3,500 communities within 10 years. They were a strong part of the lineage of a learning nation (Kincheloe, 1978; Scott, 2005).
The three decades before the civil war saw an increase in the democratization of knowledge. Literary societies recruited members from entire segments of the locales in which they were established. During the 1830s "people of color" formed scores of their own associations. Most of these associations, regardless of the segment of the population, tended to ignore the technical instruction of occupational skills and focused on the liberal education then held in such high esteem (Kett, 1994).

The end of the 1880s saw a growth in extension programs in higher education institutions. Kett (1994) stated that they owed much to the twin examples of the Chautauqua movement and the British university extension movement. However, he also stated that the extension programs grew out of the land grant colleges in response to the Morrill Act, because these institutions could not get students to enroll in on-campus classes. The reality may lie somewhere in the middle.

After the civil war, liberal education became feminized. The establishment of academies (formalized learning institutions, but not degree-granting) widened the educational opportunities for women. Not only did they participate more in the learning, they often organized and even lectured in education programs for adults (Kett, 1994; Scott, 2005).

*The Chautauqua Movement*

The Chautauqua movement started in 1874 as a summer school for Methodist Sunday school teachers to improve the level of instruction for children in churches (Kett, 1994; Kincheloe, 1978; Scott, 2005; Vincent, 1885/1971). The movement spread far and developed many different branches.

The Chautauqua Institute promoted liberal education for all men and women. John H. Vincent, one of the founders, firmly believed that education should be the valued
possession of many and that it would lead to the development of a well-rounded person
(Vincent, 1885/1971). Chautauqua filled a void in the lives of Americans in the latter 19th
century.

The Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Club (CLSC), established in 1878, was
the first integrated core program of adult education organized on a national scale in the
U.S., and was a pioneering venture in correspondence education (Dakin, 1999; Scott,
2005). It consisted of a four-year course of home reading. The reading was not sequential
and the program accommodated for entry at any point in the cycle. It offered solid
correspondence teaching in descriptive science, English, and history. Unfortunately, the
format was not suitable for instruction in the laboratory sciences (Kett, 1994; Scott).

The Chautauqua movement contributed to the further democratization of
education, theory development, and structure of both adult education and university
education in the United States. It was thought of as a small town movement, but it was
the most significant venture in popular education in our nation’s history. It permanently
influenced both the structure and theory of adult and university education. Today,
Chautauqua remains a synonym for adult and continuing education (Scott, 2005).

Post Chautauqua

By the early 1900s culture as a goal of popular adult education had declined.
From 1890 to the Great Depression an industry of part-time vocational institutions
developed. These institutions included correspondence schools, corporation schools, and
evening colleges (Kett, 1994). The average age of students attending these institutions
was 25-30. Young working adults took classes part-time because the opportunity costs—
defined as what in their lives they had to give up in order to attend classes—of attending
full-time were formidable. As a result, evening classes in these institutions out-enrolled
those offered during the day. In the 1920s proprietary schools offered neither credits nor certificates. They stressed that education was a continuing supplement to work, not a preparation for it.

Another growth market of this time was the correspondence school. The largest and most successful was the International Correspondence Schools (ICS) established in 1906 and located in Scranton, Pennsylvania. Students who enrolled in ICS were not after a comprehensive education. They wanted to upgrade specific skills in order to obtain promotions at work (Kett, 1994). ICS, as well as other correspondence schools, offered many subjects that public schools did not. Also, they overcame the limitations of geographical location that existed for proprietary school classrooms (Kett, 1994). However, they could not confer degrees.

*World War I, World War II, and After*

During and after the world wars, adult education developed along two parallel paths. One path became more community conscious with a theme of a shared commitment to self-awareness, personal development, and a desire to connect with others. The other path became more academic, moving away from the community aspect (Grace, 2000; Karpiak, 2000; Kett, 1994). A statement by William C. I. Bagley in 1941 (as cited in Kett) described the junior college (which became the community college) and adult education as “the two [emphasis added] most important and promising present-day movements in American education” (p. 415).

*The academic path.* According to Grace (2000), academic adult education intensified efforts in the realm of techno-scientific subjects in an effort to take the concept of adult education beyond the reactive survivalist mode to a place and space where it was seen as a culturally valued education for adults. University summer schools
increased in the early 1900s in response to the demands by state and local boards of education that teachers possess baccalaureate degrees (Kett, 1994). Adult education made significant inroads into the university in the period between 1917 and 1970, with much expansion and innovation from 1920 to the end of World War II. But the evolution of academic adult education was most pronounced after World War II (Grace, 2000).

The GI Bill had a huge impact on higher education by further democratizing it (Kett, 1994). However, many military enrollees who wanted to take advantage of the education offered by the bill had not finished high school. As a result, the General Education Development Test (GED) was developed to ascertain if these students possessed the knowledge equivalent of a high school education that would allow them to enroll in higher education. The government started administering the test to all civilians after the war.

The community path. In the meantime, some adult education became more therapeutic and civic-focused than intellectual and individual (Kett, 1994). According to Kett it was seen as a method for individuals to feel better about themselves and their communities. A common theme of what was called adult and continuing education was a shared commitment to self-awareness, personal development, and a desire to connect meaningfully with others (Karpiak, 2000).

In the 1920s liberal education was associated with nurturing unique and creative personalities. The quest for culture was a means of personal growth. During this same period the consensus developed that, in the future, people would have far more disposable time and they would require education for leisure (Kett, 1994).

Educators and social critics of the 1930s thought that adult education could achieve valuable personal social results by helping ordinary Americans fill up the “vast
reservoir of leisure time” (Kett, 1994, p. 377). Adults attended schools that did not offer credit because they had little interest in certificates and diplomas. Typically in their 30s and 40s, the students wanted to understand world and national affairs, work out personal problems, find new ways to express themselves, and generally become more acceptable socially.

Community Colleges

In the 1930s the vision began to develop in which junior colleges would be the pioneers of future growth in higher adult and continuing education. Officials of these institutions advocated for semiprofessional fields—those below the level of university professional schools, but above high school vocational courses. In the 1940s the preferred description of these institutions became community college. The adult education professionals focused on these institutions as spearheads of future expansion in higher education. Indeed, the flexible structure invited attendance by adult students (Kett, 1994).

In 1970 the New York State Board of Higher Education mandated open admissions, which meant admitting students despite poor performance in school. It also opened up diversity issues, since many who enrolled were minority students (Cross, 2000). Such open admissions caused changes in the missions of institutions. However, these changes took place in the form of new kinds of colleges more than it did changes in established institutions. Community colleges opened throughout the early 1970s at a rate of one per week. As a result of these changes community colleges flourished and, since the 1970s, many junior colleges have evolved into comprehensive community colleges that offer a wide array of low-cost occupational and baccalaureate-transfer programs as well as many non-credit community service programs and classes (Kelly, 2001). By the end of the 1970s higher education institutions (including community colleges) had
become the leading provider of adult education, and the student focus shifted toward credit-bearing courses and programs leading to certificates and degrees (Kett, 1994).

In order to make a college education more accessible to students, community colleges became creative with credit for life experience, credit by examination, distance learning, cooperative programs with businesses, flexible scheduling, increased day care facilities, and increased parking (Cross, 2000). Student services became very important.

Adult Students: Who Are They?

The phenomenon of lifelong learning was identified as an entity in the 1960s. It gained momentum in the early 1970s and still shows few signs of a receding interest (Kett, 1994). By the 1990s the lifelong learning movement was firmly established as the global need for the information-savvy worker intensified. To succeed in the new knowledge-based economy, adults increasingly were compelled to have at least a bachelor degree to gain access to living-wage work.

However, this meant that there was a new type of student on campus. These students belonged to a new generation that did not understand or appreciate traditional academic values. They viewed themselves as customers, complete with comparison shopping to find the options that best fit their situations (Cross, 2000).

With the number of such adult students increasing, we need to understand who the adult student is. The first thing to realize is that there is no definitive definition. The primary descriptor used most often is age. However, age as a definition or criterion falls far short of a more comprehensive understanding of either the types of adult students or their needs (Schuetze & Slowey, 2002; Senter & Senter, 1998). As Kasworm (1990) states, “The sole criterion of age presents limited utility to uncovering key definers of unique adult student characteristics” (p. 358). In 1996, the National Center for Education
Statistics (as cited in Wagner, 2002) defined adult students by the presence of one or more of seven characteristics: (a) delayed enrollment into postsecondary education—usually after age 25; (b) part-time enrollment; (c) financially independent; (d) employed full-time while enrolled; (e) has dependents other than a spouse; (f) single parent; and (g) did not obtain a standard high school diploma. Even that definition does not give the whole picture. In 1978 Kurland (as cited in Krager, Wrenn, & Hirt, 1990) indicated that the literature uses more than 30 terms in referencing older students.

Adult students are a highly diverse population and defy generalization (Bendixen-Noe & Giebelhaus, 1998; Hughes, 1983). Adult students are persons whose principle identity has moved beyond that of student (Compton et al., 2006; Mancuso, 2001). They have assumed major life responsibilities and/or commitments such as work, family, and community activities (Chartrand, 1992; Horn, 1997; Kasworm, 1990; Mancuso, 2001; Richardson & King, 1998; Timarong, Temaungil, & Sukrad, 2002). Their family and work environments often take precedence over their educational one (Hughes). Adult students are not concerned with or involved in traditional campus activities due to life conflicts and time constraints (Graham & Donaldson, 1999; Kasworm, 2003). Typically, degree-seeking adult students are from a working class background and are first generation college students (Bendixen-Noe & Giebelhaus, 1998).

Adult students may return to school as either part-time or full-time students, but they continue to maintain the responsibilities of adult life (Timarong et al., 2002). As such, they have competing demands on their time not just from attending class and studying, but from family, work and community commitments as well (Wonacott, 2001). They have to juggle the demands of adulthood with those imposed by seeking a degree,
and they must negotiate with their families, employers, coworkers and friends to establish
their priorities, time commitments and responsibilities (Polson, 2003).

Work-based, mature students enter higher education with a readily constructed
identity based on their work roles that may be in conflict with their new identity of
student (Belcastro & Purslow, 2006). Bay (1999) puts it best, “. . .Each adult enrolls in
college with a complex set of beliefs, internal demands, and external pressures” (p. 5). As
complex people, adult students represent a unique life status consisting of (a) age, (b)
maturity and developmental complexity, and (c) responsible and often competing sets of
adult roles (Kasworm, 2003). Adult students exhibit significant differences in academic,
as well as life, involvements from traditional undergraduate students (Compton et al.,
2006; Kasworm, 1990). Traditional (conventional or historically traditional) students
enter college directly after high school graduation and earn their degrees in four or five
years. Adult (the new traditional) students who enter college for the first time often have
not been in high school for at least five years (Bee & Beronia, 1989).

Adult students exhibit high levels of motivation as well as attention to detail.
They have the ability to integrate new classroom information with their life and work
experiences (Saunders & Bauer, 1998). Adult students have focused goals for their
education, typically to gain/enhance their work skills (Compton et al., 2006). Their
learning tends to be self-directed and their experiences both trigger and aid in their
learning. Reflection and action are integral components of adult learning (Eastmond,
1998).

Faculty perceive adult students as more motivated, pragmatic, self-directed, goal-
oriented, and competent than traditional-aged students (Bendixen-Noe & Giebelhaus,
1998). Several traits separate adult students from the “traditional” 18-22 year-old
students. A compilation of these traits from several sources (Fairchild, 2003; Hughes, 1983; Kasworm, 2003; Krager et al., 1990; Saunders & Bauer, 1998) would include the following.

1. Adult students are responsible for themselves.
2. They often are directly responsible for others (57% are married and 53% are supporting dependents other than a spouse).
3. They are perceived as fulfilling several roles typical of mature adults in society.
4. They have diverse life experiences.
5. They have a broader concept of social responsibility.
6. They have a greater sense of purpose.
7. They navigate college independently without an age cohort.
8. They have a better understanding of the financial and time commitments required in higher education.
9. Their social groups are usually not associated with the college.
10. They are not involved in campus organizations.
11. They are on campus only for classes or administrative requirements and do not live on campus.
12. Most attend classes on a part-time basis.
13. They have the ability to integrate new classroom information with their life and work experiences.

Adult students return to school based on personal circumstances, not because society or parents expect it of them (Swenson, 1998). They usually enter/re-enter higher education due to a life changing event that could range from children leaving home to a
change in job or job responsibilities to the death of a spouse (Compton et al., 2006; Donaldson & Graham, 1999; Flint & Frey, 2003; Krager et al., 1990). Adult students seek out further education to improve and/or change their careers or to address work or life transitions (Ansalone, 1999; Donaldson & Graham, 1999; Flint & Frey, 2003; Hu, 1985; Kasworm, 2003; Timarong et al., 2002; Wagner, 2002). For many, education becomes a life-long pursuit (Saunders & Bauer, 1998).

This life-long pursuit of education has become necessary due to the societal shift from a manufacturing economy to a service-oriented economy. As such the nature of jobs is rapidly changing (Ansalone, 1999). Of all the reasons for entering/re-entering higher education cited by adult students, career-related reasons are the most prevalent (Bendixen-Noe & Giebelhaus, 1998; Chartrand, 1992; Flint & Frey, 2003; Hu, 1985; Kasworm, 2003).

The results of a 1994 survey stated that 56% of the businesses surveyed reported a necessary increase in job-skill requirements (Kasworm, 2003). These changing needs of the job market, technological changes, and economic issues compel adult students to upgrade their skills in order to provide themselves with a measure of security (Bash, 2003; Timarong et al., 2002). According to Bash, “We are entering an unprecedented era in which the economy requires people everywhere to become ‘knowledge workers” (p. 36). To meet these changing needs, even the already educated find it necessary to return to the university for additional courses to prepare them for the work world (Vijayakumar, 2002). In fact, 85% of adult students report career reasons as their key college enrollment motivation (Belcastro & Purslow, 2006; Kasworm, 2003).

There is an increasing prominence of the requirement of academic credentials that resulted from the conjunction of bureaucratization, professionalization, and expansion of
higher education (Kett, 1994). There has been a cementing of the bond between higher education and various professions that has contributed to the internal stratification of the professions on the basis of academic credentials. This spread of credentialing has created a situation in which the knowledge worker must continually learn, and demonstrate that learning with a recognized certificate or degree. It has pushed working adults into further education. Basically, education now is mandatory throughout our lives (Kett; Belcastro & Purslow, 2006; Stallings, 2000).

Employers want their workforces to learn. More and more business leaders are looking toward learning programs and systems as strategic business opportunities. Not only are workers encouraged to increase their skills, they often are required to do so. Everyone is expected to continue learning throughout their life. If they stop learning, they are no longer considered current and marketable (Bash, 2003; Milleron & Miles, 2000; Palumbo & Killian, 2002). Lifelong learning has become essential to maintain a competitive edge for both individuals and corporations (Kett, 1994; G. E. Miller, 1997).

Need For Flexibility in Services

Previous studies have produced some general knowledge about adult students. One such body of knowledge is their need for flexibility in services. While this information is important, it does not speak specifically to whether those needs vary by degree level.

What the Experts Say

Adult students require more flexibility in the scheduling of classes and services in order to make higher education more accessible to them (Belcastro & Purslow, 2006; Bendixen-Noe & Giebelhaus, 1998; Hay, 2002; Hu, 1985; Hughes, 1983; Kilgore, 2003; Kilgore & Rice, 2003; Saunders & Bauer, 1998; Schuetze & Slowey, 2002; Wagner,
They want alternative services that better meet their needs (Bendixen-Noe & Giebelhaus, 1998; Flint & Frey, 2003; Milleron, 2001). According to Kilgore and Rice, "...Adequate services should be available to students when and where they need them" (p. 81). Vijayakumar (2002) supports this thought by stating his belief that the educational process could become fully flexible without affecting the basic formal structure.

Graduate adult students have issues of their own. Today's graduate programs are more likely to enroll students who are employed full time, commute to and from campus and enroll on a part-time basis. Many will enroll in courses offered in off-campus locations and through distance education. Additionally, the realities of the job market may dictate that they pursue a different track from the more traditional route through graduate school (Polson). "The challenges of meeting the needs of today's heterogeneous graduate population require sensitive, flexible, and creative responses" (Polson, p. 67).

Hughes (1983) suggests a four-pronged approach in addressing the concerns of adult students. He says that we need to look at services, programs, advocacy, and the academic delivery system. Services can range from those that are readily available and insignificant in cost, to those that have a high cost and require significant time to implement. One avenue is to make existing services more available to adult students by changing or increasing hours and/or locations.

According to Weathersby and Tarule (as cited in Hughes, 1983) effective programming for adult students needs to be designed so that it supports and promotes development of adult students. Most existing programs have evolved in a haphazard manner based on institutional needs assessment rather than adult development research.
Advocacy, according to Hughes (1983), requires that the perspective of the adult student be represented at all levels of institutional planning. This could include plans for new construction, the scheduling of classes, evaluating available academic, lounge and recreational space as well as in decisions impacting parking.

Hughes (1983) also suggests several areas where the academic delivery system could be examined and, possibly, improved. Some of these areas are: more flexibility in course structures, teaching methods, meeting times and places, and support services; expansion of external degree programs; emphasis on part-time programs; and making residency requirements less difficult for adult students to satisfy.

*What the Students Say*

Adult students want creative ways to complete their education that minimizes time spent on campus like alternate intake, learning, and service options. They need services different from traditional students to enhance academic experiences (Donaldson & Graham, 1999; Mancuso, 2001; Whiteman, 2002; Wonacott, 2001). Concerns expressed most frequently are: (a) difficulty in registration; (b) limited hours to conduct business associated with their academic career; (c) lack of evening, weekend, and distance learning courses; and (d) lack of credit for out-of-college experiences such as credit for prior learning or life learning (Flint & Frey, 2003; Hughes, 1983; Kasworm, 1990; Kilgore & Rice, 2003). In a study conducted by the South Oklahoma City Junior College office of institutional research, students indicated that the inconvenience of scheduling was a major factor in their decision not to return to college (Thompson, 1985).

*Barriers.* Obstacles (barriers) for adult students in their success-to-degree fall into three primary categories: situational, dispositional, and institutional (Fairchild, 2003) (Note: Potter (1998) also includes informational as a category of barriers). Situational
factors include (but are not limited to) job, health problems, financial problems, legal problems, and personal or family problems (Wonacott, 2001). Dispositional factors include issues such as expectations (both internal and external), level of self-esteem, level of family support, and past educational experiences (Wonacott). Institutional factors include systemic barriers in the form of policies and procedures that either exclude adult students or make it difficult for them to navigate through their academic career (Fairchild, 2003; Hu, 1985; Kasworm, 2003; Lynch & Bishop-Clark, 1998; Sissel, 2001; Timarong et al., 2002; Wagner, 2002; Wonacott, 2001).

For example, academic residency requirements often are formidable barriers to adult students earning their degrees, especially if the student does not live near the institution (Peinovich, Nesler, & Thomas, 1997). These students are looking for creative ways to complete their education that minimizes the time spent on the campus (Donaldson & Graham, 1999). Other institutional barriers to the adult student education include the lack of flexibility in the scheduling of classes required for the degree, lack of counseling services, the lack of child care services, and problems with transportation (Timarong et al., 2002). Another issue for students is the fact that the criteria for awarding federal, state, or private student aid historically has discriminated against part-time students (Kett, 1994). Finally, students who said they were not likely to enroll in higher education cited the recurring theme of the lack of time as the major reason (Hu, 1985).

Needs. Adult students need administrators to eliminate unnecessary barriers and to cut down the bureaucratic red tape (Horn, 1997). They need all aspects of the educational experience—from admissions to instruction to support services to administrative services—to be integrated in order to support their efforts (Flint & Frey,
2003). They need services that are different from the conventional students that will enhance their academic experiences (Mancuso, 2001).

Adult students need a way to find out about the programs and student services that are available to them (Kasworm, 1990). According to Benshoff and Lewis (as cited in Wagner, 2002) there are several services that have been identified as of particular importance to adult students. They are: (a) separate registration, orientation, and advising; (b) greater availability of parking; (c) more evening, weekend, and distance learning programs, including telecourses and online classes; (d) special assistance with financial aid, child care, and housing; (e) student support services such as counseling, assessment, peer support groups, etc.; (f) social activities geared toward older students and their families; and (g) better preparation of educators and staff in meeting the needs of adult students. Above all, adult students need flexibility, flexibility, flexibility (e.g. Bendixen-Noe & Giebelhaus, 1998; Hay, 2002; Saunders & Bauer, 1998; Wagner, 2002; Whiteman, 2002).

If Needs Are Met

Overall, adult students face many barriers and have many needs in gaining their degrees, and institutions can mitigate. It is time that faculty and administrators utilize more creative scheduling solutions by reassessing and revising their policies in relation to adult students (Chartrand, 1992; Thompson, 1985; Timarong et al., 2002). If institutions provide good support structures for adult students, as well as a relaxed, encouraging atmosphere, it increases their rate of success and their satisfaction with the institution, which leads to increased retention (Bay, 1999; Horn, 1997; Hughes, 1983; Schuetze & Slowey, 2002; Wagner, 2002; Whiteman, 2002). Everyone will benefit from a place that acknowledges adult students, strives to accommodate their special needs, and investigates
ways to foster learning experiences that do not present additional barriers (Fairchild, 2003; Graham & Donaldson, 1999; Mancuso, 2001). While these services have been identified as important to adult students, how to implement them has not been identified.

Institutional Considerations

According to Bash (2003)—as well as many unpublished members of the higher education community—maintaining the status quo in the academy has become an art form. The academic community has resisted the introduction of fundamentally different formats that might serve society’s needs (Newman, 1998). Institutions cling to the basic structural format—the concept of campus, faculty, library, and student body—pushing these definitions to be ever broader and more inclusive.

Many campuses are reluctant to make greater efforts to meet the needs of the adult student population because they are concerned that these needs will be very extensive and costly to satisfy (Senter & Senter, 1998). New ideas that threaten to change the culture, even if practical or cost effective, are denounced, even if they are likely to protect or sustain at-risk departments and programs (Bash, 2003). Discussions tend to stress the supposed needs rather than the potential benefits adult students can bring to the institution (Richardson & King, 1998). Administrators believe that standardized systems for providing services are a necessity to maintain an economy of scale and minimize costs. This is a myth, according to Mancuso (2001).

If institutions take adult students more seriously, they will design more flexibility into their courses, teaching methods, meeting places, and support services (Hughes, 1983). The key is to evaluate the institution’s programs from the learner’s perspective (Granger & Benke, 1995). According to Kilgore and Rice (2003), “Rather than developing a new ideal adult student around which to design student services, we should
build flexibility into the processes by which we serve students” (p. 89). However, change requires a political awareness of privilege, power on campus, and a willingness to challenge current conditions while proposing and/or implementing better resources for adult students (Sissel, 2001).

Retention and Attrition Considerations

According to Hadfield (2003) retention is defined as any student who has not either transferred to another institution to complete his/her program of study or passed away. All others should be considered retained even if they are not currently attending classes, because during any given term, up to 40% of active students will not enroll for a course due to life circumstances. These students constitute the richest market pool for higher education. But if they are not attending, how do you get them back?

Providing a comprehensive orientation for adult students to the educational programs is the first step toward retention (Wonacott, 2001). It is important for universities to provide good support structures for adult students, because their rate of success increases when they believe they are able to rely more on the university for support (Horn, 1997). To create this sense of belonging, special programs or forums in which adult students can discuss their concerns and/or issues should be designed (Williams, 2002).

Early and continuous follow-up both in and out of classes forms a constant theme in adult student retention (Wonacott, 2001). If students do not perceive themselves as receiving support from the faculty or the institution, they will not function as well academically or psychologically. They are more likely to persist when they feel that they matter (Polson, 2003).
According to Timerong, Temaungil, and Sukrad (2002) two of the primary barriers to retention and attainment of educational goals for adult students is time and money. The National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) (as cited in Wagner, 2002) found that adult students are at increased risk for attrition (also known as stopping out or dropping out) due to the multiple commitments and responsibilities they have outside of school. If they cannot make child care arrangements, pay for college, and/or adjust work schedules they will not persist in school.

A high attrition rate in programs offered in the adult segment of higher education demonstrates a lack of appropriate support services (Hu, 1985). Adult students require different kinds of support than the universities’ traditionally aged students. Institutions that address this issue tend to experience less attrition and more success in meeting the needs of adult students (Wagner, 2002). According to Rice (2003), “Universities and colleges that are prepared to meet the needs of an adult student population will continue to recruit and retain students through this transition to a new age” (p. 56).

Additionally, the alarming attrition rates at the graduate level have challenged the assumption that these students are capable of handling the responsibilities of graduate study without needing special services. This realization has stimulated a reexamination of how institutions might better serve their graduate student clientele (Polson, 2003).

The Changing Market: Competition, Survival, and Entrepreneurialism

There is a substantial demand for higher education in the adult student market, much of which is coming from the corporate world (Hu, 1985; Swenson, 1998). These students expect to be treated as customers (Swenson). As he states, “Like it or not, our economy and the businesses that compose it are, like our students, the customers of higher education” (p. 35).
Adult students expect the institution to perform and be accountable for a product (the degree) that provides a good return on their investment (Whiteman, 2002). Many authors have warned that if higher education is unwilling or unable to meet the demands of this new market place other providers will rise to the occasion (Cross, 2000; Swenson, 1998). Timarong, Temaungil, and Sukrad (2002) state it well. "IHEs [institutions of higher education] need to reassess and revise their policies in relation to adult learners, especially in the areas of student accounts, registration, and class scheduling. Curricula, instruction, counseling, support services, faculty development, and administrative procedures must all be made more flexible. In addition, IHEs must develop and implement strategies to enhance and increase retention" (p. 4).

Because of their inattention to the marketplace, higher education institutions face the challenge of convincing adult students to enroll at their institutions as opposed to the array of other learning opportunities that are available (Hadfield, 2003). Bash (2003) points out that there is a growing number of for-profit institutions as well as an emergence of corporate universities. According to Milleron and Miles (2000) corporate educators estimate that the total education market is worth more than $600 billion annually. There are corporate and for-profit HE providers springing up and courting learners who are underserved by the community colleges or universities. Swenson (1998) states that the rise of the corporate university, as well as the for-profit providers, is a shot across the bow of higher education. There is a brisk demand for the product that institutions like the University of Phoenix sell—a no-frills college degree designed to fit the hectic schedules of working adults (Stamps, 1998).

Adult students will seek additional education through the means of least resistance, and the increase in the corporate and for-profit institutions provides them with
this (Hadfield, 2003; Swenson, 1998). Therefore, the survival of traditional higher education institutions depends on their ability to attract and retain members of the adult student market, who exhibit a substantial demand for higher education (Hu, 1985; Hughes, 1983). According to Chartrand (1992), “Efforts to promote institutional commitment and to minimize psychological distress may be more important than interventions designed to promote the academic adjustment of nontraditional students” (p. 201). The satisfaction of students is thought to have a relationship with their persistence and achievement as well as an essential element in the assessment of institutional effectiveness (Schuh et al., 2001).

For higher education to play its best and most appropriate roles, its capacity for innovation needs to be regenerated and encouraged (Newman, 1998). Any university's ability to remain competitive is dependent upon its ability to provide a variety of timely and flexible educational opportunities as well as exceptional and convenient service to the increasing adult student customer base (Guvenoz, 2002). Once they achieve this, their satisfied students will act as recruiters for the school. They will recommend the school in corporate boardrooms and throw their support behind the corporate contracting initiatives of the school (Hadfield, 2003).

Student Support Services

According to Potter (1998) there is evidence suggesting that support services can play a significant role in helping students persist to degree. Yet few professional preparation programs for higher education administrators or student affairs professionals include information about adults as students (Sissel, 2001).

The role of support services “includes the many forms of assistance that are intended to both remove barriers (situational, institutional, dispositional, informational)
and promote academic success” (Potter, 1998, p. 60). Categories of adult student services include (but are not limited to) academic advising, academic services, admissions, financial aid, campus climate, registration effectiveness, safety and security, and service excellence (Timarong et al., 2002; USA Group Noel-Levitz, 2002; Wagner, 2002).

Except for the quality of academic offerings, excellence in customer service is the single most important factor in determining the future success or failure of higher education programs for adult students (Hadfield, 2003). Research has shown that support services such as counseling, financial aid, transportation, and child care constitute the most important factors in helping to retain adult students (Wagner, 2002).

Student services staff members need to be knowledgeable about adult students and the diverse needs they bring to campus. They should be equipped and empowered to educate the faculty and administrators of their institutions regarding these students’ unique needs and expectations (Williams, 2002). Student affairs professionals need to create strategic partnerships with other stakeholders of the institution (faculty, students, support staff, and outside organizations) in order to collaborate in designing and delivering a wide variety of programs and services for these students (Williams).

Instructors and administrators involved in adult learning programs can be allies because they tend to be change agents (Bash, 2003).

Kilgore (2003) exhorts support services staff to think about the processes in their offices to determine if they are flexible, accessible, and available. Williams (2002) states that one good benchmark of effective support services programs is to determine the extent to which these units design programs and services that meet the needs of the adult students in unconventional ways. However, one size does not fit all (Polson, 2003). It is imperative to know who is being served (Granger & Benke, 1995). As Williams points
out, the key to responding to the needs of adult students involves (a) understanding what the needs include, (b) designing creative and flexible programs that address these needs, and (c) assessing the effectiveness of the programs. The future of adult student services relies on leaders and practitioners who continue to redefine the institution by refining policies and procedures so that all aspects of the educational experience are integrated in order to support the adult student (Hughes, 1983; Kasworm, 2003; Kilgore & Rice, 2003; Senter & Senter, 1998).

In short, the adult student perspective must be represented at all levels of institutional planning (Hughes, 1983). “As our student populations become more and more ‘nontraditional,’ everyone will benefit from a place that acknowledges adult students and strives to accommodate their special needs” (Fairchild, 2003, p. 16).

Review of Previous Recommendations for Serving Adult Students

Adult students expect a variety of options that enable them to conduct the business of higher education, including reviewing programs and services, applying for admissions, registering for classes, taking courses, accessing syllabi, checking grades, and communicating with faculty, staff, and peers as well as having access to state-of-the-art research materials (Whiteman, 2002). They exercise a consumer consciousness because they view higher education as one large industry in America (Bajdek & Kim, 1999). As Horn (1997) states, “Make no mistake: colleges and universities that serve adult learners are in the business of providing customer service” (p. 19). In view of this, some schools have taken steps to transform themselves. Changes they have made are consistent with, or derived from, programs devoted to serving adult learners (Bash, 2003).
Benchmarks and Components

In her study of benchmarking techniques to study the success level of adult-centered practices at different institutions, Susan Mancuso (2001) lists 13 practices that "represent the best practices for colleges and universities educating and serving adults" (p. 169). This list is a compilation of findings at several institutions and addresses all aspects of the institutional make up from admissions to classes, to faculty/staff and technology. The benchmarks are: (a) institutions have clearly articulated missions that permeate the institution and inspire and direct practice; (b) institutional decision-making is a shared responsibility that uses collaborative processes inclusive of faculty, staff, and students to create rapid, flexible responses to student and community needs; (c) curriculum is designed to meet individual needs of adult learners; (d) the institution uses prior learning assessment programs to honor and credit the learning which adults have previously acquired and to help plan new learning; (e) multiple methods of instructional delivery are provided to help adult learners meet their learning goals; (f) the teaching-learning process actively involves students in collaborative learning experiences typically centered around their lives and work; (g) the institution uses an inclusive, non-competitive admissions process designed to determine the best educational match for the adult learner; (h) the institution engages adult learners in an ongoing dialogue designed to assist learners to make informed educational planning decisions; (i) the institution makes student services easily accessible and convenient to adult learners through many venues; (j) full-time faculty perform a blended role which combines instruction, student services, and administration; (k) the institution employs part-time/adjunct faculty to assure financial viability and uses them to enhance quality through their special expertise, to make connections to workplaces, and to deliver an accessible and flexible curriculum; (l)
the institution uses technology to enrich one-on-one communication; and (m) the institution makes continuous and deliberate efforts to ensure that its education remains affordable for adults while maintaining access and quality. The identified benchmarks include concepts from all areas of institutional life (e.g. mission statements, curriculum, admissions processes, student services, technology, and accessibility) that, if implemented at one institution, would be a boon for adult students.

Penny Rice (2003) lists several ideal components that should be part of an adult student services office. Those components are: (a) first contact admissions to enrollment; (b) resources and referrals; (c) hours, access, and staff; (d) orientation; and (e) support and discussion groups. In her vision, Rice puts all of the components within a separate office dedicated to serving the adult student.

Becherer and Becherer (as cited in Williams, 2002) list four benchmarks of good practice that student service personnel offices use. They include designing programs and services in nontraditional ways, encouraging student involvement in the planning and implementation of learning experiences, creating a sense of belonging for the students, and emphasizing the need for partnerships between student services and other units, both on and off campus.

In her study about removing barriers for adult students, Ayla Guvenoz (2002) lists three key areas to focus on in order to meet the needs of adult students. They are: (a) presenting flexible scheduling options and providing continuous enrollment opportunities; (b) providing learning opportunities any time and any place; and (c) providing the right balance of high-tech versus high-touch service opportunities for students.
**Lifelong Education Program Planning**

The Lifelong Education Program Planning (LEPP) model developed by Rothwell and Cookson (as cited in Kilgore & Rice, 2003) focuses on four quadrants of services that should be addressed by the institution. They are (a) exercising professional responsibility, (b) engaging in relevant contexts, (c) designing the program, and (d) managing the administrative aspects. This model is designed so that an entry point can be made in any of the four quadrants, because they are related to each other (Kilgore & Rice). The four quadrants are discussed very briefly below.

According to Kilgore and Rice (2003), exercising professional responsibility involves four steps; (a) articulating a working philosophy, (b) enacting a sense of professional responsibility, (c) assuming the role of lifelong educator, and (d) working effectively. One of the key elements of this quadrant is seeing the whole picture. Institutions need to ask whose interests are being served, whose interests are not being considered, and whose interests should be considered (Kilgore & Rice).

Engaging relevant contexts consists of taking stock of all of the situations and conditions—internal and external—affecting the university, negotiating the interests of all the stakeholders, assessing learning needs, and accommodating adult student characteristics. The primary objective of this quadrant is to make sure that the higher education that planners aim to provide is accessible to adult students (Kilgore & Rice, 2003).

Designing the program starts with needs assessment in setting the goals and objectives of the program. It then moves on to planning how the program will be evaluated, developing the instructional design and formulating the learning procedures. It also is important to remember that both program and learner objectives specify program
goals in terms that can be observed and measured. The design and learning procedures should consider the needs of adult learners and how they learn (Kilgore & Rice, 2003).

Managing the administrative aspects of a program is exactly what one would expect them to be. It consists of ensuring that the necessary facilities, materials, computing technologies, as well as any other administrative supports that are needed by adult students, are easily available to the students (Kilgore & Rice, 2003).

While this is a well-rounded model for developing a program, it is used primarily in the private sector. However, higher education could adapt the quadrant of exercising professional responsibilities to its own purposes.

A Hole in the System

All of these models have sound suggestions for working with adult students, but they are, basically, lists of best practices proffered for consideration by the industry and lack any indication of how to implement them. The LEPP model is an actual working model, but is used primarily in the private sector and, therefore, does not speak to the service needs of adult students who are attending traditional institutions of higher education. The LRM model works well, but was designed for community colleges.

There is a hole in the system in that none of the benchmarks, best practices, or areas of focus talk about how to get from the ideals to the practical. Also, they do not talk about how to service students pursuing different degree levels.

From Conceptual Framework to Reality

The conceptual framework for this study (discussed briefly in Chapter 1) is drawn from four areas: (a) the 7 Principles of Good Practice in Student Services; (b) Scheutze and Slowey’s institutional factors influencing participation by adult students, (c) Schuh
and Upcraft's *Assessment Practice in Student Affairs*; and (d) part of Miller's guidelines for assessing organizational performance.

*Principles of Good Practice*

Blimling, Whitt and Associates (1999) filled an entire book discussing their principles. In *Good Practice in Student Affairs: Principles to Foster Student Learning*, each principle has an entire chapter dedicated to it. Here the principles are listed with only minor elaboration (pp. 14-20).

1. *Good practice in student affairs engages students in active learning.* It encourages development of self-knowledge, self-concept, self-esteem, confidence, team building, and other related skills. Student affairs organizations are part of the educational mission of higher education, and are connected directly with the learning experiences of students.

2. *Good practice in student affairs helps students develop coherent values and ethical standards.* Higher education has a responsibility, historically and educationally, for developing values and ethical principles in students.

3. *Good practice sets and communicates high expectations for learning.* Expectations help students set goals for themselves that involve assuming leadership positions, achieving high academic performance on standardized exams or in particular courses, completing more than one bachelor's degree in four years, mastering a language prior to a foreign exchange program, traveling abroad, becoming a resident assistant, or becoming president of the student body.

4. *Good practice uses systematic inquiry to improve student and institutional performance.* “If you want to know what students think, ask them” (p. 17).
It is difficult to manage what you cannot measure. Measure both what contributes positively to the process of learning as well as what interferes with it.

5. **Good practice in student affairs uses resources effectively to achieve institutional missions and goals.** This principle of good practice in student affairs refers to responsible stewardship of students' money. Student affairs educators must know how to manage resources to get the most from them.

6. **Good practice in student affairs forges educational partnerships that advance student learning.** Collaboration does not come easily or naturally owing to the personalities, history, expertise, and territories that define colleges and universities. It must be cultivated and grown.

7. **Good practice builds supportive and inclusive communities.** One of the greatest challenges for student affairs professionals is to make educational environments accepting of diverse groups of students who wish to take advantage of what they have to offer. All student service personnel strive to achieve a sense of community and acceptance by all of its members. “Building community is an essential element in building the support network necessary for students’ success and achievement. Student affairs’ role includes working with students to help them achieve a sense of belonging and to build a sense of community and support among students’ allegiance to the institution, and commitment to one another” (pp. 19-20).

It is critical to understand the organizational principles derived from the good models and how and when to best implement them given the culture, history, and climate
of the institution (Woodard, Love, & Komives, 2000b). This leads to the second source for the conceptual framework.

**Institutional Factors Influencing Participation**

Schuetze and Slowey (2002) did a study about adult students encompassing 10 countries that looked at the factors that influenced participation from adult students. The study determined that there are six institutional factors that influence participation (or nonparticipation) in the institution by adult students.

1. **System differentiation and coordination.** System differentiation and coordination concerns coordination between different sectors, programs, and institutions. It involves student information and student choice. Are there transfer and articulation routes without any dead ends? Is there an equivalence between general and vocational routes? Can the student accomplish his/her goal?

2. **Institutional governance.** Institutional governance deals with the autonomy of an institution. Is the institution able to make decisions independent of system, state, or national directives in order to respond to the needs of the students? The amount of autonomy can greatly influence the institution’s ability to be flexible. The study also suggested that the responsibility for lifelong learning experiences be assigned to a single senior administrator.

3. **Access.** Access is about the ability of adult students to participate in higher education. Are admissions open, or at least flexible? Is there an explicit policy for lifelong learners? Does the institution recognize work and life experiences with credit toward a certificate or degree program?
4. **Mode of Study.** The mode of study looks at methods of delivery other than the traditional face-to-face classroom setting. There are several alternatives available including modular courses, transfer credits, distance learning, and independent study. For most adult students, the ability to learn on a part-time basis also is crucial.

5. **Financial Support.** The study confirmed that financing a higher education career is an important consideration in the decision of adults about participation in advanced learning. Does the institution offer ways to help students finance their education? Are they easily accessible to the students?

6. **Continuing Education Opportunities.** Many students are not seeking degree completion. Rather, they need specialized credentials to enter, or advance in, a specific career. Does the institution provide courses that are accessible and affordable to accommodate these students?

While the online survey was not organized by these specific categories, questions were contained in the instrument that speak to all six of these factors. Organization of the survey was based primarily on the work done by Schuh and Upcraft as explained in the next section.

*Getting the Answers*

According to Schuh and Upcraft (2001), “Assessment is any effort to gather, analyze, and interpret evidence which describes institutional, divisional, or agency effectiveness” (pp. 3-4). “Evaluation is any effort to use assessment evidence to improve institutional, departmental, division, or institutional effectiveness” (p. 4). In other words,
"Assessment is the gathering and analyzing of information, and evaluation is using assessment information to solve the problem that precipitated the study" (p. 23).

In their book Assessment Practice In Student Affairs: An Applications Manual, Schuh and Upcraft (2001) list eight areas that constitute a comprehensive assessment model: (a) tracking; (b) needs assessment; (c) satisfaction assessment; (d) student cultures and campus environments assessment; (e) outcomes assessment; (f) comparable institution assessment; (g) national standards assessment; and (i) cost effectiveness assessment. For this study, I am focusing on satisfaction assessment.

One of the primary purposes in assessing student satisfaction is to determine whether or not students receive high quality educational experiences that foster learning and growth (Upcraft, Schuh, & Associates, 1996). According to Schuh and Upcraft (2001), student satisfaction is believed to have a positive relationship with student persistence and achievement. It is seen by some as an essential element in the assessment of institutional effectiveness.

When measuring student satisfaction, Upcraft et al. (1996) indicate several areas that should be measured. First they indicate that the tangibles should be measured. These include areas such as the appearance of the physical facilities, equipment available, personnel, and communication materials. Next they examine the reliability of the institution as measured by the ability of the institution to provide the promised service(s) dependably and accurately. Along with reliability goes responsiveness, which is measured by the willingness of institutional personnel to help their customers (students and staff) and provide prompt service. The area of assurance encompasses four areas of measurement; (a) competence (possession of the required skills and knowledge to perform the service), (b) courtesy of the contact personnel, (c) credibility of the service
provider, and (d) security (freedom from danger, risk or doubt). The final area of satisfaction to be measured is institutional empathy which includes three sub dimensions; (a) access, (b) communication, and (c) understanding the customer.

While I am focusing on assessing the satisfaction of students, Schuh et al. (2001) state that needs assessment is linked closely with satisfaction assessment. Through satisfaction assessment, missing elements or areas requiring improvement are brought to light. A thorough student satisfaction inventory will measure how important a service is as well as how satisfied the student is with the delivery of that service (Upcraft et al., 1996). Therefore, the online survey was designed to measure both aspects of all the services listed.

According to Upcraft et al. (1996), “Thorough assessment of student satisfaction will be accomplished most successfully when a blend of methods and techniques is used” (p. 164). Additionally, a complete study—whether qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods—will include 11 steps (Schuh et al., 2001). The steps include: (a) define the problem; (b) determine the purpose of the study; (c) determine where to get the information needed; (d) determine the best assessment methods; (e) determine whom to study; (f) determine how data will be collected; (g) determine what instruments will be used; (h) determine who should collect the data; (i) determine how the data will be analyzed; (j) determine the implications of the study for policy and practice; and (k) report the results effectively. These steps have been followed, as far as possible, in the design of this study.

Customer and Stakeholder Satisfaction

Barbara Miller (2007) sets forth a comprehensive plan for assessing the organizational health of any institution in her book Assessing Organizational Health in
Higher Education. She indicates that there are seven areas of organizational performance that should be measured; (a) effectiveness, (b) productivity, (c) quality (including the quality of leadership systems, of inputs, of key work process, of programs and services, and of work life), (d) customer and stakeholder satisfaction, (e) efficiency, (f) innovation, and (g) financial durability. In this study I focus on the fourth area—customer and stakeholder satisfaction. B. A. Miller states that customer and stakeholder satisfaction is a measure of the extent to which organizations meet the needs of the people they serve.

B. A. Miller (2007) defines customers as individuals or groups who directly receive or experience an organization's outputs. She defines stakeholders as individuals or groups who have a stake in, depend on, and/or benefit from organizational effectiveness (achievement of the intended outcomes).

It is important to distinguish between outputs and outcomes (i.e. achievement of student learning) so that both can be measured (B. A. Miller, 2007). Outputs are designed and delivered specifically to meet or exceed the needs/requirements of customers and stakeholders (i.e. alignment of courses to the program's objectives) and are the end result of a work product. Outcomes are the intended or desired results as a consequence of customers or stakeholders receiving or experiencing the outputs.

The experiences of customers as they interact with the products and/or services of an organization determine the degree to which that organization achieves its intended outcomes (B. A. Miller, 2007). It also produces customers who are either satisfied or dissatisfied. Customer satisfaction is crucial to organizational success because the customers are the reason it exists. Dissatisfied customers not only go elsewhere for service, but they also complain loudly to anyone who listens—including stakeholders, other customers, and suppliers—which can affect an organization's future capacity to
perform. Without customer satisfaction, organizations lose customer loyalty and lost customer loyalty translates into lost customers. For these reasons, it is important to know if customers and stakeholders are satisfied.

It is through assessment that policy and decision-makers can discover the quality of their programs and services (B. A. Miller, 2007). It is important to measure the quality of both the outputs and outcomes from the perspective of the people they are designed to serve. Three important questions to ask are (p. 18-19):

1. Are we offering the right programs and services?
2. How satisfied are the people we serve?
3. How satisfied are our important stakeholders?

B. A. Miller (2007) agrees with Upcraft, et al. (1996) that the best assessment of customer (student) satisfaction is a combination of quantitative and qualitative data. She recommends self-reporting surveys and focus groups.

Bringing it All Together

My conceptual framework draws from four separate frameworks, each of which is strong on its own merits. By selecting the specific part(s) of these frameworks that pertain to this study, I have developed a conceptual framework that begins with a combination of the 7 Principles of Good Practice in Student Services (Blimling et al., 1999) and Scheutze and Showey’s (2002) study about the institutional factors that influence participation by adult students. These concepts are filtered through Schuh et al.’s (2001) assessment methods as well as Miller’s (2007) guidelines for determining customer and stakeholder satisfaction. As a result of the filtration process, a mixed-methods study was devised. Services appearing on the student survey for this study,
while strongly influenced by Schuh et al., are derived from all parts of the conceptual framework.

Chapter 2 Conclusion

Throughout our country’s history, adult students have pursued additional education beyond the public education available. Colleges and universities, historically, were designed for the conventional, degree-seeking student. It wasn’t until the 20th century that adult students became a prominent part of the higher education systems. As a result, programs and services for adult students are after-thoughts or add-ons in most institutions. This fact presents many barriers to adult students accessing additional education.

In today’s changing environment, it has become necessary for adults to continually upgrade their skills and knowledge. This requires access to higher education in a way that maximizes both the institution’s and the student’s resources.

While there are several models mentioned in the literature, they do not speak to implementation of the models, and they do not address students pursuing different degree levels. The need for a comprehensive framework for institutions to use that assesses and addresses adult student needs, as well as discusses how to implement the results in the real world, is missing. This research will help address that gap in the higher education system.
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Research Questions

This research focused on two areas. First, I identified the services viewed as essential by adult students and how to deliver them. Second, the responses of the students from the different degree levels were compared to determine if there is significant difference in the support required for success to degree.

The primary question in this research was: To what extent, if any, do the needs of adult students for support services differ based on the degree level pursued—bachelor, master, or doctorate? To answer this question, several areas were examined including the following.

1. Which support services do adult students consider most important to enhance their success to degree?

2. According to adult students, what is the quality level of the current offerings of student services in the areas of (a) administrative services (e.g. admissions, registration, records, grades, etc.), (b) academic environment (e.g. courses, advising, faculty, etc.), (c) academic support services (e.g. library, research needs, tutoring, etc.), (d) student support services (e.g. career counseling, personal counseling, job placement services, etc.) and (e) the physical plant/facilities (parking, food services, safety of campus, etc.).?

3. What processes and modalities do students believe would be best for providing the necessary services identified as most important in order for them to be useful and available to adult students?
Research Design

According to Blimling, Whitt and Associates (1999), systematic inquiry is intentional and organized. It encompasses research, assessment, and evaluation, and can be conducted using both quantitative and qualitative research methods (Woodard, Love, & Komives, 2000a). Both research traditions are valued highly, and when used in combination the researcher can develop a high-quality study and enrich the results in ways that one form of data examination does not allow (Hanson, Creswell, Clark, Petska, & Creswell, 2005; Schuh et al., 2001).

I found a variety of labels in the literature for the mixed method research that I will be using. Creswell (2003) calls it a sequential exploratory design where each phase of the research is conducted and then the results of both phases are integrated during the interpretation phase.

Rossman and Wilson (1991) use the label of development to describe the process where the efforts from one method are used to inform the other method. The results generated by the first method (either qualitative or quantitative) shape subsequent instrumentation, sampling or analysis strategies for the other method.

Morse (as cited in Hanson et al., 2005) calls it a sequential explanatory process. She states that the quantitative method carries the most weight and that the qualitative method is used to explain more deeply the quantitative results.

Whatever it is called, this research consisted of a two-phase, mixed method approach. The quantitative phase was a collection of demographic information and student perceptions of important services via an online survey. The qualitative phase used individual interviews with participants at each degree level to further investigate
variables that were rated as (a) important and well done and (b) important and not well done by survey respondents.

Phase One: Quantitative

Population

I obtained a list of currently enrolled students (spring 2007 semester) from Institutional Research at the research university (TRU). The criteria for this list was students who are/were at least 30 years of age at the time of admission or re-admission to their current programs. The age for this list was determined by subtracting each student’s birth date from his/her latest admission date. Even though students with a privacy flag were excluded, this list yielded $N = 2,029$ students.

The fields that were contained in the list were (a) age, (b) gender, (c) ethnicity, (d) level of degree. The demographic fields were used to determine the correlation between the population of the research ($N = 2,029$) and the respondents to the survey ($n = 614$).

Process

An email was sent to each person on the list requesting them to take part in an anonymous, online survey. This email contained information about the study as well as a URL link to the survey (see Appendix A for a copy of the email.) The survey was available for three weeks (January 17, 2007 – February 7, 2007). Given that the survey software does not track the email addresses of the respondents, they were urged to provide their names and WMU email addresses (which were stored in a separate file) to enter a drawing for one of two $50 gift certificates to the campus bookstore. After seven days a follow-up email was sent (see Appendix B). After another seven days a third email
(see Appendix C) was sent. At the end of the three weeks, access to the survey was removed.

The first page of the survey contained informed consent information (see Appendix D). The student was instructed that his/her submission of the survey constituted permission to use the data he/she submitted in my analysis. Once the survey was submitted, the student was invited to take part in one of the six Nominal Group Technique (NGT) focus groups (with six to eight members each) to take place in March. If he/she volunteered for this, she/he was asked to complete basic demographic information that was used in selecting a purposeful sample from which to comprise the six groups. Due to the inability to schedule enough respondents at one time to conduct the NGT groups, the qualitative portion of the study was changed to individual interviews.

Cleansing the Data

The data from the survey were supplied to me by the office of Academic Technology and Instructional Services (ATIS) in anonymous form. There were three sets of data that needed to be cleansed. The process for each one was primarily concerned with removing erroneous data.

Population data. As the population data was pulled from the student information system, there was minimal cleansing. I filled 26 empty cells (unknown ethnicity) with "." to denote missing values. Using the visual banding feature of SPSS 12.0 for Windows I created four age groupings for current age (for clarification purposes, variable names are italicized). Finally, I changed 14 degree codes from 41 (certificate) to 42 (master) so all records would group into the same level.

Survey data. The survey results data required considerably more work to cleanse. First, I replaced all the empty cells (over 1,600) with "." to denote missing data. Most of
the missing data appeared in the "other" categories of the survey because the majority of respondents did not enter anything into this area. Field names were changed from those provided by the survey administrators to shorter names (with extensions to denote the category of answers) to make them easier to use in the statistical software. The satisfaction section of the survey was broken into two variables. The No Basis response became the NB extension while all the other responses became the SAT extension. Responses in the importance section of the survey were assigned the extension of IMP.

I changed erroneous data to ".". This consisted of entries in fields that did not match the data, such as a response of "education" in the current age field. Three records were removed from the data because all cells were either null or contained zeros.

Finally I changed credit hours per semester and hours worked per week to a single number if there was a range. For credit hours per semester, I used the high end of the range. For hours worked per week I used an average of the range and rounded up.

Interview selection data. The third set of data was provided by respondents who indicated a willingness to take part in the focus group portion of the research. (When the method was changed to interviews this data was used to purposefully select participants.) There were 344 total responses. Of that, 86 rows were removed because all the cells were either null or contained zeros. Another 10 rows were removed because no degree level was listed. Since the interview protocols were based on degree level, these records were unusable. This netted a total of 258 records.

As with the survey data, credit hours per semester and hours worked per week were adjusted to be a single number. Finally, I filled all of the empty cells with "." to denote missing data.
Survey Analysis

I used descriptive (mean, median and mode) statistics to determine the answers to questions one and two in several groupings: overall, by demographic groups, and by degree level. The results from the degree-level analysis were used as the starting point for the interview protocols. I used ANOVA and the post hoc TUKEY test to determine if there were patterns in the data between demographic groups and degree levels, and if so, what those patterns were.

Phase Two: Qualitative Interview Process

I used purposeful selection to obtain interview participants from each degree level that were as diverse as possible. Once identified, I contacted each member to ascertain if he/she still was willing to participate (see Appendix E for contact scripts). I also determined dates, times, and places that would work for the volunteer to participate in the interview process with the least inconvenience possible. Once the meetings were set, I sent information to the participants that outlined what would be discussed during the interview (see Appendix F). This information was specific to the degree level that the participant was pursuing. I also included a copy of the informed consent letter (see Appendix G) for them to read prior to the interview.

When I met with each participant for the interview, I asked each to sign the informed consent letter. Then I explained that this portion of the study was to determine the best modalities for delivering services, and that the protocol (see Appendix H) was a starting point for the interview. Participants were encouraged to provide any additional information on any subject that they deemed important—whether it was positive or negative.
The interviews were digitally taped and later uploaded to a memory stick. These files then were used to extract key ideas provided by, and statements made by, the participants about the topics. After extracted from the interviews, the ideas and statements were grouped according to the topic under discussion. This grouping was used to author chapter five where the interview data is examined.

Ethical Considerations

The primary ethical consideration for this study is the anonymity and confidentiality of the participants. The online survey was administered by the Academic Technology and Instructional Services at the study university. The results of this survey were provided to me in data form and I never saw the individual responses. To maintain the confidentiality of the interview participants, any comments that were used were attributed to alias names.

Another consideration is the placement of the researcher in this project. I am an adult student and have been throughout my higher education career. Therefore, I did have some pre-conceived ideas about what the results of this study would be. However, I believe the processes of the online survey and the interviews distanced me enough from the study to provide an objective analysis of the data.

All instruments, data, and results will be maintained by me in a secure file cabinet for a minimum of five years (to allow time for publication possibilities). My advisor also will maintain copies of all information. After the specified amount of time, all data will be destroyed to prevent it from being misused.

Chapter 3 Conclusion

As indicated in the literature review, the current method of providing student services does not work for most adult students. This study examined that issue through a
two-phase, mixed method design using an online survey followed by individual interviews. Data from both phases of the study were analyzed. Using these results, a student services delivery structure was developed and proposed for consideration that reflects students' perceptions of how higher education can better serve the new traditional student population in higher education.
CHAPTER 4: SURVEY RESULTS

This chapter presents the results of the survey that was administered to the selected population during the spring of 2007. First, demographic comparisons are offered between the population (all students meeting the criteria of an adult student enrolled in spring 2007) and the sample (all students who responded to the survey). Next, the specific results of each area of the survey are discussed in detail by gender, by ethnicity, by current age, and by degree level. (For clarification purposes, when variables are referred to in the text, they will be italicized.) Finally, results are offered for each section of the survey (Administrative Services, Academic Environment, Academic Support Services, Student Support Services, and Physical Plant/Facilities), first in totality, and then broken down by gender, ethnicity, current age, and degree level. This discussion will shed light on any patterns based on the breakdowns of the dependent variables by the independent variables.

Demographic Comparisons

The online survey data were collected during the three-week period of January 18, 2007 – February 7, 2007. An initial email (see Appendix A) was sent to the population list (N = 2,029) requesting their participation. After the first week, there were 258 respondents for a 12% response rate. Another email (see Appendix B) was sent to the population list. The second week resulted in 479 respondents (an additional 221 responses) for a 24% response rate. A final email (see Appendix C) was sent to the population list resulting in the final total of 614 respondents (an additional 135 responses) for a 30% response rate. After data cleansing there were a total of 611 usable responses.

Frequencies were performed on both the population data and the sample data to determine if the sample demographic data are representative of the population data. As
can be seen in Table 4.1 the percentages of gender show 5.3% more females responded than exist in the population, while the percent of male respondents was 6.3% less than the population. One percent of the sample did not respond to the gender question.

Table 4.1

*Frequency Comparison of Demographic Data by Population and Sample*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variable</th>
<th>Population (%)</th>
<th>Sample (%)</th>
<th>Difference (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>59.5</td>
<td>64.8</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>40.5</td>
<td>34.2</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ethnicity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American/Alaskan Native</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian American/Pacific Islander</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>-1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>78.5</td>
<td>80.4</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexican American/Hispanic</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response/Unknown</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Current Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 35</td>
<td>25.7</td>
<td>24.5</td>
<td>-1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-44</td>
<td>45.7</td>
<td>46.0</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-54</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>24.2</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55+</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>-1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td></td>
<td>.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Degree</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor</td>
<td>26.6</td>
<td>35.8</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master/Certificate</td>
<td>53.4</td>
<td>42.2</td>
<td>-11.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctor</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>20.9</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Population: N = 2,029. Sample: n = 611.*

For ethnicity, all of the differences are less than 2% with the exception of international, of which there were no respondents. This is because the survey choices for ethnicity did not contain a category for international and, therefore, those respondents
were forced either to choose one of the listed ethnicities, to choose "other" or to leave it blank. As a result, none of the areas will contain data for international students. While this appears to be a limitation, in reality, the majority of international students do not meet the criteria I set forth to define adult students, because the primary purpose of international students is to attend classes.

For current age, the variance of sample percentages to population percentages for the age groups all calculate to less than 2%, with .5% of the responses missing the age of the respondent.

Table 4.1 also shows that the greatest differences between the population and the sample respondents are for the bachelor and master degree levels. One percent of the respondents did not indicate degree level in the survey. For those that did, 9.2% more bachelors responded while 11.2% fewer master-level students responded. The percentages work out to 56 and 68 people respectively out of the total sample of 611.

Overall, for all groups as broken down by the independent variables, the differences between the population data and the sample data are small enough that they should not produce large systematic biases within the findings.

Administrative Services

Table 4.2 lists the means for each of the 26 dependent variables in this section of the survey, as well as the percentage of responses for each of the importance and satisfaction levels. Also shown are the percentages of responses for each dependent variable in which the respondents indicated they had no basis for rating the level of satisfaction for the service. To determine this percentage, the number of "no basis" responses was divided by the total of the number of satisfaction ratings and of the no basis responses. (To view this data separated by degree level, refer to Appendix I.) The
possible values for all variables were: 1 = very unsatisfied/very unimportant, 2 =
unsatisfied/unimportant, 3 = satisfied/important, and 4 = very satisfied/very important.

Table 4.2

Response Percentages and Means for Administrative Services—Total Sample (n=611)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Satisfaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very Unimportant (%)</td>
<td>Unimportant (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuition Cost</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registering for Classes</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fees Cost</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obtaining Grades</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer Account Services</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduation Auditing</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admission Process</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Orientation</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Aid Services</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>13.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get Official Transcript</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drop/Add Classes</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get Unofficial Transcript</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>16.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus Orientation</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>32.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Each dependent variable in the survey equates to two variables in the statistical data, one for level of importance and one for level of satisfaction. Mean is calculated on a 4.0 scale with 1.0 = very unimportant/very unsatisfied and 4.0 = very important/very satisfied.
To rank-order the variables, the table was sorted in descending order by level of importance mean. This ranking revealed that the respondents felt that (a) *cost of tuition*, (b) *registering for classes*, and (c) *cost of fees* were the most important administrative services. Conversely, they rated (a) *dropping/adding classes*, (b) *getting unofficial transcripts* and (c) *campus orientation* as the three least important administrative services. The three areas with which they were most satisfied were (a) *getting unofficial transcripts*, (b) *obtaining their grades*, and (c) *dropping/adding classes*. They were least satisfied with (a) *financial aid services*, (b) *cost of tuition* and (c) *cost of fees*.

**Gender**

Of the 26 total variables examined within the Administrative Services section of the survey, four dependent variables were found to be significantly different when broken down by gender (see Table 4.3). Three of these displayed significant gender differences regarding the views on importance of the variables: (a) *orientation to program* (p < .01), (b) *obtaining term grades* (p < .05), and (c) *graduation auditing* (p < .05). Only one variable, *obtaining unofficial transcripts* (p < .01), was significant as to the differences between genders as it related to the satisfaction levels. Because there are only two levels to the independent variable, the post hoc TUKEY could not be used.

Table 4.3

*Significant Means by Gender for Administrative Services*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Male (n=209)</th>
<th>Female (n=396)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Getting Term Grades-Importance</td>
<td>3.40*</td>
<td>3.53*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduation Auditing-Importance</td>
<td>3.29*</td>
<td>3.45*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation to Program-Importance</td>
<td>3.19**</td>
<td>3.42**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obtaining Unofficial Transcript-Satisfaction</td>
<td>3.19**</td>
<td>3.36**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05, **p < .01
In all four cases the means for the females within the sample were higher than those for the males. This indicates that females either considered the service more important than males (when looking at the responses as to the importance of the variable), or they were more satisfied with the service (looking at the responses as to the satisfaction expressed in the delivery of the variable).

**Ethnicity**

When the ANOVAs were run with the independent variable of *ethnicity*, three of the 26 dependent variables showed significant differences. One (*orientation to campus* \( p < .01 \)) showed a significant difference in the importance area, while two (*cost of tuition* \( p < .001 \) and *cost of fees* \( p < .05 \)) displayed significant differences in the satisfaction area. However, as shown in Table 4.4, when the post hoc TUKEY was run, only *cost of tuition* showed significant differences between the ethnicity groups.

It should be noted that when there are more than two groups within a dependent variable, the post hoc TUKEY is run on the variables displaying significant differences to determine between which groups the difference occurs. Because the TUKEY is very conservative to protect against Type I errors (rejecting the null hypothesis when, in fact, it should be accepted), it is not unusual for there to be no significance found between the groups within a dependent variable even when the ANOVA reports a significant difference on the dependent variable.

When rating the satisfaction of *cost of tuition*, Native Americans (mean of 3.33) showed significant differences with Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders (mean of 1.70) for a mean difference of 1.633, with Mexican Americans/Hispanics (mean of 1.90) for a mean difference of 1.433, and with the unknown group (mean of 1.76) for a mean difference of 1.569. According to the survey results, Native Americans were much more
satisfied with the cost of tuition than the three groups with which they differed.

Caucasians respondents (mean of 2.39) showed a significant difference with the unknown category, but to a much smaller degree. The unknown category reported a mean of 1.76, for a mean difference of 0.626 with Caucasians.

Table 4.4

*Significant Means by Ethnicity for Administrative Services*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Native American (n=13)</th>
<th>Asian/ Pacific Islander (n=15)</th>
<th>African American (n=48)</th>
<th>Caucasian (n=491)</th>
<th>Mexican American/ Hispanic (n=19)</th>
<th>Unknown/ Other (n=25)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cost of Tuition-Sat</td>
<td>3.33a,b,c</td>
<td>1.70a</td>
<td>2.16</td>
<td>2.39a</td>
<td>1.90a,b,c</td>
<td>1.76a,b,c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of Fees-Sat**</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td>2.01</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>1.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation to Campus-Imp**</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>2.95</td>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**No significant difference found between the group means when the TUKEY was performed.

*Note: Matching subscripts in the same row denote the groups of dependent variables between which significant differences occurred when the post hoc TUKEY was performed. “Imp” stands for importance. “Sat” stands for satisfaction.

*p < .05

*Current Age*

When the independent variable current age was examined for each of the 26 dependent variables via an ANOVA, five dependent variables showed significant differences (see Table 4.5). Four variables showed significant differences regarding respondents’ satisfaction: (a) orientation to campus (p = .05), (b) obtaining official transcript (p < .01), (c) financial aid services (p < .05), and (d) graduation auditing (p < .05). The fifth variable regarding the importance of financial aid services also is significantly different across age groups (p < .001). One of the variables (orientation to campus) showed significant difference via the ANOVA, but the post hoc TUKEY did not reveal any significant differences between the different age groups.

The graduation auditing process showed a significant difference as to the satisfaction of the service between respondents less than 35 years of age (mean of 2.49)
and those 35-44 years of age (mean of 2.75) for a mean difference of -0.468, indicating that the 35-44 age group was more satisfied with the process.

Table 4.5

**Significant Means by Current Age for Administrative Services**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>&lt;35 (n=150)</th>
<th>35-44 (n=281)</th>
<th>45-54 (n=148)</th>
<th>55+ (n=29)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Graduation auditing-Sat</td>
<td>2.49*</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>2.96*</td>
<td>2.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial aid services-Imp</td>
<td>3.56***</td>
<td>3.35*</td>
<td>3.07***</td>
<td>3.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial aid services-Sat</td>
<td>2.44*</td>
<td>2.53</td>
<td>2.83*</td>
<td>2.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obtaining official transcript-Sat</td>
<td>3.22*</td>
<td>2.95*</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>2.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation to campus-Sat††</td>
<td>2.52</td>
<td>2.66</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>2.94</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

††No significant difference found between the group means when the TUKEY was performed.

*Note:* Matching subscripts in the same row denote the groups of dependent variables between which significant differences occurred when the post hoc TUKEY was performed. "Imp" stands for importance. "Sat" stands for satisfaction. *p < .05, ***p < .001

The responses for financial aid services (both importance and satisfaction) revealed significant differences between several groups. For importance, the <35 age group (mean of 3.56) showed a significant difference with the 45-54 age group (mean of 3.07) for a mean difference of 0.492. The 35-44 age group (mean of 3.35) showed a significant difference when compared with the 45-54 age group for a mean difference of 0.286, indicating that the younger respondents believe that financial aid services are more important than the older students.

The results for the satisfaction level of financial aid services showed the significant difference to be between the <35 (mean of 2.44) and the 45-54 (mean of 2.83) age groups for a mean difference of -0.393. However, far fewer respondents rated the satisfaction level of the services. There were 546 respondents that rated the importance of the service, but only 399 respondents who rated the satisfaction level. Of those only 77 were in the 45-54 age group and only 15 were in the 55+ age group. With so few respondents in the older age groups, one has to view the satisfaction mean with caution.
Finally, the responses regarding respondents’ satisfaction with obtaining official transcripts, when analyzed through the post hoc TUKEY, showed a significant difference between students less than 35 years of age (mean of 3.22) and those 35-44 years of age (mean of 2.95) for a mean difference of 0.266.

**Degree Level**

Five of the 26 dependent variables showed significant differences via the ANOVA when compared by degree level. Two variables revealed significant differences in respondents’ rating of their importance: orientation to program (p < .01) and financial aid services (p < .05). Three showed significant differences regarding respondents’ satisfaction level: orientation to program (p < .01), registering for classes (p < .01) and cost of tuition (p < .01). When these variables were run through the TUKEY post hoc test, a total of nine significant differences were found between the different degree levels. As can be seen in Table 4.6, all of the differences were between the bachelor level and either the master or the doctoral level. None were between the master and the doctoral level.

The bachelor student results (mean of 2.18) in rating their satisfaction with the cost of tuition were significant between both the master students (mean of 2.40 for a mean difference of -0.220) and the doctoral students (mean of 2.42 for a mean difference of -0.241). The mean differences indicate that the undergraduate respondents are less satisfied with the cost of tuition than the graduate respondents.

The significant difference in registering for classes was between the bachelor (mean of 2.89) and master-level (mean of 3.15) students, for a mean difference of -0.261, again indicating less satisfaction by the lower-level students.
Table 4.6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Bachelors (n=219)</th>
<th>Master/Certificate (n=258)</th>
<th>Doctoral/Specialist (n=128)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cost of Tuition-Sat</td>
<td>2.18,<em>,b</em></td>
<td>2.40,*</td>
<td>2.42,*,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registering for Classes-Sat</td>
<td>2.89,**</td>
<td>3.15,**</td>
<td>3.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Aid Services-Imp</td>
<td>3.47,c*,c*</td>
<td>3.25,**</td>
<td>3.21,*,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation to Program-Imp</td>
<td>3.18,c**,c*</td>
<td>3.42,**</td>
<td>3.42,c*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation to Program-Sat</td>
<td>2.62,*<em>a</em></td>
<td>2.81,*</td>
<td>2.90,**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Matching subscripts in the same row denote the groups of dependent variables between which significant differences occurred when the post hoc TUKEY was performed. “Imp” stands for importance. “Sat” stands for satisfaction. *p < .05, **p < .01

In looking at the importance of financial aid services, bachelor student responses (mean of 3.47) produced a significant difference with master-level students (mean of 3.25) as well as doctoral-level students (mean of 3.21). The mean difference with the masters was 0.213, and the mean difference with doctoral students was 0.253. While the differences are small, it still indicates that financial aid services become less important as the level of degree increases.

The bachelor-level respondents showed a significant difference when compared with those in the master and the doctoral levels for their level of both importance and satisfaction for orientation to program, although the mean differences in all four cases were small (MD < 0.28). The results did, however, indicate that the bachelor respondents thought that an orientation to the program was less important than both master and doctoral students, and they rated the service with less satisfaction.

**Administrative Services Summary**

The administrative services section of the survey contains variables that speak to the business of attending college. For each of the four independent variables (gender, ethnicity, current age, degree level) there were significant differences for at least three of
the 26 dependent variables when the analysis of variance was performed. Table 4.7 provides a synopsis of the significant differences found in this section.

**Table 4.7**

**Synopsis of Significant Differences for Administrative Services Variables**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>ANOVA</th>
<th>TUKEY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Importance</td>
<td>Satisfaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Age</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree Level</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Gender.* Of the 26 total variables examined within the Administrative Services section of the survey, four dependent variables were found to be significantly different when broken down by gender. Of those, three showed significant differences as to the rating of the importance of the service, while one showed a significant difference regarding the satisfaction of the service.

*Ethnicity.* When the ANOVAs were run with the independent variable of ethnicity, three of the 26 dependent variables showed significant differences. One dependent variable showed a significant difference as to the importance of the service, and the other two showed significant differences regarding the satisfaction level of the service. There was one dependent variable that did not result in any significant difference between the group means when the post hoc TUKEY was performed.

*Current age.* When the independent variable current age was examined for each of the 26 dependent variables via an ANOVA, five dependent variables showed significant differences. Four of the variables exhibited significant difference regarding the satisfaction of the service, while the other variable was significantly different across the ages in rating the importance of the service. There was one dependent variable that
did not result in any significant difference between the group means when the post hoc TUKEY was performed. The remaining dependent variables resulted in five significant differences between the age groups.

In examining the results by current age, the data indicates that the younger age groups consider financial aid services more important than the older ones. However, there were 546 respondents that rated the importance of the service, but only 399 respondents who rated the satisfaction level. Of those only 77 were in the 45-54 age group and only 15 were in the 55+ age group. With so few respondents in the older age groups, it is possible that the mean satisfaction level for the younger age groups was exaggerated.

Degree Level. Five of the 26 dependent variables showed significant differences via the ANOVA when broken down by degree level. Two variables revealed significant differences in respondents' rating of their importance, while three showed the significant differences in their level of satisfaction. When the post hoc TUKEY was performed, nine significant differences were revealed between the degree levels. All of these differences were between the bachelor level and either the master or the doctoral level. None were between the master and the doctoral level.

Academic Environment

The academic environment section of the survey contains questions about the settings in which the students pursue their degrees. As with the administrative services section, the 20 dependent variables in this section affect most, if not all, students. They represent the culture in which the students are asked to learn.

Table 4.8 shows the aggregated results by dependent variables in rank order of the importance of a given variable. It also reports the percentage of responses for each level of importance and satisfaction. The last column presents the percentages of responses for
each dependent variable in which respondents indicated they had no basis for rating the level of satisfaction for the service. (To see this data by degree level, refer to Appendix J.)

Table 4.8

Response Percentages and Means for Academic Environment—Total Sample (n=611)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Satisfaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very Unimportant (%)</td>
<td>Unimportant (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency Courses Offered</td>
<td>1.4 1.9 34.6 62.2</td>
<td>3.58 11.5 33.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Times Courses Offered</td>
<td>1.4 3.9 32.8 62.0</td>
<td>3.55 8.8 23.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to Faculty</td>
<td>1.0 2.0 39.8 57.1</td>
<td>3.53 3.5 10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to Advisors</td>
<td>1.5 3.2 38.5 56.7</td>
<td>3.50 7.6 18.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Interaction</td>
<td>0.8 4.2 40.1 54.8</td>
<td>3.49 3.1 9.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Days Courses Offered</td>
<td>1.7 7.1 37.2 54.1</td>
<td>3.44 5.0 17.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Facilities</td>
<td>2.2 8.5 56.9 32.3</td>
<td>3.19 9.1 21.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dept Staff Interaction</td>
<td>1.4 16.2 47.9 34.5</td>
<td>3.06 4.5 9.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Size</td>
<td>1.7 24.2 45.9 28.3</td>
<td>3.01 2.4 8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># Adult in Classes</td>
<td>8.5 43.9 33.8 12.2</td>
<td>2.49 2.5 11.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Each dependent variable in the survey equates to two variables in the statistical data, one for level of importance and one for level of satisfaction. Mean is calculated on a 4.0 scale with 1.0 = very unimportant/very unsatisfied and 4.0 = very important/very satisfied.

According to the respondents, the three most important areas of the academic environment were the (a) frequency with which classes are offered, (b) times that the
classes are offered, and (c) access to faculty members. Conversely, they rated (a) interaction with department staff, (b) class size of required courses, and (c) number of other adult students in their classes as the least important areas.

Looking at satisfaction levels, the respondents rated (a) access to faculty, (b) interactions with faculty, and (c) interactions with department staff as the areas of academic environment with which they were most satisfied.

Gender

Of the 20 dependent variables examined in the academic environment section of the survey, four dependent variables were found to be significantly different when broken down by the independent variable of gender (see Table 4.9). Two showed significant difference regarding the respondents' views on importance: accessibility of advisors ($p < .05$) and # of other adult students in classes ($p < .001$). Two variables, class size of required courses ($p < .05$) and accessibility of faculty ($p < .05$), were significant as to the differences between genders related to the satisfaction levels. In all cases the females were more satisfied and/or considered the variable more important than the males. Since there are only two levels to the independent variable, it was not possible to run the post hoc TUKEY.

Table 4.9

**Significant Means by Gender for Academic Environment**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Male (n = 209)</th>
<th>Female (n = 396)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accessibility of Faculty-Satisfaction</td>
<td>3.02*</td>
<td>3.21*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessibility of Advisors-Importance</td>
<td>3.42*</td>
<td>3.55*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Size of Required Courses-Satisfaction</td>
<td>2.91**</td>
<td>3.10**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of Other Adult Students in Class-Importance</td>
<td>2.32***</td>
<td>2.58***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001
Ethnicity

When the ANOVA was run with the independent variable of ethnicity, only one of the 20 dependent variables (# of other adult students in classes (p < .05)) showed a significant difference and that was in the level of satisfaction. However, when the post hoc TUKEY was performed, none of the ethnic groupings exhibited a significant difference from the others (see Table 4.10). Therefore, it is unknown which ethnicity caused the variable to be significant in the ANOVA.

Table 4.10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Native American (n=13)</th>
<th>Asian/Pacific Islander (n=15)</th>
<th>African American (n=48)</th>
<th>Caucasian American/Hispanic (n=491)</th>
<th>Mexican American/Other (n=19)</th>
<th>Unknown/Other (n=25)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td># Adult Students in Class-Sat</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>2.56</td>
<td>2.76</td>
<td>3.01</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>3.07</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*No significant difference found between the group means when the TUKEY was performed.

Current Age

When the independent variable current age was examined for each of the 20 dependent variables via an ANOVA, two dependent variables showed significant differences. One variable (class size of required courses (p < .05)) showed a significant difference as to the satisfaction level, and one variable (interactions with staff in depts (p < .01)) revealed a significant difference as to importance. The post hoc TUKEY resulted in three significant differences between the age groups (see Table 4.11).

The responses regarding the importance of interactions with staff in depts showed that the younger groups considered the variable less important than the older groups. Those less than 35 years of age (mean of 3.05) showed a significant difference with those 55+ (mean of 3.52) for a mean difference of -0.469. Respondents aged 35-44 (mean of 3.12) also showed a significant difference with those 55+ for a mean difference of -0.398.
Likewise, for the satisfaction level of *class size of required courses*, students 35-44 years of age (mean of 2.97) were significantly less satisfied than those 45-54 years of age (mean of 3.16) for a mean difference of -0.185.

Table 4.11

*Significant Means by Current Age for Academic Environment*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>&lt;35 (n=150)</th>
<th>35-44 (n=281)</th>
<th>45-54 (n=148)</th>
<th>55+ (n=29)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interactions with department staff-Imp</td>
<td>3.05,++</td>
<td>3.12,++</td>
<td>3.26</td>
<td>3.52,+++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class size of required courses-Sat</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>2.97,c</td>
<td>3.16,c</td>
<td>2.96</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Matching subscripts in the same row denote the groups of dependent variables between which significant differences occurred when the post hoc TUKEY was performed. "Imp" stands for importance. "Sat" stands for satisfaction.*

*p < .05, **p < .01

**Degree Level**

Twelve of the 20 dependent variables showed significant differences via the ANOVA when broken down by the independent variable *degree level*. Four variables revealed significant differences in respondents' rating of their importance: (a) *frequency courses offered* (p < .001), (b) *days courses are offered* (p < .001), (c) *times courses are offered* (p < .001), and (d) *# other adult students in classes* (p < .01). Eight showed significant differences regarding respondents' satisfaction level: (a) *frequency courses offered* (p < .001), (b) *days courses are offered* (p < .001), (c) *times courses are offered* (p < .001), (d) *class size of required courses* (p < .05), (e) *accessibility of faculty* (p < .05), (f) *accessibility of advisors* (p < .05), (g) *interactions with staff in depts* (p < .05), and (h) *classroom facilities* (p < .05). Table 4.12 shows a synopsis of the results.

When these variables were run through the TUKEY post hoc test, a total of 16 significant differences were found between the different degree levels. Two variables (*accessibility of advisors* and *classroom facilities*) did not show significant differences between the degree levels. As can be seen in Table 4.12, for all but one of the other variables, the differences were between the bachelor level and either the master or the
doctoral level. One significant difference was between the master level and the doctoral level.

As to the importance of the frequency courses offered, the bachelor respondents (mean of 3.71) showed a highly significant difference with master-level respondents (mean of 3.53) for a mean difference of 0.184, as well as a highly significant difference with the doctoral respondents (mean of 3.45) for a mean difference of 0.259. Meanwhile, for their satisfaction with frequency courses offered, bachelors (mean of 2.31) showed a highly significant difference to the masters (mean of 2.54 mean difference of -0.225) and the doctoral respondents (mean of 2.71 for a mean difference of -0.399). This indicates that the frequency with which classes are offered is more important to the bachelor students, and they were less satisfied with the way classes are scheduled.

Table 4.12

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Bachelors (n=219)</th>
<th>Master/Certificate (n=258)</th>
<th>Doctoral/Specialist (n=128)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequency Courses Offered-Imp</td>
<td>3.71***</td>
<td>3.53**</td>
<td>3.45***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency Courses Offered-Sat</td>
<td>2.31***</td>
<td>2.54**</td>
<td>-1.21***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Times Courses Offered-Imp</td>
<td>3.67***</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>3.39***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Times Courses Offered-Sat</td>
<td>2.35***</td>
<td>2.90***</td>
<td>2.97***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessibility of Faculty-Sat</td>
<td>3.04*</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>3.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessibility of Advisors-Sat††</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>3.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Days Courses Offered-Imp</td>
<td>3.62***</td>
<td>3.37***</td>
<td>3.26***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Days Courses Offered-Sat</td>
<td>2.59***</td>
<td>2.94***</td>
<td>2.99***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Facilities-Sat††</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>2.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactions with Staff in Depts-Sat</td>
<td>2.95</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>3.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Size of Required Courses-Sat</td>
<td>2.94**</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>3.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of Other Adult Students in Classes-Imp</td>
<td>2.34*</td>
<td>2.57</td>
<td>2.63**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*†† No significant difference between the means was found when the TUKEY was performed.
Note: Matching subscripts in the same row denote the groups of dependent variables between which significant differences occurred when the post hoc TUKEY was performed. "Imp" stands for importance. "Sat" stands for satisfaction.
*p < .05, **p < .01 ***p < .001
This same trend showed up in the importance of days courses are offered versus the satisfaction of days courses are offered. For importance, bachelors (mean of 3.62) showed a highly significant difference to masters (mean of 3.37 for a mean difference of 0.254) as well as a very highly significant difference to doctoral students (mean of 3.26 for a mean difference of 0.364). But the highly significant difference of the bachelors (mean 2.59) to the masters (mean of 2.94, mean difference of -0.344) and doctoral students (mean of 2.99, mean difference of -0.397) showed lower satisfaction with the class scheduling.

For the importance of times courses are offered, the bachelor students (mean 3.67) only showed a significant difference with the master students (mean 3.39) for a mean difference of 0.288. However, the satisfaction side of the variable times courses are offered showed bachelors (mean of 2.35) with a highly significant difference with master-level students (mean of 2.90, mean difference of -0.552) and a very highly significant difference to doctoral students (mean of 2.97, mean difference of -0.613). Again, this indicates that the scheduling of classes is more important to the bachelor students, and that they are less satisfied with it.

The rest of the variables show significance between either importance or satisfaction, not both. The only other variable to produce significant differences as to the importance of the service was # other adult students in classes. Bachelors (mean of 2.34) again showed significant difference with both the masters (mean of 2.57, mean difference of 0.226) and the doctoral students (mean of 2.63, mean difference of -0.286).

For all of the other services, the significant differences were in the rating of the respondents' satisfaction. With a mean difference of -0.194, bachelors (mean of 3.04) showed a significant difference with master students (mean of 3.24) in response to
accessibility of faculty. For interactions with staff in depts, the bachelors did not show a significant difference with either of the other degree levels. However, the masters (mean of 3.12) showed a significant difference with doctoral students (mean of 3.13) with a mean difference of 0.240, indicating that master students are slightly more satisfied with these interactions. For class size of required courses the bachelors (mean of 2.94) had a highly significant difference to master students (mean of 3.11, mean difference of -0.168).

Academic Environment Summary

The academic environment section of the survey contains 20 dependent variables that inquire about the settings in which the students pursue their degrees. As with the administrative services section, these services affect most, if not all, students. They represent the culture in which the students are asked to learn. Table 4.13 show a synopsis of significant differences found between the dependent variables in the academic environment section of the survey.

Table 4.13

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>ANOVA</th>
<th>TUKEY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Importance</td>
<td>Satisfaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Age</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree Level</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gender. Of the 20 dependent variables examined in the academic environment section of the survey, four dependent variables were found to be significantly different when broken down by the independent variable of gender. Two of the variables showed significant differences in the area of importance of the service, while the other two
variables showed significant differences in the area of satisfaction. For all four variables, the means of the female respondents were higher than the means for the male respondents.

**Ethnicity.** When the ANOVA was run with the independent variable of *ethnicity*, only one of the 20 dependent variables showed a significant difference and that was in the level of satisfaction. However, when the post hoc TUKEY was performed, none of the ethnic groups exhibited a significant difference from the others. Therefore, it is unknown which ethnicity caused the variable to be significant in the ANOVA.

**Current age.** When the independent variable *current age* was examined for each of the 20 dependent variables via an ANOVA, two dependent variables showed significant differences. One variable showed a significant difference in respondents' rating of the importance of the service, and one was in their rating of the level of satisfaction with the service.

**Degree level.** The independent variable that showed the most dramatic results when broken down by groups through the ANOVA was *degree level*, producing 12 out of 20 dependent variables with significant differences between the groups. Four of the variables produced significant differences in responses to the importance of the services, while eight produce significant differences in responses rating the satisfaction level of the services.

Two variables did not show significant differences between the degree levels when the post hoc TUKEY was performed. The remaining dependent variables produced 16 significant differences between the degree levels. For all but one of the dependent variables that showed significant differences when the post hoc TUKEY was performed,
the differences were between the bachelor level and either the master or the doctoral level. One significant difference was between the master level and the doctoral level.

Academic Support Services

The Academic Support Services section of the survey contains variables that might be considered peripheral services, but are important to support successful learning. Some are necessary for all students; others are necessary to certain subsets of students. Table 4.14 shows the means for the 14 dependent variables examined in this section of the survey. It also reports the percentage of responses for each level of importance and satisfaction. The table is rank ordered based on the mean of importance of the variables. The last column provides the percentages of responses for each dependent variable in which respondents indicated they had no basis for rating the level of satisfaction for the service. (To view this data separated by degree level, refer to Appendix K.)

Overall, respondents rated library services and purchasing textbooks as the two most important academic services, and considered computer support and tutoring services as the least important. When it came to satisfaction with the services, they indicated they were most satisfied with the library services and access to computer labs, but were least satisfied with purchasing of course packs and tutoring services. However, it should be noted that 74.5% of the respondents who rated tutoring services as important indicated they had no basis for rating satisfaction with the service. Therefore, the satisfaction results could be understated.
Table 4.14

**Response Percentages and Means for Academic Support Services—Total Sample (n=611)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Satisfaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very Unimportant (%)</td>
<td>Unimportant (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library Services</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchasing Textbooks</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchasing Course Packs</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Needs</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Support</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>17.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Labs</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>20.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutoring Services</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>34.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Each dependent variable in the survey equates to two variables in the statistical data, one for level of importance and one for level of satisfaction. Mean is calculated on a 4.0 scale with 1.0 = very unimportant/very unsatisfied and 4.0 = very important/very satisfied.*

**Gender**

Of the 14 variables examined within the Academic Support Services section of the survey four were found to show significant differences when broken down by gender (see Table 4.15). All of these differences were as to the importance of the service: (a) ease of purchasing course packs (p < .05), (b) access to library services (p < .05), (c) access to computer support (p < .05); and (d) access to research needs (p < .05). Since there are only two levels to this independent variable it was not possible to perform the post hoc TUKEY.
Table 4.15

Significant Means by Gender for Academic Support Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Male (n=209)</th>
<th>Female (n=396)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Access to Library Services-Importance</td>
<td>3.37*</td>
<td>3.51*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ease of Purchasing Course Packs-Importance</td>
<td>3.27*</td>
<td>3.38*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to Research Needs-Importance</td>
<td>3.07*</td>
<td>3.24*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to Computer Support-Importance</td>
<td>2.99*</td>
<td>3.17*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05

Once again the means for the female respondents were higher than the means for the male respondents for all of the dependent variables, indicating they think the services are more important than the male respondents do.

Ethnicity

When the ANOVAs were run with the independent variable of ethnicity, three dependent variables showed significant differences, all of which were as to the importance of the services: (a) access to computer labs (p < .01), (b) access to computer support (p < .05), and (c) access to tutoring services (p < .001). However, as shown in Table 4.16, when the post hoc TUKEY was run, access to computer support did not show significant differences between any of the ethnic groups.

Table 4.16

Significant Means by Ethnicity for Academic Support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Native American (n=13)</th>
<th>Asian/Pacific Islander (n=15)</th>
<th>African American (n=48)</th>
<th>Caucasian (n=491)</th>
<th>Mexican American/Hispanic (n=19)</th>
<th>Unknown/Other (n=25)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Access to Computer Labs-Imp</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>3.41*</td>
<td>3.01*</td>
<td>3.53</td>
<td>3.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Support-Imp**</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>3.34</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>3.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutoring Services-Imp**</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>3.18</td>
<td>3.14*</td>
<td>2.61**</td>
<td>2.72</td>
<td>3.06</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**No significant difference found between the group means when the TUKEY was performed.

Note: Matching subscripts in the same row denote the groups of dependent variables between which significant differences occurred when the post hoc TUKEY was performed. "Imp" stands for importance. "Sat" stands for satisfaction.

*p < .05, **p < .01
All of the significant differences between categories appeared between African Americans and Caucasian students. For access to computer labs African Americans (mean 3.41) showed a mean difference of 0.390 with Caucasians (mean of 3.01), while access to tutoring services produced a mean difference of 0.528 between African Americans (mean of 3.14) and Caucasians (mean of 2.61). African Americans considered both services to be more important than Caucasians.

Current Age

When the independent variable current age was examined for the 14 dependent variables via the ANOVA, no significant results were found.

Degree Level

Four of the 14 dependent variables showed significant differences via the ANOVA when broken down by degree level (see Table 4.17). Two variables revealed significant differences in respondents' rating of their importance: access to library services (p < .01) and access to research needs (p < .01), while the other two showed significant differences regarding respondents' satisfaction level: access to library services (p < .05) and access to tutoring services ( p < .001).

Table 4.17

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Bachelors (n=219)</th>
<th>Master/Certificate (n=258)</th>
<th>Doctoral/Specialist (n=128)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Access to Library Services-Imp</td>
<td>3.34a**</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>3.61a**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to Library Services-Sat</td>
<td>3.12a**</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>3.36a**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to Research Needs-Imp</td>
<td>3.07a**</td>
<td>3.17a*</td>
<td>3.40a*,a*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to Tutoring Services-Sat</td>
<td>2.97a,**</td>
<td>2.57**</td>
<td>2.49**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Matching subscripts in the same row denote the groups of dependent variables between which significant differences occurred when the post hoc TUKEY was performed. "Imp" stands for importance. "Sat" stands for satisfaction.

*p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001
When these variables were run through the TUKEY post hoc test, a total of six significant differences were found between the different degree levels. Most of the significance occurred between bachelor students and the other two levels of degrees.

For the importance of *access to library services* bachelor students (mean of 3.34) showed highly significant differences with the doctoral students (mean of 3.61) with a mean difference of -0.271. For satisfaction with *access to library services* bachelors (mean 3.12) again showed a significant difference with doctoral students (mean of 3.36) with a mean difference of -0.239. The differences indicated that bachelor students considered the library services to be both less important and less satisfactory than the doctoral students.

For *access to research needs*, results from the doctoral students (mean of 3.40) showed significant differences between both bachelor students (mean of 3.07, mean difference of 0.334) and master-level students (mean of 3.17, mean difference of 0.234) indicating that research is more important to doctoral students. Results from *access to tutoring services* showed significant differences between the bachelor students (mean of 2.97) and master students (mean of 2.57, mean difference of 0.397), as well as the bachelor students and the doctoral students (mean of 2.49, mean difference of 0.477), indicating that the service becomes less important as a student progresses through the different degree levels.

*Academic Support Services Summary*

The Academic Support Services section of the survey contains 14 dependent variables that might be considered peripheral services, but they are important to support successful learning. Some are necessary for all students, and others are necessary to
certain subsets of students. Table 4.18 shows a synopsis of the significant differences found for the dependent variables in the academic support services area.

Table 4.18

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>ANOVA</th>
<th>TUKEY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Importance</td>
<td>Satisfaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Age</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree Level</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Gender.** Of the 14 variables examined within the Academic Support section of the survey four were found to show significant differences when broken down by gender. The differences for all four of the variables were produced through the responses for the importance of the service. Again, as in other sections of the survey, the means for the responses of the females were higher than the means for the responses of the males.

**Ethnicity.** When the ANOVAs were run with the independent variable of ethnicity, three dependent variables showed significant differences, all of which were as to the importance of the services. There was one dependent variable that did not show any significant differences between the ethnicities when the post hoc TUKEY was performed. For the two significant differences that were found between the groups, the significance appeared between African American students and Caucasian students.

**Current age.** When the independent variable current age was examined for the 14 dependent variables via the ANOVA, no significant results were found.

**Degree level.** Again the independent variable that showed the most dramatic results when examined via the ANOVA was degree level, producing four dependent variables out of 14 with significant results. Of those four variables, two reported
significant differences as to the importance of the service, while two of them were in the area of satisfaction. Of the six significant differences that were found between the degree levels when the post hoc TUKEY was performed, one was between master-level students and doctoral-level students. The other five differences were all between the bachelor students and either the master students or the doctoral students. In reviewing the mean differences, the results indicate that bachelor students consider library services to be both less important and less satisfactory than the doctoral students. Additionally, access to research needs is more important to doctoral students, and tutoring services become less important as a student moves through the different degree levels.

Student Support Services

The dependent variables in the Student Support Services section of the survey cover the types of services that are traditionally thought of as being addressed by the student services offices on campus.

Table 4.19 lists the means for each of the 14 dependent variables in this section. It also reports the percentage of responses for each level of importance and satisfaction. The last column provides the percentages of responses for each dependent variable in which respondents indicated they had no basis for rating the level of satisfaction for the service. (To view this data separated by degree level, refer to Appendix L.)

According to the respondents, job placement and career counseling are the most important services. Conversely, they rated diversity/multi-cultural services and veterans services as the least important. They were most satisfied with health services and veterans' services, and least satisfied with career counseling and job placement.
Table 4.19

*Response Percentages and Means for Student Support Services—Total Sample (n=611)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Satisfaction</th>
<th># That Rated Satisfaction</th>
<th>No Basis For Rating (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very Unimportant (%)</td>
<td>Unimportant (%)</td>
<td>Important (%)</td>
<td>Very Important (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Placement</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>20.2</td>
<td>39.3</td>
<td>34.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Counseling</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>42.3</td>
<td>26.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disabled Student Services</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>27.2</td>
<td>30.5</td>
<td>24.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Counseling</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>33.8</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>18.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Services</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>37.1</td>
<td>24.7</td>
<td>23.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity/Multi-Cultural</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>31.9</td>
<td>30.7</td>
<td>20.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veterans' Services</td>
<td>19.1</td>
<td>32.4</td>
<td>28.1</td>
<td>20.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Each dependent variable in the survey equates to two variables in the statistical data, one for level of importance and one for level of satisfaction. Mean is calculated on a 4.0 scale with 1.0 = very unimportant/very unsatisfied and 4.0 = very important/very satisfied.

I would like to point out that all but one of the dependent variables in Table 4.16 have a mean below the level of "important" (i.e. less than 3.0 on a 4.0 scale). Also, notice that at least 69.7% of the respondents who rated the importance of a given student service indicated they had no basis for rating their satisfaction of the service. This phenomenon was explored during the interview process of the research and will be discussed in chapter five.
Gender

When the 14 dependent variables were examined via the ANOVA with the independent variable of gender, only one variable, the importance of diversity/multicultural services, came back as significant ($p<.05$). As can be seen in Table 4.20, responses of the female respondents again produced a higher mean than those of the male respondents, although both means rate the service between unimportant and important.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Male (n=209)</th>
<th>Female (n=396)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diversity/Multicultural Services-Imp</td>
<td>2.41*</td>
<td>2.63*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* $p<.05$

Ethnicity

When the ANOVAs were run with the independent variable of ethnicity, six of the 14 dependent variables showed significant differences. All of the variables were significant in the importance area: (a) health services ($p < .001$), (b) career counseling ($p < .01$), (c) personal counseling ($p < .001$), (d) diversity/multicultural services ($p < .001$), (e) disabled student services ($p < .01$) and (f) job placement services ($p < .05$). This last dependent variable showed no significant differences between the groups when the post hoc TUKEY was performed. In reviewing the results shown in Table 4.21, notice that Native American students is the only group that did not produce significant differences with any other ethnicity.

With a mean difference of -0.597, the importance rating of career counseling only showed a significant difference between Caucasians (mean of 2.80) and Mexican Americans/Hispanics (mean of 3.40), while the significant difference for disabled student
services appeared between Caucasians (mean of 2.54) and the Unknown/Other category (mean of 3.33), producing a mean difference of -0.792. Personal counseling followed the pattern of career counseling with a significant difference also between Caucasians (mean of 2.52) and Mexican Americans/Hispanics (mean of 3.22) with a mean difference of -0.698.

Table 4.21

Significant Means by Ethnicity for Student Support Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Native American (n=13)</th>
<th>Asian/Pacific Islander (n=15)</th>
<th>African American (n=48)</th>
<th>Caucasian (n=491)</th>
<th>Mexican American/Hispanic (n=19)</th>
<th>Unknown/Other (n=25)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Job Placement Services-Imp</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>3.18</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>2.95</td>
<td>3.30</td>
<td>3.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Counseling-Imp</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>3.18</td>
<td>3.18</td>
<td>2.80***</td>
<td>3.40***</td>
<td>3.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disabled Student Services-Imp</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>2.82</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>2.54***</td>
<td>2.95</td>
<td>3.33***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Counseling-Imp</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>2.85</td>
<td>2.52***</td>
<td>3.22***</td>
<td>3.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Services-Imp</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.36***</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>2.47***</td>
<td>3.25**</td>
<td>3.28**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity/Multicultural Services-Imp</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>3.40***</td>
<td>2.42***</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>2.94</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**No significant difference found between the group means when the TUKEY was performed.
Note: Matching subscripts in the same row denote the groups of dependent variables between which significant differences occurred when the post hoc TUKEY was performed. "Imp" stands for importance. "Sat" stands for satisfaction.
*p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001

For health services, there was a significant difference between Asian/Pacific Islanders (mean of 3.36) and Caucasians (mean of 2.47) producing a mean difference of 0.889. Caucasians also showed a significant difference with Mexican Americans/Hispanics (mean of 3.25, mean difference of -0.776) and Unknown/Other (mean of 3.28, mean difference of -0.804).

The final dependent variable, diversity/multicultural services, calculated to a significant difference between African Americans (mean of 3.40) and Caucasians (mean of 2.42) for a mean difference of 0.982.
In reviewing the data, they show that, in all cases, Caucasians had a lower mean than the other ethnicities, which indicates they consider all of the services to be less important than the other groups. Also, all of the mean differences were greater than 0.5, which indicates a consistently larger difference in the means than is seen between the groups of any of the other independent variables.

Current Age

When the independent variable current age was examined for each of the 14 dependent variables via an ANOVA, five dependent variables showed significant differences (see Table 4.22). Four of the variables showed a significant difference as to the importance of the student service: (a) health services (p < .05), (b) career counseling (p < .001), (c) job placement services (p < .001), and (d) diversity/multicultural services (p < .01). Only career counseling showed a significant difference as to the satisfaction of the service (p < .05). When the post hoc TUKEY was performed, the results showed that the age group of 45-54 showed significant differences with at least one other age group for every dependent variable.

The responses for job placement services produced a significant difference between the <35 age group (mean of 3.16) and the 45-54 age group (mean of 2.72, mean difference of -0.435), as well as the 35-44 age group (mean of 3.10, mean difference of -0.386). In rating the importance of career counseling, the 45-54 age group (mean of 2.59) showed significant differences between the <35 age group (mean of 3.01, mean difference -0.417) as well as with the 35-44 age group (mean of 2.96, mean difference of -0.374). However, in rating the satisfaction with career counseling, respondents' replies showed a significant difference between those in the 45-54 age group (mean of 2.82) and those in the 55+ age group (mean of 1.75) for a mean difference of 1.074.
Table 4.22

**Significant Means by Current Age for Student Support Services**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>&lt;35 (n=150)</th>
<th>35-44 (n=281)</th>
<th>45-54 (n=148)</th>
<th>55+ (n=29)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Job Placement Services-Imp</td>
<td>3.16**</td>
<td>3.10**</td>
<td>2.72**</td>
<td>2.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Counseling-Imp</td>
<td>3.01**</td>
<td>2.96**</td>
<td>2.59**</td>
<td>2.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Counseling-Sat</td>
<td>2.69</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td>2.82**</td>
<td>1.75*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Services-Imp</td>
<td>2.64</td>
<td>2.65*</td>
<td>2.34*</td>
<td>2.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity/Multicultural Services-Imp</td>
<td>2.53</td>
<td>2.68**</td>
<td>2.30**</td>
<td>2.64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* Matching subscripts in the same row denote the groups of dependent variables between which significant differences occurred when the post hoc TUKEY was performed. "Imp" stands for importance. "Sat" stands for satisfaction.

* *p < .05, **p < .01

In rating the importance of health services, the significant difference appeared between the age group of 35-44 (mean of 2.65) and the age group of 45-54 (mean of 2.34) with a mean difference of -0.310. Diversity/multicultural services followed the same pattern with a mean of 2.68 for ages 35-44 and a mean of 2.30 for ages 45-54 resulting in a mean difference of -0.386. The results indicate that, in general, the dependent variables become less important as the age brackets go up.

**Degree Level**

When the independent variable degree level was examined via an ANOVA, there were six dependent variables that showed significant differences (see Table 4.23). Only one dependent variable (health services (p < .05)) showed a significant difference as to the satisfaction of the respondents with the service. The other five dependent variables all showed significant differences in how the respondents rated the importance of the variable: (a) career counseling (p < .001), (b) job placement services (p < .001), (c) personal counseling (p < .01), (d) disabled student services (p < .01), and (e) veterans services (p < .001).
Table 4.23

**Significant Means by Degree Level for Student Support Services**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Bachelors (n=219)</th>
<th>Master/Certificate (n=258)</th>
<th>Doctoral/Specialist (n=128)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Job Placement Services-Imp</td>
<td>3.19***</td>
<td>2.96*</td>
<td>2.79***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Counseling-Imp</td>
<td>3.09**</td>
<td>2.82**</td>
<td>2.64***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disabled Student Services-Imp</td>
<td>2.82**</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>2.35***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Counseling-Imp</td>
<td>2.79***</td>
<td>2.54*</td>
<td>2.42***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Services-Sat</td>
<td>3.18*</td>
<td>2.99</td>
<td>2.78*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veterans’ Services-Imp</td>
<td>2.76*</td>
<td>2.48*</td>
<td>2.13***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Matching subscripts in the same row denote the groups of dependent variables between which significant differences occurred when the post hoc TUKEY was performed. “Imp” stands for importance. “Sat” stands for satisfaction.

*p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001

As with other sections of the survey when the post hoc TUKEY was performed, the ten significant differences between degree levels found that the bachelor-level students showed significant differences with both master- and doctoral-level students. When rating the importance of *job placement services*, there was a significant difference between the bachelor respondents (mean of 3.19) and master-level students (mean of 2.96) producing a mean difference of 0.225, as well as with the doctoral-level students (mean of 2.79) for a mean difference of 0.401. However, 87.3% of the respondents indicated that they had no basis for rating the satisfaction of this service. That means that only 74 respondents rated the satisfaction level of this service.

Respondents’ rating of *career counseling* showed that bachelor students (mean of 3.09) also produced a significant difference with both master-level students (mean of 2.82) and doctoral-level students (mean of 2.64). The TUKEY showed a mean difference of 0.274 between the bachelors and masters, and a mean difference of 0.454 between bachelors and doctoral-level students. The significant difference in the importance of *disabled student services* was between bachelor students (mean of 2.82) and doctoral students (mean of 2.35) producing a mean difference of 0.479.
Again, in the calculation of the importance of the dependent variable personal counseling, bachelor respondents (mean of 2.79) showed a significant difference with both master-level respondents (mean of 2.54) and doctoral-level respondents (mean of 2.78). These results produced a mean difference of 0.246 with the masters and a mean difference of 0.374 with the doctoral students.

Bachelor respondents (mean of 3.18) displayed a significant difference for their satisfaction with health services with the doctoral-level students (mean of 2.13) only. The mean difference calculated to 0.408, indicating that bachelors are more satisfied with the services. However, 67.4% of the 542 respondents indicated that they had no basis for rating the satisfaction of this service. That means that only 182 respondents rated the satisfaction level of this service.

Significant differences were found for the importance of veterans services between the bachelor respondents (mean of 2.76) and both the master-level (mean of 2.48) and doctoral-level (mean of 2.13) students. The mean differences were 0.273 and 0.632 respectively. Here, as in all cases where the bachelors showed significance between both the masters and the doctoral students, the mean differences were progressively larger with each degree level.

**Student Support Services Summary**

The 14 dependent variables in the Student Support Services section of the survey inquire about the types of services that are traditionally thought of as being addressed by the student services offices on campus. It was noted that all but one of the dependent variables in this section of the survey have a mean below the level of "important" (i.e. less than 3.0 on a 4.0 scale). Also, at least 69.7% of the respondents who rated the importance of a given student service indicated they had no basis for rating the
satisfaction of the service. Table 4.24 shows a synopsis of the significant differences found for the dependent variables in the academic support services area.

Table 4.24

**Synopsis of Significant Differences for Student Support Services Variables**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Current Age</th>
<th>Degree Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Importance</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANOVA Total</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TUKEY Satisfaction</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TUKEY Total</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Gender.* When the 14 dependent variables of the Student Services section of the survey were examined via the ANOVA with the independent variable of gender, only one variable came back as significant, and that was in the importance rating. However, even though the means for both genders were quite low (below important but above unimportant), the female responses produced a higher mean than did the male responses.

*Ethnicity.* When the ANOVAs were run with the independent variable of ethnicity, six of the 14 dependent variables showed significant differences, all of which were significant in the importance area. When the post hoc TUKEY was performed on these dependent variables, one produced no significant differences between the ethnic groupings. There were eight significant differences between the groups, however, Native American students did not produce significant differences with any other ethnicity.

In reviewing the data, they show that, in all cases, Caucasians had a lower mean than the other ethnicities, which indicates they consider all of the services to be less important than the other groups. Also, all of the mean differences of the significant groupings were greater than 0.5, which indicates a consistently larger difference in the means than is seen between the groups of any of the other independent variables.
Current age. The independent variable *current age* was examined for each of the 14 dependent variables in the Student Services section of the survey via an ANOVA, and five dependent variables showed significant differences. Five of the variables showed significant differences in reporting the importance of the service, while one showed the difference in the area of satisfaction. When the post hoc TUKEY was performed, the results showed that the age group of 45-54 showed significant differences with at least one other age group for every dependent variable. Additionally, the results indicate that, in general, the dependent variables become less important as the age brackets go up.

Degree level. When the independent variable *degree level* was examined via an ANOVA, there were six of the 14 dependent variables that showed significant differences. When the post hoc TUKEY was performed on these six variables, it revealed ten cases of significant difference between the levels of degree. Here, as in all cases where the bachelors showed significance between both the masters and the doctoral students, the mean differences were progressively larger with each degree level.

Physical Plant/Facilities

The services examined in the Physical Plant/Facilities section of the survey cover areas that pertain to the logistics of navigating through the University. Some of the variables pertain to all students, while other variables may or may not be of use to the students. Table 4.25 lists the means for each of the 14 dependent variables in this section of the survey. It also reports the percentage of responses for each level of importance and satisfaction. The last column lists the percentages of responses for a given dependent variable in which respondents indicated they had no basis for rating the level of satisfaction for the service. (To see this data separated by degree level, refer to Appendix M.)
When the results are rank ordered by the importance mean, they show the respondents rated *campus safety* and *parking availability* as the most important services. At the other end, they thought that *child care cost* and *child care availability* were least important. On the satisfaction side, respondents reported they were most satisfied with *campus safety* and *vending machine availability*, and they were least satisfied with *parking availability* and *cost of parking*. With a mean of 1.82, respondents indicated extreme dissatisfaction with the *cost of parking* on campus.

Table 4.25

*Response Percentages and Means for Physical Plant/Facilities—Total Sample (n=611)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Satisfaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very Unimportant (%)</td>
<td>Unimportant (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus Safety</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking Availability</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking Cost</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Services</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>30.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vending Machines</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>35.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Care Cost</td>
<td>26.5</td>
<td>32.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Care Availability</td>
<td>26.3</td>
<td>32.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* Each dependent variable in the survey equates to two variables in the statistical data, one for level of importance and one for level of satisfaction. Mean is calculated on a 4.0 scale with 1.0 = very unimportant/very unsatisfied and 4.0 = very important/very satisfied.
Gender

Of the 14 variables examined within the Physical Plant/Facilities section of the survey, two dependent variables were found to be significantly different when broken down via an ANOVA by gender (see Table 4.26). They both displayed significant gender differences regarding the views on importance of the variables availability of parking ($p < .01$) and safety/security of campus ($p < .001$). As the table shows, female respondents produced a higher mean than did male respondents for both variables. Because there are only two levels to this independent variable, the post hoc TUKEY could not be run.

Table 4.26

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Male (n=209)</th>
<th>Female (n=396)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Safety/Security of Campus-Importance</td>
<td>3.33***</td>
<td>3.60***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of Parking-Importance</td>
<td>3.37**</td>
<td>3.55**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$

Ethnicity

When the ANOVAs were run with the independent variable of ethnicity, two dependent variables resulted in a significant difference. The first, availability of food services ($p < .05$), showed significant difference as to the importance of the variable. The other variable, cost of child care ($p < .05$), reported a significant difference in the rating of the satisfaction level. See Table 4.27.

However, when the post hoc TUKEY was performed no significant differences were found between the groups for either dependent variable. For cost of child care, there was at least one category that had fewer than two cases so the TUKEY was not performed. For availability of food services, the TUKEY was performed, but no significant differences were found between the different means of the ethnicities.
Table 4.27

*Significant Means by Ethnicity for Physical Plant/Facilities*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Native American (n=13)</th>
<th>Asian/Pacific Islander (n=15)</th>
<th>African American (n=48)</th>
<th>Caucasian (n=491)</th>
<th>Mexican American/Hispanic (n=19)</th>
<th>Unknown/Other (n=25)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food Services Availability-Imppp</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>2.47</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>2.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Care Cost-Satppp</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>2.53</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

pppNo significant difference found between the group means when the TUKEY was performed.

*Current Age*

When the independent variable *current age* was examined for each of the 14 dependent variables via an ANOVA, five dependent variables showed significant differences. Four of the variables showed significant differences regarding the importance of the service: (a) *cost of parking* (p < .05), (b) *child care availability* (p < .001), (c) *child care cost* (p < .001), and (d) *food service availability* (p < .05). The fifth variable, *child care costs* (p < .05) is significantly different regarding satisfaction with the service. As Table 4.28 shows, two of the variables (*cost of parking* and the satisfaction side of *cost of child care*) showed significant difference via the ANOVA, but the post hoc TUKEY did not reveal any significant differences between the different age groups. It did, however, reveal five significant differences between the other dependent variables. The results of the TUKEY also showed that all of the significant differences found between groups occurred between the age group of 45-54 and the two younger age groups.

The ratings of the respondents as to the importance of *availability of food services*, when analyzed through the post hoc TUKEY, showed a significant difference between the 35-44 age group (mean of 2.60) and the 45-54 age group (mean of 2.34) with a mean difference of 0.262. Again looking at the importance rating, *child care cost*
showed significant differences between the 45-54 age group (mean of 1.90) and both the <35 age group (mean of 2.51) and the 35-44 age group (mean of 2.45). The mean differences calculated to -0.615 for those <35 and -0.549 for those 35-44.

Table 4.28

**Significant Means by Current Age for Physical Plant/Facilities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>&lt;35 (n=150)</th>
<th>35-44 (n=281)</th>
<th>45-54 (n=148)</th>
<th>55+ (n=29)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cost of Parking-Imp***</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>3.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of Food Services-Imp</td>
<td>2.46</td>
<td>2.60***</td>
<td>2.34,*</td>
<td>2.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of Child Care-Imp</td>
<td>2.51,***</td>
<td>2.45,c,***</td>
<td>1.90,<em><strong>,</strong></em></td>
<td>2.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of Child Care-Sat***</td>
<td>2.59</td>
<td>2.23</td>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>1.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of Child Care-Imp</td>
<td>2.49,c,***</td>
<td>2.42,c,***</td>
<td>1.92,c,***</td>
<td>2.23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**No significant difference between the means was found when the TUKEY was performed.**

*Note:* Matching subscripts in the same row denote the groups of dependent variables between which significant differences occurred when the post hoc TUKEY was performed. "Imp" stands for importance. "Sat" stands for satisfaction. 

As with the previous dependent variable, the importance of child care availability was found to have significant differences between the three lower age groups. The group of 45-54 (mean of 1.92) was significantly different from the <35 age group (mean of 2.49) with a mean difference of -0.574, and from the 35-44 age group (mean of 2.42) with a mean difference of -0.504.

Reviewing the mean differences shows that for the variables concerned with child care, the importance of the availability or cost lessens as the students grow older.

*Degree Level*

Six of the 14 dependent variables showed significant differences via the ANOVA when broken down by the independent variable *degree level* (see Table 4.29). Four variables revealed significant differences in respondents’ rating of their importance: (a) safety/security of campus (p < .05), (b) availability of parking (p < .05), (c) cost of parking (p < .01), and (d) availability of food services (p < .05). Two showed significant
differences regarding respondents' satisfaction level: availability of parking \((p < .01)\) and cost of parking \((p < .001)\).

Except for the importance of safety/security of campus (which had significant differences between the master-level and doctoral-level respondents) when the post hoc TUKEY was run, all of the significant differences between degree levels again appeared between bachelor students and students in the other two degree levels. For safety/security of campus, master-level students (mean of 3.58) showed a mean difference of 0.194 with doctoral-level students (mean of 3.38) in their rating of the importance of the service.

Table 4.29

\textit{Significant Means by Degree Level for Physical Plant/Facilities}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Bachelors ((n=219))</th>
<th>Master/Certificate ((n=258))</th>
<th>Doctoral/Specialist ((n=128))</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Safety/Security of Campus-Imp</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>3.58*,</td>
<td>3.38*,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of Parking-Imp</td>
<td>3.57**,</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>3.33**,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of Parking-Sat</td>
<td>2.11**,</td>
<td>2.44**,</td>
<td>2.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of Parking-Imp</td>
<td>3.54**,</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>3.21**,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of Parking-Sat</td>
<td>1.60**,***</td>
<td>1.89**,</td>
<td>2.12**,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of Food Services-Imp</td>
<td>2.62*,</td>
<td>2.41*,</td>
<td>2.57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textit{Note:} Matching subscripts in the same row denote the groups of dependent variables between which significant differences occurred when the post hoc TUKEY was performed. “Imp” stands for importance. “Sat” stands for satisfaction. *\(p < .05\), **\(p < .01\), ***\(p < .001\)

For the dependent variable availability of parking, both the importance and the satisfaction side of the variable showed significant differences. In rating the importance of availability of parking, bachelor students (mean of 3.57) showed a significant difference with the doctoral students (mean of 3.48) for a mean difference of 0.241. However, for the satisfaction level of the variable bachelor students (mean of 2.11) were significantly different from master students (mean of 2.44) with a mean difference of -.329.
The bachelor-level respondents (mean of 3.54) showed a significant difference when compared with those in the doctoral level (mean of 3.21) when they rated the importance of *cost of parking*, with a mean difference of 0.336. However, for the respondents' satisfaction level for *cost of parking*, bachelors (mean of 1.60) showed a significant difference between both the masters (mean of 1.89, mean difference of -0.290) and the doctoral students (mean of 2.12, mean difference of -0.513).

For the final dependent variable, the importance of *availability of food services*, bachelor respondents (mean of 2.62) thought the service was more important, but only slightly so, than the master students (mean of 2.41) with a significant mean difference of 0.212.

*Physical Plant/Facilities Summary*

The services examined in the Physical Plant/Facilities section of the survey inquire about the importance and satisfaction of areas that pertain to the logistics of navigating through the University. Some of the 14 variables pertain to all students, while other variables may or may not be of use to the students. Table 4.30 shows a synopsis of the significant differences found for the dependent variables in the academic support services area.

**Table 4.30**

*Synopsis of Significant Differences for Physical Plant/Facilities Variables*
Gender. The ANOVA produced two dependent variables with significant differences when the 14 dependent variables were broken down by the independent variable gender. For both dependent variables the significant difference was in the rating of the importance of the service. Once more, female respondents produced higher means than male respondents, indicating that they believe the services to be more important than do the males.

Ethnicity. When the ANOVAs were run with the independent variable of ethnicity, two of the 14 dependent variables resulted in a significant difference. One showed a significant difference as to the importance of the service; One showed a significant difference as to the satisfaction with the service. However, when the post hoc TUKEY was performed, neither variable produced any significant differences between the ethnic groupings.

Current age. The independent variable of current age produced five dependent variables with significant differences out of the 14 in this section when examined via an ANOVA. Three of the variables reported significant differences in the ratings of the importance of the service, while the other two reported significant differences as to the level of satisfaction. However, two of the dependent variables did not show significant differences between the groups when the post hoc TUKEY was performed.

Degree level. Out of the 14 dependent variables in this section, the independent variable degree level produced six dependent variables with significant differences when analyzed via an ANOVA. Four of these variables reported the respondents responses on the importance of the service. The other two reported their responses on their satisfaction with the service.
All six of the dependent variables then showed significant differences between one or more of the degree levels when the post hoc TUKEY was performed. For availability of parking bachelors thought it was more important than doctoral students, but they were less satisfied than master students. For cost of parking, the same trend appeared, except that bachelors were less satisfied than both the master students and the doctoral students.

Chapter 4: Overall Observations

In observing the survey data, most of the significant differences were found when the data was broken down by degree level via an ANOVA, and further analysis was done by a post hoc TUKEY. As evidenced by Table 4.31, while the other independent variables did show some differences, they were not as pronounced as with the independent variable of degree level.

Table 4.31

Synopsis of Significant Differences for All Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>ANOVA</th>
<th>TUKEY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Importance</td>
<td>Satisfaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Age</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree Level</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the independent variable of gender, in general there were fewer dependent variables with significant differences produced than with the other independent variables. Also, when examining the means of the significant dependent variables in the different sections of the survey, the males and females showed general agreement in the level of importance/satisfaction of a service; however, in each case responses of the female students produced a higher mean than the male students.
When the dependent variables were examined via an ANOVA for the independent variable of *ethnicity*, dependent variables with significant differences were found in every section of the survey, but when the post hoc TUKEY was performed at least one of those dependent variables produced no significant differences between the ethnicities. Also, in all the cases where significance was found, the Caucasian group was part of the pairing.

There was one area of the survey (academic support services) where no dependent variables with significant differences were produced via the ANOVA when run with the independent variable of *current age*. For the other areas of the survey, when dependent variables with significant differences were put through the TUKEY post hoc test, most of the significant differences between groups was found to be between the age group of 45-54 and the other age groups. Also, the general trend was that the younger students either thought the service to be more important, and/or they were less satisfied with it than the older students.

The independent variable that produced the most dependent variables with significant differences, as well as the most significant differences between the groups, was *degree level*. Additionally, the mean differences of the variables tended to become larger as the degree level increased.

In Chapter 5, the results of the follow-up interviews will be discussed. Chapter 6 will combine the results of the survey and the follow-up interviews into a recommendation for delivering services to adult students based on the degree level they are pursuing.
CHAPTER 5: INTERVIEW RESULTS

Demographics of Participants

There were 13 participants in the interview portion of data collection (see Table 5.1): four were bachelor level, four were master level, and five were doctoral level. Of the 13 participants, nine were female and four were male. One participant was African American and the rest were Caucasian. Ages of the participants ranged from 35 through 57, with a mean of 45.7 years. All of the participants work full time, many more than 40 hours per week producing a mean of 45.2 hours. Six were staff members at the university where the study was conducted, which I will call the research university (TRU), while six are employed by other institutions, both public and private.

Table 5.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Staff</th>
<th>Degree Level</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Hrs Work Per Week</th>
<th>Years in Program</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Betty</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Bachelor</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bianca</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Bachelor</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Binnie</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Bachelor</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brandon</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Bachelor</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magdalene</td>
<td>Y/N</td>
<td>Master</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marie</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Master</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matthew</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Master</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morgan</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Master</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darrin</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Doctoral</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deb</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Doctoral</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diana</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Doctoral</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dragon</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Doctoral</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dusty</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Doctoral</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The 13th participant has taken classes while employed via both situations. (Note: The sample contains 50% participants who are staff members at the study university.)
However, their responses and concerns mirrored those of the participants who worked outside the university.)

The number of years they have been pursuing their degrees ranges from 1 year to 10 years, with a mean of 3.9 years. Between the time the survey was administered and the interviews were held, one person received a bachelor degree, one completed a masters degree, and one left the university to pursue a degree at another institution.

All of the participants were asked to choose alias names. For clarification in this discussion, as well as in discussion of my recommendations in Chapter 6, all bachelor-level aliases begin with “B,” master-level aliases begin with “M,” and doctoral-level aliases begin with “D.”

Bachelor-Level Participant Responses

After evaluation of the survey results, there were six services identified that bachelor-level survey respondents rated as both important and satisfactory: (a) admission process, (b) class size of required classes, (c) dropping/adding classes, (d) obtaining semester/session grades, (e) obtaining unofficial transcript, and (f) times courses are offered. There were four services selected that survey respondents stated were important, but were not satisfactorily delivered: (a) availability of parking, (b) availability of child care, (c) cost of fees, and (d) cost of tuition.

It should be noted that all four of the bachelor-level participants were staff members at the research university. Based on overall responses from the interviews, I believe that responses from participants who worked outside the university would have been similar to those given by these participants.
Services Well Done

This section discusses participant responses to the services that were rated as important and delivered satisfactorily.

Admission process. All of the bachelor-level participants had high praises for the admission process. While none of them could speak to the online process because they were admitted prior to its initialization, they said that the personal service was excellent. Brandon indicated that there was a small glitch with a transcript from another institution and getting the transfer credits, but he said it was rectified well and he was happy with the personal service.

Class size of required classes. The bachelor-level participants agreed, generally, that the class sizes were appropriate for the topic. Brandon commented that general education requirements and classes had not changed much in the 20 years since he obtained his first bachelor degree (at a university in a different state). He commented that it would be nice if more of the general education classes were available online. One class he took, he felt, would have been just as effective, maybe more effective, done as an online course rather than in the large lecture format. All of the bachelor-level participants commented that, in the large lecture format, you had to sit near the front in order to learn, because the historically traditional students spent a lot of time doodling, texting, and talking. If you sat near them, it was very distracting.

Dropping/adding classes. Betty stated she had no experience with dropping and adding classes, but the other bachelor participants said it was very easy and they loved that it was on the web. Bianca had an issue trying to drop an online course, but felt it might have been the course software and not the registration system that was the issue.
Binnie stated that, not only has she never had a problem with the process, she often helps other students by showing them how to do it.

*Obtaining semester/session grades.* Bachelor-level participants praised the process for obtaining their grades. Brandon said it worked smoothly and that he had been really impressed with the system. He liked that they can be viewed online and he does not have to worry about getting them in the mail late. Binnie liked that she could view the grades the same day as they are processed.

*Obtaining an unofficial transcript.* While Betty again indicated she had not attempted to obtain an unofficial transcript, the other bachelor-level participants liked the process a lot. Bianca stated she loves GoTRU (the research university’s student portal) for getting her unofficial transcripts. Brandon agreed, stating that even five years ago, getting a copy of his transcript was a lot of “bureaucratic brouhaha.” Binnie commented on how easy it is to print the unofficial transcript.

*Times courses are offered.* Two of the bachelor-level participants disagreed that the times courses are offered should be on the well-done list. Both Bianca and Binnie had issues with the way the courses are offered. They both indicated that it was hard for them to take classes during the day because of their positions at TRU, and that it is hard to get some of the general education classes, as well as classes from their majors and minors, outside of the 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. window.

Brandon, on the other hand, stated that he appreciated having evening classes that meet once per week, even though it means a long time to sit. He said he would really appreciate more Saturday classes. He pointed out that the Extended University Programs (EUP) classes were often offered on Saturday, but they do not do the general education
classes. Betty indicated that, since she is a staff member at TRU, it is not difficult for her to take classes during the day because her supervisor supports her efforts.

*General comments.* The bachelor-level participants agreed that they liked all of the services that are online, because they are easy to get to, easy to use, and because they are available 24-7 from wherever they are. This is important for adult students. Brandon stated that he appreciated the dedication that the faculty displayed to their teaching and the students. He felt that they provided good customer service. Bianca commented that most of the historically traditional students do not treat her negatively because she is older. In fact they often want to pick her brain for information about various topics, including life.

*Services of Concern*

This section discusses the topics that were rated as important, but that are not delivered satisfactorily.

*Availability of parking.* Two of the bachelor-level participants did not comment on this because one walks to work and the other has a staff permit. Betty and Binnie both have staff permits, also, but they did comment on the topic on behalf of other students. Betty felt that the parking permit costs too much and, while students could park at the meters, often there is not a place left when adult students get to campus. Binnie said that if other students already are on campus and parked, when adult students come from work to take classes, it can be an issue finding a place to park. If their classes are in the area of Dunbar Hall and Brown Hall (two of the primary classroom buildings at TRU), then, even if they do find a place to park, they have to walk a long way. Even the handicapped students cannot park close to the buildings because there are no lots near these buildings.
Students in wheelchairs or on crutches can have a real issue in the winter trying to navigate ramps and walks when it is snowy.

*Availability of child care.* Three of the bachelor-level respondents indicated that they had never used the child care facilities on campus. Brandon said that he and his wife had used it for their youngest son's pre-preschool, that his son had enjoyed it, and that it worked well for their schedule. Betty indicated that, while she had not used it, many of the teaching assistants in her department had, and they thought it was okay. So the participants I interviewed either had no experience or felt it should not be on the list of services with problems.

*Cost of fees.* These participants were all TRU staff members so they did not pay the fees. However, Binnie was very concerned because she felt the cost of fees was unfair to the adult students. Most of them do not use the facilities and services that the enrollment fees are meant to subsidize.

*Cost of tuition.* Again, as TRU staff members these participants do not pay tuition. However, Betty and Binnie were both concerned that adult students, especially single parents, would find the cost of tuition prohibitive without scholarships and/or financial aid, especially if they were not able to accumulate savings. As Binnie pointed out, there aren’t enough scholarships to go around. She thought that the situation was only going to get worse as long as the state finances higher education as it does.

*Comments, Ideas, and Suggestions*

This comments, ideas, and suggestions section reports what the bachelor-level participants had to say about other areas of life at TRU. These areas were not part of the guided interview, but, rather, were topics that the participants felt strongly about concerning adult students.
All of the bachelor-level participants were acutely aware of the need for adult students to take classes. Betty pointed out that, even at the university, a person needs a bachelor degree to advance past a certain pay grade. It is the same in the private sector. Binnie told about a student who worked in the private sector who was being forced by his employer to finish his bachelor degree in order to keep his job.

The bachelor-level participants expressed concerns that adult students do not have any feeling of community. Betty thought it must be very scary for them to come on campus alone with no direction, because they do not know who to call for any needs they have. Bianca said it might be good to have an informational event geared toward adult students that covers things that are pertinent to them. She said some of the areas to address are: (a) what the university has to offer adult students, (b) what the majors/minors are about, (c) what you can do once you receive a degree with one of the majors, and (d) information about the businesses in the community that offer discounts to TRU students. She felt many adult students had no idea about the community discounts.

Brandon said he was disappointed that there is not a peer group for the adult students on campus. He hastily clarified that he was not talking about group meetings, necessarily, because adult students usually do not have time for one more meeting. His suggestion was an email list or maybe a list serve where people could pose questions, state ideas, express concerns, or just connect with someone else who is in the same boat as themselves. Bianca pointed out that most campus activities are geared toward the younger students and that people with families do not have any activities where they can get together as a group. "[It] would be nice to have event(s) where people can bring their children," she stated. "I don't know what it would look like, but definitely believe it would make people feel like there's a connection."
Binnie was especially concerned about academic advising for adult students. She said it was hard for them to access because the advising offices are open only from 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. She thought it was very important for adult students to have access to advising to make sure they took the right classes (and not ones that do not count for anything) and to get their graduation audits initiated. Binnie stressed the need for more flexibility in the advising process to make it accessible to adult students. If they are not advised properly, she commented, then they won't know to follow the appropriate pattern for their program. If this happens, they may end up with only one possible course to take in a given semester, and it may not be offered at a time that they are able to take it.

All of the bachelor-level participants thought that, overall, TRU did a good job with the students. However, Binnie cautioned that we need to treat them the way we would want to be treated. “If we cannot treat any of the students...the way we want to be treated, then...we’re failing them,” she stated. “But I think in some respects we’re failing the nontraditionalists more because they’re not on campus except at night.”

Master-Level Participant Responses

After evaluation of the survey results, there were six services selected to inquire about that master-level survey respondents rated as both important and satisfactory: (a) admission process, (b) class size of required classes, (c) dropping/adding classes, (d) obtaining semester/session grades, (e) obtaining unofficial transcript, and (f) times courses are offered. There were four services selected that master-level survey respondents stated were important, but were not satisfactorily delivered: (a) availability of parking, (b) availability of child care, (c) cost of fees, and (d) cost of tuition.
Services Well Done

This section discusses participant responses to the services that were rated as important and delivered satisfactorily.

Access to computer labs. While the master-level participants indicated that they had computers of their own, they all appreciated the fact that the computer lab in the student union is open 24 hours a day. Those from the branch campus stated that their computer lab also had extensive hours in which to access it. Morgan stated it was especially important for her because she cannot get into the university system from work due to firewall configurations.

Access to computer support. The master-level participants that have had to make use of the computer support were very positive in their comments about it. Morgan said that when she first started at TRU she was able to access her information from work. When that changed she contacted the support group and they were very responsive and quick. She found them to be very helpful. Matthew indicated that he only had to use the service once, and that they were very professional and quickly helped him with his problem.

Class size of required courses. All of the master-level respondents indicated that their classes were of a convenient size. Matthew indicated that, while the size is good, they need to offer more sections of some of the classes. He stated that it often is hard to get the class he needs because they fill up so quickly. Then, if it happens to be a class that is offered only during certain semesters, the student is stuck until it is offered again. He pointed out that this could drastically affect the time-to-degree for adult students who usually take only one or two classes a semester. Morgan commented that it is not the size
of the class that is an issue, it is the facilities in which they are held. Both the rooms and the desks are too small.

_Dropping/adding classes._ All of the master-level participants said that registering for classes (because some had never dropped or added classes), and dropping and adding classes was very smooth and easy. Magdalene said that it is definitely easier now than with the old manual system. Matthew went so far as to say it is, "Ridiculously easy." They all stated that the fact it is online and available when they need it is a huge plus.

_Obtaining semester/session grades._ The master-level participants agreed that obtaining their semester/session grades was easy. Marie said that maybe some of the instructors are not in tune with exactly how the process works, because they would state the grades had been posted, but the grades were not visible to the students yet.

_Times courses are offered._ The master-level participants, in general, stated that the evening classes were the best. Morgan stated that her schedule is pretty flexible at work and she usually can get the time to take a class at 3:00 or at 6:00. She likes that they are one day a week.

Marie said that she ran into difficulties, especially towards the end of her program, because she was not able to drive to another city if the class was offered there. She related information about one class she took that met on multiple Saturdays during the semester, meeting from 9:00 to 5:00 p.m.. She said that was very enjoyable, because she was not tired from work, and they met for one day, five times during the semester, and they were done. She thought it was an excellent format for the working adult. Matthew, however, disagrees. He said he prefers the evening classes to Saturday classes.

Marie disagreed that this should be under the well-done section. She commented that she had problems with classes being cancelled. She had the program plan of when
courses were supposed to be offered, would have her year planned out, would register for the appropriate class, and then the class would be cancelled due to low enrollment. She would have to scramble to find another class to take, which meant rearranging her plan for taking courses to finish her degree.

Magdalene said that the times are generally okay, but that sometimes he ran into conflicts when two classes that he needed were offered at the same time, or in some other manner that prohibited him from taking both classes.

**General comments.** Matthew commented that he really liked the dual campus concept in the same city. He likes the diversity of meeting different places. He commented that the facilities were convenient, comfortable, and always clean. He thought that said a lot about the pride of the university in its facilities.

Matthew also said that he would like instructors to utilize WebCT more fully. He likes to have the class materials online in case he is traveling for his job. Also, he says, having the grades for all of the assignments online reduces, if not eliminates, the conversations during class time about, “Where am I? How am I doing?” that wastes so much class time. He would rather have the time used for instruction/discussion.

Marie pointed out that there was a lot of research in her program, and the library services were excellent. A representative from the library came to an early class and gave an overview of how to access the library services from home to obtain the needed materials. It worked well.

**Services of Concern**

This section discusses the topics that were rated as important, but that are not delivered satisfactorily.
Availability of parking. The four master-level participants had different situations when it comes to parking. Two of them are staff members at TRU, so parking is not an issue because they have staff permits, which allow them to park close. Magdalene said that even when he was not a staff member, he always got to campus early enough to get a parking spot, and that the distance from the parking lot to the building did not bother him because he exercises a lot anyway.

Matthew said he really never comes to main campus and there is not an issue with parking availability at the suburb campus. His concern was that parking at the downtown center was limited. He said there used to be a parking structure, but it is gone now, so parking is hard to find. He pointed out that it is not a very good area of town, either, and if he was a small woman walking to her car after class, he would be very uncomfortable.

Morgan stated that the parking situation on the main campus makes her laugh. She said that all of her classes are in one building. However, the only place she can park is in a parking structure some distance from the building. In between the structure and the building are obstacles to be overcome, such as: (a) multi-level terrain, which means stairs; (b) multiple buildings, which means walking around them or through them; and (c) busy roads to be traversed. She commented that there is a parking lot directly behind the building, but, as a student, she is not allowed to park there. She thought that the lot should be made available to adult students after 5:00 p.m..

Cost of fees. Three of the four master-level respondents said that the cost of fees was not an issue for them because they either do not pay them or are reimbursed for them by their employer. Morgan said that she thinks of fees and tuition as the same thing. She thinks there should be a break for adult students who take only one class. She said that she assumes the fees are to cover a lot of student services that adult students do not use.
She felt that the university should take this into account when setting up the fee structures.

**Cost of parking.** Because two are staff members and a third only uses a branch campus, Morgan was the only participant that commented on the cost of parking. She said that it took her about a year to discover that she did not have to pay the full price of a student pass. She said that, since she takes only one class, she can get a day pass for $5 per week, which works out to about $70 for a semester. She commented that if she were on campus more and had to get the regular student sticker, she would pull her hair out at the cost.

She also commented that she knows a lot of students who do not know about the daily pass, especially if they are coming from out of town. She said there is not any information anywhere that explains this option. Students have to figure it out on their own or hear it from another student.

**Cost of tuition.** Again, two of the master-level participants are staff members, so they do not pay tuition. Matthew, who is not a staff member, said that he looked at different programs before he started, and that TRU was the least expensive option for him. He thinks that it is reasonable for the quality of the program. Morgan stated that she likes that they moved the bill-paying process to the student union. She says that it is so convenient now, if she gets here in time.

**Ease of purchasing textbooks.** Morgan disagreed with this service being listed as not done so well. She said that the only problem she has ever had was when the instructor had not ordered the books in time. She likes the new setup for purchasing text books (this process recently was moved out of the main bookstore and placed in a larger area dedicated to the sale of textbooks). Marie, Matthew, and Magdalene all thought that the
purchasing of textbooks needed revamping. Among them, they commented that they were never sure which bookstore was going to have the book (the campus book store (our book store) or the privately owned book store (the other book store)). They also stated that the book might be at our bookstore, but that the course pack was at the other bookstore. Marie stated that sometimes students did not know where to get the materials—or that there were other materials to get—until the first night of class. She thought that if the books/materials were going to be somewhere other than our bookstore, the students should be notified before the first night of class so that they could have them when they reported to class.

Matthew stated he has always had a problem getting his books, even when he signs up to have the books shipped to him. This is a big issue for him. Both Matthew and Magdalene stated it would be nice to have both the syllabus and the books prior to class so that they could read ahead. For working adults, there are often times when they are out of town for their jobs. If it is not possible to be at the first class, and the students cannot get the syllabus until they return, they already are behind in the class, and with graduate classes it is almost impossible to catch up.

Another issue that was raised is the cost of text books and course packs. Morgan commented that she thought text books were a racket because of their high cost. She and Magdalene both commented that they seldom sell their texts back after the class. However, they said they have talked with students who do, and those students comment on the fact that they pay so much for the text books and they get so little when they sell them back. Magdalene pointed out that instructors teaching the same class will choose different books. This makes it very hard to either purchase used books, or to sell them back at all.
Magdalene was concerned with the cost of some course packs, especially when very little of the course pack actually was used in class. He stated that sometimes they are more expensive than the text books, and they are only photocopies of articles. He thought there should be a better process for providing the course packs.

Comments, Ideas, and Suggestions

This comments, ideas, and suggestions section reports what the master-level participants had to say about other areas of life at TRU. These areas were not part of the guided interview, but, rather, were topics that the participants felt strongly about concerning adult students.

Matthew commented that there is nowhere at the branch campus for students to meet as a group to work on class projects. He added that it would be nice to have an activities room (video games, movies, homework area, etc.) near the student work group area. That way they could bring their older children in with them and the kids would be occupied while the adults worked on their group projects. He also stated that it would be nice to be able to get food at the branch campus, because it often is impossible to get something to eat between work and class.

Magdalene wanted more pro-active communication about things that adult students would be concerned with. He said that events are not advertised well. Sometimes he reads about a speaker that was on campus and, if he had known about it, he would have attended. For instance, if a brochure for adult students was placed on the web, he thinks students should be emailed when it is updated. He also stated that it is very annoying to receive information in the mail from TRU addressed, “To the parents of.” He thought that the university should be able to tell by the age of the student that they are independent.
Doctoral-Level Participant Responses

After evaluation of the survey results, there were five services selected to inquire about that doctoral-level survey respondents rated as both important and satisfactory: (a) class size of required classes, (b) cost of child care, (c) dropping/adding classes (d) obtaining semester/session grades, and (e) obtaining unofficial transcript. There were four services selected that doctoral-level survey respondents stated were important, but were not satisfactorily delivered: (a) availability of parking, (b) cost of fees, (c) cost of parking, and (d) cost of tuition.

Services Well Done

This section discusses participant responses to the services that were rated as important and delivered satisfactorily.

Class size of required courses. All of the doctoral-level participants agreed that the size of the classes were not an issue. One participant indicated that she was surprised by the size of the earlier classes that are required of all doctoral students. She said it was not an issue, it just wasn’t the intimate learning setting she thought it would be. Dusty, who takes most of her courses at one of the branch campuses, said that she thought one of the positive things about the class size is that it was probably controlled by the limited admissions, and therefore, limited enrollment of the program. Diana said that she liked the earlier, required classes where it was almost like a cohort of students taking the classes, because the same people were in all the classes. Deb indicated that it was not the size of the class that was the issue, it was the size of the classrooms and desks.

Cost of child care. For cost of child care, only one of the five doctoral-level participants had used the on-campus program. She said it was many years ago and that, at
the time, it was fairly cost effective. She commented that there were good and bad points to the program, but overall it was okay for her children.

*Dropping/adding classes.* When it came to dropping and adding classes, the participants who had dropped and/or added classes thought it was very convenient since it was online. They thought the instructions were clear and liked the fact that it was available anytime and anywhere.

Diana and Deb talked about trying to add a class late (after the drop and add period had ended). Diana thought that there were some politics involved with whether or not a student got permission to add the class late. Deb said that the registrar's office was wonderful in helping her through the process. She stated that once she got to a person (she felt the phone tree was too large), that the person knew exactly what Deb needed to do and gave excellent driving and walking directions, since she was new to campus.

*Obtaining semester/session grades.* The general consensus of the doctoral-level participants was that obtaining their grades was timely, with easy access, and, most of all, convenient. Dusty summed it up well. She commented that the mere fact that they were on the web and that she could access them whenever and wherever she needed was the preferred method for adult students.

*Obtaining unofficial transcripts.* The participants echoed the sentiments toward the other services in obtaining their unofficial transcripts. Again, they expressed that the fact that the transcripts can be accessed online whenever and wherever a student chooses is invaluable to adult students.

*General comments.* The doctoral-level participants agreed that the more services that are online, the better it makes their worlds. Darrin commented that having computer services, the library, as well as other services, set up on line is invaluable. Deb
appreciated the fact that she could access records from work and did not need to try and call from work. Dragon summed it up by saying that it is important for students, many of whom also work. She explained why it works, "It's convenience, it's accessibility, it's the ease with which the process is laid out and that you can make it work, and you can get the information you need in a very efficient time frame."

**Services of Concern**

This section discusses the topics that were rated as important, but that are not delivered satisfactorily.

*Availability of parking.* All of these participants agreed that the availability of parking was a huge issue. They stated that parking lots for the student stickers are the furthest from the classroom buildings, which requires students to walk some distance to class. Deb commented that most doctoral classes that adult students take are in the evening, and for a woman to have to walk so far is a safety issue.

Darrin said that if they had closer lots for commuters, it would be a real blessing; or if they made more of the restricted lots (i.e. staff lots) available to commuters in the evening when most adult students are on campus. Dragon agreed with this concept. She talked about one class that she took where the closest lot for her classmates to park (Dragon is a TRU staff member) was such that they had to walk a block or two (depending on how far back in the lot they had to park). Meanwhile, the staff lot adjacent to the building was mostly empty. She felt that better accommodations should be made for students who probably come to campus only to take one class, especially if the student was coming from a long distance, maybe even another state.

*Cost of fees.* When discussing the cost of fees, two of the participants were of one mind. Both Diana and Deb thought that it was wrong to make adult students pay fees to
subsidize services that they did not use. Diana pointed out that most adult students, especially at the higher degree levels, have access from home and do not use computer labs. Deb pointed out that doctoral students have an established life and do not have time to take advantage of the things that the enrollment fee subsidizes. Diana felt that if adult students are required to pay fees, at least the official transcript should be included and they should not have to pay for it.

Cost of parking. All of the doctoral-level students agreed that the cost of parking is too much for adult students. Darrin said that it is very high, especially when a person has to walk a long way to get to class. Diana related an incident where she was invited to participate in an interview process, which took place during the day. Her parking pass allowed her to park in a certain lot after 5:30. She was given a visitor pass to use during the interviews, but she still received a parking ticket. When she inquired, she was told that students with parking passes cannot use visitor passes.

Dusty, who, as previously mentioned, takes most of her classes at one of the branch campuses, wondered why it is not possible to purchase parking stickers from the branch campuses. Instead, she has to make a point to come to campus during regular business hours to get a sticker if she needs one to attend class on the main campus. In her words, “There are some delivery opportunities there.”

Cost of tuition. All of the participants thought the cost of tuition was high, but they had varying responses to the fact. Darrin said he thought it was in line with other programs of TRU’s caliber, and commented that, since we can’t do anything about it anyway, why whine. Diana stated that she did not have a sense of how TRU’s tuition compared to other institutions. However, she said, by the time she completes her doctorate (given her age) she does not think she will work long enough to recoup the cost
of the degree. Deb was surprised that after paying such high tuition that two of the three classes she had taken were taught by doctoral assistants rather than faculty members. She felt that, at the doctoral level, and with the cost of tuition the classes should be taught by faculty, not students.

Dragon had a lot to say about the cost of tuition as it applies not only to retention, but also to recruitment. She said that the university should look at the cost of tuition, fees, and parking as a differential to enhance the attractiveness of the university for doctoral students. “Especially when I think of doctoral students, when they are in their lives somewhere,” she stated. “having to pay for it and having to negotiate parking are the two things right off the bat that pretty much are going to be yea or nay right off the web site. If we are not competitive in that way,” she continued, “or can’t offer them things that other institutions don’t, then we are going to be hurting for students.” She summed it up by saying that we need to look at things that can be offered that will entice and allow students the ability to come and be productive, add to research, and do what we expect doctoral students to do. In other words, what can we give back to them, because the process should be reciprocal.

General comments. Dusty made some general comments about the interlibrary loan process. In the doctoral program, getting research through interlibrary loan is a fact of life. Currently, students at branch campuses have to either physically go to the library on the main campus to pick up and return the material, or they have to pay to have it mailed to them. She wondered why it could not be sent via couriers, which travel between the main campus and the branch campuses anyway. Then the student could pick up and return the material to their own campus. This especially is an issue when the campuses are farther from campus than the one she attends. She commented that the cost
of tuition is higher for students taking classes at the branch campuses, so this, as well as other services, should be available via the branch locations.

Comments, Ideas, and Suggestions

This comments, ideas, and suggestions section reports what the doctoral-level participants had to say about other areas of life at TRU. These areas were not part of the guided interview, but, rather, were topics that the participants felt strongly about concerning adult students.

On the whole, according to the doctoral-level students, flexibility is the biggest issue for adult students regardless of the topic. Communication was another key topic when they talked about issues in general.

When it came to communications from the university, Dusty was offended that the communications were sent “to the parents of” most of the time. She said that it tells her that the university does not know who their students are. She said she is in the process of her third degree at TRU, and that she would have expected the university to realize that she is an adult student. She also is concerned that the university does not know who they are in terms of the branch campuses. She capsulated her concerns when she said, “[The research university] is still in the mode of thinking their students are traditional college students. It has not adapted to the fact that there is an increasing number of students that are nontraditional in terms of age, campus location, all those things. They want us here, I believe that, but they don’t acknowledge our existence in terms of the way they do business.”

Along the lines of communication, Dragon talked about two areas that really compliment each other. The first was providing some kind of “orientation” experience for adult students, but not calling it orientation—she mentioned maybe calling it a mini
academy. This experience would not only inform students about what TRU can do for them, but what is expected of them in return. Along with this, she suggested that students be broken into degree levels to explain what is expected of them for that degree level, because the university’s expectations are very different for a doctoral-level student than they are for a bachelor-level student.

Dragon commented that students knowing what is expected of them and what we can do for them becomes a retention issue. Adult students, according to her, can read the catalogs and look at the web site, but that only scratches the surface. She thinks there should be an event where we talk with the students and say here’s what we know about you and here’s what we can offer you as adult students. Then we have to ask the questions, “What else do we need to know about you, and what are the things that you need, want, or expect from us that may be reasonable to fulfill?” Once the question is asked, however, she says we have to be willing to follow through. “If we want to set ourselves apart, we need not only to ask the questions, but then be prepared to do something with that information. And to do something may mean we investigate something and discover we can’t [do it], tell somebody we can’t do that, but we may be able to do this. The question is,” according to Dragon, “how do you show that you value the people who are here?”

Many of the participants thought that a web site devoted to adult students would be an excellent addition to the university’s communication network. Dragon stated that adult students want information to be accessible, and to be able to obtain that information in the most expedient method possible. She said that something specifically for adult learners to communicate through would be good. She suggested a blog or some mechanism through which the adult learners on campus could talk about their
experiences without having a meeting that no one has time to attend. "It's all of the pieces that I think come together that are very important for adult learners, but there's nothing that connects people right now," she stated. "And even though it wouldn't be a face-to-face connection that's okay. It would still be a feeling of connectedness. I think it would also demonstrate that the institution values who these people are and their experiences."

Along the lines of the web site idea, some of the participants thought it was good that the university has the services they do online, and that it would be beneficial to have more courses online. Deb thought that the discussions held during an online class were much more beneficial than the ones that took place in face-to-face classes. She said that, at the doctoral level, they need to have focus and be quite opinionated. She felt that face-to-face discussion often deteriorated into a bunch of emotional responses creating a debate situation where no real learning was taking place. However, with online discussions, people have time to read the comments of others and think about their own responses before replying. She stated that when it comes to learning, "You don't want emotional responses, you want thought-out conversation."

The other big topic among the doctoral-level participants was flexibility. They spoke about flexibility in the aspects of doing business with the university, but their biggest concern was a flexibility in the programs. Diana stated that she was frustrated that there are not provisions in the programs that take into account what the students have done in their lives. She said it is frustrating to have to pay the money and spend the time to take classes that cover information that she has been incorporating into her position for years. Deb commented that, program-wise, there need to be more options for completing the degree. She stated that, to complete her program at TRU, she would have had to
retake classes that she had already taken at another school. She said that taking three credit hours for a class in a semester seems like a waste when she did not learn anything new from it. She said that this is one of the reasons she left TRU to complete her degree at another institution. (She also mentioned the parking situation as another determining factor in her decision to leave.)

Content of the programs was a concern for both Diana and Deb, who are in different doctoral programs. Diana felt there is a real disconnect between what is ideal and what is real. She said that in her program they get a lot of theory (what is ideal), but they are not taught hands-on techniques (what is real). She wanted more of how-do-I-deal-with-this-situation rather than here-is-why-the-situation-occurs. Deb was concerned that the certification for the program she was in was not comprehensive. Students at TRU only need to be certified in one area of the specialty. She stated that, even though it is a state-driven process, it is not enough. Other schools in the state require students to have at least one class in every area of the specialty. When TRU graduates report to the job they have no idea how to handle situations outside of their area of the specialty. Deb commented that it also was a recruitment issue. “Graduates from TRU know they are not prepared so they are not recommending TRU to other people.” She recommended that the program be changed to follow the other schools in the state, providing a stronger base for TRU students.

Comparison by the Degree Levels

After the analysis was completed, and the topics chosen for the interview portion of the study, all degree levels were concerned with what could be called the logistics of getting a degree. Many of the results were common among all three degree levels, but there were differences (see Table 5.2).
There were a total of 15 topics identified for discussion during the interview phase of the research. Six (40%) of the topics were common between all three of the degree levels: (a) *class size of required classes*, (b) *dropping/adding classes*, (c) *obtaining semester/session grades*, (d) *availability of parking*, (e) *cost of fees*, and (f) *cost of tuition*. There were three (20%) topics common between two of the degree levels: (a) *obtaining unofficial transcripts* (bachelor and doctoral), (b) *times courses are offered* (bachelor and master), and (c) *cost of parking* (master and doctoral). Six (40%) of the topics were specific to one degree level: (a) *access to computer labs* (master), (b) *access to computer support* (master), (c) *admission process* (bachelor), (d) *cost of child care* (doctoral), (e) *availability of child care* (bachelor and doctoral), and (f) *ease of purchasing text books* (master).

While many of the services of importance were common among the degree levels, the ranking for level of importance within the same degree level varied. For each degree level, two of the three variables rated as most important fell into the *services of concern* area because the satisfaction level was so low. *Cost of tuition* was most important for the bachelor- and master-level students (although *times courses are offered* produced the same mean for bachelor-level students), while *cost of fees* won out for the doctoral-level students. Second most important for bachelor and master students was *cost of fees*; for doctoral students it was *obtaining grades* (which was rated well done). Third on the list for bachelor and doctoral respondents was the *availability of parking*, while master students rated *times courses offered* at number three.

**Discussion by Level**

For variables that were rated important by two or more degree levels, the participant responses were compared to determine if there was any difference in the
discussion of why the university is or is not successful in delivering the service. Results are listed below.

Table 5.2

Comparison by Degree of the Importance of Services Well Done and Services of Concern

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Bachelor Mean</th>
<th>Bachelor Rank</th>
<th>Master/Certificate Mean</th>
<th>Master/Certificate Rank</th>
<th>Doctoral/ Specialist Mean</th>
<th>Doctoral/ Specialist Rank</th>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Mean is calculated on a 4.0 scale with 1 = very unimportant and 4 = very important. Rank refers to the level of importance for each degree level as determined by rank ordering according to the mean.

Class size of required classes. For class size of required classes, bachelors rated the importance at 9 out of 9, masters rated it 11 out of 11, and doctoral students rated it 7 out of 8. This states that for all three levels, of the variables discussed, this is one of the least important.

The main difference in the discussion of delivery was in the area of bachelor participants. They commented that the large lecture courses can be an issue because
conventional students do not always pay attention and can be distracting. They thought the lectures might better be delivered via an online course or CD for adult students.

*Dropping/adding classes.* Bachelor respondents rated the importance of *dropping/adding classes* as 6 out of 9, masters rated it 8 out of 11, and doctorals rated it 5 out of 8. Again, this is on the lower end of the importance scale. Participants from all three degree levels said that dropping and adding courses is very easy due to the fact that it is on the web.

*Obtaining semester/session grades.* For *obtaining semester/session grades*, bachelor respondents rated it 4 out 9, master students said it was 4 out of 11, and doctoral respondents ranked it at 2 out of 8. For this variable, respondents from degree levels disagreed on how important it is. However, all of the participants, regardless of degree level, stated that obtaining their grades is easy due to the fact that it is on the web. They much prefer it to when the grades were mailed.

*Availability of parking.* Bachelor respondents rated the importance of *availability of parking* as 3 out of 9, masters rated it as 5 out of 11, and doctoral students rated it as 3 out of 8. While not at the top of the importance scale, when it came to the discussion, the *availability of parking* was a huge issue with all of the participants who were not TRU staff members. The common thread was that parking lots designated to students are so far from the class buildings, it is difficult to traverse between the two, especially when they are carrying a lot of books and required materials, but also when the weather is bad.

*Cost of fees.* For the importance of *cost of fees*, bachelor students rated it as 2 out 9, master students rated it as 2 out of 11, and doctoral respondents rated it as 1 out of 8, indicating that this variable is important for all degree levels. The thread of discussion was common at all degree levels. They felt that, since adult students cannot/do not access
many of the services that the student fees help to subsidize, that they should not have to pay them. They thought that, for adult students, a different fee structure should be developed where they paid fees only for services that they use.

*Cost of tuition.* Both bachelor-level students (out of 9) and master-level students (out of 11) rated *cost of tuition* as number one, while doctoral respondents rated it as 4 out of 8. The bachelor-level participants were all TRU staff members, so the *cost of tuition* does not affect them. However, they were concerned that it might be prohibitive for a single person, especially if he/she was a single parent, to negotiate the cost, because there aren’t enough scholarships to go around. The master-level and doctoral-level students were more accepting of the tuition rates, though not happy about them. One of the participants indicated that the university should more closely examine the tuition/fee/parking costs to see if they could be used as incentives for some students to attend the research university rather than going somewhere else.

*Obtaining unofficial transcripts.* For bachelor respondents, *obtaining unofficial transcripts* was ranked 7 out of 9 for level of importance, while doctoral students ranked it 6 out of 8. Although they consider it to be among important services, neither degree level considers it in the top 50% of importance. Both levels said that they liked being able to obtain the transcript online, and that they did not have to present themselves in an office or request it by mail and wait.

*Times courses are offered.* The topic of *times courses are offered* was important to both bachelor level students (1 out of 9) and master-level respondents (3 out of 11). For the bachelor participants, the issue actually was the time of day that the courses are offered, since many undergraduate classes are offered during the day, with fewer available in the evening. The master students said that, more than the time of day, it was
the cycle with which the course was offered, the fact that there weren't enough sections offered, or the fact that a course would be offered and then cancelled for lack of enrollment. Both degree levels thought that more online courses, or more courses offered via CVIT (compressed video interactive television) would be helpful.

Cost of parking. While both the master-level respondents (6 out of 11) and the doctoral-level students (4 out of 8) considered cost of parking important, it was not highest on their priority list. Participants at both levels (who are not TRU staff members) said that the parking is too expensive, especially when an adult student in a graduate program usually is on campus only one night a week for three hours. Another issue is that, if they are asked to be on campus at another time and they are provided with a guest pass, they still get a ticket.

Student Services Not Used

The Student Support Services section of the survey covered the types of services that are traditionally thought of as being addressed by the student services offices on campus. Table 5.3 is a reproduction of table 4.19 except that it is rank ordered by the no basis to rate column. The table lists the means for each of the 14 dependent variables in this section, as well as the percentages of responses for each level of importance and satisfaction. The last column (no basis to rate) provides the percentages of responses for each dependent variable in which respondents indicated they had no basis for rating the level of satisfaction for the service. I interpreted the fact that they had no basis to rate satisfaction of the service to mean that they have not used the service.

As can be seen in the table, the percentages are extremely high for the services in this area of the survey, ranging from almost 70% to over 97%. This was a cause of
concern to me, and I wanted to know why the services are not used. Specific questions I had were:

1. Do adult students not need the services?
2. Do adult students not know about the services?
3. Do adult students know about the services and need the services, but cannot take advantage of the services because of the way they are delivered?

I asked all of the interview participants for their views on the topic. If they said that adult students needed the service and knew about the service but couldn’t access the service, I asked them to explain what about the service makes it not accessible. Since the non-use of the services is more about being an adult student, and does not necessarily pertain to degree level, this section includes responses aggregated from all of the participant statements.

Health Services

Of the 611 survey respondents, 69.7% said they had no basis for rating the satisfaction level of the service. The mode for importance level at 37.1% was *unimportant*, with a total of 51.7% of the respondents rating it as *unimportant* or very *unimportant*. From statistics alone, this says that adult students consider the service as not applicable to them.

In general, participants said that many adult students have health care provisions through work and, therefore, would not use these services even if they knew about them. The primary exceptions were participants who are TRU staff members. For students who might need the service, participants thought that either they did not know it was available to them, or that it was not available in a manner that they could avail themselves of the
service. One TRU staff member thought that more adult students might take advantage of the university’s health services if they were aware of them, and if they were available through an avenue they could take advantage of.

Table 5.3

Reproduction of Table 4.19: Response Percentages and Means for Student Support Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Satisfaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very Unimportant (%)</td>
<td>Unimportant (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Placement</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>20.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Counseling</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>23.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disabled Student Services</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>27.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Counseling</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>33.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Services</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>37.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity/ Multi-Cultural Services</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>31.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veterans’ Services</td>
<td>19.1</td>
<td>32.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Each dependent variable in the survey equates to two variables in the statistical data, one for level of importance and one for level of satisfaction. Mean is calculated on a 4.0 scale with 1.0 = very unimportant/very unsatisfied and 4.0 = very important/very satisfied.

Career Counseling

Of the 611 survey respondents, 77.1% said they had no basis for rating the satisfaction level of the service. The mode for importance level at 42.3% was important, with a total of 68.7% of the respondents rating it as important or very important. From statistics alone, this says that adult students consider the service as applicable to them.
Bachelor-level participants thought that it was a good service and important. Master-level and doctoral-level students thought that by the time a person reaches graduate school, it was not pertinent because they would not be taking graduate classes if they had not decided what career they wanted to pursue.

Several of the participants commented that they did not think adult students were aware of the service. Binnie had a concern that for those who know about it and want to use the service, that it happens only from 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. She did say that a lot of adult students do not know that they can log on to the jobs web site and download a resume sample.

**Personal Counseling**

Of the 611 survey respondents, 85.6% said they had no basis for rating the satisfaction level of the service. The mode for importance level at 35.7% was *important*, with a total of 54% of the respondents rating it as *important* or *very important*. However, the rating for *unimportant* was almost as high at 33.8%, with a total of 45.9% rating it as *unimportant* or *very unimportant*. From statistics alone, it appears that the respondents were almost evenly split on the importance of this service.

Most of the participants in the interview process stated that either they did not know the service existed, or that they knew about the service but did not realize they could partake of it. Deb commented that she did not know about it, but even if she had it would be hard to find the time to use the service since it is only from 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Dragon thought that adult students would use the service if they knew about it and if they could access it in a convenient manner.
Diversity/Multi-Cultural Services

Of the 611 survey respondents, 86.7% said they had no basis for rating the satisfaction level of the service. The mode for importance level at 31.9% was unimportant, with a total of 48.6% of the respondents rating it as unimportant or very unimportant. The rating for important was almost as high at 30.7%, but the total of 51.4% rating it as important or very important was higher than the total for unimportant/very unimportant. From statistics alone, it appears that the respondents were almost evenly split on the importance of this service.

The consensus of the participants was that most adult students do not know it exists, but that if they do, they are not really aware of exactly what the service does for the student. Deb commented that she thought there was quite a bit of diversity at the university, that there are a lot of different cultures represented and most of the time relations were handled very well and very politically correct. Based on that she thought the service must be successful.

Job Placement Services

Of the 611 survey respondents, 87.3% said they had no basis for rating the satisfaction level of the service. The mode for importance level at 39.3% was important, with a total of 73.3% of the respondents rating it as important or very important. From statistics alone, this says that adult students consider the service as applicable to them.

In general, the participants were aware that the university offers these services. However, some did not know how it works or what all of the services entail. Binnie commented that, while adult students can register for the service via the web, if they want to talk with someone they have to settle for a phone conversation because the service is offered only 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.. Deb indicated that she had attended one of the job
fairs and thought it was done very well, with a variety of opportunities for students to check out.

*Veterans' Services*

Of the 611 survey respondents, 89.8% said they had no basis for rating the satisfaction level of the service. The mode for importance level at 32.4% was *unimportant*, with a total of 51.5% of the respondents rating it as *unimportant* or very *unimportant*. From statistics alone, this says that adult students consider the service as not applicable to them. However, since this is such a specialized service, those statistics may be misleading.

Most of the participants indicated that they were not aware that the university provided services for veterans. Dragon believed that the students who needed the service, namely veterans, knew about it. Binnie, again, was concerned that the service was available only during the 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. time frame.

*Disabled Student Services*

Of the 611 survey respondents, 97.4% said they had no basis for rating the satisfaction level of the service. The mode for importance level at 30.5% was *important*, with a total of 54.7% of the respondents rating it as *important* or very *important*. From statistics alone, this says that adult students consider the service as applicable to them.

For this service, because of its specialized audience, it is not surprising that so many of the survey respondents did not have a basis for rating satisfaction. Most of the interview participants were aware that the services exist, but were not sure of the exact extent of the services. Three of the participants indicated that they had contacted the office, with varying results. Participant Alpha (names are withheld to further protect confidentiality) said she had a temporary need for the services. When she called them,
after having obtained the approvals from all required parties herself, she was told she
would have to come to campus during regular business hours to set up the service. It was
not until she spoke with the director that the issue was resolved and the service provided
without having to take time off from work and drive several miles.

Participant Bravo said that he had used the services temporarily and that the
people were very helpful. He indicated that all transactions and requirements were very
clear and the service was provided satisfactorily. Participant Charlie said that she
contacted the office and the people were very helpful. However, since she is trained in a
similar field, they could not provide services for her that she could not provide for
herself. She did state, however, that she has seen the services abused by some students
who are looking for ways to get out of completing some of the requirements and this
makes her angry.

Comments, Ideas, and Suggestions

When aggregated, the comments of the participants seemed to follow a continuum
of sorts. The continuum went from one end where the service(s) are not necessary for
adult students to the other end where the services are not available to adult students.
When it came to suggestions, two primary ones emerged. First, participants talked about
how the services need to be marketed better and how this could be accomplished. Second,
they shared ideas about how the delivery of the services might be improved.

Not needed. Four of the participants indicated that, in general, they did not believe
that most of the services were needed by adult students. Morgan stated that, “If you have
an established life where you’ve got your own support system, you don’t think so much
about using university services.”
Not aware. There were seven participants who thought that adult students were unaware of the services, or that the services were unavailable to them. Bianca thought that adult students probably do not understand what the services mean to them. If they see services listed they wonder what it can do for them. For instance, how does career counseling differ from personal counseling? Morgan thought that perhaps graduate students believed that the services were offered for undergraduate students only. Magdalene stated that he is both a student and a staff member, and he has no idea who to talk to about what his next degree should be. He doesn’t know where to start to find out what would complement his present degrees and what would be most marketable. Dragon thought there were adult students who definitely would take advantage of personal counseling if they knew it was available to them, and if it was offered in a manner they could conveniently access.

Not available. While all of the participants felt that accessibility was a big issue with the services, three of them went into detail. Binnie said, “I think the biggest thing in any of these seven areas is that every office is open 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.. Unless you are able to get here and talk with [someone in the office] during the 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. time, there’s no one there to talk to to help you after 5:00 p.m.” She went on to comment that the business of the university does not take into consideration that there is a large group of students taking classes that are working full time. She commented that even some university staff members could not get away from their jobs other than at lunch time or after 5:00 p.m..

Betty pointed out that it is not just the student services that are an issue. All of the business offices at the university close at 5:00 p.m., leaving no opportunity for adult students to make use of them. As far as services go, she commented, the portal is not
intuitive to navigate. Betty also stated that it is hard for adult students when they do need to access a service or a business office because they often do not know who to call in order to have their issue addressed appropriately. She stated, “If the goal is to attract new students and retain them, and they say it is, then we have to do things differently.”

Dusty, who is one of the participants from a branch campus, said that they cannot use the services because they are not available at the site. In order to access most of the services, the student has to go to main campus between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.. She said that it feels like the entire focus of the university is around the historically traditional student, even though the population has changed over time. “If they need the service,” she stated, “the manner they are delivered in provides a barrier for adult students, especially if they are at a satellite campus.”

Marketing. The participants presented many suggestions about how to market the services to make adult students aware of them. One of the most mentioned was a web site dedicated to adult students. This web site would be designed such that a person does not have to click down into a lot of levels to find the information, and it always would have a way back to the home page with one click.

Another suggestion was to do a bullet-point pamphlet about the services and how they apply to adult students. Several suggestions were made for disbursing the document. Some suggested a short orientation or academy to introduce the students to what the university has. Another suggestion was to mail it with the information that is sent when the student is notified that they have been admitted to the program; another was to send it via university email. Darrin and Magdalene both mentioned that, while all of these methods were viable, how would a student know if something about the services changed or if a new service was added. Michael agreed with them. They all thought that posting
the pamphlet on the web site for adult students was the best idea. The pamphlet would be kept up-to-date, and students would be notified either via email or a message in the portal that the new version was available. Then they could access it at their convenience. Also, it always would be available if at some point they determined they did need to access one of the services or business offices.

As far as the content of the pamphlet is concerned, the participants thought it should be easily read, as well as that the information should be easy to locate if the student was looking for a specific service. They suggested that it include not only information about the services available and how to access them, but perhaps semester-specific information, information on the business offices, and information on who to call for various needs. Marie commented that the information needs to be geared toward adult students, not just a redesign of current information. Dragon thought it also was important that, if the university was not able to provide a specific service that a student might need, that they provide information on where or who in the community they could contact to obtain the service. By doing this, she said, it shows that the university values the student and knows that it might be important to them.

Delivery. The primary point participants made as far as delivery is concerned was to make the services accessible. For most adult students, that would require availability after 5:00 p.m.. Also, participants thought it would be good to have a central place, one number, that adult students could call to ask questions, perhaps an office designed to deal with adult students specifically. The participants were unsure of exactly what this delivery system would look like, or how it would work. However, they think it is important to figure out and to implement.
Chapter 5 Summary

This chapter presented the results of the interview portion of the research. The services deemed most important by the survey respondents were selected for discussion during the interview phase. These topics included both services that respondents rated as well done and those that respondents rated as unsatisfactorily delivered.

Many of the topics were common across the three degree levels, although the ranking of importance within degree levels varied. For most of the topics, comments were similar between the degree levels, also. However, there were differences found by degree level both in the importance of variables, as well as the discussion of why the service succeeded or did not succeed.

These results will be discussed further, and recommendations based on the results will be made, in Chapter 6.
CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This chapter discusses the services identified as most important by the survey respondents. This discussion covers the results both in aggregate and by degree level. The dependent variables measuring importance that were found to show significant differences when broken down by degree level via an ANOVA are then discussed. During this discussion, comments from the participant interviews are used to increase understanding of the results and emphasize concerns.

Second, the services with the lowest satisfaction ratings as identified by the survey respondents are discussed. This is done both in aggregate and by degree level. The dependent variables measuring satisfaction that were found to show significant differences when broken down by degree level via an ANOVA are then discussed. Again, comments from the participant interviews are used to expand understanding of why respondents were so unsatisfied with the delivery of these services.

As indicated in Chapter 3, I had some pre-conceived ideas about what the results of this study would be. I was extremely careful in the analysis of the data to maintain a distance and to allow the data to speak—and it spoke loud and clear. While there were services that were commonly identified as important, as well as services that were commonly identified as having the least satisfactory delivery, among the three degree levels, there were differences not only in the rank order of the services within degree levels, but also in some of the services identified as important and unsatisfactory.

In general, when significant differences were identified in the data, the differences were between bachelor students and master students, or between bachelor students and doctoral students. In a very few instances the differences were between master students and doctoral students. This tells me that the needs of adult undergraduate students are
different than those of adult students taking graduate classes. However, as will be seen during an in depth discussion of services that are not used, there are differences even between the master and doctoral students.

Research Questions

This research focused on two areas. First I identified the services viewed as essential by adult students and how to deliver them. Second, the responses of the students from the different degree levels were compared to determine if there was significant difference in the support required for success to degree.

The primary research question was: To what extent, if any, do the needs of adult students for support services differ based on the degree level pursued—bachelor, master, or doctorate? To answer this question, several areas were examined including the following:

1. Which support services do adult students consider most important to enhance their success to degree?

2. According to adult students, what is the quality level of the current offerings of student services in the areas of (a) administrative services (e.g. admissions, registration, records, grades, etc.), (b) academic environment (e.g. courses, advising, faculty, etc.), (c) academic support services (e.g. library, research needs, tutoring, etc.), (d) student support services (e.g. career counseling, personal counseling, job placement services, etc.), and (e) the physical plant/facilities of the university (parking, food services, safety of campus, etc.).
3. What processes and modalities do students believe would be best for providing the necessary services identified as most important in order for them to be useful and available to adult students?

Importance of Services

Of the 44 variables examined in the survey, respondents rated 31 of them as important or very important (with a mean of at least 3.0 on a 4.0 scale). Table 6.1 lists the top ten ranked dependent variables (along with the mean for each variable) from the aggregated results, as well as the top ten from each degree level. The table is rank ordered by the aggregated mean results. Due to the ranking differences between the degree levels, it was necessary to list 18 dependent variables in order to encompass the ten most important for each degree level. An examination of the table supports the conclusion that adult students view the importance of services differently based on their different degree levels. Ten of these 18 variables were found to have significant differences when broken down by degree level via an ANOVA, providing further evidence of the different requirements of adult students depending on the degree being pursued.

The only two services on which all three degree levels are in relative agreement on importance are cost of tuition and registering for classes. For all of the other services, either they are ranked very differently, or they are missing from the degree level.

There are only four other services that placed in the top ten of each degree level when ranked by importance: (a) frequency of courses offered, (b) cost of fees, (c) accessibility of faculty, and (d) accessibility of advisors. Even though all degree levels consider these services important, the ranking within degree level is very different.
Table 6.1

**Top Ranked Important Dependent Variables: Aggregated and by Degree**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Aggregated Mean Rank (n)</th>
<th>Bachelor Mean Rank (n)</th>
<th>Master Mean Rank (n)</th>
<th>Doctoral Mean Rank (n)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cost of Tuition</td>
<td>1 3.65 (570)</td>
<td>3 3.67 (206)</td>
<td>1 3.64 (244)</td>
<td>1 3.63 (120)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registering for Classes</td>
<td>2 3.63 (578)</td>
<td>2 3.68 (206)</td>
<td>2 3.62 (248)</td>
<td>3 3.59 (124)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency Courses Offered*</td>
<td>3 3.58 (584)</td>
<td>1 3.71 (207)</td>
<td>6 3.53 (253)</td>
<td>8 3.45 (124)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of Fees</td>
<td>4 3.57 (567)</td>
<td>4 3.63 (205)</td>
<td>4 3.56 (241)</td>
<td>7 3.51 (121)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Times Courses are Offered*</td>
<td>5 3.55 (586)</td>
<td>3 3.67 (209)</td>
<td>5 3.54 (253)</td>
<td>3.56 (124)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessibility of Faculty</td>
<td>6 3.53 (584)</td>
<td>9 3.49 (210)</td>
<td>4 3.56 (250)</td>
<td>5 3.56 (124)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety/Security of Campus*</td>
<td>7 3.51 (566)</td>
<td>8 3.50 (203)</td>
<td>3 3.58 (245)</td>
<td>5 3.56 (124)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessibility of Advisors</td>
<td>8 3.50 (583)</td>
<td>9 3.49 (208)</td>
<td>8 3.49 (251)</td>
<td>4 3.57 (124)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactions with Faculty</td>
<td>9 3.49 (583)</td>
<td></td>
<td>5 3.54 (232)</td>
<td>6 3.52 (114)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of Parking*</td>
<td>10 3.48 (570)</td>
<td>6 3.57 (203)</td>
<td>9 3.48 (249)</td>
<td>9 3.48 (249)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obtaining Semester/Session Grades</td>
<td>10 3.48 (570)</td>
<td>8 3.50 (204)</td>
<td>7 3.51 (247)</td>
<td>7 3.51 (247)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Days Courses are Offered*</td>
<td>5 3.62 (209)</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.62 (209)</td>
<td>3.62 (209)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of Parking*</td>
<td>7 3.54 (202)</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.54 (202)</td>
<td>3.54 (202)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Aid Services*</td>
<td>10 3.47 (197)</td>
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<td>3.47 (197)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to Library Services*</td>
<td></td>
<td>9 3.48 (245)</td>
<td>2 3.61 (121)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation to Program*</td>
<td></td>
<td>10 3.42 (245)</td>
<td>9 3.42 (122)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer Account Services</td>
<td></td>
<td>9 3.42 (121)</td>
<td>3.42 (121)</td>
<td>3.42 (121)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Dependent variables showing significant statistical differences (p < .05) when broken down by degree level via an ANOVA.
There were four services that produced top ten rankings for both bachelor-level and master-level respondents: (a) *times courses are offered*, (b) *safety/security of campus*, (c) *availability of parking*, and (d) *obtaining semester/session grades*. For all four services the rankings were relatively the same. There were three services that both the master-level and doctoral-level students ranked in the top ten: (a) *interactions with faculty*, (b) *orientation to program*, and (c) *access to library services*. The variables *interactions with faculty* and *orientation to program* were ranked in similar positions by both degree levels. However, *access to library services* was ranked 9th by master-level respondents, but 2nd by doctoral-level respondents.

All of the other services on the list appeared in the top ten for only one degree level. Bachelor-level respondents rated *days courses are offered*, *financial aid services*, and *cost of parking* in the top ten. All of the variables ranked in the top ten for level of importance by master-level students also appeared in the lists for either the bachelor level or the doctoral level, or both. Doctoral-level responses put *customer account services*, and *access to research needs* in the top ten.

Table 6.2 lists the 17 dependent variables (out of a total of 44) found to show *significant differences* in the rating of importance when broken down by degree level via an ANOVA. A post hoc TUKEY was performed on these dependent variables, and the table indicates the degree levels between which significant differences were discovered.

As can be seen from the table, bachelor-level respondents showed significant differences from both the master-level respondents and the doctoral-level respondents in nine of the service areas: (a) *# other adult students in classes*, (b) *career counseling*, (c) *days courses offered*, (d) *financial aid services*, (e) *job placement services*, (f) *orientation to program*, (g) *personal counseling*, and (i) *veterans' services*. There was one service
area, availability of food services, in which the bachelor-level respondents showed a significant difference from the master-level students. Significant differences between bachelor-level and doctoral-level respondents appeared in six of the service areas: (a) access to library services, (b) access to research needs, (c) availability of parking, (d) cost of parking, (e) disabled student services, and (f) times courses are offered. There were only two services in which significant differences were found between master-level students and doctoral-level students: access to research needs and safety/security of campus.

Table 6.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Bachelor vs. Master</th>
<th>Bachelor vs. Doctoral</th>
<th>Master vs. Doctoral</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td># Other Students in Classes</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to Library Services</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to Research Needs</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of Food Services</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of Parking</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Counseling</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of Parking</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Days Courses Offered</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disabled Student Services</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Aid Services</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency Courses Offered</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Placement Services</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation to Program</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Counseling</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety/Security of Campus</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Times Courses Offered</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veterans' Services</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This further supports the conclusion that adult students pursuing different degree levels consider different services important to enhance their success to degree. However, it also shows that the needs of bachelor students differ from the other two degree levels
more than do the needs of master-level and doctoral-level students. So it would appear that there is some validity in grouping students as undergraduates and graduates. Table 6.2 shows only two areas where there were significant differences between masters and doctoral students. However, this does not represent all of the variables in the study, and, in any case, any differences between the two levels indicate that they, also, should be considered separately when designing services.

Satisfaction of Services

Of the 44 dependent variables investigated via the survey, only 13 were rated by the respondents as satisfactory or very satisfactory (with a mean of at least 3.0 on a 4.0 scale). This says that, for the most part, adult students do not consider the services to be delivered in a satisfactory manner. Table 6.3 shows the services that appear in the bottom ten when rank ordered by satisfaction level in aggregate, as well as the bottom ten for each degree level (the service ranked as least satisfactory is number one in the table). Due to the ranking differences between the degree levels, it was necessary to list 16 dependent variables in order to encompass the ten least satisfactory for each degree level. Examination of this table shows that the satisfaction of students does not differ by degree level as much as it does when considering the importance of a service. There were six of the bottom ten variables that were found to have significant differences when broken down by degree level via an ANOVA.

The two services that the respondents were least satisfied with, cost of parking and cost of fees, were two of the services that were discussed during the interview portion of the study, and the topics brought many fervent comments from the participants.
### Table 6.3

**Lowest Ranked Satisfaction Dependent Variables: Aggregated and by Degree**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Aggregated Mean Rank</th>
<th>Bachelor Mean Rank</th>
<th>Master Mean Rank</th>
<th>Doctoral Mean Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(n)</td>
<td>(n)</td>
<td>(n)</td>
<td>(n)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of Parking*</td>
<td>1.82 (481)</td>
<td>1.60 (189)</td>
<td>1.89 (206)</td>
<td>2.12 (86)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of Fees</td>
<td>1.98 (526)</td>
<td>1.87 (191)</td>
<td>2.05 (227)</td>
<td>2.01 (108)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of Parking*</td>
<td>2.29 (522)</td>
<td>2.11 (191)</td>
<td>2.44 (228)</td>
<td>2.29 (103)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of Child Care</td>
<td>2.32 (65)</td>
<td>2.18 (22)</td>
<td>2.41 (27)</td>
<td>2.38 (16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of Tuition*</td>
<td>2.33 (529)</td>
<td>2.18 (192)</td>
<td>2.40 (226)</td>
<td>2.42 (111)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of Child Care</td>
<td>2.38 (60)</td>
<td>2.25 (20)</td>
<td>2.44 (25)</td>
<td>2.47 (15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Placement Services</td>
<td>2.48 (100)</td>
<td>2.41 (37)</td>
<td>2.52 (42)</td>
<td>2.52 (21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency Courses Offered*</td>
<td>2.50 (537)</td>
<td>2.31 (194)</td>
<td>2.54 (228)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Aid Services</td>
<td>2.56 (392)</td>
<td>2.57 (160)</td>
<td>2.52 (81)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to Tutoring Services*</td>
<td>2.57 (161)</td>
<td>2.50 (74)</td>
<td>2.54 (39)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Times Courses are Offered*</td>
<td>7.35 (199)</td>
<td>2.35 (199)</td>
<td>2.54 (39)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of Food Services</td>
<td>2.56 (117)</td>
<td>2.60 (126)</td>
<td>2.54 (46)</td>
<td>2.37 (19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation to Campus</td>
<td>2.56 (117)</td>
<td>2.56 (117)</td>
<td>2.54 (46)</td>
<td>2.56 (25)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Dependent variables showing significant statistical differences (p < .05) when broken down by degree level via an ANOVA.

The common thread of all of the conversations was that a different cost structure needs to be developed for adult students, because, generally, they are not on campus except to take classes, therefore they rarely take advantage of the services that the fee charge is
designed to subsidize. They also thought that the cost of parking was exorbitant, as well as the rules being inflexible. One participant related an experience where she was asked to participate in an interview process that happened to take place before 5:00 p.m.. She was given a visitor’s pass so she could park in the parking lot near the building. She received a parking ticket. Another instance that I was made aware of (not as part of this study) was a time when doctoral students were taking the written comprehensive exam. They, also, were given guest passes, allowing them to park in the lot near the building (which was good since they all were transporting multiple books). They, also, received parking tickets. In both instances, when questioned, the department of parking services stated simply that students are not eligible to use guest passes. Just one example of the inflexibility of the system.

The availability of parking was another topic that elicited energetic (to say the least) conversation during the interview process. About half of the participants were TRU staff members, so this service did not affect them personally. However, some of them responded on behalf of other adult students. All that responded were in unanimous agreement that parking availability for adult students needs to be examined closely. Adult students, for the most part, take classes in the evening, at which time most of the staff lots are all but empty. Yet, as students, with student parking passes, adult students are forced to park in lots that are some distance from the buildings where the classes are held. Participants suggested that the staff lots be made available to adult students coming from off-campus after a given time, for example, after 5:00 p.m.. Perhaps a special parking pass category for commuting adult students could be created for use in these lots. The participants pointed out that some of the lots on campus are available after 5:00 p.m. for student use and wondered why all of them were not open to students after 5:00 p.m.. One
of the participants stated that the parking system was one of the reasons she left TRU to pursue her degree at another institution.

While *availability of child care* and *cost of child care* are both ranked in the bottom ten of the service-satisfaction scale, only two of the participants I interviewed had any experience with the service, or had needed the service. There were 529 respondents who indicated a level of importance for availability of child care, but only 67 responded to the importance of the service with a mean of 2.30, which places it closer to unsatisfactory (2) than satisfactory (3). For cost of child care, 525 respondents rated the importance of the variable, but only 61 rated the importance with a mean of 2.38, which, again, places it closer to unsatisfactory. One of the participants, who primarily attends classes at a branch campus, suggested that perhaps an activity room could be developed in an area available for students to use while working on class-assigned group projects. This would enable students to bring children who are a little older, but not yet old enough to be left alone, with them. That way, while the parents are working in their groups, the children could be occupied in a near-by area.

Ranked between 4th and 6th in the bottom ten satisfactory services is *cost of tuition*. While survey respondents were consistent in their dissatisfaction, none of the participants felt there was much anyone could do about it. One participant commented that as long as the state funded higher education in the current manner, the university's hands were tied as far as making it any better.

The rest of the services (except for *job placement services*, which will be discussed later) were not ranked in the bottom ten by all three degree levels. Bachelor-level (n=194) and master-level (n=228) students ranked *frequency courses are offered* at 6 and 7, respectively. Interview participants said that many of the courses, when they get
to the end of their major, are not offered frequently enough, especially at the master level. Some courses may be offered only in certain terms, and if the student is not able to take the course during that term, for whatever reason, it delays the completion of his/her degree. Several participants thought a way should be developed for academic departments to determine more precisely what courses, as well as how many sections of the courses, are needed. A master-level student at one of the branch campuses said it was not uncommon for a required class to fill up before all of the students who needed it could register.

One surprising result was that both bachelor-level respondents (not surprising, n=74) and doctoral-level respondents (very surprising, n=39) ranked access to tutoring services as the ninth least satisfactorily delivered service. One does not normally think of doctoral students as needing tutoring. In the survey, bachelor respondents had a mean of 2.97 (on a 4.0 scale) for the importance of access to tutoring, while doctoral respondents had a mean of only 2.49. Additionally, the post hoc TUKEY produced a highly significant difference (p < .001) between the bachelor-level students and the doctoral-level students. Since it was not discussed in the interviews at the doctoral level, I do not know why they were unsatisfied with it. Participants at the bachelor level gave accessibility as the biggest barrier to using the service. The only level that ranked times courses are offered in the bottom ten was the bachelor level. They said that, often, courses they need are not offered in the evening. That means they either have to take time off from work, or they cannot take the class.

Three of the remaining variables were not discussed in the interview process, so I have nothing but speculation as to why respondents considered them unsatisfactory in their delivery. Master and doctoral-level results showed financial aid services on both
lists, while bachelor-level and master-level results showed availability of food services. The only level that had orientation to campus in the bottom ten was the bachelor level. All of the remaining services that made the bottom ten are student support services, which will be discussed at length in a section dedicated to the discussion of student support services and why adult students do not use them.

While there are several differences in the way the three degree levels rank the importance of services, they are more similar in the ranking of their satisfaction with the delivery of the services.

There were 16 dependent variables (out of a total of 44) that showed significant differences in the satisfaction rating when broken down by degree level via an ANOVA. A post hoc TUKEY was performed on these dependent variables, and Table 6.4 indicates the degree levels between which significant differences were discovered. Note that both access to advisors and classroom facilities did not find significant differences between the degree levels when the TUKEY was performed. Because the TUKEY is a highly conservative test to protect against Type I errors, it is not uncommon for variables found to have significant differences in an ANOVA to result in no significant difference between the levels of the independent variable when the TUKEY is performed.

As can be seen from the table, bachelor-level respondents showed significant differences from both the master-level respondents and the doctoral-level respondents in eight of the service areas: (a) class size of required courses, (b) cost of parking, (c) cost of tuition, (d) days courses are offered, (e) frequency courses are offered, (f) orientation to program, (g) times courses are offered, and (h) access to tutoring services. Two service areas, access to faculty and registering for classes, showed significant differences between the bachelor-level and the master-level respondents. Significant differences
between bachelor-level and doctoral-level respondents appeared in three of the services:

(a) availability of parking, (b) health services, and (c) access to library services. Only

one service area, interactions with departmental staff, showed significant differences

between the master-level and doctoral-level respondents.

Table 6.4

Dependent Variables with Significant Differences in Rating of Satisfaction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Bachelor vs. Master</th>
<th>Bachelor vs. Doctoral</th>
<th>Master vs. Doctoral</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Access to Advisors**</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to Faculty</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of Parking</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class size of Required Courses</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Facilities**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of Parking</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of Tuition</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Days Courses Offered</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency Courses Offered</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Services</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactions with Departmental</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to Library Services</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation to Program</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registering for Classes</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Times Courses Offered</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutoring Services</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**No significant differences found between degree levels when the post hoc TUKEY was performed.

As with the analysis of the importance of services, when it comes to satisfaction

levels, bachelor students differ from both the master-level and doctoral-level students,

thus lending some validity to considering the students as undergraduates versus

graduates. However, these are only the variables that produced significant differences.

Table 6.3 shows that when all variables are considered, there are several differences in
the rankings of satisfaction between the master level and the doctoral level. Therefore, the levels should be considered separately when designing services.

Student Support Services

This section of the survey warranted closer examination because each of the services indicated that at least 69% of the respondents had no basis for rating satisfaction with the service. I interpreted this to mean that they had not used the service. I wanted to know why, so I included this in my interview process with participants in all three degree levels. I asked them to help me answer the questions:

1. Do adult students not need these services?
2. Are adult students not aware of these services?
3. Are adult students aware of the services, and need the services, but the services are offered in a manner in which they cannot use them?

Responses were mixed as to questions two and three. Some thought that, even if they knew about them and the service was accessible, they would not use it because they have their own lives and their own support systems set up. Others thought that adult students probably were not aware of most of the services. If they knew about the services, many participants thought that the adult students probably did not realize exactly how the service applied to them, how it could help them. All of the participants thought that the services needed to be “marketed” better, to make students aware that they exist, as well as of how the services apply to them.

Far and away the strongest response was a resounding “yes” to question three. Participants emphasized repeatedly that, even if adult students wanted to take advantage of some of the services, the method—primarily the time frame—of delivery was a barrier for them. One participant pointed out that even as a TRU staff member she
could not avail herself of many of the services because her only options were to go on her lunch hour or after work. While offices are open during the lunch hour, they are usually minimally staffed and the adult student may or may not actually be able to get help. The majority of the offices (both service offices and business offices) close at 5:00 p.m., which means she cannot conduct her business after work.

There were four service areas that were investigated under the student services section of the survey that appeared in the list of the bottom ten services when ranked by satisfaction: (a) job placement services, (b) personal counseling, (c) diversity/multicultural services, and (d) career counseling. Only one service, job placement services, appeared on all the lists. While 87.3% of the respondents indicated that they had no basis for rating the satisfaction level, the primary concern expressed by the interview participants was lack of accessibility. While a student can go online and register for the job search or obtain resume samples, unless he/she takes time off from work or has a telephone conversation while at work, she/he cannot talk to anyone because the office closes at 5:00 p.m.. The only way for adult students who work full time to get feedback on their resumes is via email, which takes time and is not as productive as meeting face-to-face.

Both master-level students and doctoral-level students ranked their satisfaction with personal counseling in the bottom ten. This result is probably skewed because 85.6% of the respondents had no basis for rating satisfaction of the service. Interview participants knew very little about the service and, therefore, could not comment beyond the fact that, here again, the office closes at 5:00 p.m..

Only the doctoral-level students ranked career counseling in their bottom ten for satisfactory services. This result is puzzling, because the master- and doctoral-level
participants stated that they would not be using career counseling services because they had already made decisions as to their careers and were taking graduate classes toward that end. Again, with 85.6% of the respondents indicating they had no basis for rating the satisfaction, this result most likely is skewed.

Connections to Previous Research

Most of the results from this study parallel results from previous studies when talking in general about adult students and how they differ from conventional students. However, this study took this information to another level by examining the differences in the needs of adult students based on the degree level they are pursuing. According to Williams (2002), traditional institutions provide support services based on the historical model of delivery that is focused on the conventional student, and takes place, mostly, during standard business hours. Past research has indicated that the traditional model of support services does not work for adult students (Kilgore, 2003; Kilgore & Rice, 2003). This study reinforces that finding. The two primary reasons participants gave for not using student services were that they had no use for them, and if they did, they could not access them because of the hours of operation. Participants also indicated that if students were aware of the services available, they often believed them to be for conventional students, only.

Flexibility is another issue. According to Kilgore and Rice (2003), "...Adequate services should be available to students when and where they need them" (p. 81). Hughes (1983) suggests that, in reviewing flexibility, we need to look at services, programs, advocacy, and the academic delivery system. The interview participants agree with this. According to them, flexibility is required, not only in student services, but in all of the areas that encompass the business of going to college. They indicated that if they need to
conduct business with one of the university offices, that they either have to do so via phone or email, or they have to take time off from work. They also expressed a concern that they feel like the university does not know who they are.

Participants, especially doctoral-level students, also commented on a need for more flexibility in both the programs and the way classes are offered. On the whole, according to the doctoral-level students, flexibility is the biggest issue for adult students regardless of the topic. The participants believe that adults, especially graduate students, should receive credit for skills and knowledge learned in their careers. More than one participant stated that they felt it was a waste of time and money to be forced to sit through a class in which they could teach the material because they used it on a regular basis in their current jobs. Others mentioned that alternative delivery methods would be good; that there should be more classes available online.

In past research, students have indicated that they want creative ways to complete their education that minimizes time spent on campus; that they need services different from the conventional students to enhance academic experiences (Donaldson & Graham, 1999; Mancuso, 2001; Whiteman, 2002; Wonacott, 2001). Concerns expressed most frequently in the literature are: (a) difficulty in registration; (b) limited hours to conduct business associated with their academic career; (c) lack of evening, weekend, and distance learning courses; and (d) lack of credit for out-of-college experiences (Flint & Frey, 2003; Hughes, 1983; Kasworm, 1990; Kilgore & Rice, 2003). While respondents in this study did not consider registration to be an issue at the study university, they did agree with the other three items (even though TSU does have some online offerings), either through the survey instrument or through the interview process.
The limited hours in which to conduct their business with the university was repeatedly mentioned by the interview participants. It was a large source of frustration for them. As Betty (an interview participant in my study) pointed out, "If the goal is to attract new students and retain them, and they say it is, then we have to do things differently."

Both *times courses are offered* and *frequency courses are offered* appeared in the list of least satisfactory services in Table 6.3. When questioned about these areas, the participants expressed issues that included, but were not limited to: (a) courses are not offered often enough; (b) courses are offered, but then cancelled for lack of enrollment; (c) not enough sections are offered to accommodate students that need the course; (d) courses are offered during the day (mostly a concern at the bachelor level); and (e) not enough online classes. Participants stated that the services that are online work well and are important, because they can access them anytime from anywhere. All said that they would like more online services.

Granger and Benke (1995) stated that the key is to evaluate the institution's programs from the learners' perspectives. Kilgore and Rice (2003) agree. "Rather than developing a new ideal adult student around which to design student services," they say, "we should build flexibility into the processes by which we service students" (p. 89). One area that stands out as needing attention is communication. Participants that I interviewed expressed concern that the university did not know who they were. They consistently received information addressed "to the parents of" from the university, and believed that we should be able to distinguish them from the conventional students. Dusty (one participant in my study) summed it up well. "[The university] is still in the mode of thinking their students are traditional college students. It has not adapted to the fact that there is an increasing number of students that are nontraditional in terms of age, campus
location, all those things. They want us here, I believe that, but they don’t acknowledge our existence in terms of the way they do business.”

According to Horn (1997), it is important for universities to provide good support structures for adult students, because their rate of success increases when they believe they are able to rely more on the university for support. To create this sense of belonging, special programs or forums in which adult students can discuss their concerns and/or issues should be designed (Williams, 2002). Participants in my study agreed with this philosophy. Many of them commented that students who are not staff members (and some who are staff members) are not aware of all of the services and support systems available to them. They also commented that if the students are aware, they do not know how to contact them. Often, they will have a specific question, but do not know who to contact to get it answered. They stated that having one place to contact would be very helpful and would save them much time and frustration. They also thought that having information specifically geared toward adult students was very important.

Past studies have reported that providing a comprehensive orientation for adult students to the educational programs is a first step in retention (Wonacott, 2001). However, participants in my study stated that, while an orientation would be great, most adult students just do not have time to fit in one more meeting. They suggested an alternative way of providing the information they need; perhaps a pamphlet, a web site, or a CD. Whatever the format, it needs to contain the information they need, while providing them with the opportunity to review the information on their own time table, even if that is in the middle of the night. The information needs to be comprehensive, but, at the same time, easy to read and designed so that specific topics can be located easily.
According to Hadfield (2003) and Swenson (1998), adult students will seek additional education through the means of least resistance. The interview participants from my study agreed with this concept. Many stated that if they did not have to move, they might have chosen a different institution for their studies. One participant indicated that, due to issues with parking and her program, she had left the university to continue her degree at another institution that provided more flexibility in her program as well as the delivery of her courses.

According to Potter (1998) there is evidence suggesting that support services can play a significant role in helping students persist to degree. The role of support services “includes the many forms of assistance that are intended to both remove barriers (situational, institutional, dispositional, informational) and promote academic success” (p. 60). For higher education to play its best and most appropriate roles, its capacity for innovation needs to be regenerated and encouraged (Newman, 1998). “Universities and colleges that are prepared to meet the needs of an adult student population will continue to recruit and retain students through this transition to a new age” (p. 56).

Both the results of the survey and the comments from interview participants indicate that TRU needs to re-examine the delivery of some services to adult students. Each of the participants gave an example of something that could be done in a different way to better serve, support, and/or inform adult students, regardless of the degree level. While specific needs for services vary by degree level, method of delivery is based more on the fact that adult students have limited time because of other roles in their lives. They need the information, but they need it in modalities that are different from conventional students.
My conceptual framework (see Figure 1 in chapter 1) served me well for this study. Combining the information from Blimling, Whitt and Associates (1999), Scheutze and Slowey (2002), and Schuh and Upcraft (2002) to develop a survey that examined both the importance and satisfaction of 44 areas of services, and using those results to inform the individual interviews, I was able to develop a structure that will serve all three degree levels better in the future.

Recommendations

With the adult student representing 73% of undergraduate enrollment nationally (Belcastro & Purslow, 2006), delivery of student services has to be redesigned to meet the needs of these students, most of whom work full time. As Belcastro and Purslow pointed out, “Adult students over the age of 25 are where the new enrollment growth is, and where it is expected to remain” (p. 2). They continue that public institutions already have sustained tremendous enrollment losses to private institutions, and that this trend will continue unless the public schools embrace this demographic change and adjust business practices accordingly. The recommendations presented here are developed based on data obtained from my study, and build upon previous research as well. If implemented they would be a start to accomplishing that needed shift. Taken together they form the basis of a new structure for delivering services to adult students.

Recommendation 1: Central Area that Specializes in Adult Student Needs

Having one place for adult students to contact when they have a need will simplify their lives, as well as show them that the university is aware of them and values not only them, but their time. There should be a central area that specializes in adult student needs. I will call it the Office of Adult Student Information Specialists, or OASIS for short. In the short term, the office could be mostly, or completely, virtual (V-OASIS).
Many of the interview participants commented that adult students who are not staff members (and some who are staff members) do not know the university’s processes and cultures, so they do not know who to contact, or how to contact them, to get assistance with their concerns (when I say concerns, I am encompassing any communication that may take place regarding questions, issues, complaints, etc.). OASIS, whether the virtual version or the physical version, would speak to this issue.

Past research supports this recommendation. According to Rice (2003) all of the components of serving adult students should emanate from a single location. This could be a single person, an office (or part of another office), a division, or a department. The key is that it is dedicated to serving the adult student. Also, according to Ayla Guvenoz (2002), it is important to provide the right balance of high-tech and high-touch service opportunities for adult students. Additionally, past research states that if institutions provide good support structures for adult students, it increases their rate of success and their satisfaction with the institution, which leads to increased retention (Bay, 1999; Horn, 1997; Hughes, 1983; Schuetze & Slowey, 2002; Wagner, 2002; Whiteman, 2002). For some adult students, this means a central location (even if it is part of another office) to access in order to obtain answers/solutions to their questions and concerns. With this central location there are several important aspects to include as addressed in the following subsections.

Staff knowledge. The staff responding to students through OASIS or V-OASIS would be well-trained, not in how to solve all of the students’ needs, but in how to work with the student, as well as the appropriate office(s) on campus, to get the students connected with the people who can help them with their concerns. This will require a thorough knowledge of all of the university workings including, but not limited to,
services available, what the services provide for the students, business practices, and advising offerings. However, OASIS (or V-OASIS) representatives should be well-enough trained so that the majority of questions a student might have can be answered on the spot.

Marketing OASIS and V-OASIS. Having the office is not enough. The existence of the office must be well publicized so that the adult students are aware of it. There are multiple possibilities for this. I mention four avenues of marketing here that were suggested by interview participants. But this is by no means an exhaustive list. It is meant only to start the brainstorming process.

First, information about the office should be included in the admission acceptance package for adult students (this could be determined by age). This would be a simple flyer stating only that it exists, the times of operation, and how to contact the office. Second, posters should be placed strategically around campus in places where adult students would frequent. For most adult students, that would be primarily the classroom buildings. Third, the university could work with the faculty and, hopefully, get them to include the office information on their syllabi for courses that would be filled by primarily adult students. This would probably be mostly graduate courses. Fourth, a channel could be placed in the student portal with information about the office, how to contact the office, and a link to contact the office via email, which brings me to my second recommendation.

A dedicated email account. As part of V-OASIS, an email account needs to be established that focuses on adult students similar to the current Reg_Info email address that the study university has established for any student to ask a question. Many of the interview participants indicated that it is important to have one place to go to ask
questions. Participants that were staff members stated that sometimes they did not know where to go for an answer.

If there is an adult student service office available, this is the logical place for the account to be monitored and maintained. If there is not such an office, there are several possibilities for managing the account, including but not limited to the registrar's office, the student affairs office, or an office under the direction of the Vice Provost for Enrollment Management. Where it is managed from is not as important as that it exists and adult students have a single place to contact to get their needs addressed.

The person or persons managing this account would not necessarily be able to answer all the questions or meet all the needs, but they would know whom to refer the student to in order to get those questions answered and needs met. They would, however, be able to address the majority of the concerns that the students address.

*Web page dedicated to adult students.* One of the strongest recommendations that I came away from the interviews with was to create a web page dedicated to adult students. As part of V-OASIS, this web page would be available to the public, not behind the student portal (although it would contain links to the student portal). The student portal should contain links to the web page, also. This web page would list services that are available as well as how to take advantage of them. It would contain semester-specific information such as deadlines, times when the university is closed, when registration opens, etc. The criteria the participants indicated as important for the web site included several specifics.

First, there should not be any place on the site where a person has to click down an excessive amount of levels to obtain information. Participants said it was frustrating to click down all those levels and then either find that it was not what they were looking for
and/or they could not easily get back to the beginning page. So the second criteria is that every page in the web site include a link back to the home page of the web site. Third, they thought there should be four subsections. One subsection would contain information that applies to all students (e.g., dates, drop and add information, refund information). The other three subsections would contain degree-level-specific information (e.g., applying for graduation, perhaps a link to appropriate level courses, tuition rates, information about thesis/dissertation completion). Fourth, all of the information on the web site should be, not only easy to access, but easy to read, understand, and digest. They suggested bullet-points rather than prose to convey most of the information.

Recommendation 2: Brochure/Pamphlet Explaining Services to Adult Students

One of the common themes that emerged from the interview process was that, even when adult students were aware that a service existed, they did not know that it was available to them, and or they did not know what the service encompassed. While past research, as well as my quantitative data (of 563 respondents, 81.7% said it was important or very important), state that orientations to both the campus and programs are important, the common theme of the interview participants is that they do not have time for one more meeting. The suggestion was made to create a brochure or a pamphlet that talks about all of the services the university has to offer and specifically how they could help the adult student. The brochure also would contain information on how to access the service.

In addition to the services available, participants in my study thought it would be important to include information about the business of attending college such as dates, how to register, when to register, tuition, hours business offices are available, etc. It could include a list of web addresses for the different areas on campus so that the student can
gain information from specific web sites. It also should include information about OASIS or V-OASIS.

Distribution of the brochure could follow many different routes, according to the interview participants. The strongest suggestion was to post it on a public web site. If the university has a web site dedicated to adult students, that would be the optimal choice. Otherwise it could be placed under the links for both potential students and current students on the university’s web site. It could be mailed to newly admitted adult students with their acceptance materials. It could be distributed to adult students via classes if the university enlisted the help of the faculty. All of the advisors—including college, major, minor, and graduate—could be given supplies to distribute to adult students with whom they talk. Or they could be placed in public areas where adults students would frequent.

Although this pamphlet/brochure would duplicate some information on the web site, such brochures are still an important means of distributing information.

Recommendation 3: Redesign Student Services for Accessibility and Applicability

This recommendation encompasses several smaller recommendations, mostly having to do with the way student services are provided. I will talk about some areas that, strictly speaking, do not fall under the heading of students services, but, in reality, they all affect adult students and the ease with which they achieve their success to degree.

Student costs. Among the top ten important services were the cost of tuition (n=576, 96.7% important/very important; 52.8% unsatisfied or very unsatisfied), the cost of fees (n=573, 96.2% important/very important; 69.9% unsatisfied/very unsatisfied), and the cost of parking (n=569, 90.3% important/very important; 77.1% unsatisfied/very unsatisfied). These services also made the list of the ten most unsatisfactory services. Participants in the interview process agreed that these were important aspects of getting a
degree, but also agreed that they could be a huge road block for someone who wanted to return to, or enter for the first time, higher education.

While, admittedly, there is not much room for negotiation in tuition rates, perhaps something could be done with the student fees and the parking rates. Adult students are on campus, usually, one night a week for a few hours. They attend class and they leave. They do not avail themselves of any of the services that the student fees are meant to subsidize. As many participants pointed out, why do they have to pay for something they do not use.

For adult students, it would make sense to set up a fee structure where they did not pay the portion that, for example, subsidizes the student center, since they never use it. If an adult student wanted to use the student center, she/he could buy a membership in the same manner that staff members do.

*Other student services.* This part of the recommendation is focused on the student services that the survey revealed are not used by adult students. While it is true that many adult students would not use the services if available, we cannot ignore an entire section of our student population because some choose not to use them.

First, we have to look at the *design of the services* to see if, as designed, they are useful to adult students. For example, job placement services concentrate on getting students ready to enter the job market. Adult students have been there and done that. This is a minute detail, but it is an example of why adult students do not believe that their needs are being met by the service.

Next, we have to examine the *delivery of the service.* Is it conveniently accessible to the adult student? The first thing this means is availability after 5:00 p.m. Whether there are set hours after 5:00 p.m. for drop-in questions, or whether it is run on an
appointment basis, students need to be able to access services after 5:00 p.m. If appointments are set after 5:00 p.m., is the location somewhere that is convenient for the student to get to? Can the appointment be made so that the adult student does not have to make an extra trip to campus?

*Sense of community.* “Building community is an essential element in building the support network necessary for students’ success and achievement. Student affairs’ role includes working with students to help them achieve a sense of belonging and to build a sense of community and support among students’ allegiance to the institution, and commitment to one another” (Blimling et al., 1999, pp. 19-20). Many of the participants stated that they do not feel connected to the university or other students, and that they would appreciate having a way to interact with other adult students to build a sense of connectedness. They were quick to point out that another meeting was not the answer because adult students generally do not have time to fit in one more meeting. (I experienced this personally when I tried to gather focus groups—the original design of phase two of my study. I could not find times when multiple adult students—regardless of degree level—could get together to discuss the survey results.) Some of the suggestions made by the participants were: (a) an adult student union (possibly as part of OASIS), (b) an email list or a listserv, (c) a blog, or (d) setting up WebCT so that online discussions could take place.

A listserv would be an inexpensive support system that could be set up easily. Adult students could participate as much or as little as they want. However, adult students should not be forced to use their university email address to access the listserv. Many students either cannot access their accounts from off campus, or they are so dissatisfied with the email service, that if forced to choose between using their university accounts or
not participating, they will not participate. The listserv could be administered from the same office as the web site and the adult student information email account, thereby taking another opportunity to consolidate points of contact between adult students and the university. An adult student blog would be a logical companion to the listserv. Special interest communities could be started, each with their own listserv and blog. This would save adult students time since they could participate only in what interested them and ignore the other stuff without having to wade through everything to find what they are interested in knowing.

Parking. Given the results of the survey and the comments from the interview participants, parking is a huge issue with adult students. It goes beyond the cost of the parking passes. It is the fact that there is little, if any, convenient parking for adult students to use while attending classes after they have paid the high price for the pass. Many used the term “insulted” to describe how they felt when they had to pay so much and walk so far. In the survey, of the 576 respondents rated the availability of parking, 94.1% rated it as important/very important. For satisfaction, 77.1% said that the availability was unsatisfactory or very unsatisfactory.

I recommend the creation of a another parking pass category for adult students who are taking only 1 or 2 classes per term. It could be at a slightly reduced price, and it would be valid in staff lots after a given time, perhaps 5:00 p.m.

Another huge issue is the inflexibility of the system. Students are not allowed to use parking meters, whether they purchase a pass or not. I personally have heard tales from many students that did not purchase parking passes, but chose to feed the meters, only to end up with a parking ticket because they are a registered student. The rule that students are not eligible to use guest passes should be reviewed. The guest passes are not
easy to come by. If a student is parking using a guest pass, changes are very good that the person is there on university business at the request of a faculty or staff member. The student should not be penalized for doing business with the university by either having to park in a lot some distance away, or by receiving a ticket for using a guest pass.

Recommendation 4: Provide More Flexibility and Focus in Course Offerings

The literature on adult student needs agrees that the one thing that adult students need most from an institution of higher education is flexibility in the way it deals with them (Hughes, 1983; Kilgore & Rice, 2003). Thompson (1985) cites a study done by the South Oklahoma City Junior College in which students indicated that the inconvenience of scheduling was a major factor in their decision not to return to college.

Of the 194 bachelor-level respondents who rated satisfaction with the frequency classes are offered, 53.6% of them rated it as very unsatisfactory or unsatisfactory, while 53.3% of them responded in a similar pattern for times courses are offered. Many of the interview participants commented that, at some point, they had trouble getting a class they needed to complete their programs. Sometimes it had to do with the time of day or day of the week the class was offered. Sometimes it had to do with the class filling up before they could register. Sometimes it had to do with how often a course is offered. Sometimes it had to do with the class being canceled for lack of enrollment. Whatever, the reason, when the students cannot take the classes they need to complete their programs when they need them, it lengthens their time to degree, which is very frustrating for them.

Brandon stated, “As more and more traditional undergrads are needing to be in the work force, flexibility is always a good thing.” His suggestion was to offer more classes online. Other participants agreed. As was pointed out by the participants, adult
students are very focused on their classes and are prime candidates to complete online courses successfully. Many of the general education classes, as well as some of the basic major/minor and graduate courses, could be offered in an online format. This would allow adult students more flexibility in completing the course. It also would allow students to take courses that are offered on a limited schedule, that fill up, or are canceled.

Not all courses may be able to be taught on line (e.g., some science lab classes). For those classes, departments should spread the course offerings throughout the day/evening as well as the days of the week. While only a handful of participants indicated an interest in Saturday classes, many students I have personally had contact with have commented how much they like the Saturday format. This would be an excellent alternative for scheduling classes such that adult students would be able to take them. With some coordination between departments, classes could be scheduled on Saturdays in a way that an adult student could come to campus once a week on Saturday and complete at least two courses per semester. Whether the courses were offered as morning classes and afternoon classes, or whether they were offered as full day classes on opposite Saturdays, adult students could accomplish in one trip per week what it currently takes them two to do. Adult students like the more focused schedules of classes, where they come for a few intense sessions and the course is done. If courses were offered in this matter, a special category of parking pass could be developed that would allow students to park in any lot, since most of them would be mostly empty, anyway.

While not specific to adult students, another area that participants commented on was the expense, and difficulty of obtaining, course packs. They commented that usually the course packs are just a collection of photocopied articles the instructor has found
during her/his own research. The course pack can become quite thick and quite expensive. The suggestion was made to provide the course pack on a CD rather than in paper form. That way the student has the option of reading the articles on line or printing them out. Also, the cost of a CD would be much less than the cost of a course pack. Having paid less, the students would not feel as much resentment at having to purchase the course pack when less than half of the material is used during the presentation of the course. An alternative option would be to provide the students with web addresses where the articles can be found (since most articles can be found online now). Then they can either print them, read them on the monitor, save them, or any combination thereof. This is even less expensive for the student since it is free.

In short, the university needs to develop a system of offering classes for adult students that is flexible in delivery methods, times, and days, as well as focused and to the point. The adult student is on a mission in the pursuit of a degree. He/she wants that mission to be as concise and efficient as possible (Compton et al., 2006; Saunders & Bauer, 1998).

Recommendation 5: Assess the Success of Programs for Adult Students Every 2-3 Years

Using an instrument similar to the one used for this study, adult students should be surveyed every 2-3 years. The university needs to determine if the needs that the students consider important are being met satisfactorily, as well as if the needs previously considered important still rank in the top 10. Swenson (1998) states, “Like it or not, our economy and the businesses that compose it are like our students, the customers of higher education” (p. 35). Keeping our customers satisfied is related to their persistence and achievement (Schuh, Upcraft, & Associates, 2001). The future of adult services relies on leaders and practitioners who continue to redefine the institution by refining policies and
procedures in order to support the adult student. In order to know if the university is successful is to assess the effectiveness of the programs (Hughes, 1983; Kasworm, 2003; Kilgore & Rice, 2003; Senter & Senter, 1998).

Recap of Recommendations

After analyzing the results of the survey and the interview process, I have developed six major recommendations as the basis for designing a program to provide services to adult students based on the degree level they are pursuing. Those recommendations are:

1. Create a central area that specializes in adult students. This area would include a dedicated email account for adult students to contact the university with questions, concerns, or comments, and a web site dedicated to adult students and their needs.

2. Develop a brochure or pamphlet that identifies, as well as thoroughly explains, services available to adult students, along with other information they will need.

3. Redesign student services to improve accessibility and applicability for adult students.

4. Redesign course offerings to provide more flexibility and focus for adult students.

5. Assess the success of the programs for adult students every 2-3 years.

Implementing all of these recommendations not only will take time, but will require financial resources. At a bare minimum, adult students need a centralized contact point. The office for adult students would be ideal, but if it is cost prohibitive at this point in time, then start with a virtual office including a web site, email account, and pamphlet.
Delimitations

There were two primary delimitations with this study. The first was that the population was, in effect, an opportunity population since students from the university the researcher works at were used. However, the reasoning for this choice surpassed convenience. Recognizing that every institution of higher education has its own culture, I wanted all of the respondents to have the same experience to draw from when responding to the survey. The same was true for the participants in the interview process.

The other delimitation was the services that were chosen for investigation. The 44 services studied were selected after review of the literature as areas that would most represent the anticipated needs of adult students.

Limitations

The first delimitation listed above also is a limitation. Because the population was taken from one institution, the generalizability of the study is limited. However, other institutions could use the same process for their students and services to develop their own program.

Another limitation of the study is that it deals only with delivery of services to students. It does not look at interpersonal relationships between adult students and faculty, adult students and staff, or adult students and younger students.

Due to the busy lives of adult students, it was not possible to schedule focus groups for the second phase of the study as originally planned. Therefore, the method was changed to interviews. While doing interviews is not a limitation, the fact that only 13 participants could be found who were willing and had the time to participate is a limitation. Additionally, the participants in the survey, as well as the interviews, were
primarily self-selecting. While I performed purposeful selection for the interview process, all of the candidates had self-selected by agreeing to participate in phase two of the study.

Of the 13 interview participants, 50% of them were staff members at the university. However, their responses were very much the same as participants who do not work for the university. As indicated previously, even staff members did not know about all the services.

I believe that using only a four-point likert scale in the survey instrument proved to be a limitation. In many of the areas, four points did not allow for enough differentiation to get a true picture of how important the services are or how satisfactorily they were delivered.

For some dependent variables, the number of respondents who rated the satisfaction of the service was very low. This is a limitation because firm conclusions cannot be drawn on some of the variables. Had there been more respondents who were able to rate their satisfaction level, there may have been more significant differences discovered in some of the services.

It is possible that not all respondents interpreted the terms and/or phrases of the services listed in the survey the same. Definitions of terms and/or phrases that are susceptible to misinterpretation should be included in future studies.

Further Research

There is a mountain of further research that should be done. A larger qualitative study should be done to determine if there are other services that adult students need that university’s are not currently offering. Because this study started as quantitative, it became self-limiting in the scope of possible services to study. A totally qualitative study
could be done across institutions to gain a fuller understanding of specific services needed by adult students.

Other institutions should replicate this study within their student bodies to determine if they are meeting the needs of adult students. They should, however, use a six-point scale, rather than a four-point scale. Also, they may want to adjust the specific services studied based on their own campus culture or, if it has been performed, the results of the qualitative study listed above.

The study should be replicated on a cyclical basis at the university where it was originally conducted to determine if the recommendations that have been implemented at the institution have improved meeting the needs of adult students, or if other needs have surfaced. A more detailed survey instrument should be developed that covers more services and uses a six-point likert scale.

Chapter 6 Summary

Chapter six begins by providing observations and conclusions that answer the primary research question as well as the subquestions. The most important services to adult students mostly deal with the logistics of getting a degree like cost of tuition, cost of fees, cost of parking, financial aid, and the pattern (days, times, frequencies) in which courses are offered. Responses to the survey, as well as comments during the interviews, showed clearly that adult students do not consider the delivery of services satisfactory.

The interview process produced data from the participants that resulted in six recommendations for improving the delivery of services to adult students. Conclusions drawn from analysis of the data from both the survey responses and the participant comments during the interviews showed that there are differences by degrees. While the majority of the differences were between undergraduate and graduate students, the needs
of adult students do differ based on the degree level (bachelor, master, or doctoral) they
are pursuing. However, the extent of the difference depends on the particular service. For
services that are required by all students like admission, registration, or purchasing text
books, the differences are smaller. Conversely, some services like financial aid,
orientation to campus, orientation to the program, access to library services, and access to
research support showed very large differences between the degree levels. So, in asking
the research question, “To what extent, if any, do the needs of adult students for support
services differ based on the degree level pursued—bachelor, master, or doctorate?” the
answer would be, “It depends.” The extent of the differences between degree levels is
inversely proportionate to the necessity of the service in conducting the business of going
to college. It is important to acknowledge that the needs of the new traditional student are
different than those of the historically traditional student, and that adult students do
indeed experience needs that exhibit differences by degrees.
REFERENCES


Appendix A

Initial Email
Subject: Research by WMU student to serve adult students better

Hello. My name is Kathy Rix and I am a doctoral candidate at Western Michigan University. For my dissertation I am doing research on the support services that are important to adult students and how to best deliver them. My ultimate goal is to develop a model for use by higher education institutions to better serve the adult student population.

You have been selected as part of the pool of students because, based on the information we have, you meet the criteria of an adult student. I am very anxious to know what the concerns of our adult student population are. Therefore, I have prepared a short online survey to gather this information.

Do you have concerns about the services provided here at Western? Do you have ideas of how to make them better? The more people who complete the survey, the more information I will have with which to develop the model. So here is your chance to be heard. Please click on the link below to begin the survey which should take you no more than 10 minutes to complete.

At the end of the survey, you will have a chance to enter a drawing for one of two $50 gift certificates to the WMU bookstore. If you wish to enter, provide your name and WMU email address. This information will be stored in a separate file from your survey responses to keep your survey answers anonymous.

Thank you for your attention and your participation. If you have any questions or concerns, you can respond to this email or reach me at 269-370-3885.

Sincerely,
Kathy L. Rix

http://survey.atis.wmich.edu/atis/rix1.htm
Appendix B

1st Follow-up Email
Hello, again. My name is Kathy Rix and I am a doctoral student here at WMU. Last week I sent an invitation to you to participate in my study (and enter the drawing for one of the two prizes). If you have responded already, thank you very much. If you have not, would you please take a few minutes to do so?

I would encourage you to let your voice be heard. Take about 10 minutes right now to complete the survey at the URL listed below. Your information is important to my study. The results of the study will be beneficial to all adult students. The web site will be open only for this week and next week.

Don’t forget, at the end of the survey, you will have a chance to enter a drawing for one of two $50 gift certificates to the WMU bookstore. If you wish to enter, provide your name and WMU email address. This information will be stored in a separate file from your survey responses to keep your answers anonymous.

Thank you for your attention and your participation.

If you have any questions or concerns, you can respond to this email or reach me at 269-370-3885.

Sincerely,

Kathy L. Rix

http://survey.atis.wmich.edu/atis/rix1.htm
Appendix C

2nd Follow-up Email
Subject: Last chance to give your opinion

It's me again. My name is Kathy Rix and I am a doctoral student at WMU. I am doing research on how to serve adult students in the best way.

Previously I sent you two emails inviting you to participate in my study (and enter the prize giveaway drawing). If you have responded already, thank you very much, and I apologize for this email. But, to maintain your anonymity, the survey software does not tell me who has and has not responded.

If you have not responded I sincerely would like to hear from you. You are who I am doing this research for and I want to know what you think. Please click on the URL below and complete the survey (it should take about 10 minutes) to tell me what you think about how services are provided to adult students. You have only seven more days before the web site is closed.

Don’t forget, at the end of the survey, you will have a chance to enter a drawing for one of two $50 gift certificates to the WMU bookstore. If you wish to enter, provide your name and WMU email address. This information will be stored in a separate file from your survey responses to keep your answers anonymous.

Thank you for your attention and your participation.

If you have any questions or concerns, you can respond to this email or reach me at 269-370-3885.

Sincerely,

Kathy L. Rix

http://survey.atis.wmich.edu/atis/rix1.htm
Appendix D

Online Survey Instrument
My name is Kathy Rix and I am a doctoral candidate at Western Michigan University. I am doing research on the best way to provide support services to adult students in higher education.

The purpose of this questionnaire is to determine which support services are most important to adult students in order to make getting their degrees easier. I will be looking at the service needs of adult students in general, but in particular I will examine those needs based on the degree level adult students are pursuing (bachelor, master, or doctorate) to see if there are differences.

It should take you about 10 minutes to complete the questionnaire. To preserve your anonymity any information you provide will be reported to me by the department administering the survey in data format only without any personally identifiable information (i.e. name, email, etc.).

There are no anticipated risks to participants of this study and you may refuse to participate in, or drop out of, this study at any time without prejudice or penalty. If at any time you have questions or concerns about the study you may contact Kathy Rix at 269-370-3885 or Louann Bierlein-Palmer at 269-387-3465. You may also contact the Chair, Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (269-387-8293) or the Vice President for Research (269-387-8298) if questions or problems arise during the course of the study.

This consent document was approved by the Western Michigan University Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (HSIRB) on October 16, 2006. Do not participate after February 7, 2006.

The results of this study will benefit adult students at WMU in specific, and other institutions in general. Participation is completely voluntary and you may exit from the survey without submitting your answers at any time. However, submission of your responses to the questionnaire constitutes your consent for me to use the information you provide in the results data.

Thank you for taking the time to give me your point of view. It is very important to my study.

Enter to Win

At the end of the survey you can enter to win one of two $50 gift certificates to the WMU bookstore. This information is stored in a separate file from the survey responses, and will be provided to me separately from the survey data, so that your answers remain anonymous.

Click Next to continue or Stop to exit the survey without submitting your responses.
Basic Demographic Information
Age at time of latest admission to current course of study _____ Current age _____
Average Number of Credits Per Semester _____
Which campus do you attend for most of your classes? ☐ Main Campus, ☐ Branch Campus(es), ☐ Online only
Degree being sought Bachelor Master/Certificate Specialist/Doctorate
What major/program are you in? _____________________________
Click Next to continue or Stop to exit the survey without submitting your responses.
**Administrative Services**

This section asks questions about doing business with WMU.

1. Please indicate the importance to your success of each of the following services.
2. Rate your satisfaction with that service as provided by WMU. If you do not have experience with the service, mark “No Basis.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Satisfaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very Unimportant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ease of admission process</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation to campus</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation to program</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registering for classes</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dropping and adding classes</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obtaining unofficial transcript</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obtaining official transcript</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obtaining semester/session grades</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer account services (e.g. payment questions)</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of tuition</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of fees</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial aid services</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduation auditing process</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Click Next to continue or Stop to exit the survey without submitting your responses.
**Academic Environment**

This section asks questions about obtaining and attending your classes.

1. Please indicate the importance to your success of each of the following services.
2. Rate your satisfaction with that service as provided by WMU. If you do not have experience with the service, mark “No Basis.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Satisfaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Unimportant</td>
<td>Very Unimportant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unimportant</td>
<td>Unimportant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important</td>
<td>Important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Important</td>
<td>Very Important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Basis to Rate</td>
<td>No Basis to Rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Unsatisfied</td>
<td>Very Unsatisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsatisfied</td>
<td>Unsatisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td>Satisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Satisfied</td>
<td>Very Satisfied</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Frequency with which courses are offered
- Days of the week courses are offered
- Times of day the courses are offered
- Class size of required courses
- Accessibility of faculty teaching your courses
- Accessibility of advisors
- Interactions with faculty
- Interactions with support/clerical staff in academic departments
- Classroom facilities
- Number of other adult students in your classes

Click Next to continue or Stop to exit the survey without submitting your responses.
**Academic Support Services**
This section asks questions about services to help you succeed in your classes.
1. Please indicate the importance to your success of each of the following services.
2. Rate your satisfaction with that service as provided by WMU. If you do not have experience with the service, mark “No Basis.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Satisfaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Important</td>
<td>Unimportant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ease of purchasing textbooks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ease of purchasing course packs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to library services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to computer labs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to computer support</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to research support/assistance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to tutoring services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Click Next to continue or Stop to exit the survey without submitting your responses.
**Student Support Services**

This section asks questions about non-academic services designed to help you succeed.

1. Please indicate the importance to your success of each of the following services.
2. Rate your satisfaction with that service as provided by WMU. If you do not have experience with the service, mark “No Basis.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Satisfaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Important</td>
<td>Very Satisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unimportant</td>
<td>Very Unsatisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important</td>
<td>Satisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Important</td>
<td>Very Satisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Basis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career counseling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job placement services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal counseling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity/Multicultural services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disabled student services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veterans’ services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Click Next to continue or Stop to exit the survey without submitting your responses.
Physical Plant/Facilities
This section asks questions about auxiliary services at WMU.
1. Please indicate the importance to your success of each of the following services.
2. Rate your satisfaction with that service as provided by WMU. If you do not have experience with the service, mark “No Basis.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Satisfaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Availability of parking</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of parking</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of child care</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of child care</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of food services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of vending services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety/security of campus</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Click Next to continue or Stop to exit the survey without submitting your responses.
Other Important Services

Please list any services that are not covered in this questionnaire that you believe to be important. Then indicate the level of importance and your satisfaction with the service as provided by WMU.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Satisfaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Important</td>
<td>Very Satisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important</td>
<td>Satisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unimportant</td>
<td>Unsatisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Unimportant</td>
<td>No Basis to Rate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Click Next to continue or Stop to exit the survey without submitting your responses.
Compared to the rest of the students in your major/program, how do you perceive your age?

☒ Much younger  ☑ About the same  ☐ Much older

Choose one item in each category below that best describes you and your life.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Status</th>
<th>Work Status</th>
<th>Work Location</th>
<th>Primary Focus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>On campus</td>
<td>College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time</td>
<td>Part-time</td>
<td>Off campus</td>
<td>Family/community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not working</td>
<td>Not working</td>
<td>Work/career</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Click Next to continue or Stop to exit the survey without submitting your responses.
### Additional Demographic Information (for purposes of analysis)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Options</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Marital Status</strong></td>
<td>Married/Partnered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of persons in household</strong></td>
<td>Adults:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hours Per Week You Work</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Racial/ethnic identity (check all that apply)</strong></td>
<td>American Indian or other Native American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Click Next to continue or Stop to exit the survey without submitting your responses.
**Enter to Win**

Enter your name and address so that you can be included in the drawing to receive one of two $50 gift certificates to the WMU bookstore. This information is kept in a separate file from your survey responses and will be provided to me separate from the survey results. Therefore, your responses will remain anonymous.

Name:__________________________________________

WMU email:_____________________________________

Click Submit to continue or Stop to exit the survey without submitting your responses.
Thank you for completing this survey. Your help will be invaluable to my research.

In January and February 2007 there will be follow-up focus groups to gain further information based on the results of this survey. You are invited to learn more about participating in one of six different groups. The time frame will be approximately 2 hours. Food will be provided during the meetings and as a thank-you for your participation, you will be entered into a drawing for one of two $100 gift certificates to the WMU bookstore.

From those who volunteer I will purposely select a demographically broad range of people who will be invited to take part in the focus groups. I will contact all volunteers the first week of December 2006 to notify them of their selection status. Meeting times and places for the focus groups will be determined in consultation with those who are invited to participate in this phase of the study.

My goal is to use this information to develop a model that institutions can use to better serve their adult students. If you are willing to take part in one of the focus groups, please complete the following information. I apologize for asking twice, but I can't use the information from the previous survey because it is anonymous and I do not have access to anything but the data.

Volunteering is exactly that. If, at any time, you change your mind or something happens that you cannot participate, you are free to withdraw without any negative consequences. Thank you.

Information for focus group participation

Name
Email address
Home phone
Cell phone
Work phone
Preferred method of contact  □ Email, □ Home phone, □ Cell phone, □ Work phone

Age at time of latest admission to current course of study       Current age       
Average number of credits per semester       Gender: Male Female
Which campus do you attend for most of your classes? □ Main Campus, □ Branch
Campus(es), □ Online only
Degree being sought       Bachelor       Master/Certificate       Specialist/Doctorate
Hours Per Week You Work

Click submit to enter your information in the database or Stop to exit the volunteer form without submitting your responses.
Appendix E

Scripts for Contacting Participants for Interview Process
Interview Candidate Email

Subject: Participation in interview for study of student services for adult students.

My name is Kathy Rix and I'm a doctoral student at WMU. Last spring you completed my survey about providing student services to adult students. At the end of the survey you expressed an interest in participating in the follow-up focus groups. While I was not able to get the focus groups organized, I still would like your input. I'm writing to find out if you are you still interested in this phase of the study? If not, please simply reply to this email and indicate that you are not interested. You still will have my deepest appreciation for sharing your thoughts through the survey.

If you are willing to participate in the interview process, I need some information to set up a time and place that is as convenient for you as possible. Please respond to this email with answers to the following questions no later than Thursday, January 10, 2008.

1. The interview should take about an hour. When would be a convenient time for us to meet?

2. Would you like to meet on the Kalamazoo campus or is there another site that would be more convenient for you?

3. Would you mind if one or two other respondents took part in the same interview session?

Thank you for your time. If you have responded in the affirmative, I will be contacting you within a week to ten days to determine the exact date, time and place we will meet. I will include the topics we'll be discussing. If you have any questions for me, please don't hesitate to include them in your response or to contact me in the future.

Sincerely,

Kathy L. Rix
Interview Candidate Telephone Protocol

Hello, my name is Kathy Rix. I’m a doctoral student at WMU. May I please speak with _______?

Hello, __________. First, thank you very much for participating in my survey last spring about providing student services to adult students. At the end of the survey you expressed an interest in participating in the follow-up focus groups. I was not able to make the focus groups happen, but I am still interested in your opinions and ideas. Are you still interested in this phase of the study?

If no: I understand. Thank you, again, for your input and good luck in the rest of your classes at WMU.

If yes: I’m very glad to hear that. Now, if you have about five minutes, I need to set a time and place to meet with you.

The interview should last about one hour. When would be a good time for us to meet?

Would you like to meet at the Kalamazoo campus, or is there another site that is more convenient for you? (Here, negotiations on the meeting place and time will occur.)

Would it be okay if one or two other respondents took part in the same interview session?

Thank you for your time tonight. I will be sending you information on the topics we’ll be discussing within a week to ten days.

Do you have any questions for me?

Thank you, again and good night.
Appendix F

Interview Information Sheets for Participants
Interview Areas of Discussion—Bachelor Level

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the interview portion of this study. Listed below are areas that survey results showed to be either well done or not so well done. I would like to discuss these areas in depth during the interview. The discussion will focus on method of delivery to answer the question, “What processes and modalities do students believe would be best for providing the services identified as most important in order for them to be useful and available to adult students?”

In addition, there was an entire area of the survey that results showed most students who participated in the survey have no basis for rating the satisfaction level. I would like to discuss those areas in more depth to learn why students are not using them.

Well Done

The survey results indicated that the following areas are considered very important by students, and that they are very satisfied with the services as performed. I would like to discuss what it is about the delivery of these services that makes them work well.

1. Admission process
2. Class size of required courses
3. Dropping/adding classes
4. Obtaining semester/session grades
5. Obtaining unofficial transcript
6. Times courses are offered
Not So Well Done

Survey results indicated that the following areas are considered very important by students, but that they are very unsatisfied with the delivery of those services. I would like to discuss how delivery of these services could be improved.

1. Availability of parking
2. Availability of child care
3. Cost of fees
4. Cost of tuition

Areas Not Used

Listed below are services that most students indicated they had no basis for rating the satisfaction level of the service. I would like to discuss why students are not using the services. Do they not need the services? Are they not aware of the services? Are the services not offered in a manner in which they can use them?

1. Career counseling
2. Disabled student services
3. Diversity/multicultural services
4. Health services
5. Job placement services
6. Personal counseling
7. Veterans' services
Interview Areas of Discussion—Masters/Certificate Level

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the interview portion of this study. Listed below are areas that survey results showed to be either well done or not so well done. I would like to discuss these areas in depth during the interview. The discussion will focus on method of delivery to answer the question, “What processes and modalities do students believe would be best for providing the services identified as most important in order for them to be useful and available to adult students?”

In addition, there was an entire area of the survey that results showed most students who participated in the survey have no basis for rating the satisfaction level. I would like to discuss those areas in more depth to learn why students are not using them.

Well Done

The survey results indicated that the following areas are considered very important by students, and that they are very satisfied with the services as performed. I would like to discuss what it is about the delivery of these services that makes them work well.

1. Access to computer labs
2. Access to computer support
3. Class size of required courses
4. Dropping/adding classes
5. Obtaining semester/session grades
6. Times courses are offered
Not So Well Done

Survey results indicated that the following areas are considered very important by students, but that they are very unsatisfied with the delivery of those services. I would like to discuss how delivery of these services could be improved.

1. Availability of parking
2. Cost of fees
3. Cost of parking
4. Cost of tuition
5. Ease of purchasing textbooks

Areas Not Used

Listed below are services that most students indicated they had no basis for rating the satisfaction level of the service. I would like to discuss why students are not using the services. Do they not need the services? Are they not aware of the services? Are the services not offered in a manner in which they can use them?

1. Career counseling
2. Disabled student services
3. Diversity/multicultural services
4. Health services
5. Job placement services
6. Personal counseling
7. Veterans’ services
Interview Areas of Discussion—Doctoral Level

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the interview portion of this study. Listed below are areas that survey results showed to be either well done or not so well done. I would like to discuss these areas in depth during the interview. The discussion will focus on method of delivery to answer the question, “What processes and modalities do students believe would be best for providing the services identified as most important in order for them to be useful and available to adult students?”

In addition, there was an entire area of the survey that results showed most students who participated in the survey have no basis for rating the satisfaction level. I would like to discuss those areas in more depth to learn why students are not using them.

**Well Done**

The survey results indicated that the following areas are considered very important by students, and that they are very satisfied with the services as performed. I would like to discuss what it is about the delivery of these services that makes them work well.

1. Class size of required classes
2. Cost of child care
3. Dropping/adding classes
4. Obtaining semester/session grades
5. Obtaining unofficial transcripts

**Not So Well Done**

Survey results indicated that the following areas are considered very important by students, but that they are very unsatisfied with the delivery of those services. I would like to discuss how delivery of these services could be improved.
1. Availability of parking
2. Cost of fees
3. Cost of parking
4. Cost of tuition

*Areas Not Used*

Listed below are services that most students indicated they had no basis for rating the satisfaction level of the service. I would like to discuss why students are not using the services. Do they not need the services? Are they not aware of the services? Are the services not offered in a manner in which they can use them?

1. Career counseling
2. Disabled student services
3. Diversity/multicultural services
4. Health services
5. Job placement services
6. Personal counseling
7. Veterans’ services
Appendix G

Interview Consent Letter
Thank you for your interest in participating in this interview process. This research, entitled *Differences by Degrees: Providing Support Services to Adult Students Based on Degree Level Being Pursued*, is intended to discover what support services are most critical to adult students, as well as how to deliver them in order to make getting your degree easier. It also will determine if these services differ based on the level of degree being pursued (bachelor, master/certificate, or doctorate).

While the interview will be taped and transcribed, confidentiality of the participants is assured. Should any comments from the interview be used, alias names will be assigned to protect your identity. To help further ensure this confidentiality, the audio tapes will be destroyed upon completion of the dissertation. Other data will be maintained in a locked cabinet for a period of five years, at which point it will be destroyed.

There are no anticipated risks to participants of this study. However, as in all research, there may be unforeseen risks to you. If an accidental injury occurs, appropriate emergency measures will be taken; however, no compensation or additional treatment will be made available to you except as otherwise stated in this consent form.

The end product of this study will be a set of recommendations for delivering improved support services to adult students. If these types of recommendations are adopted by the administration you, as well as other adult students, may benefit from improved delivery of critical services. In any case, you will be informed of the research results if desired. In addition, as a gesture of my gratitude for your participation in this study you will be entered into a drawing for one of four $25 gift certificates to the WMU book store.

You may refuse to participate in, or drop out of, this study at any time without prejudice or penalty. If at any time you have questions or concerns about the study you may contact Kathy Rix at 269-370-3885 or Louann Bierlein Palmer at 269-387-3465. You may also contact the Chair, Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (269-387-8293) or the Vice President for Research (269-387-8298) if questions or problems arise during the course of the study.

This consent document was approved for use for one year by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board as indicated by the stamped date and signature of the board chair in the upper right corner. Do not participate in this study if there is no date stamp or if the date on the stamp is more than one year old.

If you are willing to participate, please sign below indicating that you have read and/or had explained to you the purpose and requirements of the study and that you agree to participate.

Participant Signature: ___________________________ Date: ____________

Researcher Signature: ___________________________ Date: ____________
Appendix H

Interview Protocols
Well Done

The survey results indicated that the following areas are considered very important by students, and that they are very satisfied with the services as performed. I would like to discuss what it is about the delivery of these services that makes them work well.

6. Admission process
7. Class size of required courses
8. Dropping/adding classes
9. Obtaining semester/session grades
10. Obtaining unofficial transcript
11. Times courses are offered

Not So Well Done

Survey results indicated that the following areas are considered very important by students, but that they are very unsatisfied with the delivery of those services. I would like to discuss how delivery of these services could be improved.

5. Availability of parking
6. Availability of child care
7. Cost of fees
8. Cost of tuition

Areas Not Used

Listed below are services that most students indicated they had no basis for rating the satisfaction level of the service. I would like to discuss why students are not using the services. Do they not need the services? Are they not aware of the services? Are the services not offered in a manner in which they can use them?

8. Career counseling
9. Disabled student services
10. Diversity/multicultural services
11. Health services
12. Job placement services
13. Personal counseling
14. Veterans’ services

Anything you want to add?
Interview Protocol—Masters/Certificate Level

Name: AKA: M

Well Done

The survey results indicated that the following areas are considered very important by students, and that they are very satisfied with the services as performed. I would like to discuss what it is about the delivery of these services that makes them work well.

12. Access to computer labs
13. Access to computer support
14. Class size of required courses
15. Dropping/adding classes
16. Obtaining semester/session grades
17. Times courses are offered

Not So Well Done

Survey results indicated that the following areas are considered very important by students, but that they are very unsatisfied with the delivery of those services. I would like to discuss how delivery of these services could be improved.

9. Availability of parking
10. Cost of fees
11. Cost of parking
12. Cost of tuition
13. Ease of purchasing textbooks

Areas Not Used

Listed below are services that most students indicated they had no basis for rating the satisfaction level of the service. I would like to discuss why students are not using the services. Do they not need the services? Are they not aware of the services? Are the services not offered in a manner in which they can use them?

15. Career counseling
16. Disabled student services
17. Diversity/multicultural services
18. Health services
19. Job placement services
20. Personal counseling
21. Veterans’ services

Anything You Want to Add?
Interview Protocol—Doctoral Level

Name: AKA: D

Well Done

The survey results indicated that the following areas are considered very important by students, and that they are very satisfied with the services as performed. I would like to discuss what it is about the delivery of these services that makes them work well.

- Class size of required classes
- Cost of child care
- Dropping/adding classes
- Obtaining semester/session grades
- Obtaining unofficial transcripts

Not So Well Done

Survey results indicated that the following areas are considered very important by students, but that they are very unsatisfied with the delivery of those services. I would like to discuss how delivery of these services could be improved.

- Availability of parking
- Cost of fees
- Cost of parking
- Cost of tuition

Areas Not Used

Listed below are services that most students indicated they had no basis for rating the satisfaction level of the service. I would like to discuss why students are not using the services. Do they not need the services? Are they not aware of the services? Are the services not offered in a manor in which they can use them?

- Career counseling
- Disabled student services
- Diversity/multicultural services
- Health services
- Job placement services
- Personal counseling
- Veterans' services

Anything you want to add?
Appendix I

Table 4.2 Data by Degree Level
Table 4.2b

Response Percentages and Means for Administrative Services—Bachelor (n=219)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Importance (%)</th>
<th>Satisfaction (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very Unimportant (%)</td>
<td>Unimportant (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registering for Classes</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuition Cost</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fees Cost</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obtaining Grades</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Aid Services</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>11.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer Account Services</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduation Auditing</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admission Process</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get Official Transcript</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drop/Add Classes</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Orientation</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>15.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get Unofficial Transcript</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>14.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus Orientation</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>29.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Each dependent variable in the survey equates to two variables in the statistical data, one for level of importance and one for level of satisfaction. Mean is calculated on a 4.0 scale with 1.0 = very unimportant/very unsatisfied and 4.0 = very important/very satisfied.
Table 4.2m

Response Percentages and Means for Administrative Services—Master (n=258)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Satisfaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very Unimportant (%)</td>
<td>Unimportant (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuition Cost</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registering for Classes</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fees Cost</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obtaining Grades</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Orientation</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer Account Services</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduation Auditing</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admission Process</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get Official Transcript</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>9.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Aid Services</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drop/Add Classes</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>14.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get Unofficial Transcript</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>23.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus Orientation</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>32.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Each dependent variable in the survey equates to two variables in the statistical data, one for level of importance and one for level of satisfaction. Mean is calculated on a 4.0 scale with 1.0 = very unimportant/very unsatisfied and 4.0 = very important/very satisfied.
Table 4.2d
Response Percentages and Means for Administrative Services—Doctoral (n=128)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Satisfaction</th>
<th># That Rated Satisfaction</th>
<th>No Basis For Rating (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very Unimportant (%)</td>
<td>Unimportant (%)</td>
<td>Important (%)</td>
<td>Very Important (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuition Cost</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>28.3</td>
<td>68.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registering for Classes</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>28.2</td>
<td>66.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fees Cost</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>38.8</td>
<td>57.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer Account Services</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>50.4</td>
<td>46.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Orientation</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>38.5</td>
<td>54.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduation Auditing</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>46.9</td>
<td>46.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obtaining Grades</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>45.1</td>
<td>46.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admission Process</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>54.0</td>
<td>37.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get Official Transcript</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>53.3</td>
<td>37.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Aid Services</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>17.9</td>
<td>27.4</td>
<td>49.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drop/Add Classes</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>56.1</td>
<td>30.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get Unofficial Transcript</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>63.9</td>
<td>24.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus Orientation</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>38.8</td>
<td>38.8</td>
<td>15.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Each dependent variable in the survey equates to two variables in the statistical data, one for level of importance and one for level of satisfaction. Mean is calculated on a 4.0 scale with 1.0 = very unimportant/very unsatisfied and 4.0 = very important/very satisfied.
Appendix J

Table 4.8 Data by Degree Level
### Table 4.8b

*Response Percentages and Means for Academic Environment—Bachelor (n=219)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Importance (%)</th>
<th>Satisfaction (%)</th>
<th># That Rated Satisfactory</th>
<th>No Basis For Rating (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very Unimportant</td>
<td>Unimportant</td>
<td>Important</td>
<td>Very Important Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency Courses Offered</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>72.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Times Courses Offered</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>71.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Days Courses Offered</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>30.6</td>
<td>66.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to Advisors</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>39.9</td>
<td>54.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to Faculty</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>55.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Interaction</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>39.5</td>
<td>51.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Facilities</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>51.2</td>
<td>38.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dept Staff Interaction</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>22.4</td>
<td>40.5</td>
<td>34.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Size</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>29.8</td>
<td>389</td>
<td>29.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># Adult in Classes</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>52.4</td>
<td>24.5</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* Each dependent variable in the survey equates to two variables in the statistical data, one for level of importance and one for level of satisfaction. Mean is calculated on a 4.0 scale with 1.0 = very unimportant/very unsatisfied and 4.0 = very important/very satisfied.
Table 4.8m

Response Percentages and Means for Academic Environment—Master (n=258)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Satisfaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very Unimportant (%)</td>
<td>Unimportant (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to Faculty</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Times Courses Offered</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Interaction</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency Courses Offered</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to Advisors</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Days Courses Offered</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>9.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dept Staff Interaction</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>14.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Facilities</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Size</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>19.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># Adult in Classes</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>43.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Each dependent variable in the survey equates to two variables in the statistical data, one for level of importance and one for level of satisfaction. Mean is calculated on a 4.0 scale with 1.0 = very unimportant/very unsatisfied and 4.0 = very important/very satisfied.
Table 4.8d

Response Percentages and Means for Academic Environment—Doctoral (n=128)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Satisfaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very Unimportant (%)</td>
<td>Important (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to Advisors</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>16.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to Faculty</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Interaction</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency Courses Offered</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>16.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Times Courses Offered</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Days Courses Offered</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dept Staff Interaction</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Facilities</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Size</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>24.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># Adult in Classes</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>37.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Each dependent variable in the survey equates to two variables in the statistical data, one for level of importance and one for level of satisfaction. Mean is calculated on a 4.0 scale with 1.0 = very unimportant/very unsatisfied and 4.0 = very important/very satisfied.
Appendix K

Table 4.14 Data by Degree Level
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Satisfaction</th>
<th>Satisfaction Mean</th>
<th># That Rated Satisfactory</th>
<th>No Basis For Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very</td>
<td>Unimportant</td>
<td>Important</td>
<td>Very Important (Mean)</td>
<td>Very Unsatisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Important</td>
<td>Unimportant</td>
<td>Important</td>
<td>Importance Mean</td>
<td>Satisfactory (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchasing Textbooks</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>52.4</td>
<td>44.7</td>
<td>3.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchasing Course Packs</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>52.7</td>
<td>43.9</td>
<td>3.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library Services</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>47.5</td>
<td>43.6</td>
<td>3.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Labs</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>37.7</td>
<td>43.1</td>
<td>3.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Support</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>43.7</td>
<td>34.7</td>
<td>3.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Needs</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>49.0</td>
<td>30.7</td>
<td>3.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutoring Services</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>22.4</td>
<td>39.6</td>
<td>31.8</td>
<td>2.97</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* Each dependent variable in the survey equates to two variables in the statistical data, one for level of importance and one for level of satisfaction. Mean is calculated on a 4.0 scale with 1.0 = very unimportant/very unsatisfied and 4.0 = very important/very satisfied.
Table 4.14m

Response Percentages and Means for Academic Support Services—Master (n=258)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Importance %</th>
<th>Satisfaction %</th>
<th># That Rated Satisfactory</th>
<th>No Basis For Rating %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very Unimportant (%)</td>
<td>Unimportant (%)</td>
<td>Important (%)</td>
<td>Very Important (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library Services</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>35.1</td>
<td>56.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchasing Textbooks</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>51.6</td>
<td>42.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchasing Course Packs</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>51.7</td>
<td>42.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Needs</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>43.7</td>
<td>37.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Support</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>21.3</td>
<td>42.1</td>
<td>35.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Labs</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>37.6</td>
<td>35.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutoring Services</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>42.3</td>
<td>29.7</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Each dependent variable in the survey equates to two variables in the statistical data, one for level of importance and one for level of satisfaction. Mean is calculated on a 4.0 scale with 1.0 = very unimportant/very unsatisfied and 4.0 = very important/very satisfied.
Table 4.14d

*Response Percentages and Means for Academic Support Services—Doctoral (n=128)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Satisfaction</th>
<th>Importance Mean</th>
<th>Satisfaction Mean</th>
<th>% That Rated Satisfactory</th>
<th>% That Rated Unsatisfactory</th>
<th>% That Rated Satisfactory</th>
<th>% That Rated Unsatisfactory</th>
<th># That Rated Satisfactory</th>
<th>% That Rated Unsatisfactory</th>
<th>No Basis For Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Library Services</td>
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<td>27.3</td>
<td>67.8</td>
<td>3.61</td>
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<td>6.2</td>
<td>51.3</td>
<td>42.5</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>6.0</td>
<td>42.7</td>
<td>49.6</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>8.2</td>
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<td>6.4</td>
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<td>9.5</td>
<td>57.8</td>
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<td>3.18</td>
<td>7.5</td>
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<td>54.2</td>
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<td>3.14</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>65.6</td>
<td>16.7</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>22.1</td>
<td>38.5</td>
<td>34.4</td>
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<td>3.0</td>
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<td>74.0</td>
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<td>100</td>
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<td>34.7</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>2.49</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>2.54</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* Each dependent variable in the survey equates to two variables in the statistical data, one for level of importance and one for level of satisfaction. Mean is calculated on a 4.0 scale with 1.0 = very unimportant/very unsatisfied and 4.0 = very important/very satisfied.
Appendix L

Table 4.19 Data Separated by Degree Level
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Satisfaction</th>
<th># That Rated Satisfaction</th>
<th>No Basis For Rating (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very Unimportant (%)</td>
<td>Unimportant (%)</td>
<td>Important (%)</td>
<td>Very Important (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Placement</td>
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<td>16.2</td>
<td>37.7</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>3.7</td>
<td>17.9</td>
<td>43.7</td>
<td>34.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disable Student Services</td>
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<td>25.8</td>
<td>28.0</td>
<td>33.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>27.4</td>
<td>38.7</td>
<td>24.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>28.2</td>
<td>30.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity/Multi-Cultural</td>
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<td>31.7</td>
<td>30.6</td>
<td>23.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Services</td>
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<td>37.7</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td>33.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Each dependent variable in the survey equates to two variables in the statistical data, one for level of importance and one for level of satisfaction. Mean is calculated on a 4.0 scale with 1.0 = very unimportant/very unsatisfied and 4.0 = very important/very satisfied.
Table 4.19m

Response Percentages and Means for Student Support Services—Master Level (n=258)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Satisfaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very Unimportant (%)</td>
<td>Unimportant (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Placement</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>19.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Counseling</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>23.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disable Student Services</td>
<td>17.8</td>
<td>26.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity/Multi-Cultural</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>30.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Counseling</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>35.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veterans Services</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>32.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Services</td>
<td>17.8</td>
<td>38.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Each dependent variable in the survey equates to two variables in the statistical data, one for level of importance and one for level of satisfaction. Mean is calculated on a 4.0 scale with 1.0 = very unimportant/very unsatisfied and 4.0 = very important/very satisfied.
Table 4.19m

Response Percentages and Means for Student Support Services—Doctoral Level (n=128)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Satisfaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very Unimportant (%)</td>
<td>Unimportant (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Placement</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>27.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Services</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>33.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Counseling</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>32.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Counseling</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>40.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity/ Multi-Cultural</td>
<td>21.9</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disable Student Services</td>
<td>25.7</td>
<td>29.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veterans Services</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>36.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Each dependent variable in the survey equates to two variables in the statistical data, one for level of importance and one for level of satisfaction. Mean is calculated on a 4.0 scale with 1.0 = very unimportant/very unsatisfied and 4.0 = very important/very satisfied.
Table 4.25b

Response Percentages and Means for Physical Plant/Facilities—Bachelor Level (n=219)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Importance Mean</th>
<th>Satisfaction Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parking Availability</td>
<td>2.5 3.57</td>
<td>2.0 7.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking Cost</td>
<td>3.0 3.54</td>
<td>4.5 1.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety/Security of Campus</td>
<td>2.0 3.50</td>
<td>3.9 2.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Service Availability</td>
<td>13.4 2.62</td>
<td>28.4 2.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vending Machine Availability</td>
<td>11.4 2.52</td>
<td>37.8 2.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Care Cost</td>
<td>22.1 2.46</td>
<td>33.2 2.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Care Availability</td>
<td>22.2 2.43</td>
<td>32.8 2.18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Each dependent variable in the survey equates to two variables in the statistical data, one for level of importance and one for level of satisfaction. Mean is calculated on a 4.0 scale with 1.0 = very unimportant/very unsatisfied and 4.0 = very important/very satisfied.
Table 4.25m

Response Percentages and Means for Physical Plant/Facilities—Master Level (n=258)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Satisfaction</th>
<th># That Rated Satisfaction</th>
<th>No Basis For Rating (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very Unimportant (%)</td>
<td>Unimportant (%)</td>
<td>Important (%)</td>
<td>Very Important (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety/ Security of Campus</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>34.7</td>
<td>62.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking Availability</td>
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<td>2.4</td>
<td>41.0</td>
<td>54.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking Cost</td>
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<td>5.3</td>
<td>40.2</td>
<td>51.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vending Machine Availability</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>36.3</td>
<td>44.6</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Service Availability</td>
<td>16.8</td>
<td>35.8</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>9.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Care Availability</td>
<td>28.9</td>
<td>30.2</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>15.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Care Cost</td>
<td>29.9</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>16.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Each dependent variable in the survey equates to two variables in the statistical data, one for level of importance and one for level of satisfaction. Mean is calculated on a 4.0 scale with 1.0 = very unimportant/very unsatisfied and 4.0 = very important/very satisfied.
Table 4.25d

Response Percentages and Means for Physical Plant/Facilities—Doctoral Level (n=128)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Satisfaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very Unimportant (%)</td>
<td>Unimportant (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety/ Security of Campus</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking Availability</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking Cost</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>9.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Service Availability</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vending Machine Availability</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>27.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Care Cost</td>
<td>28.0</td>
<td>35.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Care Availability</td>
<td>29.1</td>
<td>37.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Each dependent variable in the survey equates to two variables in the statistical data, one for level of importance and one for level of satisfaction. Mean is calculated on a 4.0 scale with 1.0 = very unimportant/very unsatisfied and 4.0 = very important/very satisfied.
Appendix N

Protocol Approval and Extension Letters
Date: October 17, 2006

To: Louann Bierlein Palmer, Principal Investigator
   Kathy Rix, Student Investigator for dissertation

From: Amy Naugle, Ph.D., Chair

Re: HSIRB Project Number: 06-09-19

This letter will serve as confirmation that your research project entitled “Differences by Degrees: Providing Student Support Services to Adult Students Based on Degree Being Sought” has been approved under the expedited category of review by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board. The conditions and duration of this approval are specified in the Policies of Western Michigan University. You may now begin to implement the research as described in the application.

Please note that you may only conduct this research exactly in the form it was approved. You must seek specific board approval for any changes in this project. You must also seek reapproval if the project extends beyond the termination date noted below. In addition if there are any unanticipated adverse reactions or unanticipated events associated with the conduct of this research, you should immediately suspend the project and contact the Chair of the HSIRB for consultation.

The Board wishes you success in the pursuit of your research goals.

Approval Termination: October 17, 2007