

Improving Online Students' Quality of Relationships, Academic Success, and Overall  
Satisfaction: A Comparative Study between Undergraduates Who Use and Who Do Not Use  
Student Affairs Resources

DISSERTATION

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## **ABSTRACT**

Online education is the fastest-growing option for student seeking completion of a degree from an institution of higher education. Students enjoy the increase pace of the coursework and the autonomy to complete it on their own time, while universities identify online education as a key factor in increasing their enrollment. However, the attrition rates of students seeking a degree through online coursework is much higher than that their on-campus counterparts. With factors such as funding, institutional rankings, and accreditation linked to the retention and graduation of its students, colleges and universities have much to gain by increasing the persistence of their online students.

The existing research on online student persistence is almost exclusively focused on factors that affect their satisfaction and performance in their coursework. These factors include engagement with their peers and faculty and identifying how the coursework aligns with their academic and professional goals. For campus-based students, research identifies that social integration in extracurricular activities traditionally offered by student affairs departments is a key factor in their persistence. However, very little research exists to identify whether online students benefit in similar ways when they utilize student affairs resources. Therefore, this study addressed a gap in research to examine whether utilization of student affairs resources can be a factor in supporting online student persistence and satisfaction.

This study surveyed online undergraduate students at a large, public institution that offers a variety of degree programs in online formats. The data collected from the survey identified students' utilization of student affairs resources, the quality of their interactions with various university constituents, and their satisfaction with their university experience. Combined with demographic data and grade point averages (GPAs), the quantitative analysis identified the

relationships between each of these factors and developed models for predicting online student satisfaction.

The results of this study reveal that utilization of certain student affairs departments can support online students' quality of interactions with their peers, faculty, and university staff, as well as their overall satisfaction with their university experience. However, utilization of student affairs resources also is linked to slightly lower GPAs for online students. The model identified that quality of relationships and utilization of student affairs resources can help predict online student satisfaction.

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## DEDICATION

The completion of this doctoral program was a goal that I almost gave upon during my first semester. However, thanks to many caring friends, family members, and colleagues, I was able to get to the finish line, and I dedicate this dissertation to the many people who helped me through this journey.

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## CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Online education in colleges and universities is the fastest growing option for students seeking completion of a degree. As of 2014, one in seven students in higher education took all of their classes in a web-based format (Allen & Seaman, 2016). According to Nash (2015), the majority of classes taught at institutions of higher education may be delivered online at some point in the future. Students are looking for faster avenues toward degree completion that create less of an interruption in their everyday lives (Nash, 2015). At the same time, colleges and universities identify that online education is a critical component of their long-term strategy to increase enrollment (Allen & Seaman, 2016).

However, students pursuing degrees through online education are persisting at rates 10-20% lower than those who are taking courses in face-to-face classrooms (Angelino & Natvig, 2009). Considering how institutional funding, ranking, and accreditation are linked to retention, colleges and universities should identify ways to decrease attrition rates for web-based learners (Poll, Widen, & Weller, 2014; Sanford & Hunter, 2011). Among factors that reduce online attrition is student engagement (Deschaine & Whale, 2017; Kizilcec & Halawa, 2015), which can be described as the amount of interest, passion, and connection students have with their education or in the learning process (Angelino & Natvig, 2009).

Factors that influence student engagement include the relevance of the curriculum to the student's goals, the challenge the coursework provides, the quality and frequency of feedback from faculty, and a collaborative and supportive environment that encourages student interaction (Deschaine & Whale, 2017). The majority of research on student engagement in online education focuses on strategies for faculty to use within their classroom management software (Angelino & Natvig, 2009; Bower, 2001; James, 2016; Laing & Laing, 2015; Traynor-Nilsen, 2017).

However, Tinto (Tinto, 2007; Tinto, 2012) demonstrated that student retention is supported not only through student engagement inside of the classroom, but also outside of the classroom. Extracurricular programs such as involvement in student organizations, mentoring programs, student activities, and learning communities can support social integration in an educational setting and can increase students' persistence in their degree programs (Laing & Laing, 2015; Tinto, 2012).

In campus-based classroom settings, departments in student affairs divisions provide many of the programs and services offered to support students' social integration. Research has shown that when engaging in student affairs activities, on-campus students are more likely to persist in academic programs, achieve better performance, and graduate in a timely manner (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Zacherman & Foubert, 2014). Researchers (American Public University System, 2017; FIU Online, 2017; University of Illinois Springfield, 2017) have indicated that many student affairs resources, such as student organizations, leadership programs, community service initiatives, and wellness programs, can be translated into offerings for online learners to improve their level of engagement. However, it remains unclear whether online students who use these student affairs resources are more likely to have a higher level of achievement and satisfaction with the university when compared with their peers who do not use these resources. Thus, the purpose of this dissertation study is to investigate online students' utilization of student affairs resources and the extent to which it impacts their college experience, achievement, and satisfaction. The findings of the study could deepen student affairs professionals' understanding of college experiences of online students, and ultimately better prepared them to meet the needs of this unique population of the students.

### **Statement of the Problem**

As online degree offerings continue to grow, institutions of higher education need to address the high rates of attrition for students in these programs. The reduction in enrollment from the high dropout rates costs universities financially through the loss of tuition revenue, and institutional prestige is diminished when low retention rates adversely affect their national rankings. The challenges that cause these high dropout rates are attributable in some cases to students' poor preparation and inaccurate expectations for online learning (Angelino & Natvig, 2009), but online students also struggle with the lack of connection and engagement with their faculty and peers due to the low levels of interaction offered by online learning environments (Carruth, Broussard, Waldmeier, Gauthier, & Mixon, 2010; Cho, 2012).

Traditional campus-based students who experience a lack of connection in their educational environment typically find support from the programs and services offered by student affairs departments. However, practitioners in student affairs departments are not equipped to meet the needs of online students, either from lack of institutional attention, lack of awareness of these students' needs, or lack of resources (Cabellon & Payne-Kirchmeier, 2016). Without a thorough understanding of online students' needs and proper training in meeting those needs, student affairs professionals are not positioned to provide greater support to increase the persistence and completion of web-based learners.

### **Purpose of the Study**

As universities continue to grow their online programs and increase their numbers of students in them, a major point of emphasis for leaders on those campuses will be identifying strategies to retain these students. Students in the process of completing online degrees may benefit from utilizing the programs and services provided by student affairs departments, but empirical research is needed to provide evidence that these services do support online students

learning and improve their college experiences. Therefore, the purpose of this dissertation study is to investigate online students' utilization of student affairs resources and its impact on their college experience, academic performance, and satisfaction.

Results from this quantitative study provide administrators and researchers with a deeper understanding of the types of programs, services, and resources that are being utilized or could be utilized by online students. Additionally, this study shows what value these students place on student affairs resources. The information gathered will identify if students who utilize those resources found them to be helpful in their educational engagement, contributed to the students' success in their coursework, and ultimately added to their satisfaction with their online education experience.

### **Research Questions**

In this study, the following research questions were answered:

- 1) What are online students' awareness, utilization, and perceptions of importance of student affairs resources?
- 2) Is there a difference in the quality of online students' interactions with peers, academic advisors, faculty, student affairs staff, and other university staff between those who utilize and who do not utilize student affairs resources?
- 3) Is there a difference in online students' satisfaction with their college experience between those who utilize and who do not utilize student affairs resources?
- 4) Is there a difference in online students' grade point average (GPA) between those who utilize and who do not utilize student affairs resources?
- 5) To what extent are online students' background characteristics, utilization of student affairs resources, quality of interactions, and GPA related to overall satisfaction with their

university experience?

### **Methods**

This quantitative research study analyzed data captured from a survey administered to online students in April 2019. The sample included 537 respondents from a large, public, research university in the southern United States. The survey was adapted from the “Student Affairs Survey,” initially developed by the site institution’s division of student affairs, and respondents were assessed in a variety of areas, including 1) Engagement and Skill Development, 2) Quality of Interactions, 3) Satisfaction with the University, 4) Utilization of Resources, and 5) Background Characteristics. Analysis included descriptive statistics to answer Research Question 1, independent samples *t*-tests to answer Research Questions 2-4, and sequential multiple regression to answer Research Question 5. The methods for this study are explored further in Chapter 3.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework of this study is Vincent Tinto’s (2007; 2012) theory of student integration. Tinto’s work examined how a combination of academic and social integration in the college experience supported campus-based students’ persistence toward graduation (2007). Their integration into both settings happened through a combination of their classroom experiences and their involvement in extracurricular activities and organizations. As the literature review in Chapter 2 shows, previous research on persistence of online students has focused almost exclusively on integration that occurs in their coursework. While the majority of online students’ connections with peers and faculty occurs through their online learning management system, academic and social integration for these students also can occur outside of the classroom. This study investigated whether Tinto’s theory may extend to online students, and



more specifically whether increased social integration in the campus community could benefit their persistence.

### **Significance of the Study**

This study provides contributions to the broader study of student engagement in higher education. The majority of theories related to student engagement are focused on campus-based students and how student affairs programs and services support their holistic needs inside and outside of the classroom. This study may help expand those theories to either include the factors that support online student success or introduce new elements related to using technology to improve student persistence. Additionally, most of the research focused on online student success and engagement is related to the students' experiences in the confines of their coursework. This study introduces new information to researchers studying online student success and expand their understanding of factors that can influence student engagement and persistence in online settings.

Likewise, this study is also significant to practitioners in the field of student affairs in higher education. The field as a whole focuses primarily on the needs of campus-based students and neglects the needs of online students. As the popularity of online education grows, administrators in student affairs should assess the needs of the online students on their campus and provide support for those students' academic success, personal development and wellness, and sense of connection to the institution. If student affairs departments can help support the needs of online students, those students may be more likely to persist in their degree program and grow in their affinity to their institution. Long term, the improved persistence rates of online learners would benefit university rankings and prestige, and the connectedness students feel toward their alma mater may result in benefits to the university's development efforts.

Additionally, this study is significant for policy-makers in institutions of higher education. College and university leaders have a great interest in the persistence and graduation of online learners due to the impacts those factors have on funding, accreditation, and national rankings. The study provides findings that may guide higher education institutions to adopt new approaches to support web-based learners and may result in the development of new positions, departments, and services focused on online student success.

### **Definition of Key Terms**

Terms utilized in the research of online students and engagement in student affairs can vary from study to study. For the purposes of this study, those terms will be defined in the following ways:

**Online education** is a mode of educational instruction in which all of the educational materials, course communication, and assignments are provided over the Internet, usually through a learning management system (LMS) such as Blackboard or Moodle (Gutierrez, 2004). In this dissertation, the terms “online” and “web-based” are used interchangeably.

**Online students** are those who take all of the courses for their degree plan using the online format of education. This population does not include students who take some online courses while completing the majority of their courses in traditional, campus-based classrooms. Nor does the term “online students” refer to those who participate in blended degree programs which include both on-campus and online courses (Lim, Morris, & Kupritz, 2007).

**Student affairs programs and services** include many of the resources provided by colleges and universities to support holistic growth in its students. The departments commonly considered to provide these resources include student life (e.g. activities, organizations, Greek life), residence life, leadership and service learning offices, new student and family departments,

health and wellness areas, dean of students offices, career development centers, multicultural and international programs, and services for students with disabilities (Schuh, Jones, & Torres, 2016)

**Student engagement** for this study is focused on the feelings of connection, passion, and interest a student feels toward the learning environment. This includes peer-to-peer engagement, peer-to-faculty interactions, involvement in programs and organizations related to their interests, engaging civically in the campus and community, and feelings of connectedness to the institution (Angelino & Natvig, 2009).

### **Summary**

Online education is the fastest growing form of coursework in higher education. Students looking for faster and more convenient avenues for degree completion are attracted to the autonomy of completing their degrees in environments and timeframes that they choose. However, the lack of face-to-face connections can make online coursework a lonely experience for those students, and the low level of engagement can often lead to high attrition rates for online degree programs. Colleges and universities must find solutions to support the success, persistence, and completion of these learners.

Student affairs departments may be the answer. While student affairs practitioners have historically focused on traditional campus-based students, their expertise in developing engaging student environments could translate to online coursework with some creative usage of technology. However, student affairs staff have not traditionally kept up with innovative trends in technology and are unprepared to meet the needs of these students. In this study I will highlight the programs and services that Students Affairs administrators provide and investigate how those resources may support online learners in their persistence and success.

## **CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Introduction**

With the rise in popularity of online learning in colleges and universities, substantial research has been conducted to understand the needs of online students and the best practices that support their success (Allen & Seaman, 2016; Angelino & Natvig, 2009; Bozarth, Chapman, & LaMonica, 2004; Cho, 2012; Laing & Laing, 2015). Likewise, student affairs' contributions to college student success and persistence have also been widely studied. In order to understand how student affairs might best support online students, we must first understand the needs of online learners, the practices currently being employed to support them, and the best practices of student affairs administrators that could be utilized in online education. This literature review will focus on four main areas: needs and challenges of web-based learners, factors that influence online student satisfaction, engagement in face-to-face settings, and engagement in online settings.

### **Needs and Challenges of Online Learners**

Online students face unique challenges compared to their peers in face-to-face classrooms. The lack of visual interactions with their classmates and faculty can make web-based courses feel lonely (Cho, 2012). In other cases, students' lack of technical expertise can inhibit their ability to connect to course materials and complete assignments (Angelino & Natvig, 2009; Bozarth et al., 2004; Cho, 2012). Many other online students underestimate the rigor or the daily nature of online coursework, and they struggle with managing their time and staying motivated (Angelino & Natvig, 2009; Cho, 2012; Laing & Laing, 2015; Pittenger & Doering, 2010).

### **Interactions with Classmates and Faculty**

Interactions with faculty and classmates can be challenging in online settings. Students

may never see or converse with their peers outside of the course's learning management system. Mahle (2011) studied how different levels of interactivity may impact students' motivation and success in online courses. In the study, students who experienced high levels of interactivity learned more than those with low levels of interactivity, and they rated higher in confidence, satisfaction, and understanding of the relevance of the coursework to their professional goals (Mahle, 2011). Students in online settings value feedback from faculty and interactivity in the classroom setting (Mahle, 2011). While some students choose online education for its flexibility to fit into their busy life schedule, this research supports the idea that they also find enjoyment and value in interactive experiences with other students.

Likewise, Lundberg, and Sheridan (2015) studied the responses of 812 online students who completed the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). The students' responses related to engagement were used to identify what relationships existed between online learning, students' satisfaction with their social relationships, and their university's emphasis on diversity. The analysis of the NSSE data revealed that a supportive campus environment and a school's emphasis on interactions with diversity were the strongest predictors of learning in online environments (Lundberg & Sheridan, 2015). This research supports faculty members' use of discussion boards, especially to encourage conversations that highlight the diversity of the students' in their online courses. This research may also provide evidence that student affairs administrators could support online student success by contributing to the supportive campus environment and exploration of diverse issues that encourages learning.

In addition to their interactions with peers, online students' interactions with their faculty are also important. In a study comparing students in hybrid and online sections of the same course, Lim, Morris, and Kupritz (2007) found that while the delivery format made no difference

in student learning, online learners identified experiencing less learning support from their faculty than those in hybrid classes. Additionally, hybrid class participants understood instructions better than online learners (Lim et al., 2007). Faculty for web-based courses must make extra efforts to engage their students and support their persistence. The authors suggested several methods to increase online learner satisfaction and performance, including providing feedback quickly and frequently, checking student understanding often, updating students on their progress, and using humor to help students feel refreshed and engaged (Lim et al., 2007).

### **Technical Competency**

Online students often underestimate the technical understanding required for web-based courses (Bozarth et al., 2004; Carruth et al., 2010; Deschaine & Whale, 2017). A study (Carruth et al., 2010) of new online students in an online nursing program revealed some students struggled with tasks as simple as attaching documents to emails while others dealt with challenges of navigating the learning management software (LMS). As a result, the authors developed and implemented an online orientation course to support students' technical competency, and by acclimating students to these practices in a "low stakes" environment, students gained confidence and avoided the technical challenges of online coursework in classes that carried more weight in their degree completion (Carruth et al., 2010).

Deschaine and Whale (2017) also studied how technical competency was related to student success. Their study reviewed students' discussion board posts and end-of-class surveys to see how differences in technical aptitude affected student engagement and success. Their results indicated that students' technological differences impacted faculty's instructional practices (Deschaine & Whale, 2017). Students who had stronger backgrounds in technology performed better and more easily adapted new technology into their coursework (Deschaine &

Whale, 2017). Additionally, the authors identified a new challenge for online students. They found that while increasing students' technical capabilities may increase engagement, some students may be limited by their access to or their ability to use more advanced software (Deschaine & Whale, 2017). Faculty and staff should be attentive to the needs of online learners and be trained to support online students' needs.

### **Other Challenges for Online Students**

Another common setback for online students is a lack of understanding of the time and effort required to succeed in online coursework. Bozarth, Chapman, and LaMonica (2004) conducted a needs assessment of online students in the development of an online orientation course. In addition to the struggles with technology discussed above, their study identified that students underestimated the need to reconnect with their online coursework on a daily basis (Bozarth et al., 2004). Additionally, some students were unprepared for the rigor and challenge of their classes (Bozarth et al., 2004). One of the other findings from the study revealed that some students felt faculty needed more training in how to support online students (Bozarth et al., 2004).

Similarly, Cho (2012) interviewed faculty, observed online courses, and reviewed student evaluations to identify needs for another online orientation program. Like other studies, Cho's (2012) research revealed that online students needed an understanding of the technical competence and rigor of their courses. However, the study's results also identified that online students needed to understand the best practices for interacting with their peers on discussion boards, how to approach group work and other assignments, and how to seek help from campus resources when necessary (Cho, 2012). The feedback from students who completed the orientation stated that their new understanding of what is required for success in online education

was the most valuable part of the program (Cho, 2012).

### **Factors that Influence Online Student Satisfaction**

The challenges described earlier can frustrate online students and lead many of them to the decision to drop out of their coursework. Therefore, increasing student satisfaction may support persistence of students who take web-based courses. Tactics related to increasing student motivation (Chen & Jang, 2010) and interactivity (Kuo, Walker, Belland, & Schroder, 2013) have been identified as powerful factors in increasing student satisfaction.

Chen and Jang (2010) studied what aspects of online learning supported student motivation. Their study focused on Self-Determination Theory, which states that motivation is dependent on a person's satisfaction of three basic human needs: autonomy, relatedness, and competence (Selfdeterminationtheory.org, 2016). They found that when online students felt these needs were met, their motivation was positively affected. Chen and Yang (2010) identified several practices that faculty can adopt to improve student satisfaction, such as providing a meaningful rationale as to why the coursework is important, build interpersonal relationships that emphasize students' choice and flexibility, and acknowledge negativity associated with arduous activities. These findings can relate to potential student affairs support for online students' satisfaction. Enhancing feelings of relatedness is a key focus for student affairs professionals and their programs. Additionally, support services such as counseling, disability resources, and wellness programming could support students' sense of competence in their educational pursuits.

Expanding on the concept of relatedness, Kuo et al. (2013) studied how different types of interactions that online students experience (learner-learner interactions, learner-instructor interactions, or learner-content interactions) is predictive of student satisfaction. In their findings, all three types of interactions were correlated with student satisfaction, with learner-content



interactions being the strongest predictor and learner-learner being the poorest (Kuo et al., 2013). The authors identified that learner-learner interactions have previously been identified as a strong predictor of online student satisfaction, and they reasoned that the accelerated nature of summer coursework provided fewer opportunities for the students to interact, reducing the learner-learner interactions on satisfaction (Kuo et al., 2013). If true, the learner-learner interactions may need to occur in other environments than the online learning "classroom," which is where student affairs departments may be able to provide additional support.

### **College Student Engagement**

This dissertation investigates how student affairs practitioners can support the persistence and success of online students. The profession of student affairs supports the holistic development of college students, and throughout its history, staff in this field have worked to improve the persistence and success of campus-based learners. These university administrators have been important in promoting student engagement in services and activities, and understanding how they have successfully influenced student engagement in face-to-face settings is key to understanding how their work can translate to supporting students in on-line settings.

### **Engagement in Face-to-Face Settings**

Student affairs professionals provide campus activities, help establish and maintain student organizations, deliver valuable services, and support students as they deal with the challenges of living independently from their parents for the first time. student affairs practitioners mostly serve students in face-to-face settings, and decades of research (Astin, 1992; Kuh, 2008; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Tinto, 2007; Tinto, 2012) have been conducted to assess the impact they have on student retention.

In the three editions of their seminal work, *How College Affects Students*, Pascarella and

Terenzini (2005; Mayhew et al., 2016) gathered research on topics such as students' educational accomplishments, moral growth, outcomes after college, and the ways students change during their college years. Among the research they gathered on social and co-curricular engagement were findings on first-year experience programs, and the evidence reveals a correlation between these programs and students' motivation in college (Mayhew et al., 2016). Similarly, studies related to involvement and engagement found that students experience gains in learning when they engage in co-curricular activities (Mayhew et al., 2016). Also, the research gathered on attendance at cultural events revealed positive relationships on students' understanding in a variety of subject areas (Mayhew et al., 2016). Moreover, studies focused on socialization programs and self-management initiatives offered by student affairs departments revealed a positive relationship between students' participation in stress and anxiety reduction activities and their course grades (Mayhew et al., 2016). The evidence from the research gathered by Pascarella, Terenzini, and their colleagues displays the wide array of ways that student affairs programs and services support on-campus student success.

In another study on the link between co-curricular engagement and academic performance, Zacherman and Foubert (2014) reviewed NSSE data to examine how GPA was linked to campus involvement. In their research, they found that students' GPAs rose with one to five hours of campus involvement per week and was still positive up to ten hours of involvement per week (Zacherman & Foubert, 2014). Most opportunities for campus involvement were likely established and maintained by student affairs staff, and when students engage an appropriate amount of time in campus life, their academic performance improves.

While student affairs staff do much to support on-campus learners, most are unprepared to serve the needs of online students (Cabellon & Payne-Kirchmeier, 2016). In a historical

review of research, Cabellon and Payne-Kirchmeier (2016) identified that Students Affairs practitioners and researchers have wrestled with questions about their roles in supporting online students as early as 2005, but little progress has been made in answering those questions in more than a decade. The field as a whole has been slow to utilize new technologies, such as social media sites and mobile device usage (Cabellon & Payne-Kirchmeier, 2016). Some student affairs practitioners have adapted to using these new technologies for marketing and transition programs, but very few have explored ways to increase student engagement with technology (Cabellon & Payne-Kirchmeier, 2016).

Similarly, the future practitioners in student affairs are not being adequately trained to support online learners. Calhoun, Santos Green, and Burke (2017) researched student affairs professional preparation programs to identify how graduate programs prepare future student affairs professionals to serve online learners. According to their findings, student affairs preparation programs are not focusing on online students and engaging with technology, and most of them use very little technology in their own pedagogy to give their students an experience with coursework that is similar to online education (Calhoun et al., 2017). This research provides further evidence that student affairs professionals are not trained to support online student success.

Likewise, the research from Cabellon and Payne-Kirchmeier (2016), as well as the study by Calhoun, Santos Green, and Burke (2017) addressed the standards provided to student affairs practitioners from their professional associations. Unfortunately, neither of the two main student affairs professional associations, Student Affairs Professionals in Higher Education (NASPA) and College Student Educators International (ACPA), nor the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) provides clear expectations for support of online learners

(Cabellon & Payne-Kirchmeier, 2016; Calhoun et al., 2017). Both organizations and the CAS Professional Standards for Higher Education address technology as a core competency of the profession (Calhoun et al., 2017), but very few substantial professional development opportunities are provided related to technology or support for online education (Cabellon & Payne-Kirchmeier, 2016).

### **Engagement in Online Settings**

Current research on the topic of online student engagement focuses on how students interact with their faculty, peers, and coursework within the learning management system. While most student affairs programs and services are provided outside of the classroom setting, practitioners in the field can learn much from the research of online education to apply to their work.

Traynor-Nilsen's (2017) review of the literature on increasing student engagement in online settings provides several strategies and best practices for faculty who teach web-based students. The common factors she found in current research include:

1. Utilizing synchronous learning environments when possible
2. Assigning group projects
3. Developing a calendar for students that expect daily interactions
4. Providing training sessions to familiarize students with the learning management software
5. Displaying competence using the class's online interfaces
6. Getting to know students in the class
7. Offering online tutoring. (Traynor-Nilsen, 2017)

Online orientation programs facilitated by student affairs practitioners could support the training

sessions necessary to help students be successful in their classroom interfaces. Additionally, student affairs administrators enjoy opportunities to interact with students, and they would likely be attracted to synchronous programming opportunities to interact with online learners.

Additionally, James (2016) developed a study that may be most relatable to student affairs' work in supporting online student engagement. In this study, students used gaming principles in class to complete assignments using Google Hangouts and Second Life, a virtual reality world in which students completed activities for the course (James, 2016). The virtual face-to-face interactions, teamwork, and games utilized in the course all supported student satisfaction, engagement, and perceived learning in online courses (James, 2016). Student affairs practitioners often use "games" (e.g., icebreakers and team-building activities) to teach lessons and enhance student engagement, and this research identifies that the same behaviors can support online students as well.

Though less similar to student affairs work, Kearns' (2012) study summarized the most common online course activities that foster student engagement, including discussion board posts and responses, group projects, and collaborative writing assignments. However, her study revealed that simply implementing group activities does not encourage the types of interactions that students crave (Kearns, 2012). Through the study, Kearns (2012) found that certain practices may improve student engagement, such as dividing large assignments into phases to give timely feedback to students throughout the process, using synchronous technologies when appropriate to conduct class activities or meetings, and using peer-assessment strategies that foster community within the class. Student affairs practitioners could utilize many of these practices in supporting online students. For instance, in developing the curriculum for an online leadership development program, the practices of using synchronous technologies and implementing peer-

assessment strategies would be effective in helping students understand and implement the desired leadership practices.

Clarke's (2011) research supports the concept that mere implementation of online group work does not necessarily result in student satisfaction. In her study, Clarke (2011) assessed how student learning, writing skills, and satisfaction were affected by replacing essay assignments with discussion board conversations and collaborative writing assignments. The findings of the study revealed that students were confused by the assignments and their discussion board participation was very uneven (Clarke, 2011). As students began to understand the nature of the coursework, their satisfaction within the course improved, but the retention rate for the course did not improve compared to previous semesters (Clarke, 2011). This study emphasizes that student engagement strategies in online settings needs to be purposeful, clear, and valuable to the student to be successful in improving student satisfaction and persistence.

In conclusion, this literature review outlined the challenges that online students face that often lead to attrition, such as their struggles with the technical and personal demands of their coursework, as well as the lack of interactions with their peers or faculty. However, when online students' needs for interaction and engagement are met, they are more motivated to persist in their coursework. Student affairs practitioners are key players in supporting on-campus student persistence, but they lack the expertise, training, and experience to support online learners in similar ways. The research on web-based student engagement is focused almost exclusively on their experiences in their coursework, and a gap in the literature exists pertaining to how co-curricular engagement may support online students' engagement, satisfaction, and success in their education.

### **Theoretical Foundation**

Vincent Tinto's (2007; 2012) theory of student integration is the foundation for this study. Tinto's original work studied the reasons for college student dropout, and he concluded that student persistence was contingent upon their integration into the university both academically and socially (2007). The student's academic integration was established through their performance on assignments and their intellectual development, while their social integration stemmed from their interactions with their peers, faculty, and university staff (Tinto, 2007). Students' integration into both settings takes place not only within their classroom environments, but also through extracurricular activities and organizations (Tinto, 2007). When these conditions were met, students were more likely to demonstrate a commitment to their academic goals and their chosen institution (Tinto, 2007).

As online education has grown, researchers who were focused on student engagement in online settings studied almost exclusively whether online learners engaged with their faculty, other students, and the curriculum within the learning management system used for coursework (Deschaine & Whale, 2017; Günüç & Kuzu, 2014; Kahn, Everington, Kelm, Reid, & Watkins, 2017). Yet, despite this research, the dropout rate of online learners is higher than for their on-campus counterparts (Angelino & Natvig, 2009). Therefore, following Tinto's theory, research should extend to studying how increased social integration in the campus community could benefit the persistence of online students. Therefore, in this study, I used Tinto's theory as a guide in the selection of survey variables related to the co-curricular engagement of online learners.

### **Chapter Summary**

After a review of the literature related to online students, a great deal of study has been focused on the factors that influence student performance and satisfaction through their

coursework. Online students experience a variety of challenges including social connections, technical competency, time management, and preparedness for their coursework. Meanwhile, other factors have been shown to support online students, including faculty responsiveness and the connection between their coursework and career goals. Likewise, much attention has been given to studying how engagement with student services and student life opportunities is linked to increased success for campus-based students. However, very little research has focused on whether online students might also benefit and find greater success through engagement with those aspects of the university experience. Therefore, the theoretical framework provides a lens to see if engagement outside of coursework supports online student success in similar ways as their on-campus counterparts.



## **CHAPTER 3. METHODS**

### **Chapter Overview**

This study utilized quantitative methods to examine the relationship between online students' utilization of student affairs resources and their success, their quality of relationships with other university constituents, and their satisfaction with the university experience. This chapter includes a review of the research design, data collection, and analytical procedures. In addition, it includes a discussion of the limitations of this study.

### **Research Questions**

- 1) What are online students' awareness, utilization, and perceptions of importance of student affairs resources?
- 2) Is there a difference in the quality of online students' interactions with peers, academic advisors, faculty, student affairs staff, and other university staff between those who utilize and who do not utilize student affairs resources?
- 3) Is there a difference in online students' satisfaction with their college experience between those who utilize and who do not utilize student affairs resources?
- 4) Is there a difference in online students' grade point average (GPA) between those who utilize and who do not utilize student affairs resources?
- 5) To what extent are online students' background characteristics, utilization of student affairs resources, quality of interactions, and GPA related to overall satisfaction with their university experience?

### **Research Design**

The design of this quantitative research study was ex post facto, which is designed to examine outcomes to predictors, rather than from predictors to outcomes (Light, Singer, &

Willett, 1990, p. 135). To collect data from online students, I used a survey adapted from the site institution's division of student affairs. Coupled with demographic data and GPA provided by the site institution, the study examined online students' utilization of student affairs resources, quality of interactions with various university constituents, academic success, and overall satisfaction with the university experience.

### **Research Site**

In this study, I focused on students from a large, public, research university in the southern United States, hereafter referred to as UVW. UVW serves over 10,000 online undergraduate students annually in various disciplines, such as nursing, education, business, social work, and criminal justice, but the nursing program accounts for over 90% of the online student population. UVW is ranked as one of the most ethnically diverse institutions in the U.S., recognized as a Hispanic-serving institution, and sits among the nation's leaders in graduating African-American students. The ethnic breakdown of the university includes students in the following categories of race: White (38.5%), Hispanic/Latino (26.2%), Black (14.6%), Asian (11.3%), international students (4.1%), and small percentages of other ethnicities.

The Division of Student Affairs at UVW developed a strategic plan in 2019, which included a theme related to online students. Specifically, the plan stated two goals related to online learners: 1) conduct a comprehensive assessment to determine the needs of online students, and 2) increase opportunities for online students to engage in services and programs (Division of Student Affairs, 2019). The desire of the institution's Division of Student Affairs to assess the needs of their online students influenced the nature of the survey instrument, which is discussed in the next section.

### **Population, Sample, and Data Collection**

The population of the study were all online undergraduate students enrolled in the spring 2019 term at UVW ( $N = 11,324$ ). After receiving approval from the Institutional Review Board and the Office of Legal Affairs at UVW (see Appendix A), I received email addresses of these online students from the Office of University Analytics. In April 2019, I sent an email invitation (see Appendix B) to all the students to respond to an online survey questionnaire, which is discussed in detail in the next section. Of the 11,324 online students who were invited, 537 students responded to the survey. Therefore, the sample of the study was 537 students, for a response rate of 4.74%. Given the length of the survey, the investigator offered a lottery for ten \$10 Amazon gift cards to incentivize the completion of the entire survey.

### **Survey Instrument**

The survey instrument (see Appendix C) was adapted from the “Student Affairs Survey” (SAS) developed by the Division of Student Affairs at UVW. The SAS examines students’ engagement and its effects on their development of skills, their satisfaction and commitment to degree completion, students’ perspective of importance and satisfaction with student affairs resources, and their frequency of utilizing services and attending activities offered by the Division. The SAS was tailored slightly for the purposes of this study, and survey items were added to focus on students’ quality of interactions with other students, faculty, and staff. Some items in the survey were included to support the Division of Student Affairs’ strategic planning goal of conducting a comprehensive assessment of online students’ needs, even though they did not directly answer the research questions in this study.

The instrument was delivered using Qualtrics. Students were provided three weeks to complete the survey, and reminder emails were delivered every seven-to-ten days to encourage participation. Survey results were matched to the demographic data in the data file provided by

University Analytics via students' email addresses. The combined data were loaded into SPSS for coding and analysis.

### **Engagement and Skill Development**

This section of the survey included 12 items to assess students' level of participation in campus activities, their motivation for participating, and their perception of how their skills have improved because of their participation. The nine items focused on skill development were measured on a five-point scale (*1 = no basis to judge, 2 = not at all, 3 = slightly, 4 = somewhat, 5 = moderately*). Respondents were only asked these nine questions if they identified that they had ever been involved in organized campus activities as an online student.

### **Quality of Interactions**

Students' level of engagement with students, faculty, and staff was assessed by five items in the survey. The items asked students to describe their quality of interactions with fellow students, academic advisors, faculty, and two types of university staff: those from student affairs departments and others from enrollment management departments. A seven-point scale (*1 = extremely poor, 2 = very poor, 3 = poor, 4 = fair, 5 = good, 6 = very good, 7 = excellent*) was used to measure students' quality of interactions with each population.

### **Satisfaction with the University**

The section of the survey focused on students' satisfaction with the university was assessed by eight items. These questions included statements, such as "I have a sense of pride" in the institution, "I am confident that I made the right decision in choosing this University," and "Overall, I am satisfied with my experience" at the institution. These items were assessed on a five-point scale (*1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree*).

## **Utilization of Resources**

This section of the survey included 20 items that assessed students' frequency of utilizing resources in various student affairs departments. Two of the items focused on disability services, with one inviting students to identify whether they have a documented disability and how often they utilize disability accommodations in their classes. The latter was assessed on a four-point scale (*1 = I have never utilized accommodations in my classes; 2 = I do not currently use accommodations, but have in the past; 3 = I utilize accommodations in some of my classes; 4 = I utilize accommodations in all of my classes*).

The other 18 items in this section assessed students' utilization of departmental resources and attendance at campus events on a seven-point scale. The scale also assessed students' awareness of the department if they had never used its resources in the past (*1 = not aware of this department/event, 2 = aware of this department/event but never used/attended, 3 = I have used/attended this department/event once, 4 = almost never use/attend, 5 = use/attend 2-3 times per semester, 6 = use/attend 2-3 times per month, 7 = use/attend 2-3 times per week*).

## **Background Characteristics**

In addition to the demographic data provided in the data file from University Analytics, questions related to students' background characteristics were included in the survey. These items included veteran status, students' living situation and distance from campus, first-generation student status, and employment status.

An expert review was utilized to validate the survey. The director of assessment, planning, and special projects and Vice President of Student Affairs at UVW reviewed the survey to ensure that each item was clear and consistent, as well as to ensure that the survey supported both the goals of this study and the Division's strategic plan.

## **Data Source and Analysis**

I used data drawn from both students' administrative information and their responses to the survey questionnaire. A unique dataset was created, which included students' demographic background characteristics (i.e., gender, race/ethnicity, age), enrollment status (part-time or full-time), academic degree plan, grade point average (GPA), and their responses to the survey questions. Data were uploaded into IBM's Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for analysis. This section outlines the procedures that were used to understand the sample and answer the research questions.

### **Descriptive Statistics**

Descriptive analyses were first conducted to provide an overview of the sample. Demographic frequencies were calculated for gender, race/ethnicity, age, veteran status, first-generation student status, and transfer student status. Additionally, frequencies for online students' on-campus or off-campus housing status, as well as their home's distance from campus, were calculated. These variables helped identify what percentage of students might have access to campus-based resources, if desired. Academic variables were also included in the descriptive statistics, including frequencies of enrollment status (full-time or part-time), employment status, and academic degree program. Finally, the descriptive statistics section included frequencies of students' reasons for participation in campus programs, perceived benefits of their participation, and their sources of information about those programs.

In addition, descriptive analyses were conducted to answer the first research question, which relates to online students' awareness and usage of student affairs resources, as well as the students' perceptions of the importance of each of these resources. To answer this research question, frequencies were calculated for student's awareness that each student affairs

department exists and their utilization of its resources. If respondents identified as having a disability, frequencies were calculated for those students' use of academic accommodations. Finally, online students' perceptions of student life opportunities were calculated with frequencies calculated for the level of importance students placed on each activity.

### **Independent Samples *t*-tests**

The second research question explored differences in online students' quality of interactions with various university groups (i.e., fellow students, academic advisors, faculty members, student affairs staff, and other university staff) between those who utilized and those who did not utilize different student affairs resources. To address this question, independent samples *t*-tests were performed with quality of interactions with each group investigated individually across all student affairs resources.

The third and fourth research questions examined online students' GPA and satisfaction with their university experience, respectively. Again, independent samples *t*-tests were used to answer these questions. In each question, the dependent variables of GPA and satisfaction with the university experience were compared between those who used student affairs resources and those who did not, and both dependent variables were explored across all student affairs services.

### **Sequential Multiple Regression**

The final research question investigated to what extent background characteristics, use of student affairs resources, quality of interactions, and GPA are related to online students' satisfaction with their university experience. To answer this question, a sequential multiple regression analysis was utilized. Two models were developed, with the first focused solely on background characteristics, while the second model added the other predictor variables.

### **Limitations of the Study**

As with all research, interpretation of the study results is subject to limitations. First, UVW has other online programs, but the vast majority of students in this study were nursing students. Also, the degree plans in this program are on an accelerated track, in which all courses are eight weeks long. The nature of accelerated classes may deter students from making significant connections with fellow students, faculty, or staff members (Kuo et al., 2013), as well as limit students' ability to utilize student affairs resources. These factors may have had an effect on the results.

Second, the response rate of the study was low, although the incentives were provided to online students. As the students who did not respond to the survey may be systematically different from the respondents, the findings of the study may introduce bias into discussion.

Next, the Division of Student Affairs at UVW does not currently cater its resources for online students, and in some cases, the division requires online students to pay an additional fee to utilize resources from certain departments (i.e., Campus Recreation, Career Development Center, Student Health Services). As a result, some online students may choose not to utilize these services or may not realize that these services are available to them. Additionally, the resources that are available to online students are generally the same that are offered to on-campus students. Therefore, in most cases, the student would be required to live locally to take advantage of them. Other institutions with large online populations may have a more developed plan for engaging online learners with student affairs resources or maybe further along in the development of resources distinctly designed for web-based learners. As a result, studies conducted in these institutions may have very different findings of online students' usage and experiences of student affairs resources.



Another limitation of this study is its short-term nature. This research study examined online students' behaviors at a single point in time in spring 2019. A longitudinal approach may have identified other results, including how web-based learners may utilize certain resources at different points in time. Additionally, a longitudinal approach may have shown relationships between students' length of time in their online program and their utilization of student affairs resources or better relationships with students, faculty, and staff.

Finally, the wording used in the survey questions related to students' utilization of services provided one vague response option, "Almost never use." The intent of this option was to be considered as more than once, but less than "2-3 times per semester." However, respondents could have considered other definitions for that response, which means those responses may not be fully reliable.

### **Summary**

Despite its limitations, this study addresses an evident gap in research related to online student success and satisfaction. The study specifically addresses how usage of student affairs resources may be linked to online students' increased quality of interactions with various university constituents, their academic success, and their satisfaction with their university experience. This study is among the first to examine not only how the online student experience be influenced by engagement with student affairs resources, but also whether this engagement may be predictive of online student success and satisfaction.

## **CHAPTER 4. RESULTS**

### **Chapter Overview**

In this study, I examined the relationships between online students' utilization of student affairs resources and their success in their coursework, their quality of interactions with various university constituents, and their overall satisfaction with the university experience. These factors may all influence a student's persistence toward degree completion. Once these relationships were examined, the variables of utilization of student affairs resources, quality of interactions, grade point average (GPA), and background characteristics were tested as predictors of online students' satisfaction with the university experience.

This chapter includes the results of tests for the reliability and consistency of the survey instrument used in the study. Next, the chapter includes the results of the statistical analysis for the following research questions:

1. What are online students' awareness, utilization, and perceptions of importance of student affairs resources?
2. Is there a difference in the quality of online students' interactions with peers, academic advisors, faculty, student affairs staff, and other university staff between those who utilize and who do not utilize student affairs resources?
3. Is there a difference in online students' satisfaction with their college experience between those who utilize and who do not utilize student affairs resources?
4. Is there a difference in online students' grade point average (GPA) between those who utilize and who do not utilize student affairs resources?
5. To what extent are online students' background characteristics, utilization of student affairs resources, quality of interactions, and GPA related to overall satisfaction with their

university experience?

### **Descriptive Analyses of Overall Sample**

The invitation to complete the survey was sent to 11,324 students. Of those, 537 students responded the survey, with a response rate of 4.74%. The survey instrument included 107 items, though internal logic was used to narrow which questions each respondent received. The survey included many items for the purposes of UVW's study into the needs and interests of online students, which provide a deeper understanding of how online students prefer to engage in university-sponsored programs and services. This section includes demographic information, academic performance, and involvement interests and perceptions.

#### **Demographic Characteristics**

Table 1 includes the frequencies of demographic characteristics (i.e., gender, race/ethnicity, and age) of the entire study sample, and within the sample, students who utilized student affairs resources and those who did not.

**Gender.** The majority (86.7%) of the sample were female. Only 13.1% of the respondents were male. This high percentage of female students is likely due to the nature of the online degree programs offered by UVW, as opposed to an indicator of which gender may prefer online coursework. Most of the online degrees offered at UVW are in the field of nursing, which perceived as a female-dominated profession (Roth & Coleman, 2008). The degree programs included in this study will be further discussed later in this section.

**Race/ethnicity.** Additionally, slightly more than half of the students in the sample were White (51.4%). Black and Hispanic students (20.1% and 17.7%, respectively) were both represented, due in some part to UVW's high ranking for its cultural diversity. Asian students made up 5.5% of the sample, while multiracial students comprised 3.3%.

**Table 1***Demographic Frequencies of Gender, Ethnicity, and Age*

Variable	Utilize Student Affairs Resources		Do Not Utilize Student Affairs Resources		Total	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Gender					473	100
Female	241	51.0	169	35.7	410	86.7
Male	36	7.6	26	5.5	62	13.1
Other	0	0.0	1	0.2	1	0.2
Race/Ethnicity					457	100
Asian	20	4.4	6	1.3	26	5.7
Black	56	12.3	36	7.9	92	20.1
Hispanic	43	9.4	37	8.1	80	17.5
International	1	0.2	2	0.4	3	0.7
Multiracial	6	1.3	9	2.0	15	3.3
Native American	2	0.4	2	0.4	4	0.9
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0	0.0	2	0.4	2	0.4
White	138	30.2	97	21.2	235	51.4
Age					536	100
18-22	3	0.6	4	0.7	7	1.3
23-29	65	12.1	28	5.2	92	17.2
30-39	108	20.1	86	16.0	195	36.4
40-49	92	17.2	59	11.0	151	28.1
50-59	39	7.3	36	6.7	75	14.0
60+	7	1.3	9	1.7	16	3.0

*Note.* Variations in *n* are due to missing data or participants selecting “I choose not to respond.” Percentages were calculated based on the number of responses for each category.

**Age.** The range of ages was very robust, with just 1.3% of the respondents falling within the traditional ages for undergraduate students (18-22). Instead, the greatest percentage of respondents were between 30-39 years of age (36.4%), followed by 40-49 years of age (28.1%), 23-29 years of age (17.2%), and 50-59 years of age (14.0%).

### Special Student Populations

**Veterans.** Among the students in the sample, only 7.6% identified themselves as veterans or active military members (see Table 2).

**Table 2**

*Frequencies of Membership in Unique Campus Populations*

Special Student Population	Use Student Affairs Resources		Do Not Use Student Affairs Resources		Total	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Veteran students ( <i>n</i> = 482)						
Yes	16	3.3	25	5.2	41	8.5
No	150	31.1	291	60.4	441	91.5
First-generation students ( <i>n</i> = 479)						
Yes	50	10.4	96	20.0	146	30.5
No	114	23.8	219	45.7	333	69.5
Transfer students ( <i>n</i> = 480)						
Yes	155	32.3	310	64.6	465	96.9
No	10	2.1	5	1.0	15	3.1

*Note.* Variations in *n* are due to missing data or participants selecting “I choose not to respond.” Percentages were calculated based on the number of responses for each category.

**First-generation students.** Slightly over one-fourth (27.2%) of the respondents were classified as first-generation college students. These statistics are almost identical to the national

study conducted by Ortagus (2017) in which he found 6% of online learners had military affiliations, and 30% were first-generation.

**Transfer students.** Additionally, 86.6% of students identified as being a transfer student (e.g., a student who had attended another university before enrolling at UVW). Given that most of the online students in the study were between 30-49 years of age and mostly focused on nursing majors, the fact that the sample is made up almost entirely of transfer students is not surprising, as many of the participants likely completed coursework toward a preliminary nursing degree earlier in their lives and are now working toward advancing in their careers.

### College Housing

Table 3 includes the responses to two questions related to students' housing status and distance of their residence from UVW. While online students at this university are eligible to live on-campus, only two respondents resided in an on-campus residence. However, more than two thirds of the respondents lived within 25 miles of the university.

**Table 3**

*Frequencies of Housing Status and Distance from Campus*

Housing	Use Student Affairs Resources		Do Not Use Student Affairs Resources		Total	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Housing status ( <i>n</i> = 482)						
Reside on campus or in a dwelling neighboring campus	2	0.4	0	0.0	2	.4
Reside off-campus in a home or apartment	147	30.5	279	57.9	426	88.4
Other	18	3.7	36	7.5	54	11.2

Distance from campus ( $n = 425$ )

Within city limits	8	1.9	6	1.4	14	3.3
Outside city limits, <25 miles from campus	98	23.0	182	42.8	280	65.9
Outside city limits, >25 miles from campus	23	5.4	31	7.3	54	12.7
Out of state	18	4.2	56	13.2	74	17.4
Outside United States	0	0.0	3	0.7	3	.7

*Note.* Variations in  $n$  are due to missing data or participants selecting “I choose not to respond.” Percentages were calculated based on the number of responses for each category.

### Enrollment and Employment Status

Respondents in the sample were almost evenly split in terms of their enrollment status (see Table 4), with slightly more than half being part-time (56.8%). Likewise, students completing the survey were mostly employed full-time as well (53.0%). The employment status variable is important in the study of students’ usage of student affairs resources. When online learners are working greater numbers of hours, they may be less likely to engage in aspects of university life beyond their coursework due to the time commitments they already have.

**Table 4**

*Frequencies of Enrollment and Employment Status*

Enrollment & Employment	Use Student Affairs Resources		Do Not Use Student Affairs Resources		Total	
	$n$	%	$n$	%	$n$	%
Enrollment Status ( $n = 481$ )						
Part-time	85	17.6	188	39.1	273	56.8
Full-time	81	16.8	127	26.4	208	43.2

Employment Status ( $n = 481$ )

Not employed	28	5.8	35	7.3	63	13.1
Only employed during semester/term breaks	4	0.8	2	0.4	6	1.2
>20 hours per week	11	2.3	24	5.0	35	7.3
20-29 hours per week	39	8.1	83	17.3	122	25.4
40+ hours per week	83	17.3	172	35.8	255	53.0

**Academic Programs**

Table 5 includes the breakdown of academic degrees represented in the sample. The survey respondents were almost entirely students completing nursing-related degrees (97.2%). At the time of this study, the vast majority of UVW's fully online degree programs were in its college of nursing.

Mean and standard deviation were calculated for the respondents' GPAs. Of the 537 total students responded, 75 of them were in their first semester of coursework at UVW and therefore did not have a GPA listed in the data file. The remaining students had an average GPA of 3.48 ( $SD = 0.57$ ). Further analysis of GPA data is covered later in this chapter.

**Table 5***Frequencies of Academic Programs*

Academic Program	Use Student Affairs Resources		Do Not Use Student Affairs Resources		Total	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Criminal Justice	1	0.2	0	0.0	1	0.2
Nursing	164	30.5	359	66.9	523	97.2
Public Health	1	0.2	5	0.9	6	1.1



University Studies	3	0.6	4	0.7	7	1.3
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### Perceived Benefits, Reasons to Participate, and Source of Information

**Perceived benefits.** A Likert scale was used to determine respondents' perceived benefits of engagement in the student affairs opportunities. The highest proportion of the respondents (41.7%) reported building teamwork skills as the most important benefit that they could receive from participating in student affairs programs, followed by making friends (37.5%) and developing cultural appreciation (37.5%) (see Table 6).

**Table 6**

*Frequencies of Students' Perceived Benefits of Engaging in Campus Programs*

Benefits	A great deal		Moderately		Somewhat		Slightly		Not at all		N
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	
	Involvement improves communication skills	8	33.3	4	16.7	3	12.5	1	4.2	3	
Involvement improves the technical skills required for online coursework	6	25	3	12.5	2	8.3	3	12.5	5	20.8	19
Involvement improves teamwork skills	10	41.7	3	12.5	2	8.3	0	0	4	16.7	19
Involvement improves cultural appreciation	9	37.5	4	16.7	3	12.5	2	8.3	3	12.5	21
Involvement helps me make friends	9	37.5	6	25	2	8.3	1	4.2	2	8.3	20

*Note.* "No basis to judge" was an option for respondents on the Likert scale for all questions related to the perceived benefits of involvement, but those responses were omitted from the table.

**Reasons to participate.** Additionally, students could choose multiple reasons for participating in programs (see Table 7), with the most common reason being a connection to their academic coursework (48.3%). Other reasons included students' enjoyment of the programs (31.0%) and their desire to meet new people (27.6%).

**Table 7**

*Reasons of Engaging in Campus Programs*

Reasons	<i>n</i>	%
My friends do	1	3.4
Participation is required for my coursework	4	13.8
I enjoy the programs	9	31.0
I want to meet new people	8	27.6
The programs complement my academic coursework	14	48.3

*Note.* Respondents could select all options that apply on this question.

**Source of information.** The survey included a question about the sources of information students use to learn about student affairs programs and services (see Table 8). Students were asked to identify their top three sources of information about campus activities and events, and the most common choices were emails from campus departments (68.5%), the university's website (52.7%), electronic newsletters from the university (41.3%), and its student newspaper (39.7%). These responses were not surprising given the focus of the study on students in online degree programs. Each of those methods of communication are electronic and similar to the other ways that students interact with the university for their coursework. However, other sources of information may have been identified more often if responses had not been limited to three choices.

**Table 8***Frequencies of Students' Sources of Information about Campus Activities*

Sources of Information	<i>n</i>	%
Emails from departments	368	68.5
University website	283	52.7
University newsletter	222	41.3
Student newspaper	213	39.7
Social media	80	14.9
Class announcement	76	14.2
Departmental website	41	7.6
Word of mouth	34	6.3
Student organizations	26	4.8

*Note.* Respondents could select all options that apply on this question.

Interestingly, online students do not find departmental websites as a key source for information about campus activities. Since most students were not engaging in those activities, student affairs departments may find value in promoting their websites to students enrolled in online programs. Respondents also stated that word of mouth (6.3%) and student organizations (4.8%) were not helpful sources of information. Most of the interactions online students have with their peers are likely through the electronic discussion boards of the learning management software used for their classes, so this finding is not surprising.

**Research Question 1:**

**What are online students' awareness, utilization, and perceptions of importance of student affairs resources?**

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationships between online students' utilization of student affairs resources and their quality of interactions with various university constituents, their academic performance in their coursework, and their satisfaction with the university experience. The first step in understanding this relationship is studying which university resources online learners were aware of and most commonly utilize outside of their coursework.

### **Awareness and Utilization**

In this study, a Likert scale was developed to gauge students' awareness and their engagement with a variety of student affairs departments and activities at UVW (see Table 9).

**Table 9**

*Online Students' Awareness and Utilization of Student Affairs Resources*

Student Affairs Resources	No. of Respondents	Aware		Utilized	
		<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
1) Campus Newspaper	483	352	72.9	270	55.9
2) Campus Recreation	481	260	54.1	87	18.1
3) Career Development Center	481	122	25.4	65	13.5
4) Counseling Services	481	199	41.4	61	12.7
5) Fraternity & Sorority Life	480	239	49.8	58	12.1
6) LGBTQ+ Center	481	186	36.2	57	11.9
7) Multicultural Affairs	478	176	36.8	59	12.3
8) Relationship Violence Center	479	163	34.0	55	11.5
9) Student Health Services	479	257	53.7	70	14.6
10) Student Leadership Center	478	146	30.5	61	12.8
11) Student Organizations	478	297	62.1	91	19.0
12) Study Abroad	479	196	40.9	57	11.9

*Note.* Variations in “No. of Respondents” are due to missing data.

The highest proportion of the respondents reported that they were aware of the campus newspaper (72.9%). In addition, more than half of the respondents indicated that they were aware of the departments of student organizations (62.1%), campus recreation (54.1%), and student health services (53.7%). The departments that respondents were least aware of were the career development center (25.4%) and the leadership center (30.5%).

Similarly, students utilized the departments about which they had the highest awareness. The departments of student organizations (19.0%), campus recreation (18.1%), and health services (14.6%) were most often utilized by the respondents. The least utilized areas were study abroad (11.9%), the LGBTQ+ center (11.9%), and the relationship violence center (11.5%). Additionally, awareness and utilization of the university's office for students with disabilities were gathered, but the opportunity to respond about that department was limited to those students who identified as having a documented disability through an earlier question in the survey. Among the respondents, 70 students identified as having a disability (see Table 10).

**Table 10**

*Online Students' Types of Disabilities*

Type of Disability	<i>n</i>	%
Deaf/Heard of hearing	7	1.3
Blind/Low vision	2	0.4
Physical disability	4	0.7
Learning disability	11	2.0
Chronic health-related	9	1.7
Psychiatric disability	8	1.5
Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)	23	4.3

Other	6	1.1
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Of these students with disabilities, only nine had utilized any academic accommodations in their online coursework. Table 11 presents the extent to which these students utilized academic accommodations.

**Table 11**

*Use of Academic Accommodations by Online Students with Disabilities*

Uses of Academic Accommodations	<i>n</i>	%
I utilize accommodations in all of my classes	6	8.6
I utilize accommodations in some of my classes	1	1.4
I do not currently use accommodations, but have in the past	2	2.9
I have never utilized accommodations in my classes	61	87.1

**Importance**

In the survey, respondents were asked to identify how important were student affairs resources that are offered to enhance student life (see Table 12). Most students identified that these resources were of only slight importance, but no students stated that these resources were of no importance at all to them. The resources that were identified as “extremely important” by the highest proportions of the online students were those encouraging healthy lifestyle choices (28.3%), strengthening leadership skills (26.6%), and offering internship opportunities (22.2%). Other aspects of student life, including athletic events (6.0%), social opportunities (6.2%), and campus traditions (6.6%) were among the option least rated as “extremely important.”

**Table 12***Percentages of Importance Placed on Student Life Opportunities by Online Students*

Student Life Opportunities	Extremely Important	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Slightly Important	Not Important
Social opportunities	6.2	8.2	25.3	60.4	0.0
Cultural opportunities	9.7	9.1	26.5	54.7	0.0
Spiritual/religious opportunities	12.3	12.1	18.2	57.4	0.0
Internship opportunities	22.2	22.2	15.1	40.6	0.0
Access to health services	20.7	18.5	15.8	45.0	0.0
Study abroad opportunities	10.9	11.5	17.9	59.6	0.0
Strengthening leadership skills	26.6	33.0	19.1	21.4	0.0
Campus traditions	6.6	5.8	19.0	68.5	0.0
Volunteerism opportunities	15.2	21.7	24.0	39.2	0.0
NCAA athletic events	6.0	8.3	16.4	69.2	0.0
Student organizations	8.7	16.8	25.7	48.8	0.0
Encouragement of healthy lifestyle choices	28.3	28.1	17.7	26.0	0.0

**Research Question 2:**

**Is there a difference in the quality of online students' interactions with peers, academic advisors, faculty, student affairs staff, and other university staff between those who utilize and who do not utilize student affairs resources?**

To understand the relationships between online students' use of student affairs resources and their interactions with other populations within the campus community, the following null and alternative hypotheses guided each of the tests:

**H<sub>0</sub>:** There is no difference in the quality of online students' interactions between those who utilize and who do not utilize a specific student affairs resource.

**H<sub>1</sub>:** There is a difference in the quality of online students' interactions between those who utilize and who do not utilize a specific student affairs resource.

The variable "utilization of student affairs resources" describes the frequency students engaged with the resources offered by those departments and was used as the grouping variable. In general, online students in this study rarely utilized the various student affairs departments, and among those who did utilize the resources, very few had extensive engagement with them. Therefore, the responses for this variable were recoded as a dichotomous variable. That is, students who were not aware of the departments or had never used them were grouped together and coded as 0 (non-users). Likewise, students who identified as having any amount of engagement with the departments were grouped together and coded as 1 (users).

Independent samples *t*-tests were conducted to compare the mean scores of the users and non-users on their interactions with various individuals on campus, including 1) peers, 2) faculty, 3) academic advisors, 4) student affairs staff, and 5) other staff. For each of the groups, respondents rated the quality of interactions on a Likert scale (1 = *Extremely poor*, 2 = *Very poor*, 3 = *Poor*, 4 = *Fair*, 5 = *Good*, 6 = *Very Good*, 7 = *Excellent*).

The following sections review the results of the *t*-tests regarding each of the student affairs resources discussed in this dissertation study. As mentioned in the previous section, these sources include 1) campus newspaper, 2) student organizations, 3) campus recreation, 4) student health center, 5) career development center, 6) counseling services, 7) student leadership center, 8) multicultural affairs, 9) study abroad, 10) LGBTQ + center, 11) fraternity & sorority life, and 12) relationship violence center. Among these resources, campus newspaper, student



organizations, and campus recreation were utilized most by the online students in the study. Therefore, the following section focuses on the top three resources.

### **Quality of Interactions with Peers**

**Campus newspaper.** There were 265 students who indicated on the survey that they reviewed the student newspaper and 208 who did not (see Table 13). Utilizing Levene's test for equality of variances, equal variances were assumed ( $p = .910$ ). The  $t$ -test revealed that the difference in students' quality of relationships with other students between those who reviewed the student newspaper ( $M = 5.14, SD = 1.627$ ) and those who did not use its resources ( $M = 5.06, SD = 1.588$ ) was not statistically significant,  $t(471) = -.492, p = .673$ . Therefore, the null hypothesis failed to be rejected. In other words, there is no difference in quality of interactions with peers between the student-newspaper users and non-users.

**Student organizations.** Among the respondents, 88 of them identified as participating in a student organization and 380 who did not. Applying Levene's test, equal variances were assumed ( $p = .339$ ). The difference in online students' quality of relationships with other students between those who participated in at least one student organization ( $M = 5.39, SD = 1.418$ ) and those who did not ( $M = 5.03, SD = 1.650$ ) was not statistically significant,  $t(466) = -1.864, p = .063$ , and thus, the null hypothesis failed to be rejected.

**Campus recreation.** Of those who completed the survey, 86 online students indicated utilizing the campus recreation department at least once and 385 who did not. Using Levene's test for homogeneity of variances, equal variances were assumed, ( $p = .631$ ). The difference in students' quality of relationships with other students between those who utilized campus recreation ( $M = 5.36, SD = 1.479$ ) and those who did not use its resources ( $M = 5.04, SD = 1.636$ ) was not statistically significant,  $t(469) = -1.662, p = .097$ . Therefore, the null hypothesis

failed to be rejected.

**Table 13***Independent Samples t-test Comparisons of Quality of Interactions with Other Students between Users and Non-users of Resources*

Resource	Utilized the resource			Did not utilize the resource			<i>t</i>	95% CI
	<i>n</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>		
1) Campus Newspaper	265	5.14	1.627	208	5.06	1.588	-.492	[-.366, .220]
2) Student Organizations	88	5.39	1.418	380	5.03	1.650	-1.864	[-.729, .019]
3) Campus Recreation	86	5.36	1.479	385	5.04	1.636	-1.662	[-.696, .058]
4) Student Health Services	68	5.32	1.643	401	5.06	1.603	-1.226	[-.673, .156]
5) Career Development Center	63	5.81	1.162	403	5.00	1.646	-4.846***	[-1.144, -.480]
6) Counseling Services	60	5.42	1.587	411	5.06	1.611	-1.612	[-.795, .079]
7) Student Leadership Center	59	5.56	1.454	410	5.04	1.626	-2.327*	[-.960, -.081]
8) Multicultural Affairs	58	5.40	1.632	410	5.05	1.607	-1.518	[-.787, .101]
9) Study Abroad	57	5.47	1.548	413	5.05	1.616	-1.861	[-.869, .024]
10) LGBTQ+ Center	56	5.39	1.648	415	5.06	1.602	-1.464	[-.785, .115]
11) Fraternity & Sorority Life	56	5.50	1.489	414	5.05	1.622	-1.974*	[-.901, -.002]
12) Relationship Violence Center	54	5.50	1.634	415	5.04	1.602	-1.976*	[-.915, -.003]

\**p* < .05; \*\**p* < .01; \*\*\**p* < .001

**Other student affairs resources.** Using the same tests and following the same procedure, the findings reveal that, among the other nine student affairs departments, students who used the career development center, student leadership center, fraternity & sorority life, or relationship violence center had a higher quality of relationship with their peers.

There were 68 students who indicated on the survey that they utilized the student health center and 401 who did not. Utilizing Levene's test, equal variances was assumed ( $p = .446$ ). The test revealed that the difference in students' quality of relationships with other students between those who utilized the student health center ( $M = 5.32, SD = 1.643$ ) and those who did not use its resources ( $M = 5.06, SD = 1.603$ ) was not statistically significant,  $t(467) = -1.226, p = .221$ . In this case, the null hypothesis failed to be rejected.

Among the respondents, there were 63 online students who utilized the resources of the career development center and 403 who did not. The homogeneity of variances was not assumed, due to Levene's test for homogeneity of variances ( $p < .05$ ). The difference in students' quality of relationships with other students between those who utilized the career development center ( $M = 5.81, SD = 1.162$ ) and those who did not use its resources ( $M = 5.00, SD = 1.646$ ) was statistically significant,  $t(104.851) = -4.846, p < .001$ . Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Of those who completed the survey, 60 students identified as utilizing counseling services and 411 who did not. Applying Levene's test for equality of variances, equal variances were assumed ( $p = .752$ ). The difference in online students' quality of relationships with other students between those who utilized counseling services ( $M = 5.42, SD = 1.587$ ) and those who did not ( $M = 5.06, SD = 1.611$ ) was not statistically significant,  $t(469) = -1.612, p = .108$ . In this test, the null hypothesis failed to be rejected.

Among the respondents, 59 students engaged with the student leadership center, and 410 did not. The homogeneity of variances was assumed, according to Levene's test for equality of variances ( $p = .305$ ). The difference in students' quality of relationships with other students between those who utilized the student leadership center ( $M = 5.56, SD = 1.454$ ) and those who did not use its resources ( $M = 5.04, SD = 1.626$ ) was statistically significant,  $t(467) = -2.327, p < .05$ . Once again, the null hypothesis was rejected.

There were 58 students who indicated on the survey that they participated in the programs offered by multicultural affairs and 410 who did not. Utilizing Levene's test for homogeneity of variances, equal variances was assumed ( $p = .615$ ). The test revealed that the difference in online students' quality of relationships with other students between those who participated in multicultural affairs programs ( $M = 5.40, SD = 1.632$ ) and those who did not use its resources ( $M = 5.05, SD = 1.637$ ) was not statistically significant,  $t(466) = -1.518, p = .130$ . In this case, the null hypothesis failed to be rejected.

Of those surveyed, 57 web-based students indicated utilizing the department of study abroad at least once and 413 who did not. Using Levene's test for equality of variances, equal variances were assumed ( $p = .895$ ). The difference in students' quality of relationships with other students between those who utilized study abroad resources ( $M = 5.47, SD = 1.548$ ) and those who did not use its resources ( $M = 5.05, SD = 1.616$ ) was not statistically significant,  $t(468) = -1.861, p = .063$ . Therefore, the null hypothesis failed to be rejected.

Among the respondents, there were 56 respondents who identified as utilizing the LGBTQ center, and 415 did not. The homogeneity of variances was assumed, according to Levene's test for equality of variances ( $p = .365$ ). The difference in online students' quality of relationships with other students between those who utilized the LGBTQ center ( $M = 5.39,$

$SD = 1.648$ ) and those who did not use its resources ( $M = 5.06$ ,  $SD = 1.602$ ) was not statistically significant,  $t(469) = -1.464$ ,  $p = .144$ . Once again, the null hypothesis failed to be rejected.

There were 56 students who identified as engaging with fraternity and sorority life and 414 who did not. Utilizing Levene's test for homogeneity of variances, equal variances were assumed ( $p = .489$ ). The difference in students' quality of relationships with other students between those who participated in fraternity and sorority life ( $M = 5.50$ ,  $SD = 1.489$ ) and those who did not use its resources ( $M = 5.05$ ,  $SD = 1.622$ ) was statistically significant,  $t(468) = -1.974$ ,  $p < .05$ . For this student affairs department, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Finally, there were 54 respondents who identified utilizing the relationship violence center's services and 415 who did not. Applying Levene's test for equality of variances, equal variances were assumed ( $p = .518$ ). The difference in students' quality of relationships with other students between those who utilized the relationship violence center ( $M = 5.50$ ,  $SD = 1.634$ ) and those who did not ( $M = 5.04$ ,  $SD = 1.602$ ) was statistically significant,  $t(467) = -1.976$ ,  $p < .05$ . In this test, the null hypothesis was rejected.

### **Quality of Interactions with Academic Advisors**

**Campus newspaper.** There were 266 students who indicated on the survey that they reviewed the student newspaper and 213 who did not (see Table 14). Utilizing Levene's test for equality of variances, equal variances were assumed ( $p = .785$ ). The  $t$ -test revealed that the difference in online students' quality of relationships with their academic advisor between those who reviewed the student newspaper ( $M = 5.40$ ,  $SD = 1.332$ ) and those who did not use its resources ( $M = 5.39$ ,  $SD = 1.372$ ) was not statistically significant,  $t(477) = -.064$ ,  $p = .949$ . In this case, the null hypothesis failed to be rejected.

**Student organizations.** Among the respondents, 90 stated that they participated in an

organization and 384 who did not. Applying Levene's test, equal variances were assumed ( $p = .477$ ). The difference in students' quality of relationships with their advisor between those who participated in at least one student organization ( $M = 5.49, SD = 1.238$ ) and those who did not ( $M = 5.36, SD = 1.374$ ) was not statistically significant,  $t(472) = -.787, p = .432$ . In this test, the null hypothesis failed to be rejected.

**Campus recreation.** Of those who completed the survey, 87 students indicated that they utilized campus recreation at least once and 390 who did not. Using Levene's test for equality of variances, equal variances were assumed, ( $p = .264$ ). The difference in students' quality of relationships with other students between those who utilized campus recreation ( $M = 5.68, SD = 1.146$ ) and those who did not use its resources ( $M = 5.33, SD = 1.385$ ) was statistically significant,  $t(475) = -2.162, p = .031$ . Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. In other words, students who participated in campus recreation activities had a higher quality of interaction with academic advisors than their peers who did not participate in those activities.

**Other student affairs resources.** The results indicate that, students who utilized services provided by the career development center had a better relationship with their academic advisors than their counterparts who did not use the center service. The difference between the users and non-users of the other resources were not statistically significant.

Among the respondents, there were 70 students who that they utilized the student health center and 405 who did not. Utilizing Levene's test, equal variances were assumed ( $p = .866$ ). The test revealed that the difference in students' quality of relationships with their academic advisor between those who utilized the student health center ( $M = 5.47, SD = 1.248$ ) and those who did not use its resources ( $M = 5.39, SD = 1.372$ ) was not statistically significant,

**Table 14***Independent Samples t-test Comparisons of Quality of Interaction with Academic Advisors between Users and Non-users of Resources*

Resource	Utilized the resource			Did not utilize the resource			<i>t</i>	95% CI
	<i>n</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>		
1) Campus Newspaper	266	5.40	1.332	213	5.39	1.372	-.064	[-.252, .236]
2) Student Organizations	90	5.49	1.238	384	5.36	1.374	-.787	[-.435, .186]
3) Campus Recreation	87	5.68	1.146	390	5.33	1.385	-2.162*	[-.658, -.031]
4) Student Health Services	70	5.47	1.248	405	5.39	1.372	-.478	[-.428, .261]
5) Career Development Center	65	5.78	1.139	412	5.34	1.372	-2.495*	[-.800, -.095]
6) Counseling Services	61	5.67	1.165	416	5.36	1.372	-1.699	[-.677, .049]
7) Student Leadership Center	61	5.56	1.133	413	5.38	1.377	-.985	[-.545, .181]
8) Multicultural Affairs	59	5.58	1.163	415	5.37	1.375	-1.118	[-.579, .159]
9) Study Abroad	58	5.43	1.186	418	5.39	1.372	-.217	[-.413, .331]
10) LGBTQ+ Center	57	5.53	1.338	418	5.38	1.354	-.777	[-.523, .227]
11) Fraternity & Sorority Life	57	5.67	1.155	420	5.36	1.372	-1.601	[-.679, .069]
12) Relationship Violence Center	55	5.67	1.218	420	5.36	1.367	-1.617	[-.694, .067]

\* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* $p < .001$



$t(473) = -.478, p = .633$ . In this case, the null hypothesis failed to be rejected.

Of the students who completed the survey, 65 identified that they utilized the career development center's resources, and 412 identified that they did not. Using Levene's test, the homogeneity of variances was assumed ( $p = .208$ ). The difference in students' quality of relationships with their academic advisor between those who utilized the career development center ( $M = 5.78, SD = 1.139$ ) and those who did not use its resources ( $M = 5.34, SD = 1.372$ ) was statistically significant,  $t(475) = -2.495, p < .05$ . Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. assumed ( $p = .349$ ). The difference in students' quality of relationships with other students between those who utilized counseling services ( $M = 5.67, SD = 1.165$ ) and those who did not ( $M = 5.36, SD = 1.372$ ) was not statistically significant,  $t(475) = -1.699, p = .090$ . In this test, the null hypothesis failed to be rejected.

Among the respondents, 61 students engaged with the student leadership center, and 413 did not. The homogeneity of variances was assumed, according to Levene's test for equality of variances ( $p = .202$ ). The difference in online students' quality of relationships with other students between those who utilized the student leadership center ( $M = 5.56, SD = 1.133$ ) and those who did not use its resources ( $M = 5.38, SD = 1.377$ ) was not statistically significant,  $t(472) = -.985, p = .325$ . Once again, the null hypothesis failed to be rejected.

There were 59 students who indicated on the survey that they participated in the programs offered by multicultural affairs and 415 who did not. Equal variances were assumed, utilizing Levene's test for equality of variances ( $p = .364$ ). The test revealed that the difference in students' quality of relationships with their academic advisor between those who participated in multicultural affairs programs ( $M = 5.58, SD = 1.163$ ) and those who did not use its resources ( $M = 5.37, SD = 1.375$ ) was not statistically significant,  $t(472) = -1.118, p = .264$ . Therefore, the

null hypothesis failed to be rejected.

Among the respondents, there were 58 online students who expressed involvement in fraternity and sorority life and 418 who did not. Utilizing Levene's test for homogeneity of variances, equal variances was assumed ( $p = .467$ ). The difference in students' quality of relationships with their academic advisor between those who participated in this department ( $M = 5.43, SD = 1.186$ ) and those who did not use its resources ( $M = 5.39, SD = 1.372$ ) was not statistically significant,  $t(474) = -.217, p = .828$ . For this student affairs department, the null hypothesis failed to be rejected.

There were 57 online students who indicated utilizing the study abroad department at least once and 418 who did not. Using Levene's test for homogeneity of variances, equal variances were assumed, ( $p = .834$ ). The difference in students' quality of relationships with their academic advisor between those who utilized study abroad resources ( $M = 5.53, SD = 1.338$ ) and those who did not use its resources ( $M = 5.38, SD = 1.354$ ) was not statistically significant,  $t(473) = -.777, p = .438$ . In this case, the null hypothesis failed to be rejected.

There were 57 respondents who identified as utilizing the LGBTQ center, and 420 did not. The homogeneity of variances was assumed, according to Levene's test for equality of variances ( $p = .405$ ). The difference in students' quality of relationships with other online students between those who utilized the LGBTQ center ( $M = 5.67, SD = 1.155$ ) and those who did not use its resources ( $M = 5.36, SD = 1.372$ ) was not statistically significant,  $t(475) = -1.601, p = .110$ . Once again, the null hypothesis failed to be rejected.

Among the respondents, 55 online students identified utilizing the relationship violence center's services and 420 who did not. Applying Levene's test for equality of variances, equal variances were assumed ( $p = .790$ ). The difference in students' quality of relationships with their

academic advisor between those who utilized the relationship violence center ( $M = 5.67$ ,  $SD = 1.218$ ) and those who did not ( $M = 5.36$ ,  $SD = 1.367$ ) was not statistically significant,  $t(473) = -1.617$ ,  $p = .107$ . In this test, the null hypothesis failed to be rejected.

### **Quality of Interactions with Faculty**

There were 267 web-based students who indicated on the survey that they reviewed the student newspaper and 212 who did not (see Table 15). Utilizing Levene's test for equality of variances, homogeneity of variances was assumed ( $p = .730$ ). The  $t$ -test revealed that the difference in students' quality of relationships with faculty between those who reviewed the student newspaper ( $M = 5.52$ ,  $SD = 1.227$ ) and those who did not use its resources ( $M = 5.36$ ,  $SD = 1.260$ ) was not statistically significant,  $t(477) = -1.386$ ,  $p = .166$ . Therefore, the null hypothesis failed to be rejected.

Among the respondents, 91 online students stated that they participated in a student organization and 384 who did not. Applying Levene's test for equality of variances, equal variances were assumed ( $p = .669$ ). The difference in students' quality of relationships with faculty between those who participated in at least one student organization ( $M = 5.56$ ,  $SD = 1.195$ ) and those who did not ( $M = 5.42$ ,  $SD = 1.257$ ) was not statistically significant,  $t(473) = -.990$ ,  $p = .323$ . In this case, the null hypothesis failed to be rejected.

Of the online students who completed the survey, there were 86 students who indicated utilizing the campus recreation department at least once and 391 who did not. Equal variances were assumed, using Levene's test for homogeneity of variances ( $p = .407$ ). The difference in students' quality of relationships with faculty between those who utilized campus recreation ( $M = 5.62$ ,  $SD = 1.118$ ) and those who did not use its resources ( $M = 5.41$ ,  $SD = 1.269$ ) was not

**Table 15***Independent Samples t-test Comparisons of Quality of Interactions with Faculty between Users and Non-users of Resources*

Resource	Utilize the resource			Did not utilize the resource			<i>t</i>	95% CI
	<i>n</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>		
1) Campus Newspaper	267	5.52	1.227	212	5.36	1.260	-1.386	[-.383, .066]
2) Student Organizations	91	5.56	1.195	384	5.42	1.257	-.990	[-.429, .142]
3) Campus Recreation	86	5.62	1.118	391	5.41	1.269	-1.415	[-.501, .081]
4) Student Health Center	69	5.55	1.195	406	5.43	1.255	-.738	[-.439, .199]
5) Career Development Center	65	5.75	1.016	413	5.40	1.273	-2.125*	[-.677, -.026]
6) Student Leadership Center	61	5.52	1.219	414	5.44	1.251	-.497	[-.421, .251]
7) Counseling Services	60	5.68	1.112	417	5.41	1.259	-1.566	[-.605, .068]
8) Multicultural Affairs	59	5.53	1.180	416	5.43	1.255	-.535	[-.433, .248]
9) Fraternity & Sorority Life	58	5.45	1.202	419	5.45	1.252	-.011	[-.345, .341]
10) Study Abroad	57	5.49	1.241	419	5.44	1.248	-.282	[-.396, .296]
11) LGBTQ+ Center	56	5.68	1.114	421	5.41	1.259	-1.500	[-.613, .082]
12) Relationship Violence Center	54	5.69	1.096	421	5.41	1.263	-1.510	[-.626, .082]

\* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* $p < .001$

statistically significant,  $t(475) = -1.415, p = .158$ . Therefore, the null hypothesis failed to be rejected.

There were 69 students who indicated on the survey that they utilized the student health center and 406 who did not. Utilizing Levene's test, equal variances were assumed ( $p = .970$ ). The  $t$ -test revealed that the difference in students' quality of relationships with faculty between those who utilized the student health center ( $M = 5.55, SD = 1.195$ ) and those who did not use its resources ( $M = 5.43, SD = 1.255$ ) was not statistically significant,  $t(473) = -.738, p = .461$ . In this test, the null hypothesis failed to be rejected.

When asked about their use of the career development center, there were 65 students who utilized the department's resources and 413 who did not. The homogeneity of variances was assumed, due to Levene's test for equality of variances ( $p = .092$ ). The difference in students' quality of relationships with faculty between those who utilized the career development center ( $M = 5.75, SD = 1.016$ ) and those who did not use its resources ( $M = 5.40, SD = 1.273$ ) was statistically significant,  $t(476) = -2.125, p < .05$ . In this case, the null hypothesis was rejected.

There were 61 students who indicated on the survey that they engaged with the student leadership center and 414 who did not. The homogeneity of variances was assumed, according to Levene's test ( $p = .691$ ). The difference in online students' quality of relationships with faculty between those who utilized the student leadership center ( $M = 5.52, SD = 1.219$ ) and those who did not use its resources ( $M = 5.44, SD = 1.251$ ) was not statistically significant,  $t(473) = -.497, p = .619$ . Once again, the null hypothesis failed to be rejected.

Among the respondents, 60 of them identified as utilizing counseling services and 417 did not. Applying Levene's test for equality of variances, equal variances were assumed ( $p = .519$ ). The difference in online students' quality of relationships with faculty between those

who utilized counseling services ( $M = 5.68$ ,  $SD = 1.112$ ) and those who did not ( $M = 5.41$ ,  $SD = 1.259$ ) was not statistically significant,  $t(475) = -1.566$ ,  $p = .118$ . In this test, the null hypothesis failed to be rejected.

Of those who completed the survey, 59 students participated in the programs offered by multicultural affairs, and 416 did not. Utilizing Levene's test for equality of variances, equal variances were assumed ( $p = .437$ ). The test identified that the difference in online students' quality of relationships with faculty between those who participated in multicultural affairs programs ( $M = 5.53$ ,  $SD = 1.180$ ) and those who did not use its resources ( $M = 5.43$ ,  $SD = 1.255$ ) was not statistically significant,  $t(473) = -.535$ ,  $p = .593$ . In this case, the null hypothesis failed to be rejected.

Among the respondents, 58 identified as engaging with fraternity and sorority life, and 419 who did not. Utilizing Levene's test, equal variances were assumed ( $p = .598$ ). The difference in students' quality of relationships with faculty between those who participated in fraternity and sorority life ( $M = 5.45$ ,  $SD = 1.202$ ) and those who did not use its resources ( $M = 5.45$ ,  $SD = 1.252$ ) was not statistically significant,  $t(475) = -.011$ ,  $p = .991$ . For this student affairs department, the null hypothesis failed to be rejected.

There were 57 students who indicated utilizing the study abroad department at least once and 419 who did not. Using Levene's test for homogeneity of variances, equal variances were assumed ( $p = .977$ ). The difference in students' quality of relationships with faculty between those who utilized study abroad resources ( $M = 5.49$ ,  $SD = 1.241$ ) and those who did not use its resources ( $M = 5.44$ ,  $SD = 1.248$ ) was not statistically significant,  $t(474) = -.282$ ,  $p = .778$ . Therefore, the null hypothesis failed to be rejected.

Of those who completed the survey, there were 56 respondents who identified as utilizing

the LGBTQ department and 421 who did not. The homogeneity of variances was assumed, according to Levene's test for equality of variances ( $p = .715$ ). The difference in students' quality of relationships with faculty between those who utilized the LGBTQ center ( $M = 5.68$ ,  $SD = 1.114$ ) and those who did not use its resources ( $M = 5.41$ ,  $SD = 1.259$ ) was not statistically significant,  $t(475) = -1.500$ ,  $p = .134$ . In this test, the null hypothesis failed to be rejected.

Finally, there were 54 respondents who identified utilizing the relationship violence center's services and 421 who did not. Applying Levene's test for equality of variances, equal variances were assumed ( $p = .554$ ). The difference in online students' quality of relationships with faculty between those who utilized the relationship violence center ( $M = 5.69$ ,  $SD = 1.096$ ) and those who did not ( $M = 5.41$ ,  $SD = 1.263$ ) was not statistically significant,  $t(473) = -1.510$ ,  $p = .132$ . Therefore, the null hypothesis failed to be rejected.

### **Quality of Interactions with Student Affairs Staff**

**Campus newspaper.** Among the respondents, there were 261 students who indicated that they reviewed the student newspaper and 205 who did not (see Table 16). Utilizing Levene's test, homogeneity of variances was assumed ( $p = .858$ ). The  $t$ -test revealed that the difference in students' quality of relationships with student affairs staff between those who reviewed the student newspaper ( $M = 5.03$ ,  $SD = 1.519$ ) and those who did not use its resources ( $M = 5.06$ ,  $SD = 1.479$ ) was not statistically significant,  $t(464) = -.234$ ,  $p = .815$ . Therefore, the null hypothesis again failed to be rejected.

**Student organizations.** Of the online students who completed the survey, there were 88 of them who stated that they participated in a student organization and 374 who did not. Applying Levene's test for equality of variances, equal variances were assumed ( $p = .884$ ). The difference in students' quality of relationships with student affairs staff between those who

**Table 16**

*Independent Samples t-test Comparisons of Quality of Interactions with Student Affairs Staff between Users and Non-users of Resources*

Resource	Utilized the resource			Did not utilize the resource			<i>t</i>	95% CI
	<i>n</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>		
1) Campus Newspaper	261	5.03	1.519	205	5.06	1.479	.234	[-.243, .308]
2) Student Organizations	88	5.30	1.383	374	4.98	1.523	-1.801	[-.668, .029]
3) Campus Recreation	85	5.16	1.503	380	5.02	1.501	-.827	[-.503, .205]
4) Student Health Center	67	5.15	1.617	396	5.03	1.485	-.611	[-.512, .269]
5) Career Development Center	63	5.62	1.142	402	4.96	1.535	-3.266**	[-1.055, -.262]
6) Counseling Services	60	5.30	1.533	405	5.01	1.492	-1.389	[-.695, .119]
7) Student Leadership Center	59	5.39	1.287	404	5.00	1.528	-1.877	[-.803, .018]
8) Multicultural Affairs	58	5.31	1.366	404	5.00	1.522	-1.446	[-.720, .110]
9) Study Abroad	56	5.21	1.498	407	5.02	1.506	-.896	[-.614, .229]
10) LGBTQ+ Center	56	5.29	1.637	409	5.01	1.480	-.1291	[-.696, .144]
11) Fraternity & Sorority Life	56	5.27	1.382	408	5.01	1.518	-1.182	[-.674, .168]
12) Relationship Violence Center	55	5.67	1.218	420	5.36	1.367	-1.413	[-.735, .120]

\**p* < .05; \*\**p* < .01; \*\*\**p* < .001



participated in at least one student organization ( $M = 5.30, SD = 1.383$ ) and those who did not ( $M = 4.98, SD = 1.523$ ) was not statistically significant,  $t(460) = -1.801, p = .072$ . For the test of involvement in student organizations, the null hypothesis failed to be rejected.

**Campus recreation.** There were 85 online students who indicated on the survey that they utilized the department of campus recreation at least once and 380 who did not. Equal variances were assumed using Levene's test for homogeneity of variances ( $p = .618$ ). The difference in students' quality of relationships with student affairs staff between those who utilized campus recreation ( $M = 5.16, SD = 1.503$ ) and those who did not use its resources ( $M = 5.02, SD = 1.501$ ) was not statistically significant,  $t(463) = -.827, p = .409$ . In this test, the null hypothesis failed to be rejected.

**Other student affairs resources.** Similar with findings in the previous section, the results indicated that online students who utilized career development center's services had a better relationship with student affairs staff than their peers who did not use the services. The differences of means between the users and non-users of the other services were not statistically significant.

Among the respondents, there were 67 web-based students who indicated on the survey that they utilized the student health center's services and 396 who did not. Utilizing Levene's test, equal variances were assumed ( $p = .334$ ). The  $t$ -test revealed that the difference in students' quality of relationships with student affairs staff between those who utilized the student health center ( $M = 5.15, SD = 1.617$ ) and those who did not use its resources ( $M = 5.03, SD = 1.485$ ) was not statistically significant,  $t(461) = -.611, p = .541$ . Therefore, the null hypothesis failed to be rejected.

There were 63 students who utilized the resources offered by the career development

center and 402 who did not. The homogeneity of variances was assumed, due to Levene's test for equality of variances ( $p = .327$ ). The difference in students' quality of relationships with student affairs staff between those who utilized the career development center ( $M = 5.62, SD = 1.142$ ) and those who did not use its resources ( $M = 4.96, SD = 1.535$ ) was statistically significant,  $t(463) = -3.266, p < .001$ . In this case, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Of those who completed the survey, 60 of them identified as utilizing counseling services, and 405 did not. Applying Levene's test for equality of variances, equal variances were assumed ( $p = .378$ ). The difference in online students' quality of relationships with student affairs staff between those who utilized counseling services ( $M = 5.30, SD = 1.533$ ) and those who did not ( $M = 5.01, SD = 1.492$ ) was not statistically significant,  $t(463) = -1.389, p = .165$ . In this case, the null hypothesis failed to be rejected.

Among the respondents, there were 59 students who indicated they engaged with the student leadership center and 404 who did not. The equality of variances was assumed, according to Levene's test ( $p = .587$ ). The difference in online students' quality of relationships with student affairs staff between those who utilized the student leadership center ( $M = 5.39, SD = 1.287$ ) and those who did not use its resources ( $M = 5.00, SD = 1.528$ ) was not statistically significant,  $t(461) = -1.877, p = .061$ . Once again, the null hypothesis failed to be rejected.

Of those who completed the survey, 58 online students identified as having participated in the programs offered by multicultural affairs and 404 did not. Utilizing Levene's test for equality of variances, equal variances were assumed ( $p = .822$ ). The test identified that the difference in online students' quality of relationships with student affairs staff between those who participated in multicultural affairs programs ( $M = 5.31, SD = 1.366$ ) and those who did not use its resources ( $M = 5.00, SD = 1.522$ ) was not statistically significant,  $t(460) = -1.446,$

$p = .149$ . In this case, the null hypothesis failed to be rejected.

There were 56 students who utilized the study abroad department and 407 who did not. Using Levene's test for homogeneity of variances, equal variances were assumed ( $p = .777$ ). The difference in students' quality of relationships with student affairs staff between those who utilized study abroad resources ( $M = 5.21, SD = 1.506$ ) and those who did not use its resources ( $M = 5.02, SD = 1.498$ ) was not statistically significant,  $t(461) = -.896, p = .371$ . Therefore, the null hypothesis failed to be rejected.

Of the online students who completed the survey, 56 respondents who identified as utilizing the LGBTQ center and 409 who did not. The homogeneity of variances was assumed according to Levene's test for equality of variances ( $p = .131$ ). The difference in students' quality of relationships with student affairs staff between those who utilized the LGBTQ center ( $M = 5.29, SD = 1.637$ ) and those who did not use its resources ( $M = 5.01, SD = 1.480$ ) was not statistically significant,  $t(463) = -1.291, p = .197$ . Therefore, the null hypothesis failed to be rejected.

Among the respondents, 56 identified as having participated in fraternity and sorority life and 408 who did not. Equal variances were assumed utilizing Levene's test ( $p = .921$ ). The difference in students' quality of relationships with student affairs staff between those who participated in fraternity and sorority life ( $M = 5.27, SD = 1.382$ ) and those who did not use its resources ( $M = 5.01, SD = 1.518$ ) was not statistically significant,  $t(462) = -1.182, p = .238$ . For this test, the null hypothesis failed to be rejected.

Finally, there were 54 who identified utilizing the resources in the relationship violence center and 409 who did not. Applying Levene's test for equality of variances, equal variances were assumed ( $p = .266$ ). The difference in online students' quality of relationships with student

affairs staff between those who utilized the relationship violence center ( $M = 5.31, SD = 1.588$ ) and those who did not ( $M = 5.01, SD = 1.491$ ) was not statistically significant,  $t(461) = -1.413, p = .158$ . Therefore, the null hypothesis failed to be rejected.

### **Quality of Interactions with Other University Staff**

**Campus newspaper.** There were 265 students who indicated that they read the student newspaper and 211 who did not. Utilizing Levene's test, equal variances were assumed ( $p = .348$ ). The  $t$ -test revealed that the difference in online students' quality of relationships with other university staff between those who reviewed the student newspaper ( $M = 5.17, SD = 1.321$ ) and those who did not use its resources ( $M = 5.13, SD = 1.489$ ) was not statistically significant,  $t(474) = -.295, p = .768$ . Therefore, the null hypothesis failed to be rejected.

**Student organizations.** Of those who completed the survey, 90 stated that they participated in a student organization and 383 stated that they did not. Applying Levene's test, equal variances were assumed ( $p = .833$ ). The difference in web-based students' quality of relationships with their advisor between those who participated in at least one student organization ( $M = 5.30, SD = 1.336$ ) and those who did not ( $M = 5.11, SD = 1.412$ ) was not statistically significant,  $t(471) = -1.62, p = .246$ . Therefore, the null hypothesis failed to be rejected.

**Campus recreation.** Among the respondents, 85 students indicated that they utilized the campus recreation department at least once and 390 who did not. Using Levene's test for equality of variances, equal variances were assumed, ( $p = .267$ ). The difference in students' quality of relationships with other students between those who utilized campus recreation ( $M = 5.26, SD = 1.481$ ) and those who did not use its resources ( $M = 5.13, SD = 1.380$ ) was statistically significant,  $t(473) = -.796, p = .427$ . In this test, the null hypothesis failed to be

**Table 17***Independent Samples t-test Comparisons of Quality of Interactions with Other Staff between Users and Non-users of Resources*

Resource	Utilized the resource			Did not utilize the resource			<i>t</i>	95% CI
	<i>n</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>		
1) Campus Newspaper	265	5.17	1.321	211	5.13	1.489	-0.295	[-.292, .215]
2) Student Organizations	90	5.30	1.336	383	5.11	1.412	-1.162	[-.512, .131]
3) Campus Recreation	85	5.26	1.481	390	5.13	1.380	-0.796	[-.462, .196]
4) Student Health Center	70	5.26	1.491	403	5.13	1.384	-0.693	[-.482, .231]
5) Career Development Center	63	5.57	1.228	412	5.09	1.416	-2.557*	[-.852, -.111]
6) Counseling Services	61	5.39	1.441	414	5.11	1.390	-1.462	[-.656, .096]
7) Student Leadership Center	60	5.43	1.332	412	5.11	1.407	-1.653	[-.699, .060]
8) Multicultural Affairs	59	5.42	1.367	413	5.10	1.401	-1.644	[-.702, .060]
9) Study Abroad	57	5.40	1.450	416	5.12	1.392	-1.458	[-.676, .100]
10) Fraternity & Sorority Life	57	5.26	1.408	417	5.13	1.399	-0.652	[-.517, .260]
11) LGBTQ+ Center	56	5.34	1.564	419	5.12	1.374	-1.094	[-.608, .173]
12) Relationship Violence Center	54	5.44	1.410	419	5.11	1.396	-1.656	[-.732, .062]

\* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* $p < .001$

rejected.

**Other student affairs resources.** Again, the findings of the study indicated that students who participated in career development activities had a higher quality of interactions with other university staff members than those who did not participate in such opportunities. The differences of users and non-users of the other services were trivial and not statistically significant.

Of the students who completed the survey, 70 of them indicated that they utilized the student health center, and 403 indicated that they did not. Utilizing Levene's test, equal variances were assumed ( $p = .365$ ). The test revealed that the difference in students' quality of relationships with other university staff between those who utilized the student health center ( $M = 5.26$ ,  $SD = 1.491$ ) and those who did not use its resources ( $M = 5.13$ ,  $SD = 1.384$ ) was not statistically significant,  $t(471) = -.693$ ,  $p = .489$ . Therefore, the null hypothesis failed to be rejected.

Among the respondents, 63 students identified that they utilized the career development center, and 412 did not. Using Levene's test, equality of variances was assumed ( $p = .767$ ). The difference in students' quality of relationships with their academic advisor between those who utilized the career development center ( $M = 5.57$ ,  $SD = 1.228$ ) and those who did not use its resources ( $M = 5.09$ ,  $SD = 1.416$ ) was statistically significant,  $t(473) = -2.557$ ,  $p < .05$ . Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected.

There were 61 web-based students who identified as utilizing counseling services and 414 who did not. Applying Levene's test, homogeneity of variances was assumed ( $p = .659$ ). The difference in students' quality of relationships with other students between those who utilized counseling services ( $M = 5.39$ ,  $SD = 1.441$ ) and those who did not ( $M = 5.11$ ,  $SD = 1.390$ ) was

not statistically significant,  $t(473) = -1.462, p = .144$ . Therefore, the null hypothesis failed to be rejected.

Of the online students who completed the survey, 60 students were engaged with the student leadership center, and 412 were not. The homogeneity of variances was assumed, according to Levene's test ( $p = .881$ ). The difference in online students' quality of relationships with other students between those who utilized the student leadership center ( $M = 5.43, SD = 1.332$ ) and those who did not ( $M = 5.11, SD = 1.407$ ) was not statistically significant,  $t(470) = -1.653, p = .099$ . Once again, the null hypothesis failed to be rejected.

There were 59 students who indicated on the survey that they participated in programs offered by multicultural affairs and 413 who did not. Utilizing Levene's test for equality of variances, equality of variances was assumed ( $p = .793$ ). The test revealed that the difference in students' quality of relationships with other university staff between those who participated in multicultural affairs programs ( $M = 5.42, SD = 1.367$ ) and those who did not ( $M = 5.10, SD = 1.401$ ) was not statistically significant,  $t(470) = -1.644, p = .101$ . Therefore, the null hypothesis failed to be rejected.

Among the respondents, there were 57 online students who indicated utilizing the department of study abroad at least once and 416 who did not use its resources. Using Levene's test for homogeneity of variances, equal variances were assumed ( $p = .448$ ). The difference in students' quality of relationships with other university staff between those who utilized study abroad resources ( $M = 5.40, SD = 1.450$ ) and those who did not use its resources ( $M = 5.12, SD = 1.392$ ) was not statistically significant,  $t(471) = -1.458, p = .146$ . For this test, the null hypothesis failed to be rejected.

There were 57 online students who expressed involvement in fraternity and sorority life

and 417 who did not. Utilizing Levene's test, the homogeneity variances was assumed ( $p = .999$ ). The difference in students' quality of relationships with other university staff between those who participated in this department ( $M = 5.26$ ,  $SD = 1.408$ ) and those who did not use its resources ( $M = 5.13$ ,  $SD = 1.399$ ) was not statistically significant,  $t(472) = -.652$ ,  $p = .515$ . For this test, the null hypothesis failed to be rejected.

There were 56 respondents who identified as utilizing the LGBTQ center's resources and 419 who did not. The homogeneity of variances was assumed, according to Levene's test for equality of variances ( $p = .152$ ). The difference in students' quality of relationships with other online students between those who utilized the LGBTQ center ( $M = 5.34$ ,  $SD = 1.564$ ) and those who did not use its resources ( $M = 5.12$ ,  $SD = 1.374$ ) was not statistically significant,  $t(473) = -1.094$ ,  $p = .274$ . Once again, the null hypothesis failed to be rejected.

Among the respondents, 54 students identified utilizing the services in the relationship violence center and 420 stated that they did not. Equal variances were assumed, applying Levene's test for equality of variances ( $p = .502$ ). The difference in students' quality of relationships with other university staff between those who utilized the relationship violence center ( $M = 5.44$ ,  $SD = 1.410$ ) and those who did not ( $M = 5.11$ ,  $SD = 1.366$ ) was not statistically significant,  $t(471) = -1.656$ ,  $p = .098$ . In this test, the null hypothesis failed to be rejected.

### **Research Question 3:**

**Is there a difference in online students' satisfaction with their college experience between those who utilize and who do not utilize student affairs resources?**

To answer this research question, I used the online students' responses to survey questions about their satisfaction. To better understand the experiences of the online students, I



also discuss findings from the open-ended responses about aspects of the university that support their satisfaction.

### **Quantitative Responses**

On the survey, students were asked to rate their agreement with the statement “Overall, I am satisfied with my experience at this university” on a Likert scale (1 = *Strongly disagree*, 2 = *Disagree*, 3 = *Neither agree nor disagree*, 4 = *Agree*, 5 = *Strongly agree*). Independent samples *t*-tests were once again utilized to examine the differences between online students’ usage of student affairs resources and their satisfaction with their experiences while completing their coursework at the site university. The following null and alternative hypotheses guided each of the tests:

**H<sub>0</sub>:** There is no difference in online students’ satisfaction with their college experience between those who utilize and who do not utilize student affairs resources.

**H<sub>1</sub>:** There is a difference in online students’ satisfaction with their college experience between those who utilize and who do not utilize student affairs resources.

**Campus newspaper.** Of those who completed the survey, there were 269 students who indicated that they reviewed the student newspaper and 21 who did not. Utilizing Levene’s test, homogeneity of variances was assumed ( $p = .727$ ). The *t*-test revealed that the difference in students’ satisfaction with their university experience between those who reviewed the student newspaper ( $M = 4.24$ ,  $SD = .845$ ) and those who did not use its resources ( $M = 4.16$ ,  $SD = .861$ ) was not statistically significant,  $t(479) = -1.038$ ,  $p = .300$ . Therefore, the null hypothesis failed to be rejected.

**Table 18***Independent Samples t-test Comparisons of Satisfaction with the University Experience between Users and Non-users of Resources*

Resource	Utilized the resource			Did not utilize the resource			<i>t</i>	95% CI
	<i>n</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>		
1) Campus Newspaper	269	4.24	.845	212	4.16	.861	-1.038	[-.235, .073]
2) Student Organizations	90	4.37	.710	386	4.17	.882	-2.013*	[-.397, -.005]
3) Campus Recreation	86	4.40	.816	393	4.16	.857	-2.299*	[-.431, -.034]
4) Student Health Center	69	4.35	.837	408	4.19	.855	-1.455	[-.380, .057]
5) Career Development Center	64	4.42	.662	415	4.18	.877	-2.151*	[-.471, -.021]
6) Counseling Services	60	4.43	.673	419	4.17	.873	-2.207*	[-.490, -.028]
7) Student Leadership Center	60	4.35	.799	416	4.19	.857	-1.344	[-.388, .073]
8) Multicultural Affairs	58	4.43	.678	418	4.17	.874	-2.146*	[-.491, -.022]
9) Fraternity & Sorority Life	57	4.39	.701	421	4.18	.871	-1.687	[-.440, -.034]
10) Study Abroad	56	4.39	.705	421	4.18	.871	-1.729	[-.449, .029]
11) LGBTQ+ Center	56	4.46	.660	423	4.17	.871	-1.789	[-.406, .019]
12) Relationship Violence Center	54	4.48	.693	423	4.17	.869	-2.414*	[-.529, -.054]

\* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* $p < .001$

**Student organizations.** Among the respondents, there were 90 students who stated that they participated in an organization and 386 who stated they did not. Applying Levene's test for equality of variances, equal variances were assumed ( $p = .557$ ). The difference in students' satisfaction with their university experience between those who participated in at least one student organization ( $M = 4.37, SD = .710$ ) and those who did not ( $M = 4.17, SD = .882$ ) was statistically significant,  $t(474) = -2.013, p < .05$ . For the test of involvement in student organizations, the null hypothesis was rejected.

**Campus recreation.** There were 86 online students who indicated on the survey that they utilized the campus recreation department at least once and 393 who did not. Equal variances were assumed using Levene's test for homogeneity of variances ( $p = .973$ ). The difference in students' satisfaction with their university experience between those who utilized campus recreation ( $M = 4.40, SD = .816$ ) and those who did not use its resources ( $M = 4.16, SD = .857$ ) was statistically significant,  $t(477) = -2.299, p < .05$ . In this test, the null hypothesis was rejected.

**Other student affairs resources.** Overall, among the other student affairs resources, online students who had experiences with the career development center, counseling services, multicultural affairs, and relationship violence center were more satisfied than their peers who did not use these resources.

Among the respondents, here were 69 web-based students who indicated that they utilized the student health center's services and 408 who indicated that they did not. Utilizing Levene's test, equal variances were assumed ( $p = .709$ ). The  $t$ -test revealed that the difference in students' satisfaction with their university experience between those who utilized the student health center ( $M = 4.35, SD = .837$ ) and those who did not use its resources ( $M = 4.19, SD =$

.855) was not statistically significant,  $t(475) = -1.455, p = .146$ . Therefore, the null hypothesis failed to be rejected.

There were 64 students who utilized the career development center's resources and 415 who did not. The homogeneity of variances was assumed, due to Levene's test for equality of variances ( $p = .359$ ). The difference in students' satisfaction with their university experience between those who utilized the career development center ( $M = 4.42, SD = .877$ ) and those who did not use its resources ( $M = 4.18, SD = .662$ ) was statistically significant,  $t(477) = -2.151, p < .05$ . Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Among the respondents, 60 online students identified as utilizing counseling services and 419 identified that they did not. Applying Levene's test for equality of variances, equal variances were assumed ( $p = .465$ ). The difference in online students' satisfaction with their university experience between those who utilized counseling services ( $M = 4.43, SD = .673$ ) and those who did not ( $M = 4.17, SD = .873$ ) was statistically significant,  $t(477) = -2.207, p < .05$ . In this case, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Of those who completed the survey, 60 students who indicated they engaged with student leadership center and 416 who did not. The equality of variances was assumed, according to Levene's test ( $p = .872$ ). The difference in online students' satisfaction with their university experience between those who utilized the student leadership center ( $M = 4.35, SD = .799$ ) and those who did not use its resources ( $M = 4.19, SD = .857$ ) was not statistically significant,  $t(474) = -1.344, p = .180$ . Once again, the null hypothesis failed to be rejected.

There were 58 students who identified as having participated in the programs offered by multicultural affairs and 418 who did not. Utilizing Levene's test for homogeneity of variances, equal variances were assumed ( $p = .486$ ). The test identified that the difference in online

students' satisfaction with their university experience between those who participated in multicultural affairs programs ( $M = 4.43$ ,  $SD = .678$ ) and those who did not use its resources ( $M = 4.17$ ,  $SD = .874$ ) was statistically significant,  $t(474) = -2.146$ ,  $p < .05$ . In this case, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Among the respondents, 57 identified as having participated in fraternity and sorority life and 421 who did not. Utilizing Levene's test for homogeneity of variances, equal variances were assumed ( $p = .605$ ). The difference in students' satisfaction with their university experience between those who participated in fraternity and sorority life ( $M = 4.39$ ,  $SD = .701$ ) and those who did not participate in the office's activities ( $M = 4.18$ ,  $SD = .871$ ) was not statistically significant,  $t(476) = -1.687$ ,  $p = .092$ . For this test, the null hypothesis failed to be rejected.

There were 56 web-based students who utilized the study abroad department and 421 who did not. Using Levene's test for homogeneity of variances, equal variances were assumed ( $p = .643$ ). The difference in students' satisfaction with their university experience between those who utilized study abroad resources ( $M = 4.39$ ,  $SD = .705$ ) and those who did not use its resources ( $M = 4.18$ ,  $SD = .871$ ) was not statistically significant,  $t(475) = -1.729$ ,  $p = .084$ . Therefore, the null hypothesis failed to be rejected.

Of those who completed the survey, there were 56 respondents who identified as utilizing the LGBTQ center and 423 who did not. The homogeneity of variances was assumed according to Levene's test for equality of variances ( $p = .400$ ). The difference in students' satisfaction with their university experience between those who utilized the LGBTQ center ( $M = 4.46$ ,  $SD = .660$ ) and those who did not use its resources ( $M = 4.17$ ,  $SD = .871$ ) was statistically significant,  $t(477) = -2.414$ ,  $p < .05$ . Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Finally, there were 54 respondents who identified utilizing the relationship violence

center's resources and 423 who did not. Applying Levene's test for equality of variances, equal variances were assumed ( $p = .606$ ). The difference in online students' satisfaction with their university experience between those who utilized the relationship violence center ( $M = 4.48$ ,  $SD = .693$ ) and those who did not ( $M = 4.17$ ,  $SD = .869$ ) was statistically significant,  $t(475) = -2.512$ ,  $p < .05$ . Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected.

### **Open-ended Responses**

In the survey, students were asked to identify what had contributed most to their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with their university experience, and students were able to record any response to these open-ended questions. Of the students who expressed satisfaction with their experience, the most common responses related to the responsiveness of staff to their concerns (29.4%), the autonomy and flexibility of the online program (23.3%), and the knowledge and supportiveness of their faculty (15.0%).

Certain comments provided by students thoroughly expressed the ways the online program enhanced their satisfaction with the university. One student stated, "The advisement team and the faculty and staff in the college have gone above and beyond to mentor and help in any way. They want me to excel as a student." Another respondent expressed receiving support from "the helpful, understanding, and knowledgeable advisors and faculty that answered my questions and concerns while being an online student across the world." There were no responses related to specific student affairs resources.

Likewise, the students who expressed dissatisfaction with their university experience identified reasons, including frustration with their initial enrollment experiences and slow responsiveness from faculty and staff. One student cited that their "questions on assignments are not answered in a timely manner (which) causes a delay in my ability to complete assignments."

Additionally, several students shared about their lack of connection to the campus community. In one example, a student wrote, “I am an online student, and I feel extremely disconnected. I do not feel as if (this university) was the right choice.” A few students mentioned the lack of involvement opportunities for online students. “Student groups are all geared to on-campus students. There are no groups for off-campus or non-traditional students to be involved.” Lastly, some students expressed a lack of interest or awareness of the student affairs resources available to them, while others expressed an interest in exploring these resources more after learning of their availability through the survey.

#### **Research Question 4:**

**Is there a difference in online students’ GPA between students who utilize and who do not utilize student affairs resources?**

At the time the survey was distributed, GPAs were procured from the University Analytics office at UVW. Of the students who responded to the survey, 74 students had GPAs of 0.000, indicating that they were in their first semester of coursework. The results of this research question would not have been valid by utilizing that set of GPAs, so another request for GPAs was made later. At that time, only two students had GPAs of 0.000, indicating that they likely did not pass any coursework during their first term of enrollment. The GPAs from the second request to University Analytics was utilized to answer Research Questions 4 and 5.

To explore the differences between online students’ use of student affairs resources and their GPA, another set of *t*-tests were conducted, and the following null and alternative hypotheses guided each of the tests:

**H<sub>0</sub>:** There is no difference in online students’ satisfaction with their college experience between those who have and those who have not utilized student affairs resources.

**H<sub>1</sub>:** There is a difference in online students' satisfaction with their college experience between those who have and those who have not utilized student affairs resources.

For each *t*-test, z-scores and boxplots of the data identified the presence of outliers. Similarly to the previous research questions, *t*-tests results were compared when those outliers were modified to one less extreme and when they were left untreated. In this case, students in their first semester of coursework had a GPA of 0.000, and these outliers were adjusted up to the closest non-outlier of 1.500. This adjustment created a distinct difference in the means and standard deviations for the *t*-tests. Therefore, the *t*-tests included in the results below were run with the adjusted data (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Table 19 displays the results of those tests.

**Campus newspaper.** Among the respondents, there were 270 students who indicated that they reviewed the student newspaper and 213 who did not. Utilizing Levene's test, homogeneity of variances was assumed ( $p = .211$ ). The *t*-test revealed that the difference in students' GPA between those who reviewed the student newspaper ( $M = 3.41, SD = .539$ ) and those who did not use its resources ( $M = 3.43, SD = .577$ ) was not statistically significant,  $t(481) = .186, p < .852$ . Therefore, the null hypothesis failed to be rejected.

**Student organizations.** There were 91 online students who stated that they participated in an organization and 387 who did not. Applying Levene's test for equality of variances, equal variances were assumed ( $p = .529$ ). The difference in students' GPA between those who participated in at least one student organization ( $M = 3.29, SD = .566$ ) and those who did not ( $M = 3.45, SD = .547$ ) was statistically significant,  $t(476) = 2.598, p < .01$ . For the test of differences in GPA based on involvement in student organizations, the null hypothesis was rejected.

**Campus recreation.** There were 87 online students who indicated on the survey that they



**Table 19**

*Independent Samples t-test Comparisons of GPA between Users and Non-users of Resources*

Resource	Utilized the resource			Did not utilize the resource			<i>t</i>	95% CI
	<i>n</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>		
1) Campus Newspaper	270	3.416	.539	213	3.426	.577	.186	[-.091, .110]
2) Student Organizations	91	3.287	.566	387	3.453	.547	2.598**	[.041, .293]
3) Campus Recreation	87	3.295	.521	394	3.446	.561	2.311*	[.023, .281]
4) Student Health Center	70	3.298	.548	409	3.441	.557	1.980*	[.001, .283]
5) Career Development Center	65	3.294	.552	416	3.348	.555	1.965	[-.002, .291]
6) Counseling Services	61	3.268	.554	420	3.441	.554	2.276*	[.024, .322]
7) Student Leadership Center	61	3.280	.567	417	3.443	.551	2.145*	[.014, .321]
8) Multicultural Affairs	59	3.267	.607	419	3.443	.543	2.295*	[.025, .327]
9) Fraternity & Sorority Life	58	3.261	.572	422	3.441	.552	2.309	[.027, .332]
10) Study Abroad	57	3.246	.588	422	3.444	.549	2.531*	[.044, .351]
11) LGBTQ+ Center	57	3.310	.532	424	3.434	.558	1.586	[-.030, .278]
12) Relationship Violence Center	55	3.321	.545	424	3.434	.557	1.413	[-.044, .269]

\**p* < .05; \*\**p* < .01; \*\*\**p* < .001

utilized the campus recreation department at least once and 394 who did not. Equal variances were assumed using Levene's test for homogeneity of variances ( $p = .463$ ). The difference in students' GPA between those who utilized campus recreation ( $M = 3.29$ ,  $SD = .521$ ) and those who did not use its resources ( $M = 3.45$ ,  $SD = .561$ ) was not statistically significant,  $t(479) = 2.311$ ,  $p = .021$ . In this test, the null hypothesis failed to be rejected.

**Other student affairs resources.** There were 70 web-based students who indicated on the survey that they utilized the student health center's services and 409 who did not. Utilizing Levene's test, equal variances were assumed ( $p = .898$ ). The  $t$ -test revealed that the difference in students' GPA between those who utilized the student health center ( $M = 3.30$ ,  $SD = .547$ ) and those who did not use its resources ( $M = 3.44$ ,  $SD = .557$ ) was statistically significant,  $t(477) = 1.980$ ,  $p < .05$ . Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected.

There were 65 students who utilized the career development center's resources and 416 who did not. The homogeneity of variances was assumed, due to Levene's test for equality of variances ( $p = .985$ ). The difference in students' GPA between those who utilized the career development center ( $M = 3.29$ ,  $SD = .552$ ) and those who did not use its resources ( $M = 3.44$ ,  $SD = .555$ ) was not statistically significant,  $t(479) = 1.957$ ,  $p = .051$ . In this case, the null hypothesis failed to be rejected.

Among the respondents, 61 of them identified as utilizing counseling services and 420 who did not. Applying Levene's test for equality of variances, equal variances were assumed ( $p = .684$ ). The difference in online students' GPA between those who utilized counseling services ( $M = 3.02$ ,  $SD = .869$ ) and those who did not ( $M = 3.22$ ,  $SD = .865$ ) was not statistically significant,  $t(479) = .684$ ,  $p = .151$ . In this case, the null hypothesis failed to be rejected.

Of those completing the survey, there were 61 students who indicated they engaged with

the student leadership center and 417 who did not. The equality of variances was assumed, according to Levene's test ( $p = .675$ ). The difference in online students' GPA between those who utilized the student leadership center ( $M = 3.28$ ,  $SD = .567$ ) and those who did not use its resources ( $M = 3.44$ ,  $SD = .551$ ) was statistically significant,  $t(476) = 2.145$ ,  $p < .05$ . Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected.

There were 59 students who identified as having participated in the programs offered by multicultural affairs and 419 who did not. Utilizing Levene's test for equality of variances, equal variances were assumed ( $p = .084$ ). The test identified that the difference in online students' GPA between those who participated in multicultural affairs programs ( $M = 3.26$ ,  $SD = .607$ ) and those who did not use its resources ( $M = 3.44$ ,  $SD = .543$ ) was statistically significant,  $t(476) = 2.295$ ,  $p < .05$ . Once again, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Among the respondents, 58 identified as having participated in fraternity and sorority life and 422 who did not. Equal variances were assumed utilizing Levene's test ( $p = .648$ ). The difference in students' GPA between those who participated in fraternity and sorority life ( $M = 3.26$ ,  $SD = .573$ ) and those who did not use its resources ( $M = 3.44$ ,  $SD = .552$ ) was statistically significant,  $t(478) = 2.309$ ,  $p < .05$ . For this test, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Among the respondents, there were 57 online students who utilized the study abroad department and 422 who did not. Using Levene's test for homogeneity of variances, equal variances were assumed ( $p = .197$ ). The difference in students' GPA between those who utilized study abroad resources ( $M = 3.25$ ,  $SD = .588$ ) and those who did not use its resources ( $M = 3.44$ ,  $SD = .549$ ) was statistically significant,  $t(477) = 2.531$ ,  $p < .05$ . Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Of the students who completed the survey, there were 57 respondents who identified as

utilizing the LGBTQ center and 424 who did not. The homogeneity of variances was assumed according to Levene's test for equality of variances ( $p = .711$ ). The difference in students' GPA between those who utilized the LGBTQ center ( $M = 3.31$ ,  $SD = .532$ ) and those who did not use its resources ( $M = 3.43$ ,  $SD = .558$ ) was not statistically significant,  $t(479) = 1.586$ ,  $p = .113$ . Therefore, the null hypothesis failed to be rejected.

Among the respondents, there were 55 who identified utilizing the relationship violence center's resources and 424 who did not. Applying Levene's test for equality of variances, equal variances were assumed ( $p = .962$ ). The difference in online students' GPA between those who utilized the relationship violence center ( $M = 3.32$ ,  $SD = .545$ ) and those who did not ( $M = 3.43$ ,  $SD = .557$ ) was not statistically significant,  $t(477) = 1.413$ ,  $p = .158$ . Therefore, the null hypothesis failed to be rejected.

#### **Research Question 5:**

**To what extent are online students' background characteristics, utilization of student affairs resources, quality of interactions, and GPA related to overall satisfaction with their university experience?**

The following hypotheses guided the analysis of Research Question 5.

**H<sub>0</sub>:** There are no specific predictors for satisfaction with students' university experience.

**H<sub>A</sub>:** There is at least one predictor for satisfaction with students' university experience.

To answer this research question, a multiple linear regression analysis was conducted. However, before the regression model could be set, certain variables were changed due to low response rates in certain categories. The variable for race and ethnicity was transformed into a

dichotomous variable, so that all ethnic groups, including Asian, Black, Hispanic, Native American, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, Multiracial, and International, were recoded into a single minority group. As a result, the White students represented 51.4% of the sample, and the non-White students represented 48.6% of the sample. Similarly, due to the low number of students who identified as non-binary in their gender selection, all non-female students were recoded into a single group. Therefore, female students made up 86.7% of the sample, and non-female students made up 13.3% of the sample.

The variable “use student affairs services” denotes whether students utilized any one of the student affairs resources tested in the earlier research questions. As in the previous research questions, all values related to online students’ usage of individual student affairs resources were combined to make dichotomous variables, where any amount of utilization of a resource was recoded as 1 and non-use of a resource was recoded as 0. The “use student affairs services” variable then combined all 12 student affairs categories, so that any amount of utilization of any resource was coded as 1 and non-utilization of all resources was coded as 0.

To check for multicollinearity, correlations between all the independent variables were reviewed. None of the correlations were in the model were very high with quality of interactions with student services staff and quality of interactions with other staff ( $r = -.483$ ) being the strongest. Additionally, the tolerance and variance inflation factor (VIF) values were calculated for each predictor variable. A rule of thumb is that multicollinearity likely exists when VIF values are higher than 10 (or similarly, when tolerance values are lower than .10). Among the independent variables, no VIF values were above 10 (see Table 20).

A sequential multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine if the addition of students’ use of student affairs services and their quality of interactions with other university

groups improved the prediction of satisfaction with the university experience beyond that of students' background characteristics (including gender, race, age, first-generation status, transfer student status, enrollment status, and employment status). The second model statistically

**Table 20**

*Multicollinearity Statistics: Tolerance and VIF Values*

Variable	Tolerance	VIF
Gender	.976	1.024
Race	.894	1.119
Age	.913	1.095
First-Generation Status	.961	1.041
Transfer Status	.964	1.037
Enrollment Status	.906	1.104
Employment Status	.888	1.127
Use of Student Affairs Resources	.932	1.073
Current GPA	.90	1.100
Quality of Interactions with Other Students	.523	1.911
Quality of Interactions with Academic Advisors	.443	2.259
Quality of Interactions with Faculty	.391	2.555
Quality of Interactions with Student Affairs Staff	.342	2.922
Quality of Interactions with Other Staff	.366	2.734

**Table 21***Sequential multiple regression analysis: Online students' satisfaction with university experience*

Variable	Model 1		Model 2	
	<b>B</b>	$\beta$	<b>B</b>	$\beta$
Gender	-.036	-.015	-.011	-.004
Race	-.053	-.032	-.105	-.063
Age	-.003	-.037	-.001	-.013
First-Generation Status	-.132	-.074	-.163 *	-.091
Transfer Status	.220	.049	.203	.045
Enrollment Status	.089	.053	.147 *	.088
Employment Status	-.081	* -.103	-.040	-.051
Use of Student Affairs Resources			-.012	-.007
Current GPA			.114	.081
Quality of Interactions with Other Students			-.007	-.041
Quality of Interactions with Academic Advisors			.132 ***	.216
Quality of Interactions with Faculty			.287 ***	.419
Quality of Interactions with Student Affairs Staff			-.025	-.045
Quality of Interactions with Other Staff			.007	.012
$R^2$	.008		.327	
$F$	1.497		15.615	
$\Delta R^2$	.025		.324	
$\Delta F$	1.497		29.026	

\* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* $p < .001$

significantly predicted satisfaction with the university experience,  $F(7, 408) = 29.026, p < .001$ ,  $\text{adj. } R^2 = .324$ . Table 21 includes the statistics for each regression model.

In the examination of the first model using only background characteristics, the only variable that contributed significantly to the prediction of online students' satisfaction with their university experience was employment status ( $\beta = -.081, p < .05$ ).

In the second model, employment status is no longer a significant predictor ( $\beta = -.040, p = .232$ ), but first-generation status ( $\beta = -.163, p < .05$ ) and enrollment status ( $\beta = .147, p < .05$ ) both predicted significantly. Specifically, first-generation students were less likely to be satisfied with their university experience, while students who were enrolled in online coursework full-time were more likely to be satisfied. Both findings were consistent across each model, but they became statistically significant in Model 2.

Additionally, two aspects of quality of interactions contributed significantly to the prediction of students' satisfaction with their university experience: quality of interactions with faculty ( $\beta = .287, p < .001$ ) and quality of interactions with academic advisors ( $\beta = .132, p < .001$ ). This indicates that students who identified having high satisfaction in their interactions with faculty and staff associated with their coursework were more likely to be satisfied with their university experience.

Though not statistically significant, it is worth mentioning that the two variables associated with student affairs staff and resources were negative factors in the regression model. This means that students who used student affairs resources ( $\beta = -.012, p = .866$ ) and reported better quality of interactions with student affairs staff ( $\beta = -.025, p = .508$ ) were less likely to be satisfied with their university experience. Similarly, students who reported better quality of



interactions with their peers ( $\beta = -.007, p = .802$ ) were less likely to be satisfied, though only slightly and not statistically significant.

The adjusted  $R^2$  in the analysis indicated that the final regression model accounted for 32.7% of the variance in online students' satisfaction with their university experience, as opposed to the initial model, which accounted for just 0.8% of the variance. This means that including use of student affairs resources and quality of interactions improved the predictive nature of the model.

### **Chapter Summary**

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between cocurricular engagement and academic success for online students. Specifically, this study was designed to assess if engagement with student affairs resources supported the quality of interactions that web-based learners had with other university groups. Additionally, in this study I sought to investigate if utilization of those resources supported online students' satisfaction with their university experience or their GPA. Finally, the variables of utilization of student affairs resources and quality of interactions were tested to be predictors of students' satisfaction with their university experience.

In summary, the results of this study indicated that very few online students utilized student affairs resources more than once, and whether utilizing those resources was related to their quality of interactions with different groups varied by student affairs department. However, using the resources offered by these departments resulted in students reporting greater satisfaction with their university experience, though the students who engaged with those departments had lower GPAs. The regression model developed in this study revealed that while background characteristics are not significant predictors of online students' satisfaction with

their university experience, the addition of utilization of student affairs resources and quality of relationships significantly predicted student satisfaction.

## **CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION**

### **Chapter Overview**

This chapter includes a review of the purpose and significance of the study. Additionally, the results and analysis from Chapter Four are examined in detail related to online student engagement with student affairs resources, students' relationships with other university constituents, semester grade point average (GPA), and their satisfaction with their university experience. This chapter concludes with implications for policy, practice and future research.

### **Purpose and Significance of the Study**

Previous researchers of online students (Deschaine & Whale, 2017; Günüç & Kuzu, 2014; Kahn et al., 2017) have focused primarily on their experiences interacting with faculty and their peers inside virtual classroom settings. Despite these efforts, online student satisfaction and retention have fallen behind those of on-campus learners (Carruth et al., 2010; Cho, 2012). Meanwhile decades of research (Laing & Laing, 2015; Tinto, 1975) has studied how student affairs resources support the success and satisfaction of on-campus students, and student affairs practitioners will likely be tasked in the future with supporting online students in similar ways.

The purpose of this study was to explore the relationships between online students' utilization of student affairs resources and their quality of interactions with other university constituents, academic success, and satisfaction with their university experience. As online education continues to grow, institutions of higher education will look for new strategies to improve the performance and degree attainment of the students in these programs. If engagement with student affairs resources supports on-campus students in these ways, one could surmise that online students may benefit in similar ways.

This study is significant to address the gap in literature related to online students'

utilization of student affairs resources. Additionally, this study may influence university policies related to the costs of online education. Traditionally, fees are often associated with access to student affairs resources, and since most online students do not visit campus, they are not required to pay the fees for campus-based resources. However, if those resources can be reformatted to support web-based learning, universities may not only find increased satisfaction and success among their online students, but they may find additional revenue streams for the institution as well.

### **Discussion of the Results**

This section of the chapter includes the main themes that rose from the analysis of the research questions. First, the discussion examines the unique qualities of the sample. Then, engagement with student affairs resources and the factors that may influence why online students utilize those resources are discussed. This section concludes with a review of the main themes related to online students' quality of interactions, their satisfaction with the university experience, and their GPA.

#### **Unique Qualities of the Sample**

This study focused primarily on the undergraduate online students at a single institution. This university has one academic college with a robust online program and a few online options in other colleges. Specifically, UVW's College of Nursing offers dozens of undergraduate and graduate online nursing programs, which account for the vast majority of online students at the institution. Nationally, health-related degrees are among the top choices for online students, but even so, those students typically make up only 19% of online learners (Ortagus, 2017).

The strong influence of nursing majors on the sample likely influenced the responses. For example, the nursing field is a predominantly female profession (Roth & Coleman, 2008).

Therefore, the majority of the respondents were female as well. Additionally, the high number of nursing majors may have influenced the results of certain questions on the survey. The question related to the importance that online students placed on different aspects of student life resulted in 56% of respondents stating that the university's encouragement of healthy lifestyle choices was either "extremely important" or "very important." Considering almost all of the respondents were in nursing programs, the responses may be influenced by the importance placed on healthy lifestyle choices that are encouraged within the health care industry. Similarly, when asked about their awareness of student affairs resources, most online students were aware of Student Health Services and Campus Recreation, and likewise those areas were among the departments that were most often utilized. One possibility for these units being so well known could be their role in supporting student health and wellness.

Additionally, Ortagus (2017), studying data from the National Center of Education Statistics and the National Postsecondary Student Aid Study, found that 63% of all online students are White. However, only 51% of the respondents in this study were White. This is likely due to the institution being among the highest ranked universities in the country for cultural diversity. The sample was also more highly concentrated on older students, as 64.5% of respondents were between the ages of 30-49, while nationally only 53% of students fall into that age range (Ortagus, 2017). The respondents in this study were also more likely to be balancing their coursework with employment. Nationally, 27% of online students were not working while completing their degree (Ortagus, 2017), while only 13.1% of students who participated in this survey had no job at the time. Logically, students who are working while completing their degree would have less time to engage in university resources, and therefore students in this study may utilize the university's student affairs resources at a lower rate than other institutions.

Likewise, the majority (69.2%) of students in this study live within 25 miles of UVW. Reasonably, if students live close to campus, they may be more likely to utilize student services that may require a visit to campus, such as resources offered through departments like campus recreation, health services, or counseling services. These unique aspects of the sample may have influenced other results, so further research of this type on other campuses may help to validate the findings of this study.

### **Awareness and Utilization of Student Affairs Resources**

In general, most online students in this study were unaware of the departments and resources available within student affairs. Likewise, the students in this study utilized very few of the resources within student affairs departments with the exception of reading the institution's campus newspaper. The newspaper is made available to all students through an electronic e-newsletter, which is sent to all students' email accounts each workday during the long semesters (fall and spring semester). The results of this study indicate that 56% of online students read the campus newspaper, implying that the majority of them have an interest in the activities and business of the university despite likely never spending any time on the campus.

The fact that the majority of online students are not aware of the resources in student affairs could be due to the fees associated with those resources. At UVW, many of those resources are funded through a fee that online students do not pay, and therefore they may not have access to those services. However, the majority (59.6%) of respondents identified an interest in developing leadership skills, and nearly half (44.4%) of students were interested in internship opportunities. Similarly, the greater part (56.4%) of online students stated that the university's encouragement of healthy lifestyle choices was of importance to them. A reasonable conclusion could be made that many these students currently work in the healthcare field and are

interested in professional advancement opportunities that could be achieved with a higher level of education and degree attainment. If so, leadership skills development and internships would also provide online students with valuable skills and experiences that may improve their chances at advancement in their health care careers. While online students may not have an interest in all student affairs resources, there clearly are some that online students would utilize if they had access to those resources and were made more aware of their availability.

Interestingly, respondents in this study had very little interest in social opportunities or student organizations. Previous research identified that interactivity with peers was an important part of increasing online students' confidence in their coursework, satisfaction with the learning process, and understanding of the relevance of the coursework to their professional goals (Lundberg & Sheridan, 2015; Mahle, 2011). If engagement with peers supports online students' learning and satisfaction, the social engagement available through student affairs resources ought to be of greater importance to these students. Perhaps online students do not see these as viable avenues to increasing engagement with peers, or they may not realize the correlation between engagement with peers and their success in online coursework. It is also possible that online students have been systemically trained to assume that their only engagement with other students will occur in their coursework. In any of these cases, a disconnect exists between web-based learning and student engagement opportunities offered within student affairs.

### **Quality of Interactions**

In this study, very few of the results related to online students' quality of relationships with other university constituents were statistically significant. However, some conclusions can be drawn from the practical significance identified in the results. In general, utilizing student affairs resources corresponded to higher quality of relationships with all university constituents.

The largest increase in quality of interactions was with students (average  $\Delta = .393$ ), followed by quality of interactions with student affairs staff (average  $\Delta = .270$ ). Meanwhile, utilization of student affairs resources corresponded least with the increase in quality of interactions with faculty (average  $\Delta = .169$ ).

Some student affairs resources resulted in stronger quality of interactions than others. Online students who utilized career services identified having a higher quality of interactions across all constituent groups than those who did not utilize the services. Additionally, students who engaged with the leadership center, fraternity & sorority life, and relationship violence center identified having greater quality of interactions with peers. Students with experiences of campus recreation had better relationships with academic advisors.

Career services was among the areas identified as being of greatest interest to online learners. The students engaged with these services are likely connecting to other constituents who share their educational and professional goals and utilizing the opportunities to network with peers, faculty, and staff to achieve those goals. The relationship violence center was an unexpected resource included in the areas that resulted in greater quality of relationships with students. Perhaps the staff in this department encouraged students to focus on building relationships with other members of the university community as a mechanism for healing from the violence those students experienced in other aspects of their lives.

A few student affairs departments were consistently among those resources that resulted in the least difference in quality of interactions across different constituent groups. Students who utilized the campus newspaper had no difference in quality of relationships across all groups compared to those who did not utilize it. It is likely that students' utilization of the newspaper simply means that they read the e-newsletter regularly. If so, an easy conclusion to make is that



reading the newspaper does not involve engagement with other members of the university community and therefore, does not result in increasing the quality of interactions with other people.

Other areas that consistently resulted in non-significant difference in online students' quality of interactions with other groups were areas related to health and wellness. Students who utilized the student health center and campus recreation reported very similar quality of relationships with all types of university staff (academic advisors, student affairs staff, and other staff) than those who did not utilize those services. The student health center is likely included on this list due to the clinical nature of its work. The student health center is similar to a doctor's office, and patient confidentiality likely results in a level of impersonalization in the interactions students have with the staff. Meanwhile, utilization of the resources in campus recreation is probably limited to students utilizing the recreation facility on campus for working out, and these online students are likely not engaging with university staff during their workouts.

### **Relationship between Utilization of Resources and GPA**

A somewhat surprising result of this study is that the difference in GPA between those students who utilized student affairs resources and those who did not. All of the student affairs resources resulted in negative differences in GPA. One assumption that can be drawn from these results is that many students may feel that they are performing well in their coursework and therefore have little need to pursue help from different university resources. Meanwhile, those students who may feel they are less successful in their coursework than they would like are the ones utilizing various resources from student affairs departments. Alternatively, another reason for these results (lower GPA for those who utilize student affairs resources) could be the time utilized to engage with these departments. Tinto (1975; 2007; 2012) identified that on-campus

students engaging with social activities too often can often result in lower GPAs. Perhaps the threshold for the amount of engagement with student services is less for online students due to the nature of their learning or the balance they have to dedicate to personal, professional, and school activities.

### **Online Students' Satisfaction with the University Experience**

Whereas utilization of student affairs resources resulted in very few statistically significant differences in online students' relationships with other university constituent groups, their satisfaction with their university experience had very different results. Statistically significant differences in students' satisfaction were associated with utilization of six of the 12 departments included in this study: student organizations ( $\Delta = 0.20, p < .05$ ), campus recreation ( $\Delta = 0.24, p < .05$ ), career development services ( $\Delta = 0.24, p < .05$ ), counseling services ( $\Delta = 0.26, p < .05$ ), multicultural affairs ( $\Delta = 0.26, p < .05$ ), the LGBTQ+ center ( $\Delta = 0.29, p < .05$ ), and the relationship violence center ( $\Delta = 0.31, p < .05$ ).

The areas that were associated with the greatest difference in satisfaction between those who utilized the resource and those who did not were the relationship violence center, the LGBTQ center, multicultural affairs, and counseling services. One possible reason for the relationship violence center and counseling services being among this list is that they provide support for students who are challenged by difficult emotional situations. The online students utilizing these services likely feel a greater sense of support from the university, beyond the support they receive for their academic coursework. A study by LaPadula (2010) identified similar results in that access to personal or mental health counseling were among the services most desired by online students. Likewise, the inclusion of the LGBTQ center and multicultural affairs in the list of the departments resulting in the greatest difference in satisfaction is also

reflected in previous research. Lundberg and Sheridan (2015) found that conversations of diversity in discussion boards and other coursework contributed positively to online student learning.

The difference in satisfaction between online students who utilized newspaper and those who did not was not statistically significant. The student newspaper focuses primarily on topics related to campus-based activities, and while those topics may be of interest to online learners, these students are likely not able to participate in campus events. Because online students cannot have a large role in what constitutes campus news, this may result in a feeling of disconnection or isolation from the university community.

The regression model showed that online students' quality of interactions and use of student affairs resources may have a strong influence on online students' satisfaction with their university experience. The addition of those factors resulted in a statistically significant difference in the predictability of the regression model ( $R^2 = 0.327$ ) over one that included only basic student characteristics ( $R^2 = 0.008$ ). The students' quality of interactions with faculty ( $B = 0.287$ ) and their academic advisors ( $B = 0.132$ ) were the areas that contributed most to the predictability of student satisfaction. This result is not surprising in that these are the members of the university community with whom online students likely interact with the most. The positive interactions with faculty and academic advisors were reflected in the students' open-ended responses to survey questions. Likewise, previous research (Chen & Jang, 2010; Kearns, 2012; Mahle, 2011) has shown that encouraging interactions with faculty members can contribute positively to student learning and satisfaction.

Additionally, the regression model indicated that being a first-generation college student negatively contributed to satisfaction with the university experience ( $B = -0.163$ ). First-

generation students are those whose parents do not possess a college degree, and therefore, these students may not have a thorough understanding of the resources a university offers to support their academic success and satisfaction. Alternatively, student satisfaction with the university experience positively contributed to enrollment status. The model indicates that being a full-time student leads to increased satisfaction with the university experience. One conclusion that could be drawn is that students who take longer routes to degree completion may experience unhappiness with the amount of time it takes to complete their academic and professional goals.

Utilization of student affairs resources was not a statistically significant contributor to the prediction model, nor was it a positive contributor ( $B = -0.012$ ). One possibility for this result is the limited number of times students utilized student affairs departments. If utilization of campus resources had been greater in the sample, one could theorize that this factor would instead contribute positively to the prediction model. Perhaps repeating this study on campuses where student affairs departments are providing more resources specifically to online students would garner different results.

### **Implications and Recommendations**

With the growth of online learning in higher education and the lower levels of persistence among web-based students (Angelino & Natvig, 2009; Nash, 2015), improving the success and persistence of these students will be of interest to colleges and universities in the future. This section introduces some implications of this study on practice, policy, and future research into online learning in higher education. Additionally, recommendations for colleges and universities, as well as researchers, are discussed.

#### **Implications for Policy and Practice**

One of the main benefits of most online degree programs is the lower cost compared to

campus-based programs. As stated earlier, many online students do not pay the fees that financially support the resources provided by student affairs departments. As a result, the departments are likely not designing services to support online students, and in some cases, online students may not have access to the departments' standard services. However, institutions of higher education should investigate whether they should charge online students at least a portion of their traditional fees for these student services.

This is a complicated issue for higher education. On one hand, universities may find that increasing the costs of their online programs may result in lower enrollment, as some students may be highly focused on the financial investment they want to make in their education. Those students may pursue their education at other colleges that offer less expensive degree programs. On the other hand, universities may find that increasing those costs to provide more support for online students results in greater satisfaction and increased retention for those students. In that case, the university may show increases in enrollment, both from the effect of increasing the number of returning students, as well as increases in new students who may be attracted to the institution's increased rates of online student success. This commitment to online students' satisfaction may be an attractive quality to prospective students looking at online degree options.

Student affairs divisions have traditionally been linked to the positive performance and persistence of campus-based learners for many years (Astin, 1992; Kuh, 2008; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Tinto, 2007; Tinto, 2012). As online education continues to grow, colleges and universities will search for ways to improve the performance of web-based students and increase the retention and graduation rates for this population. Some institutions have already begun to invest staffing and funds into student affairs resources for online students (American Public University System, 2017; FIU Online, 2017; University of Illinois Springfield, 2017), including

online student organizations and leadership development programs for online students. However, most student affairs practitioners have little training or education in how to support web-based students (Cabellon & Payne-Kirchmeier, 2016).

Therefore, with this study identifying student affairs resources as a possible source of increased satisfaction for web-based learners, colleges and universities should investigate how they may be able to introduce new services geared directly for online students. Specifically, resources that support career and leadership development may be of particular importance to this population. Additionally, student affairs units should make marketing their resources to online students a higher priority, as most of the students in this study were unaware of the services available to them as students at the university.

Graduate programs designed for the education and preparation of student affairs professionals also need to increase their focus on online learning. There is a gap in research related to supporting online students outside of their coursework, and these programs would be ideal sources to increase the amount of research intended to study the relationships between student affairs resources and online student success. Equipped with this knowledge, the next generation of student affairs professionals would be better prepared to support the needs of online students.

The outbreak of COVID-19 in 2020 also sheds an interesting light on the discussion of online education. As instruction across the United States moved all on-campus coursework into an online format in March of 2020, colleges and universities were challenged by their students to refund fees that provided on-campus support services. While some institutions have responded with refunds of certain fees related to parking or housing, other fees remained intact, and student affairs departments were challenged to continue to provide their resources in virtual formats.

Their ability to restructure programs and services to support online education demonstrates that these resources are capable supporting online student success. The effects of these online versions of student affairs resources are areas that should be studied further in future research.

### **Implications for Future Research**

This study investigated whether the findings of Tinto's research related to student affairs resources for campus-based students could be equated to online students. This area of higher education research needs much more attention. Related to this study, one area for future research would be understanding how recurring utilization of student affairs resources is further related to the academic success and satisfaction of online learners. In this study, very few students used the resources more than once, and so all levels of utilization were grouped together for comparative purposes. However, other universities may have online students participating in greater levels of engagement with student affairs resources. If colleges and universities are indeed interested in increasing fees to provide more student affairs resources to online students, future research should examine if increased usage results in differences in students' levels of satisfaction or academic success.

Other areas for research could simply focus on the limitations of this study. In particular, this study could be replicated at other institutions where more student affairs services are provided for online students. Not only would that provide more clarity into the relationship between utilization of student affairs services and the success and satisfaction of web-based learners, but also those studies may focus on other populations of students entering the fields of business, engineering, science, or education, thus identifying how online students' needs may differ based on academic program.

Additionally, other student development theories created to focus on the growth and

success of classroom-based students should be tested on online learners. Schlossberg (1981) developed a transition theory for how adults deal with different transitions in their lives, and a study focused on how student affairs resources support online students' transitions throughout their coursework would be beneficial to understanding their needs. Likewise, studies investigating how various student development models related to gender or ethnicity apply in online learning environments may increase the body of knowledge related to how student affairs units could better support women and minority groups in their web-based educational endeavors.

### **Conclusion**

As online learning grows in higher education, universities need to invest in resources that support the persistence, performance, and graduation of their online students. Historically, research and institutions have focused primarily on supporting these students in their academic coursework, and student affairs resources may provide solutions to increase their success. In this study, I identified how the utilization of student affairs resources has a positive relationship with online student satisfaction, and as such, it contributed substantially to the gap in existing literature related to online student success. Further research is needed to understand how online students may benefit in other ways from utilizing student affairs resources, to encourage the development and training of future student affairs administrators, and to identify new resources that will enhance the experience and outcomes of online learning.



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APPENDIX A:  
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL



March 8, 2019

David Duvall  
 Dr. Yi Zhang  
 Student Affairs  
 The University of Texas at Arlington  
 Box 19113

Protocol Number: 2019-0072  
 Protocol Title: *Supporting Online Student Engagement, Satisfaction, and Success through Student Affairs Resources*

#### APPROVAL OF MINIMAL RISK HUMAN SUBJECTS RESEARCH WITHOUT FEDERAL FUNDING

The University of Texas Arlington Institutional Review Board (UTA IRB) or designee has reviewed your protocol and made the determination that this research study involving human subjects is approved in accordance with UT Arlington's [Standard Operating Procedures \(SOPs\)](#) for minimal risk research. You are therefore authorized to begin the research as of March 7, 2019.

Note that this project is not covered by UTA's Federalwide Assurance (FWA) and the researcher has indicated it will not receive federal funding. You must inform Regulatory Services immediately if the project may or will receive federal funding in the future, as this will require that the protocol be re-reviewed in accordance with the federal regulations for the protection of human subjects.

As Principal Investigator of this IRB approved study, the following items are your responsibility throughout the life of the study:

#### UNANTICIPATED ADVERSE EVENTS

Please be advised that as the Principal Investigator, you are required to report local adverse (unanticipated) events to The UT Arlington Office of Research Administration; Regulatory Services within 24 hours of the occurrence or upon acknowledgement of the occurrence.

#### INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

The IRB approved version of the informed consent document (ICD) must be used when prospectively enrolling volunteer participants into the study. Unless otherwise determined by the IRB, all signed consent forms must be securely maintained on the UT Arlington campus for the duration of the study plus a minimum of three years after the completion of all study procedures (including data analysis). The complete study record is subject to inspection and/or audit during this time period by entities including but not limited to the UT Arlington IRB, Regulatory Services staff, OHRP, FDA, and by study sponsors (as applicable).



UNIVERSITY OF  
**TEXAS**  
ARLINGTON

**OFFICE OF RESEARCH ADMINISTRATION  
REGULATORY SERVICES**

#### **MODIFICATIONS TO THE APPROVED PROTOCOL**

All proposed changes must be submitted via the electronic submission system and approved prior to implementation, except when necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the subject. Modifications include but are not limited to: Changes in protocol personnel, changes in proposed study procedures, and/or updates to data collection instruments. Failure to obtain prior approval for modifications is considered an issue of non-compliance and will be subject to review and deliberation by the IRB which could result in the suspension/termination of the protocol.

#### **ANNUAL CHECK-IN EMAIL / STUDY CLOSURE**

Although annual continuing review is not required for this study, you will receive an email around the anniversary date of your initial approval date to remind you of these responsibilities. Please notify Regulatory Services once your study is completed to begin the required 3-year research record retention period.

#### **HUMAN SUBJECTS TRAINING**

All investigators and personnel identified in the protocol must have documented Human Subjects Protection (HSP) training on file prior to study approval. HSP completion certificates are valid for 3 years from completion date; the PI is responsible for ensuring that study personnel maintain all appropriate training(s) for the duration of the study.

#### **CONTACT FOR QUESTIONS**

The UT Arlington Office of Research Administration; Regulatory Services appreciates your continuing commitment to the protection of human research subjects. Should you have questions or require further assistance, please contact Regulatory Services at [regulatoryservices@uta.edu](mailto:regulatoryservices@uta.edu) or 817-272-3723.



APPENDIX B:  
RECRUITMENT EMAIL

To: <EMAIL>

Subject: UTA Online Student Research Study

Dear <FIRST NAME>,

You are invited to participate in a research study as an online student at the University of Texas at Arlington. This study explores how your experience as an online student may be enhanced by resources offered by UTA's Division of Student Affairs. Please share your perspective on the ways in which your online student experience could be supported.

The survey will take approximately 10-12 minutes to complete, and it will close *April 30, 2019*. Your participation in the research is voluntary, but by completing the survey, you will enter your name to win one of **ten \$10 Amazon gift cards**.

[Click here to participate.](#)

Participation in the survey is optional, and you may omit any question that you prefer not to answer.

There is no penalty for not taking part in this research study.

Your responses will be linked to data from your UTA student profile including GPA and demographic information. However, all identifying information connected to your responses and student data will be deleted prior to analysis to maintain your confidentiality. Additionally, any data that may be published from this study will not include information that will make it possible to identify you, your responses, or your personal information.

Please contact David Duvall, primary researcher and doctoral candidate in Educational Leadership and

Policy Studies, at [dpduvall@uta.edu](mailto:dpduvall@uta.edu) for any research related questions, or contact the UTA Research Office at 817-272-3723 or [regulatoryservices@uta.edu](mailto:regulatoryservices@uta.edu).

APPENDIX C:  
SURVEY INSTRUMENT

You are invited to participate in a research study as an online student at the University of Texas at Arlington. This study explores how your experience as an online student may be enhanced by resources offered by UTA's Division of Student Affairs. Please share your perspective on the ways in which your online student experience could be supported. The Division of Student Affairs at UT Arlington is committed to your success and strives to do everything possible to meet your needs.

No risks are anticipated for participating in this study, but instead, your perspectives will help us learn more about online students' needs. This information will be used to provide programs and services that are designed to enhance your online student experience at UTA.

*All information will be kept confidential and will be used for research purposes only. Any data that is published from this study will not include information that will make it possible to identify you, your responses, or your personal information. Participation in the survey is optional, and you may omit any question that you prefer not to answer.*

To start the 10-minute survey, please provide your UTA Student ID number in the space below. In doing so, you will be entered into a raffle to win one of ten \$10 Amazon gift cards. Additionally, by providing your ID number, you consent to allow the researcher to request data from your student account that will be utilized to match your survey responses. This data will include GPA and demographic information, including gender, ethnicity, age, degree program, and location.

If you have questions about how this data will be collected, stored, or analyzed, please contact David Duvall, primary researcher for this study, at [dpduvall@uta.edu](mailto:dpduvall@uta.edu), or the UTA Research Office for subject questions or concerns: 817-272-3723 or [regulatoryservices@uta.edu](mailto:regulatoryservices@uta.edu).

By providing your student ID number below, you indicate your voluntary agreement to participate in this online survey.

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**You may be entitled to know what information The University of Texas at Arlington (UT Arlington) collects concerning you. You may review and have UT Arlington correct this information according to procedures set forth in UTS 139. The law is found in sections 552.021, 552.023 and 559.004 of the Texas Government Code. For more information, see our Internet Privacy Policy at [www.uta.edu/oit/policy/cs/web/internet\\_privacy.html](http://www.uta.edu/oit/policy/cs/web/internet_privacy.html).**

Required answers: 0 Allowed answers: 0

Next Page:

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Q1 Are you or have you ever been involved in any organized activities (student organizations, peer mentoring programs, sporting events, concerts, speakers, leadership programs, career readiness programs, etc.) as an online student at UTA?

Yes[Code = 1]

No (why not?)[Code = 2] [Textbox]

Required answers: 1 Allowed answers: 1

Next Page: Sequential

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Q2 On average, how many hours per week do you spend participating in organized activities at UTA?

About 1- 5 hours[Code = 1]

About 6 - 11 hours[Code = 2]

About 12 - 15 hours[Code = 3]

About 16 hours or more[Code = 4]

Required answers: 1 Allowed answers: 1

Display if Q1='Yes'

Q3 Why do you attend or participate in organized activities? (Please choose the top 3 reasons)

My friends do[Code = 1]

It is part of my academic course work[Code = 3]

I enjoy them and want to become engaged in the campus community[Code = 4]

To meet new people and network[Code = 5]

To complement my academic program and professional goals[Code = 6]

Other (please specify)[Code = 7] [Textbox]

Required answers: 1      Allowed answers: 3

Display if Q1='Yes'

To what extent has your involvement in campus activities helped you to do each of the following?

Q4 Communicate well

A great deal [Code = 5] [Numeric Value = 5]

Moderately [Code = 4] [Numeric Value = 4]

Somewhat [Code = 3] [Numeric Value = 3]

Slightly [Code = 2] [Numeric Value = 2]

Not at all [Code = 1] [Numeric Value = 1]

No basis to judge[Code = 0] [N/A]

Required answers: 1      Allowed answers: 1

Q5 Learn the technical skills required for online coursework

A great deal [Code = 5] [Numeric Value = 5]

Moderately [Code = 4] [Numeric Value = 4]

Somewhat [Code = 3] [Numeric Value = 3]

Slightly [Code = 2] [Numeric Value = 2]

Not at all [Code = 1] [Numeric Value = 1]

No basis to judge[Code = 0] [N/A]

Required answers: 1      Allowed answers: 1

Q6 Manage your time

A great deal [Code = 5] [Numeric Value = 5]

Moderately [Code = 4] [Numeric Value = 4]

Somewhat [Code = 3] [Numeric Value = 3]

Slightly [Code = 2] [Numeric Value = 2]

Not at all [Code = 1] [Numeric Value = 1]

No basis to judge [Code = 0] [N/A]

Required answers: 1 Allowed answers: 1

#### Q7 Appreciate cultural differences

A great deal [Code = 5] [Numeric Value = 5]

Moderately [Code = 4] [Numeric Value = 4]

Somewhat [Code = 3] [Numeric Value = 3]

Slightly [Code = 2] [Numeric Value = 2]

Not at all [Code = 1] [Numeric Value = 1]

No basis to judge [Code = 0] [N/A]

Required answers: 1 Allowed answers: 1

#### Q8 Resolve conflict

A great deal [Code = 5] [Numeric Value = 5]

Moderately [Code = 4] [Numeric Value = 4]

Somewhat [Code = 3] [Numeric Value = 3]

Slightly [Code = 2] [Numeric Value = 2]

Not at all [Code = 1] [Numeric Value = 1]

No basis to judge [Code = 0] [N/A]

Required answers: 1 Allowed answers: 1

#### Q9 Solve problems

A great deal [Code = 5] [Numeric Value = 5]

Moderately [Code = 4] [Numeric Value = 4]



Somewhat [Code = 3] [Numeric Value = 3]

Slightly [Code = 2] [Numeric Value = 2]

Not at all [Code = 1] [Numeric Value = 1]

No basis to judge [Code = 0] [N/A]

Required answers: 1      Allowed answers: 1

#### Q10 Work with a team

A great deal [Code = 5] [Numeric Value = 5]

Moderately [Code = 4] [Numeric Value = 4]

Somewhat [Code = 3] [Numeric Value = 3]

Slightly [Code = 2] [Numeric Value = 2]

Not at all [Code = 1] [Numeric Value = 1]

No basis to judge [Code = 0] [N/A]

Required answers: 1      Allowed answers: 1

#### Q11 Lead a group

A great deal [Code = 5] [Numeric Value = 5]

Moderately [Code = 4] [Numeric Value = 4]

Somewhat [Code = 3] [Numeric Value = 3]

Slightly [Code = 2] [Numeric Value = 2]

Not at all [Code = 1] [Numeric Value = 1]

No basis to judge [Code = 0] [N/A]

Required answers: 1      Allowed answers: 1

#### Q12 Make friends

A great deal [Code = 5] [Numeric Value = 5]

Moderately [Code = 4] [Numeric Value = 4]

Somewhat [Code = 3] [Numeric Value = 3]

Slightly [Code = 2] [Numeric Value = 2]

Not at all [Code = 1] [Numeric Value = 1]

No basis to judge [Code = 0] [N/A]

Required answers: 1 Allowed answers: 1

Display if Q1='Yes'

Q13 What are your top 3 sources of information about on-campus activities and events? (Please choose only 3)

Word of mouth [Code = 1]

Announcements during class [Code = 2]

Student organizations [Code = 3]

The Shorthorn and/or theshorthorn.com [Code = 5]

TrailBlazer (UT Arlington student electronic newsletter) [Code = 6]

The UT Arlington website (www.uta.edu) and/or event calendar [Code = 7]

Departmental websites within the University [Code = 8]

E-mails from departments within the University [Code = 9]

Social media [Code = 10]

Other (please specify) [Code = 11] [Textbox]

Required answers: 1 Allowed answers: 3

Which of the options best describes the quality of your interactions with the following people at UTA?:

Q14 Fellow students

Excellent [Code = 7] [Numeric Value = 7]

Very good [Code = 6] [Numeric Value = 6]

Good [Code = 5] [Numeric Value = 5]

Fair [Code = 4] [Numeric Value = 4]

Poor[Code = 3] [Numeric Value = 3]

Very poor[Code = 2] [Numeric Value = 2]

Extremely poor[Code = 1] [Numeric Value = 1]

Required answers: 1      Allowed answers: 1

#### Q15 Academic advisors

Excellent[Code = 7] [Numeric Value = 7]

Very good[Code = 6] [Numeric Value = 6]

Good[Code = 5] [Numeric Value = 5]

Fair[Code = 4] [Numeric Value = 4]

Poor[Code = 3] [Numeric Value = 3]

Very poor[Code = 2] [Numeric Value = 2]

Extremely poor[Code = 1] [Numeric Value = 1]

Required answers: 1      Allowed answers: 1

#### Q16 Faculty

Excellent[Code = 7] [Numeric Value = 7]

Very good[Code = 6] [Numeric Value = 6]

Good[Code = 5] [Numeric Value = 5]

Fair[Code = 4] [Numeric Value = 4]

Poor[Code = 3] [Numeric Value = 3]

Very poor[Code = 2] [Numeric Value = 2]

Extremely poor[Code = 1] [Numeric Value = 1]

Required answers: 1      Allowed answers: 1

#### Q17 Student services staff (career services, student activities, housing, etc.)

Excellent[Code = 7] [Numeric Value = 7]

Very good[Code = 6] [Numeric Value = 6]

Good[Code = 5] [Numeric Value = 5]

Fair[Code = 4] [Numeric Value = 4]

Poor[Code = 3] [Numeric Value = 3]

Very poor[Code = 2] [Numeric Value = 2]

Extremely poor[Code = 1] [Numeric Value = 1]

Required answers: 1 Allowed answers: 1

Q18 Other administrative staff and offices (registrar, financial aid, etc.)

Excellent[Code = 7] [Numeric Value = 7]

Very good[Code = 6] [Numeric Value = 6]

Good[Code = 5] [Numeric Value = 5]

Fair[Code = 4] [Numeric Value = 4]

Poor[Code = 3] [Numeric Value = 3]

Very poor[Code = 2] [Numeric Value = 2]

Extremely poor[Code = 1] [Numeric Value = 1]

Required answers: 1 Allowed answers: 1

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Q19 UTA has had a positive influence on my personal growth.

Strongly agree[Code = 4] [Numeric Value = 4]

Agree[Code = 3] [Numeric Value = 3]

Disagree[Code = 2] [Numeric Value = 2]

Strongly disagree[Code = 1] [Numeric Value = 1]

Required answers: 1 Allowed answers: 1

Q20 I am confident that I made the right decision in choosing this University.

Strongly agree[Code = 4] [Numeric Value = 4]

Agree[Code = 3] [Numeric Value = 3]

Disagree[Code = 2] [Numeric Value = 2]

Strongly disagree[Code = 1] [Numeric Value = 1]

Required answers: 1 Allowed answers: 1

Q21 The university is inclusive of students with diverse backgrounds and experiences.

Strongly agree[Code = 4] [Numeric Value = 4]

Agree[Code = 3] [Numeric Value = 3]

Disagree[Code = 2] [Numeric Value = 2]

Strongly disagree[Code = 1] [Numeric Value = 1]

Required answers: 1 Allowed answers: 1

Q22 UT Arlington demonstrates a commitment to help me achieve my academic and career goals.

Strongly agree[Code = 4] [Numeric Value = 4]

Agree[Code = 3] [Numeric Value = 3]

Disagree[Code = 2] [Numeric Value = 2]

Strongly disagree[Code = 1] [Numeric Value = 1]

Required answers: 1 Allowed answers: 1

Q23I have a sense of pride for UTA.

Strongly agree[Code = 4] [Numeric Value = 4]

Agree[Code = 3] [Numeric Value = 3]

Disagree[Code = 2] [Numeric Value = 2]

Strongly disagree[Code = 1] [Numeric Value = 1]

Required answers: 1 Allowed answers: 1

Q24 I feel like I belong at UT Arlington.

Strongly agree[Code = 4] [Numeric Value = 4]

Agree[Code = 3] [Numeric Value = 3]

Disagree[Code = 2] [Numeric Value = 2]

Strongly disagree[Code = 1] [Numeric Value = 1]

Required answers: 1 Allowed answers: 1

Q25 It is important for me to graduate from this University.

Strongly agree[Code = 4] [Numeric Value = 4]

Agree[Code = 3] [Numeric Value = 3]

Disagree[Code = 2] [Numeric Value = 2]

Strongly disagree[Code = 1] [Numeric Value = 1]

Required answers: 1 Allowed answers: 1

Q26 Overall, I am satisfied with my experience at UT Arlington.

Strongly agree[Code = 4] [Numeric Value = 4]

Agree[Code = 3] [Numeric Value = 3]

Disagree[Code = 2] [Numeric Value = 2]

Strongly disagree[Code = 1] [Numeric Value = 1]

Required answers: 1 Allowed answers: 1

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Q27 Please explain what the university has done to demonstrate a commitment to helping you achieve your academic and career goals.

[Code = 1] [Textbox]

Required answers: 0 Allowed answers: 1

Display if Q22='Agree' OR Q22='Strongly agree'

Q28 Please explain what has contributed most to your sense of belonging at UTA.

[Code = 1] [Textbox]

Required answers: 0 Allowed answers: 1

Display if Q24='Agree' OR Q24='Strongly agree'

Q29 What has contributed most to your satisfaction with your experience at UTA?

[Code = 1] [Textbox]

Required answers: 0 Allowed answers: 1

Display if Q26='Agree' OR Q26='Strongly agree'

Q30 Please explain what the university could do to better demonstrate a commitment to helping you achieve your academic and career goals.

[Code = 1] [Textbox]

Required answers: 0 Allowed answers: 1

Display if Q22='Disagree' OR Q22='Strongly disagree'

Q31 Please explain why you do not feel like you belong at UT Arlington.

[Code = 1] [Textbox]

Required answers: 0 Allowed answers: 1

Display if Q24='Disagree' OR Q24='Strongly disagree'

Q32 What has contributed to your dissatisfaction with your experience at UT Arlington?

[Code = 1] [Textbox]

Required answers: 0 Allowed answers: 1

Display if Q26='Disagree' OR Q26='Strongly disagree'

How important are the following experiences to you, and how satisfied are you with your experience at UTA in each area?

Q33 Social opportunities (speakers, comedians, etc.)

**Importance**

Extremely important[Code = 5] [Numeric Value = 5]

Very important[Code = 4] [Numeric Value = 4]

Somewhat important[Code = 3] [Numeric Value = 3]

Slightly important[Code = 2] [Numeric Value = 2]

Not important at all[Code = 1] [Numeric Value = 1]

Required answers: 1 Allowed answers: 1

Q34 Cultural opportunities (festivals, speakers, events, etc.)

**Importance**

Extremely important[Code = 5] [Numeric Value = 5]

Very important[Code = 4] [Numeric Value = 4]

Somewhat important[Code = 3] [Numeric Value = 3]

Slightly important[Code = 2] [Numeric Value = 2]

Not important at all[Code = 1] [Numeric Value = 1]

Required answers: 1 Allowed answers: 1

Q35 Spiritual or religious opportunities (speakers, events, etc.)

**Importance**

Extremely important[Code = 5] [Numeric Value = 5]

Very important[Code = 4] [Numeric Value = 4]



Somewhat important[Code = 3] [Numeric Value = 3]

Slightly important[Code = 2] [Numeric Value = 2]

Not important at all[Code = 1] [Numeric Value = 1]

Required answers: 1      Allowed answers: 1

#### Q36 Internship opportunities

##### Importance

Extremely important[Code = 5] [Numeric Value = 5]

Very important[Code = 4] [Numeric Value = 4]

Somewhat important[Code = 3] [Numeric Value = 3]

Slightly important[Code = 2] [Numeric Value = 2]

Not important at all[Code = 1] [Numeric Value = 1]

Required answers: 1      Allowed answers: 1

#### Q37 Access to Health Services

##### Importance

Extremely important[Code = 5] [Numeric Value = 5]

Very important[Code = 4] [Numeric Value = 4]

Somewhat important[Code = 3] [Numeric Value = 3]

Slightly important[Code = 2] [Numeric Value = 2]

Not important at all[Code = 1] [Numeric Value = 1]

Required answers: 1      Allowed answers: 1

#### Q38 The opportunity to study abroad

##### Importance

Extremely important[Code = 5] [Numeric Value = 5]

Very important[Code = 4] [Numeric Value = 4]

Somewhat important[Code = 3] [Numeric Value = 3]

Slightly important[Code = 2] [Numeric Value = 2]

Not important at all[Code = 1] [Numeric Value = 1]

Required answers: 1 Allowed answers: 1

Q39 Opportunities to strengthen leadership skills

**Importance**

Extremely important[Code = 5] [Numeric Value = 5]

Very important[Code = 4] [Numeric Value = 4]

Somewhat important[Code = 3] [Numeric Value = 3]

Slightly important[Code = 2] [Numeric Value = 2]

Not important at all[Code = 1] [Numeric Value = 1]

Required answers: 1 Allowed answers: 1

Q40 Campus traditions (Oozeball, Bed Races, Homecoming, etc.)

**Importance**

Extremely important[Code = 5] [Numeric Value = 5]

Very important[Code = 4] [Numeric Value = 4]

Somewhat important[Code = 3] [Numeric Value = 3]

Slightly important[Code = 2] [Numeric Value = 2]

Not important at all[Code = 1] [Numeric Value = 1]

Required answers: 1 Allowed answers: 1

Q41 Opportunities to serve the community through volunteerism

**Importance**

Extremely important[Code = 5] [Numeric Value = 5]

Very important[Code = 4] [Numeric Value = 4]

Somewhat important[Code = 3] [Numeric Value = 3]

Slightly important[Code = 2] [Numeric Value = 2]

Not important at all[Code = 1] [Numeric Value = 1]

*Required answers: 1      Allowed answers: 1*

## Q42 NCAA athletic events

**Importance**

Extremely important[Code = 5] [Numeric Value = 5]

Very important[Code = 4] [Numeric Value = 4]

Somewhat important[Code = 3] [Numeric Value = 3]

Slightly important[Code = 2] [Numeric Value = 2]

Not important at all[Code = 1] [Numeric Value = 1]

*Required answers: 1      Allowed answers: 1*

## Q43 Student organizations/activities

**Importance**

Extremely important[Code = 5] [Numeric Value = 5]

Very important[Code = 4] [Numeric Value = 4]

Somewhat important[Code = 3] [Numeric Value = 3]

Slightly important[Code = 2] [Numeric Value = 2]

Not important at all[Code = 1] [Numeric Value = 1]

*Required answers: 1      Allowed answers: 1*

## Q44 An environment that motivates me to make healthy lifestyle choices

**Importance**

Extremely important[Code = 5] [Numeric Value = 5]

Very important[Code = 4] [Numeric Value = 4]

Somewhat important[Code = 3] [Numeric Value = 3]

Slightly important[Code = 2] [Numeric Value = 2]

Not important at all[Code = 1] [Numeric Value = 1]

*Required answers: 1    Allowed answers: 1*

## Q45 Social opportunities (speakers, comedians, etc.)

**Satisfaction**

Very satisfied[Code = 4] [Numeric Value = 4]

Moderately satisfied[Code = 3] [Numeric Value = 3]

Moderately dissatisfied[Code = 2] [Numeric Value = 2]

Very dissatisfied[Code = 1] [Numeric Value = 1]

*Required answers: 1    Allowed answers: 1*

## Q46 Cultural opportunities (festivals, speakers, events, etc.)

**Satisfaction**

Very satisfied[Code = 4] [Numeric Value = 4]

Moderately satisfied[Code = 3] [Numeric Value = 3]

Moderately dissatisfied[Code = 2] [Numeric Value = 2]

Very dissatisfied[Code = 1] [Numeric Value = 1]

*Required answers: 1    Allowed answers: 1*

## Q47 Spiritual or religious opportunities (speakers, events, etc.)

**Satisfaction**

Very satisfied[Code = 4] [Numeric Value = 4]

Moderately satisfied[Code = 3] [Numeric Value = 3]

Moderately dissatisfied[Code = 2] [Numeric Value = 2]

Very dissatisfied[Code = 1] [Numeric Value = 1]

*Required answers: 1      Allowed answers: 1*

## Q48 Internship opportunities

**Satisfaction**

Very satisfied[Code = 4] [Numeric Value = 4]

Moderately satisfied[Code = 3] [Numeric Value = 3]

Moderately dissatisfied[Code = 2] [Numeric Value = 2]

Very dissatisfied[Code = 1] [Numeric Value = 1]

*Required answers: 1      Allowed answers: 1*

## Q49 Access to Health Services

**Satisfaction**

Very satisfied[Code = 4] [Numeric Value = 4]

Moderately satisfied[Code = 3] [Numeric Value = 3]

Moderately dissatisfied[Code = 2] [Numeric Value = 2]

Very dissatisfied[Code = 1] [Numeric Value = 1]

*Required answers: 1      Allowed answers: 1*

## Q50 The opportunity to study abroad

**Satisfaction**

Very satisfied[Code = 4] [Numeric Value = 4]

Moderately satisfied[Code = 3] [Numeric Value = 3]

Moderately dissatisfied[Code = 2] [Numeric Value = 2]

Very dissatisfied[Code = 1] [Numeric Value = 1]

*Required answers: 1      Allowed answers: 1*

## Q51 Opportunities to strengthen leadership skills

**Satisfaction**

Very satisfied[Code = 4] [Numeric Value = 4]

Moderately satisfied[Code = 3] [Numeric Value = 3]

Moderately dissatisfied[Code = 2] [Numeric Value = 2]

Very dissatisfied[Code = 1] [Numeric Value = 1]

*Required answers: 1      Allowed answers: 1*

## Q52 Campus traditions (Oozeball, Bed Races, Homecoming, etc.)

**Satisfaction**

Very satisfied[Code = 4] [Numeric Value = 4]

Moderately satisfied[Code = 3] [Numeric Value = 3]

Moderately dissatisfied[Code = 2] [Numeric Value = 2]

Very dissatisfied[Code = 1] [Numeric Value = 1]

*Required answers: 1      Allowed answers: 1*

## Q53 Opportunities to serve the community through volunteerism

**Satisfaction**

Very satisfied[Code = 4] [Numeric Value = 4]

Moderately satisfied[Code = 3] [Numeric Value = 3]

Moderately dissatisfied[Code = 2] [Numeric Value = 2]

Very dissatisfied[Code = 1] [Numeric Value = 1]

Required answers: 1      Allowed answers: 1

## Q54 NCAA athletic events

**Satisfaction**

Very satisfied[Code = 4] [Numeric Value = 4]

Moderately satisfied[Code = 3] [Numeric Value = 3]

Moderately dissatisfied[Code = 2] [Numeric Value = 2]

Very dissatisfied[Code = 1] [Numeric Value = 1]

Required answers: 1      Allowed answers: 1

## Q55 Student organizations/activities

**Satisfaction**

Very satisfied[Code = 4] [Numeric Value = 4]

Moderately satisfied[Code = 3] [Numeric Value = 3]

Moderately dissatisfied[Code = 2] [Numeric Value = 2]

Very dissatisfied[Code = 1] [Numeric Value = 1]

Required answers: 1      Allowed answers: 1

## Q56 An environment that motivates me to make healthy lifestyle choices

**Satisfaction**

Very satisfied[Code = 4] [Numeric Value = 4]

Moderately satisfied[Code = 3] [Numeric Value = 3]

Moderately dissatisfied[Code = 2] [Numeric Value = 2]

Very dissatisfied[Code = 1] [Numeric Value = 1]

Required answers: 1 Allowed answers: 1

Q57 If you answered dissatisfied or very dissatisfied to any of the expectations above, please let us know why:

[Code = 1] [Textbox]

Required answers: 0 Allowed answers: 1

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Please indicate how frequently you use the **resources offered by the departments** listed:

Q58 Lockheed Martin Career Development Center

Use 2-3 times per week[Code = 7]

Use 2-3 times per month[Code = 6]

Use 2-3 times per semester[Code = 5]

Almost never use[Code = 4]

I have used this department once[Code = 3]

Aware of this department, but never used[Code = 2]

Not aware of this department[Code = 1]

Required answers: 1 Allowed answers: 1

Q59 Fraternity and Sorority Life

Use 2-3 times per week[Code = 7]



Use 2-3 times per month[Code = 6]

Use 2-3 times per semester[Code = 5]

Almost never use[Code = 4]

I have used this department once[Code = 3]

Aware of this department, but never used[Code = 2]

Not aware of this department[Code = 1]

*Required answers: 1      Allowed answers: 1*

#### Q60 The Follett Student Leadership Center

Use 2-3 times per week[Code = 7]

Use 2-3 times per month[Code = 6]

Use 2-3 times per semester[Code = 5]

Almost never use[Code = 4]

I have used this department once[Code = 3]

Aware of this department, but never used[Code = 2]

Not aware of this department[Code = 1]

*Required answers: 1      Allowed answers: 1*

#### Q61 Multicultural Affairs (Heritage Months, Women in Leadership, Maversity, Diversity Week)

Use 2-3 times per week[Code = 7]

Use 2-3 times per month[Code = 6]

Use 2-3 times per semester[Code = 5]

Almost never use[Code = 4]

I have used this department once[Code = 3]

Aware of this department, but never used[Code = 2]

Not aware of this department[Code = 1]

*Required answers: 1      Allowed answers: 1*

## Q62 Study Abroad

Use 2-3 times per week[Code = 7]

Use 2-3 times per month[Code = 6]

Use 2-3 times per semester[Code = 5]

Almost never use[Code = 4]

I have used this department once[Code = 3]

Aware of this department, but never used[Code = 2]

Not aware of this department[Code = 1]

*Required answers: 1      Allowed answers: 1*

## Q63 Parent &amp; Family Center

Use 2-3 times per week[Code = 7]

Use 2-3 times per month[Code = 6]

Use 2-3 times per semester[Code = 5]

Almost never use[Code = 4]

I have used this department once[Code = 3]

Aware of this department, but never used[Code = 2]

Not aware of this department[Code = 1]

*Required answers: 1      Allowed answers: 1*

## Q64 Student Organizations

Use 2-3 times per week[Code = 7]

Use 2-3 times per month[Code = 6]

Use 2-3 times per semester[Code = 5]

Almost never use[Code = 4]

I have used this department once[Code = 3]

Aware of this department, but never used[Code = 2]

Not aware of this department[Code = 1]

*Required answers: 1      Allowed answers: 1*

Please indicate how frequently you use the **campus services** listed:

Q65 Reading The Shorthorn (UTA's student news media)

Use 2-3 times per week[Code = 7]

Use 2-3 times per month[Code = 6]

Use 2-3 times per semester[Code = 5]

Almost never use[Code = 4]

I have used this department once[Code = 3]

Aware of this department, but never used[Code = 2]

Not aware of this department[Code = 1]

*Required answers: 1      Allowed answers: 1*

Q66 Campus Recreation Facilities and Programs (MAC, Fields Complex, group fitness/wellness classes, intramural sports, aquatics, sport clubs)

Use 2-3 times per week[Code = 7]

Use 2-3 times per month[Code = 6]

Use 2-3 times per semester[Code = 5]

Almost never use[Code = 4]

I have used this department once[Code = 3]

Aware of this department, but never used[Code = 2]

Not aware of this department[Code = 1]

*Required answers: 1      Allowed answers: 1*

## Q67 Center for Students in Recovery

Use 2-3 times per week[Code = 7]

Use 2-3 times per month[Code = 6]

Use 2-3 times per semester[Code = 5]

Almost never use[Code = 4]

I have used this department once[Code = 3]

Aware of this department, but never used[Code = 2]

Not aware of this department[Code = 1]

*Required answers: 1      Allowed answers: 1*

## Q68 Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)

Use 2-3 times per week[Code = 7]

Use 2-3 times per month[Code = 6]

Use 2-3 times per semester[Code = 5]

Almost never use[Code = 4]

I have used this department once[Code = 3]

Aware of this department, but never used[Code = 2]

Not aware of this department[Code = 1]

*Required answers: 1      Allowed answers: 1*

## Q69 Health Center

Use 2-3 times per week[Code = 7]

Use 2-3 times per month[Code = 6]

Use 2-3 times per semester[Code = 5]

Almost never use[Code = 4]

I have used this department once[Code = 3]

Aware of this department, but never used[Code = 2]

Not aware of this department[Code = 1]

Required answers: 1 Allowed answers: 1

#### Q70 Off-Campus Mavericks

Use 2-3 times per week[Code = 7]

Use 2-3 times per month[Code = 6]

Use 2-3 times per semester[Code = 5]

Almost never use[Code = 4]

I have used this department once[Code = 3]

Aware of this department, but never used[Code = 2]

Not aware of this department[Code = 1]

Required answers: 1 Allowed answers: 1

#### Q71 LGBTQA Program (Maverick Ally, Educational and Social Programs, Pride Week)

Use 2-3 times per week[Code = 7]

Use 2-3 times per month[Code = 6]

Use 2-3 times per semester[Code = 5]

Almost never use[Code = 4]

I have used this department once[Code = 3]

Aware of this department, but never used[Code = 2]

Not aware of this department[Code = 1]

Required answers: 1 Allowed answers: 1

#### Q72 RVSP - Relationship Violence and Sexual Assault Prevention

Use 2-3 times per week[Code = 7]

Use 2-3 times per month[Code = 6]

Use 2-3 times per semester[Code = 5]

Almost never use[Code = 4]

I have used this department once[Code = 3]

Aware of this department, but never used[Code = 2]

Not aware of this department[Code = 1]

Required answers: 1 Allowed answers: 1

Q73 If you have a documented disability, into which category does it fall (select all that apply)?

No disability/Not applicable[Code = 10]

Deaf/Hard of hearing[Code = 9]

Blind/Low vision[Code = 8]

Physical/Mobility[Code = 7]

Learning disability or cognitive disorder[Code = 6]

Chronic health-related[Code = 5]

Psychiatric[Code = 4]

Learning disability or cognitive disorder[Code = 3]

ADHD[Code = 2]

Other[Code = 1]

Required answers: 1 Allowed answers: 1

Q74 How often do you utilize accommodations from UTA's Office for Students with Disabilities?

I utilize accommodations in all of my classes[Code = 4]

I utilize accommodations in some of my classes [Code = 3]

I do not currently use accommodations, but have in the past[Code = 2]

I have never utilized accommodations in my classes [Code = 1]

Required answers: 1 Allowed answers: 1

Display if Q73 NOT='No disability/Not applicable'

Please indicate how frequently you attend the following **events**:

Q75 Major events, speakers, and campus traditions (Homecoming, MavsMeet, Convocation, etc.)

Use 2-3 times per week[Code = 7]

Use 2-3 times per month[Code = 6]

Use 2-3 times per semester[Code = 5]

Almost never use[Code = 4]

I have used this department once[Code = 3]

Aware of this department, but never used[Code = 2]

Not aware of this department[Code = 1]

Required answers: 1      Allowed answers: 1

Q76 Movin' Mavs Wheelchair Basketball

Use 2-3 times per week[Code = 7]

Use 2-3 times per month[Code = 6]

Use 2-3 times per semester[Code = 5]

Almost never use[Code = 4]

I have used this department once[Code = 3]

Aware of this department, but never used[Code = 2]

Not aware of this department[Code = 1]

Required answers: 1      Allowed answers: 1

Q77 EXCEL Campus Activities Events

Use 2-3 times per week[Code = 7]

Use 2-3 times per month[Code = 6]

Use 2-3 times per semester[Code = 5]

Almost never use[Code = 4]

I have used this department once[Code = 3]

Aware of this department, but never used[Code = 2]

Not aware of this department[Code = 1]

Required answers: 1 Allowed answers: 1

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How satisfied are you with your experience with the following departments?

Q78 Lockheed Martin Career Development Center

Very satisfied[Code = 4] [Numeric Value = 4]

Moderately satisfied[Code = 3] [Numeric Value = 3]

Moderately dissatisfied[Code = 2] [Numeric Value = 2]

Very dissatisfied[Code = 1] [Numeric Value = 1]

Required answers: 1 Allowed answers: 1

Display if Q58='Use 2-3 times per week' OR Q58='Use 2-3 times per month' OR Q58='Use 2-3 times per semester' OR  
Q58='Almost never use'

Q79 Fraternity and Sorority Life

Very satisfied[Code = 4] [Numeric Value = 4]

Moderately satisfied[Code = 3] [Numeric Value = 3]

Moderately dissatisfied[Code = 2] [Numeric Value = 2]

Very dissatisfied[Code = 1] [Numeric Value = 1]

Required answers: 1 Allowed answers: 1

Display if Q59='Use 2-3 times per week' OR Q59='Use 2-3 times per month' OR Q59='Use 2-3 times per semester' OR  
Q59='Almost never use'



## Q80 The Follett Student Leadership Center

Very satisfied[Code = 4] [Numeric Value = 4]

Moderately satisfied[Code = 3] [Numeric Value = 3]

Moderately dissatisfied[Code = 2] [Numeric Value = 2]

Very dissatisfied[Code = 1] [Numeric Value = 1]

*Required answers: 1      Allowed answers: 1*

Display if Q60='Use 2-3 times per week' OR Q60='Use 2-3 times per month' OR Q60='Use 2-3 times per semester' OR  
Q60='Almost never use'

## Q81 Multicultural Affairs (Heritage Months, Women in Leadership, Maversity, Diversity Week)

Very satisfied[Code = 4] [Numeric Value = 4]

Moderately satisfied[Code = 3] [Numeric Value = 3]

Moderately dissatisfied[Code = 2] [Numeric Value = 2]

Very dissatisfied[Code = 1] [Numeric Value = 1]

*Required answers: 1      Allowed answers: 1*

Display if Q61='Use 2-3 times per week' OR Q61='Use 2-3 times per month' OR Q61='Use 2-3 times per semester' OR  
Q61='Almost never use'

## Q82 Study Abroad

Very satisfied[Code = 4] [Numeric Value = 4]

Moderately satisfied[Code = 3] [Numeric Value = 3]

Moderately dissatisfied[Code = 2] [Numeric Value = 2]

Very dissatisfied[Code = 1] [Numeric Value = 1]

*Required answers: 1      Allowed answers: 1*

Display if Q62='Use 2-3 times per week' OR Q62='Use 2-3 times per month' OR Q62='Use 2-3 times per semester' OR  
Q62='Almost never use'

## Q83 Parent &amp; Family Center

Very satisfied[Code = 4] [Numeric Value = 4]

Moderately satisfied[Code = 3] [Numeric Value = 3]

Moderately dissatisfied[Code = 2] [Numeric Value = 2]

Very dissatisfied[Code = 1] [Numeric Value = 1]

*Required answers: 1      Allowed answers: 1*

Display if Q63='Use 2-3 times per week' OR Q63='Use 2-3 times per month' OR Q63='Use 2-3 times per semester' OR  
Q63='Almost never use'

## Q84 Student Organizations

Very satisfied[Code = 4] [Numeric Value = 4]

Moderately satisfied[Code = 3] [Numeric Value = 3]

Moderately dissatisfied[Code = 2] [Numeric Value = 2]

Very dissatisfied[Code = 1] [Numeric Value = 1]

*Required answers: 1      Allowed answers: 1*

Display if Q64='Use 2-3 times per week' OR Q64='Use 2-3 times per month' OR Q64='Use 2-3 times per semester' OR  
Q64='Almost never use'

How satisfied are you with your experience with the campus services?

## Q85 Reading The Shorthorn (UTA's student news media)

Very satisfied[Code = 4] [Numeric Value = 4]

Moderately satisfied[Code = 3] [Numeric Value = 3]

Moderately dissatisfied[Code = 2] [Numeric Value = 2]

Very dissatisfied[Code = 1] [Numeric Value = 1]

*Required answers: 1      Allowed answers: 1*

Display if Q65='Use 2-3 times per week' OR Q65='Use 2-3 times per month' OR Q65='Use 2-3 times per semester' OR  
Q65='Almost never use'

Q86 Campus Recreation Facilities and Programs (MAC, Fields Complex, group fitness/wellness classes, intramural sports, aquatics, sport clubs)

Very satisfied[Code = 4] [Numeric Value = 4]

Moderately satisfied[Code = 3] [Numeric Value = 3]

Moderately dissatisfied[Code = 2] [Numeric Value = 2]

Very dissatisfied[Code = 1] [Numeric Value = 1]

*Required answers: 1      Allowed answers: 1*

Display if Q66='Use 2-3 times per week' OR Q66='Use 2-3 times per month' OR Q66='Use 2-3 times per semester' OR Q66='Almost never use'

Q87 Center for Students in Recovery

Very satisfied[Code = 4] [Numeric Value = 4]

Moderately satisfied[Code = 3] [Numeric Value = 3]

Moderately dissatisfied[Code = 2] [Numeric Value = 2]

Very dissatisfied[Code = 1] [Numeric Value = 1]

*Required answers: 1      Allowed answers: 1*

Display if Q67='Use 2-3 times per week' OR Q67='Use 2-3 times per month' OR Q67='Use 2-3 times per semester' OR Q67='Almost never use'

Q88 Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)

Very satisfied[Code = 4] [Numeric Value = 4]

Moderately satisfied[Code = 3] [Numeric Value = 3]

Moderately dissatisfied[Code = 2] [Numeric Value = 2]

Very dissatisfied[Code = 1] [Numeric Value = 1]

*Required answers: 1      Allowed answers: 1*

Display if Q68='Use 2-3 times per week' OR Q68='Use 2-3 times per month' OR Q68='Use 2-3 times per semester' OR Q68='Almost never use'

#### Q89 Health Center

Very satisfied[Code = 4] [Numeric Value = 4]

Moderately satisfied[Code = 3] [Numeric Value = 3]

Moderately dissatisfied[Code = 2] [Numeric Value = 2]

Very dissatisfied[Code = 1] [Numeric Value = 1]

*Required answers: 1      Allowed answers: 1*

Display if Q69='Use 2-3 times per week' OR Q69='Use 2-3 times per month' OR Q69='Use 2-3 times per semester' OR Q69='Almost never use'

#### Q90 Off-Campus Mavericks

Very satisfied[Code = 4] [Numeric Value = 4]

Moderately satisfied[Code = 3] [Numeric Value = 3]

Moderately dissatisfied[Code = 2] [Numeric Value = 2]

Very dissatisfied[Code = 1] [Numeric Value = 1]

*Required answers: 1      Allowed answers: 1*

Display if Q70='Use 2-3 times per week' OR Q70='Use 2-3 times per month' OR Q70='Use 2-3 times per semester' OR Q70='Almost never use'

#### Q91 Office for Students with Disabilities

Very satisfied[Code = 4] [Numeric Value = 4]

Moderately satisfied[Code = 3] [Numeric Value = 3]

Moderately dissatisfied[Code = 2] [Numeric Value = 2]

Very dissatisfied[Code = 1] [Numeric Value = 1]

*Required answers: 1      Allowed answers: 1*

Display if Q73 NOT='No disability/Not applicable'

#### Q92 RVSP - Relationship Violence and Sexual Assault Prevention

Very satisfied[Code = 4] [Numeric Value = 4]

Moderately satisfied[Code = 3] [Numeric Value = 3]

Moderately dissatisfied[Code = 2] [Numeric Value = 2]

Very dissatisfied[Code = 1] [Numeric Value = 1]

Required answers: 1 Allowed answers: 1

Display if Q72='Use 2-3 times per week' OR Q72='Use 2-3 times per month' OR Q72='Use 2-3 times per semester' OR Q72='Almost never use'

#### Q93 LGBTQA Program (Maverick Ally, Educational and Social Programs, Pride Week)

Very satisfied[Code = 4] [Numeric Value = 4]

Moderately satisfied[Code = 3] [Numeric Value = 3]

Moderately dissatisfied[Code = 2] [Numeric Value = 2]

Very dissatisfied[Code = 1] [Numeric Value = 1]

Required answers: 1 Allowed answers: 1

Display if Q74='Use 2-3 times per week' OR Q74='Use 2-3 times per month' OR Q74='Use 2-3 times per semester' OR Q74='Almost never use'

How satisfied are you with the following events?

#### Q94 Major concerts, speakers, and campus traditions (Homecoming, MavsMeet, etc.)

Very satisfied[Code = 4] [Numeric Value = 4]

Moderately satisfied[Code = 3] [Numeric Value = 3]

Moderately dissatisfied[Code = 2] [Numeric Value = 2]

Very dissatisfied[Code = 1] [Numeric Value = 1]

Required answers: 1 Allowed answers: 1

Display if Q75='Use 2-3 times per week' OR Q75='Use 2-3 times per month' OR Q75='Use 2-3 times per semester' OR Q75='Almost never use'

#### Q95 Movin' Mavs Wheelchair Basketball

Very satisfied[Code = 4] [Numeric Value = 4]

Moderately satisfied[Code = 3] [Numeric Value = 3]

Moderately dissatisfied[Code = 2] [Numeric Value = 2]

Very dissatisfied[Code = 1] [Numeric Value = 1]

Required answers: 1 Allowed answers: 1

Display if Q76='Use 2-3 times per week' OR Q76='Use 2-3 times per month' OR Q76='Use 2-3 times per semester' OR Q76='Almost never use'

#### Q96 EXCEL Campus Activities Events

Very satisfied[Code = 4] [Numeric Value = 4]

Moderately satisfied[Code = 3] [Numeric Value = 3]

Moderately dissatisfied[Code = 2] [Numeric Value = 2]

Very dissatisfied[Code = 1] [Numeric Value = 1]

Required answers: 1 Allowed answers: 1

Display if Q77='Use 2-3 times per week' OR Q77='Use 2-3 times per month' OR Q77='Use 2-3 times per semester' OR Q77='Almost never use'

Q97 If you answered "Dissatisfied" or "Very Dissatisfied" to any of the programs/services above, please let us know why:

[Code = 1] [Textbox]

Required answers: 0 Allowed answers: 1

Q98 Do you have any suggestions for how we can improve the student experience for online students at UT Arlington?

Yes (please explain)[Code = 1] [Textbox]

No[Code = 2]

Required answers: 1      Allowed answers: 1

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Page - Demographics

Q99 Are you a veteran?

Yes[Code = 1]

No[Code = 2]

Required answers: 1      Allowed answers: 1

Q100 Where do you live?

On campus in a University apartment or residence hall [Code = 1]

Off campus in a neighboring apartment complex (Centennial Court, Maverick Place, Midtown, Campus Edge, etc.) [Code = 4]

Off campus in your own home or apartment [Code = 6]

Other (please specify)[Code = 7] [Textbox]

Required answers: 1      Allowed answers: 1

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Q101 How far do you live from campus?

Within 1 mile of campus [Code = 1]

More than 1 mile away from campus, but within Arlington city limits [Code = 2]

Outside Arlington, less than 25 miles from campus [Code = 3]

Outside Arlington, 25 miles or more from campus[Code = 4]

Out-of-state[Code = 5]

Outside the United States[Code = 6]

Required answers: 1      Allowed answers: 1

Display if OR Q111='Off campus in your own home or apartment '

Q102 With which gender do you identify?

Male[Code = 1]

Female[Code = 2]

Transgender[Code = 3]

Other[Code = 4]

Choose not to respond[Code = 0] [N/A]

Required answers: 1 Allowed answers: 1

Q103 What is your ethnicity?

Asian[Code = 1]

Black[Code = 2]

Hispanic[Code = 3]

Native American[Code = 4]

Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander[Code = 5]

White[Code = 6]

Multiracial[Code = 7]

International[Code = 8]

Choose not to respond[Code = 0] [N/A]

Required answers: 1 Allowed answers: 1

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Q104 Are you the first in your family to attend college?

Yes[Code = 1]

No[Code = 2]



*Required answers: 1      Allowed answers: 1*

Q105 Did you attend another college or university before coming to UT Arlington?

Yes[Code = 1]

No[Code = 2]

*Required answers: 1      Allowed answers: 1*

Q106 What is your enrollment status?

Full time (12 or more credit hours for undergraduate students; 9 or more credit hours for graduate students) [Code = 1]

Part time (Fewer than 12 credit hours for undergraduate students; fewer than 9 credit hours for graduate students)[Code = 2]

*Required answers: 1      Allowed answers: 1*

Q107 What is your current employment status?

Not employed [Code = 1]

Employed only during semester/summer breaks [Code = 2]

Employed 20 or fewer hrs/wk [Code = 3]

Employed 21 - 39 hrs/wk [Code = 4]

Employed 40+ hrs/wk[Code = 5]

*Required answers: 1      Allowed answers: 1*

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