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The relationship between student involvement and adjustment to the transition to university

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The Relationship between Student Involvement and Adjustment to the Transition to University

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Abstract

The study reported in this paper examined the relationship between involvement in extracurricular academic and community activities and students' adjustment to the transition to university. The study also sought to identify the underlying motivational factors that influence students' decisions to get involved in these kinds of activities.

Participants were 90 first-year undergraduate university students (59 females, 31 males) with a mean age of 19.4 years (SD= .98), participating in mass testing sessions conducted at WLU with introductory psychology classes. Participants were asked to complete a questionnaire containing measures designed to assess various aspects of involvement and adjustment. These included a background measure, a measure of motivation, three measures of involvement, and five outcome measures, each assessing a different aspect of adjustment.

It was hypothesized that students would experience psychological benefits from being involved, regardless of the type of involvement they were engaged in. This hypothesis was supported, as results indicated that students who were involved in extracurricular academic/community activities evidenced better social/emotional adjustment to university compared to students who were uninvolved. The underlying motivating factors influencing student's decisions to get involved in extracurricular activities were also examined. These factors include values/beliefs, interest, community concern, and personal and academic development. Results indicated that students who had higher levels of overall motivation also tended to become involved in extracurricular activities compared to students who indicated lower levels of motivation.

Thus, the results obtained paint the following picture with respect to involvement in extracurricular activities: Students who are involved tend to be better emotionally and socially adjusted and to possess higher levels of motivation than students who are uninvolved.

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The relationship between student involvement and adjustment to the transition to university

The importance of life transitions as periods of vulnerability to stressful events is widely noted in the social psychological literature (Ruble & Seidman, 1996). Transitions involve periods of change, loss, or disruption of a prior structure or order in an individual's life, bringing with them increased levels of stress as the individual struggles to regain stability in the face of new challenges (Lamothe, Currie, Alisat, Sullivan, Pratt, Pancer & Hunsberger, 1995). It has been shown, in turn, that stressful events increase individuals' vulnerability to psychological, behavioural, or somatic disorders (Fisher & Hood, 1987). Literature documenting such vulnerability will be examined, with a specific focus on the psychological effects of the transition to university. Research illustrating the benefits of student participation in extracurricular academic and community-based activities will also be discussed, generating a proposed link between the two areas of research. Specifically, the link between the psychological effects, namely adjustment to the transition to university and the possibility of reducing the distress associated with this event through student involvement will be examined.

The transition to university is considered to be a stressful life event. Leaving home and entering university, which is often an unfamiliar and intimidating place, frequently involves both separating from one's family and friends, as well as adjusting to an environment that presents new academic and social demands on the individual. Such demands can be a source of substantial risk and vulnerability for students. Poor support may compound this risk, making one vulnerable to experiencing symptoms of anxiety, depression, or somatic problems during this period (Compas, Wagner, Slavin, & Vannatta, 1986). The presence of these symptoms may interfere with the skills necessary to generate a new, satisfying sense of support in the university environment. Symptoms of depression have also been found to have an influence on interpersonal relationships (Compas et al., 1986). Thus, a vicious cycle is formed, in that students may feel lonely and depressed as a result of a lack of social support, while, at the same time, the depressive symptoms they are experiencing are actually interfering with the building of new social relationships.

The experience of homesickness is an additional area of concern with respect to the transition to university. A series of studies conducted on university students (Fisher & Hood, 1987) has shown that about 60 to 70 per cent of students report experiencing homesickness. They state that those who reported experiencing homesickness were shown to have greater absent-mindedness, and were more likely to report difficulties in concentrating and coping with academic work. Thus, students may be preoccupied with feelings of loneliness and depression, and consequently may be unable to adjust properly to university life.

Another study conducted by Fisher and Hood (1987) found that first-year students showed elevated psychological distress after the university transition, particularly with regard to depression and obsessionality, as well as increased absent-mindedness. The study demonstrates that a major life-event, such as the transition to university, may have adverse effects on psychological functioning, at least in the short term.

Students who experience great difficulty during this transition are at risk of dropping out of university, thus perhaps altering the plans and/or expectations they had created for themselves with respect to their future. Consequently, this is a very difficult time for students. However, one thing that may counteract their stress during this transition is involvement in either community-based or academically-based activities, such as involvement in school clubs or volunteering at local hospitals or charities. In fact, research has shown that involvement has a positive influence on various aspects of university adjustment and aspirations, such as academic persistence (i.e., degree completion). Students who were involved tended to possess aspirations related to degree completion more than students who were not involved (Hanks & Eckland, 1976; Marsh, 1992).

With respect to student involvement, Astin (1970) proposed one of the earliest models of college impact, termed the "input-process-output" model. On the basis of his own research, and consistent with Pace's (1984) work on the quality of student effort, Astin has proposed a "theory of involvement" to explain the dynamics of how students develop. According to Astin (1985, p.133) his theory "can be stated simply: Students learn by becoming involved". Astin suggests five basic postulates of his theory: 1) involvement requires the investment of psychological and physical energy in objects (i.e. tasks,

people, activities) of all sorts, whether specific or highly general; 2) involvement is a continuous concept, in that different students will invest varying amounts of energy in different objects; 3) involvement has both quantitative and qualitative features; 4) the amount of learning or development is directly proportional to the quality of involvement: and 5) educational effectiveness of any policy or practice is related to its capacity to induce student involvement (Astin, 1985). In his more recent thinking, Astin assigns the institutional environment a critical role in this process; however, students also play a central role, in that they must actively exploit the opportunities presented to them by the environment. More specifically, according to Astin, individuals play a central role in determining the extent and nature of growth they experience according to the quality of effort or involvement with the resources provided by the institution.

Several other models of learning and student development have also noted the importance of student involvement or engagement as a key determinant of the outcomes of education. For instance, Spady (1970), Bean (1980) and Tinto (1975) found that peer relationships and extracurricular involvement enhance one's social integration and interpersonal bonds with the institution. They state that, all else being equal, this increases the student's commitment to and likelihood of persisting at the institution and completing one's degree. Similarly, the social-psychological life-cycle model of status attainment developed by Sewell, Hauser, and their associates (Sewell & Hauser, 1975) posits the importance of interactions with significant others as an influence on degree completion. Other studies have found similar results, stating that individuals' participation in an influential peer culture may explain why extracurricular involvement has a positive impact on educational attainment (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991).

Hanks and Eckland (1976) propose that involvement in extracurricular activities serves two important functions. First, students are exposed to a social network of other achievement-oriented peers, thereby generating and reinforcing higher aspirations and goals. Second, students acquire the personal resources that are required for the attainment of such goals. Evidence concerning the net effect of extracurricular involvement on educational attainment (bachelor's degree completion) is relatively clear: extracurricular involvement increases academic persistence. Hanks and Eckland (1976) also estimated the influences on educational attainment with a national sample of college students. They

found that a measure of collegiate social participation had a statistically significant positive relationship with educational attainment for both men and women.

A considerable body of evidence suggests that a student's quality of effort or level of involvement in the university also has a significant and positive effect on various dimensions of general cognitive development. Self-reports of involvement and academic progress were used in an eight-institution study of college impact reported by Gaff, Wilson, and their colleagues (Gaff, 1973; Wilson, Wood, & Gaff 1974; Wilson, Wood, Gaff, Dienst, & Bavry 1975). Seniors at the institutions were asked to indicate both the extent of their campus involvement and the extent of their progress during college on a number of dimensions of cognitive growth. The study found degree of involvement to be significantly and positively associated with cognitive growth. The researchers concluded that regardless of academic or vocational interests, students who were most involved in the pursuit of intellectual activities demonstrated the most progress in learning and the application of principles. They elaborated, stating that interactions between students and major socializing agents, such as peers and faculty, were significantly linked to the development of general cognitive skills during the students' careers at university. Thus the weight of the evidence indicates that both the frequency and the quality of student interactions with peers, and their participation in extracurricular activities are positively associated with academic persistence (Carroll, 1988; Dukes & Gaither, 1984). In a similar study, Marsh (1992) examined the impact of participation in extracurricular as well as community activities in a sample of 10,000 university students and found a significant relationship between participation in such activities and positive changes in self-concept, as well as higher educational and occupational aspirations. Students' improved performance at schoolwork was also found to be related to involvement in such activities.

Similarly, the literature indicates that social, organizational, and coping skills, as well as self-esteem, are all improved through the student's involvement in extracurricular activities. A recent study by Yates and Youniss (1996) found that high school students who participated in a community service program as volunteers in a soup kitchen demonstrated greater concern for social issues, such as the rate of homelessness, and social justice. This newly discovered interest in social issues was attributed to their

volunteer experience. A study by Pancer and Pratt (1999) also found that committed youth volunteers reported that their experiences had enhanced their skills and knowledge, and produced changes in their personal attitudes and perceptions, career directions, and to some extent even their personalities.

Several studies have demonstrated that living on or near campus while attending university is consistently one of the most important determinants of a student's level of integration or involvement in the social system of an institution. It has been found that students who live in residence (or near campus) have significantly more social interaction with peers and faculty, and are more likely to be involved in extracurricular activities (Chickering, 1974; Chickering & Kuper, 1971). There are other benefits associated with living on campus, as suggested by Astin (1973), Chickering (1974) and Pascarella (1984); it is likely that the major causal mechanism underlying the positive influence of living on campus on persistence and degree completion is the facilitation of campus involvement. Thus, it is presumed that students who live in residence will be more apt to become involved simply as a result of being in close proximity to the activities offered or occurring on campus.

While the literature contains an abundant amount of information concerning the benefits of student involvement with regard to academic achievement and cognitive skill development, research on the impact of such involvement on student's emotional adjustment to the transition to university has largely been ignored. Thus, we do not have a good idea about how students are going to adjust emotionally and socially to this very important and stressful transition. We think a link may exist between emotional and social adjustment and student involvement in various types of activities. The present study aimed to examine the relationship between student involvement and adjustment to the transition to university. It was hypothesized that there would be a significant, positive association between student involvement and adjustment; students who are involved in either their community or their school would evidence better adjustment compared to those students who are not involved.

To summarize, the study reported here sought to examine students' experiences with their involvement, assessing the benefits associated with such activities. It was hypothesized that students who are involved would exhibit better emotional adjustment to

the transition to university than students who are not involved, regardless of type of involvement engaged in. The benefits of being involved in either a university-based program or in a community-based program should be quite similar. Both types of involvement allow the participants to increase their networks, whether these networks are social or professional in nature. Both types also allow participants to partake in activities that serve their needs, either to increase understanding in a particular area of study (university-based) or create the feeling of contributing to one's community (community-based). Each type of involvement has the potential to increase participants' level of self-esteem, increase feelings of belonging and affiliation with the community and academic institution, and create a sense of purpose or self-worth within each individual.

Figure 1 demonstrates the predicted benefits that involvement will have on the above-mentioned components of adjustment.

Conceptual Framework for the Involvement Process

The research literature suggests that students who are involved in university or community life adjust better than those who do not (Marsh, 1992). However, not all students get involved, despite the possible benefits of involvement. Questions arise then, as to why it is that some students get involved and others do not? What motivates students to get involved initially?

This study examined some of the factors that motivate involvement, by using a conceptual framework which parallels that implemented by Omoto and Snyder (1995) in their investigation of motivational factors of volunteers working with AIDS patients. They developed a conceptual framework that identifies three stages of the volunteer process. These stages include an antecedents stage, experiences stage, and a consequences stage. In the present study, this conceptual framework was modified to represent the phases of the involvement process. In this respect, the antecedents phase examines possible motivating factors that influence students' decision to get involved. The experiences phase focuses on the type, as well as level of involvement that students are engaged in, and the consequences phase investigates the psychological benefits that could possibly be associated with involvement.

The rationale for investigating issues of underlying motivational factors is based on functionalist theorizing (Omoto & Snyder, 1995), a theory which was developed by Emile Durkheim in 1859. The central tenet of this mode of theorizing states that different people can and do engage in the same behaviours for different reasons, in pursuit of different ends, and to serve different psychological functions. According to this logic then, acts of involvement that share surface similarity may actually reflect markedly different underlying motivations. Thus, they may serve distinctly different psychological functions, reflecting the various needs of individual students.

However, functionalist theory was not without its criticisms. Among those opposed to the theory were conflict theorists and naturalists (Hagedorn, 1980). Conflict theorists assert that continuous power struggles between groups result in a constantly changing society. The basic causes of change, according to this theory, are not to be found in the values of individuals, but in the structure of society (Hagedorn, 1984). Naturalist theory contends that certain effects (behaviours) will occur given specified conditions (Hagedorn, 1984). Naturalists have questioned whether functionalism is adequate to explain social behaviour. It has been argued that to account for phenomena by showing what social needs they satisfy does not explain how it originated or why it is what it is (Hagedorn, 1980). Perhaps the greatest criticism of the theory contends that it presents somewhat of a circular argument; needs are postulated on the basis of existing institutions, that are, in turn, used to explain their existence (Hagedorn, 1980). The basic tenets of functionalist theorizing, regardless of these criticisms, fits in well with the conceptual framework utilized in this study. As mentioned above, this theory contends that individuals generally engage in similar behaviours, such as getting involved in extracurricular activities, for markedly different reasons, thus reflecting the underlying motivating factors that are personally influential to the individual. The theory also contends that the function of engaging in such behaviour may be to serve individual needs that are unique to each person.

The framework developed to investigate these issues is a general one that specifies psychological and behavioral features associated with each phase, as well as the social, organizational, and societal contexts in which they occur. The framework consists of three phases: the antecedent phase, experiences phase, and the consequences phase.

Phase one: Antecedent factors

The question that defines, in general terms, the concerns of the antecedents phase of the involvement process is "What prompts people to get involved?" Some possible antecedent factors include a) personality and psychological attributes and b) personal motivation. There are several possible motivating factors implicated in a student's decision to get involved. These factors include getting involved to increase or maintain self-esteem (i.e., to feel good about oneself), or feeling as though one is making a difference in the lives of others, such as offering aid at hospitals or charitable functions/causes. Other factors involve the driving force of interest as a possible influence, such as hobbies or interest with respect to future career considerations, as people tend to get involved in activities that are of interest to them, thus deriving enjoyment and fulfillment from engaging in the activity. Students may become involved in order to obtain more information or practical experience in a certain area, or as a result of personal interest in the activity. Motivational factors such as one's values and beliefs (either religious or secular) can also exert an influence on one's decision to get involved, as students may possess certain values/beliefs that will motivate them to become involved in causes or activities that reinforce their ideals.

Other possible motivational factors include getting involved in order to include the experience gained on a resume or other type of application (ex. scholarship, school entrance application). Students may feel as though getting involved in a club/organization/activity may increase their chances of gaining employment or admission, as they will have obtained relevant experience from their involvement. Students may also become involved not out of interest, but out of necessity. This may be the case for students who become involved in various extracurricular activities solely for the purpose of fulfilling a course requirement such as a field placement. These students may or may not be inherently interested in pursuing the activity, but will become engaged in it in order to complete the requirements of a course.

See Table 1 for a list of possible motivating factors influencing student involvement in extracurricular activities.

Table 1- Possible motivating factors influencing involvement

Self-esteem- to feel good about oneself Interest- result of hobbies/enjoyment Values/beliefs- reinforce ideals Career enhancement- add to resume/school application Course requirement- to complete a course

Phase one, therefore, addresses the question: What are the motivating factors influencing people's decisions to get involved? In order to answer this question, the motivational factors involved in the decision to choose, and the maintenance of, involvement must be identified.

Phase two: Experiences of involvement

This phase of the framework investigates the experiences of involvement, which function to determine the benefits one reaps as a result of such participation. Students' satisfaction with their involvement, as well the length of time the student has been involved, will be assessed at this phase. The types of experiences students have with involvement, as well as the types of involvement students engage in, could serve to either promote or deter continuing involvement. There are two central components to this issue, the first of which involves the degree of satisfaction felt by the student with the involvement he or she is participating in. Satisfaction will be assessed by considering the number of friends, new contacts and new networks the student has formed as a result of being involved, as well as looking at the length of time involved, the number of meetings, practices, or social events the student has participated in that are related to their involvement, and level of optimism. The second component involves organizational integration, which is the sense of belonging or affiliation one experiences with respect to the institution at which they are studying, or the community in which they are residing. Therefore, this study will examine the types of involvement that students are engaged in, and the factors that initiate and sustain such involvement. The types of involvement to be assessed include student government involvement, team sports, various clubs and organizations offered at Laurier, political involvement, fund raising positions, religious

involvement, and community volunteering in various settings (ex., hospitals, food banks, retirement homes, church groups). The key issue to be investigated at this phase concerns the type of involvement as well as the level of involvement that students are engaged in.

Phase three: Consequences phase

This phase examines whether student involvement is beneficial with respect to students' psychological well-being, as well as the outcomes associated with the two types of involvement. The ways in which involvement has influenced their personal attitudes, fears, knowledge, behaviours, and overall emotional adjustment (i.e., their perceived changes) is the key issue in this stage. It was predicted that some of the benefits of student involvement would include increased skills, such as social, interpersonal, academic, and organizational skills. Involved students would also benefit from increased social support, as social support buffers people from the deleterious effects of negative life events and daily hassles. Other benefits include lower levels of depression, and a greater sense of belonging to the institution, increased levels of optimism, increases in self-esteem, and increases in career decidedness.

The literature on student involvement thus far presents findings suggesting some of the benefits of involvement. A considerable body of evidence suggests that a student's quality of effort or level of involvement in university has a significant and positive effect on various dimensions of general cognitive development. A study conducted in this area found that students most involved in the pursuit of intellectual activities showed the most progress in learning and applying principles (Gaff, 1973; Wilson, Wood & Gaff, 1974; Wilson, Gaff, Dienst, Wood & Bavry, 1975). To date, research on the benefits of involvement has centered on academic issues and has not examined the benefits with respect to psychological health, more specifically, emotional adjustment to the transition to university.

Motivating factors operating at the antecedents phase were also examined. This was done in order to discover what makes some students get involved in extracurricular activities. A comprehensive list of possible motivating factors was generated in order to reflect a range of possible influences in a student's life. It was predicted that factors such as wanting to increase one's academic skills and professional networks would influence

behaviour in the area of university-based involvement, whereas factors such as wanting to feel better about oneself, feel less lonely, increase one's social networks (i.e. make new friends, meet new people) would influence behaviour in the area of community-based involvement. These predictions were based on the premise that people will become involved in activities that will suit and meet their specific individual needs. Thus, students involved in university-based activities would be seeking to increase such things as their professional networks or to improve their knowledge in a particular area of study. Similarly, students involved in community-based activities would be seeking to increase their social networks by meeting new people in their community, or to experience personal development. Therefore, it is possible to conceptualize involvement as a means to an end.

Method

Participants and Procedures

Participants were 90 first-year undergraduate psychology students, 59 females and 31 males, with a mean age of 19.4 (SD= .98) years. Participants were taking part in a mass testing session being conducted with introductory psychology classes at Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo, Ontario, Canada. A brief explanation concerning the purposes of the study was given at the beginning of the session. For instance, participants were told that the study was investigating the relationship between student involvement and emotional adjustment during the transition to university. All participants were required to read and sign a consent form before participating. All questionnaires were kept confidential and each participant was provided with an information sheet outlining the purposes of the study in greater detail at the end of the session. Also included on this sheet was contact information should participants wish to discuss the study further or in a more private setting with the researcher. The phone number for student counseling services was also provided on the sheet outlining the purposes of the study, should participants have wished to use these services. Participants were also provided with information regarding the date that the final results of the study would be posted, as well as the location of this posting (outside the psychology office at WLU). The questionnaire was distributed in mid-February in a large lecture hall with 90 in attendance, and took

approximately 45 minutes to complete. Participants were then thanked for their participation.

Measures

Participants were asked to complete a questionnaire consisting of several measures. These included a few questions concerning demographic information, used to obtain information regarding the age, gender, race and ethnic background of the participants. This would also allow us to control for age and gender in the analysis of the data. A measure of motivation developed for the purposes of the study was also included in the questionnaire, as well as several other measures designed to assess the range of components previously discussed involved in adjustment to major life transitions. These measures are described in detail below.

Antecedents phase

Consistent with the primary objective of the antecedents phase, to discover what makes people get involved, a measure of motivation was administered to participants.

Motivational factors measure

Participants were asked to complete a measure of motivation concerning involvement in general, consisting of 42 questions (37 in the final version), designed to assess the motivational factors influencing their decision to get involved, as well as their level of involvement. The measure parallels that used by Omoto and Snyder (1995) and consists of eight subscales, each measuring a particular aspect of motivation implicated in the decision to get involved. Participants are asked to indicate, using a 7-point response format ranging from (–3) strongly disagree to (+3) strongly agree, the extent to which they believe each of the items listed played a role in their decision to get involved in either an academically-based or community-based activity.

These scales include: 1) values, which contains four items such as "it is my humanitarian obligation to help", and "because of my personal values, convictions, and beliefs"; 2) enjoyment/interest, which includes three items, such as "because I enjoy participating in what I am involved in"; 3) personal development, which includes five

items, such as "to get to know people similar to myself", " to meet new people and make new friends", "to challenge my skills" and "to learn more about myself"; 4) community concern, which measures the sense of obligation one feels toward one's community, and includes five items such as "to get to know people in my community" and "to help members of my community"; and 5) esteem enhancement, containing five items measuring motivating factors such as "to make my life more stable", "to escape from other pressures and stress", "to feel good about myself" and "to make a difference". The notion that esteem enhancement is the primary motivating factor influencing people's behaviour is quite prevalent in the literature in social psychology (Scheier & Carver. 1985; Ruble & Seidman, 1996). People may engage in various activities in order to feel as though they are making a difference in the lives of others, which in turn would make one feel better about oneself.

Other subscales included: 6) job/career enhancement, consisting of six items, such as "to put on my resume/school application" and "to increase my chances of gaining employment"; 7) academic development, which include five items, such as " to enhance my skills specific to my area of study" and " to meet faculty in my area of study"; 8) course requirement/field placement, which includes four items, such as " because it was a course requirement" and "because I could not graduate without it"(degree requirement).

See Table 2 for item. scale and subscale reliabilities.

Table 2

Motivation scale reliabilities

Subscale	Items	Item-subscale correlation	Alpha
1-values, beliefs, concerns	1.because of my humanitarian obligation to help	.4712	
	2.because of my personal values, convictions, & beliefs	.4850	
	13.becaue I have an obligation to my community/school	.4646	
	14.because I believe in the cause	.4159	.6648

2-interest/ enjoyment	3.to learn more about the organization	.4847	
	6.because I enjoy participating in what I am involved in	.4483	
	27.because I enjoy helping others	.5188	.6658
3-personal development	8.to make new friends	.5813	
	11.to meet new people	.5394	
	19.to test or challenge my skills and abilities	.4583	
	20.to get to know people similar to myself	.7936	
	23.to learn about myself-my strengths and weaknesses	.5291	.7928
4-community concern	4.to make a difference	.5278	
	5.to develop new social networks	.3618	
	16.to expand my knowledge	.4927	
	22.to learn more about the people the organization serves	.6015	
	25.to help members in my school/ community	.5105	.7337
5-esteem enhancement	7.to escape from the pressure & stresses of everyday life	.4655	
	10.because I want to feel needed by others	.5501	
	12.in order to feel less lonely	.6751	
	15.to feel better about myself	.3348	
	24.to make my life more stable	.4462	.7309
6-job/career enhancement	9.to gain experience	.3002	
	17.to enhance my resume or school application	.6337	
	30.to increase my chances of gaining employment generally	.7221	
	34.to remain competitive in the job market	.6316	
	41.to increase my chances of gaining employment in my area of study	.7816	
	42.to gain more information about a potential career	.4665	.8214
7-academic development	31.to enhance my skills specific to my area of study	.6599	
	32.to get better grades	.6317	
	33.because it is valued in my area of study	.6120	

	35.to meet faculty in my area of study	.4705	
	39.to remain competitive academically	.4705	.8014
8-course/ degree requirement	28.because of a course/degree requirement	.5386	
	36.because I could not graduate without it	.8097	
	37.because I wanted a course that had a placement requirement	.4035	
	40.because I received or will be receiving bonus percentage points for it	.6766	.8263
		Overall Alpha	.9061

Experiences phase (involvement)

With respect to the second phase of the framework, the experiences phase, several measures were administered to participants in order to assess the type and level of involvement that students are engaged in. These measures include the EII and YII.

Extracurricular Involvement Inventory (EII)

The EII (Winston & Massaro, 1987) is a 13-item measure that assesses the types of involvement the student is currently active in, as well as their level of involvement in that activity. Participants are asked to indicate the type of group/organization they are involved in, the number of hours per month they participate, and the type of position held there, such as committee member, secretary, or a position other than that of leadership. Participants are also asked to indicate the extent to which they participate in various aspects of the activity, such as meetings and social functions. Possible responses range from very often (4) to never (1), with higher scores indicating increased levels of involvement. The second section of the EII assesses students' past involvement and their satisfaction with the experience.

A quality of involvement score for each organization was obtained by totaling the responses to the five items that assessed the dimension of quality, giving three points for each "very often" response, two for "often", one for "occasionally", and zero for "never". The sum of the five items is then multiplied by the quantity measure (how much time was devoted to the activity per week), to achieve an intensity score, using the following

conversion scale for the quantity measure: 0 hours = 0, 1-8 hours= 1, 9-16 hours= 2, continuing on in eight hour intervals. This yields an intensity score for each organization the student is involved in. The EII score, then, is the sum of the intensity scores for all the organizations to which the respondent belongs. The authors of the scale provided sufficient evidence of the scale's reliability, presenting a two-week test-retest reliability estimate of .97. The present study obtained a Cronbach's alpha for the scale of .66, which is satisfactory.

Youth Inventory of Involvement (YII)

The YII (Pancer, Pratt & Hunsberger, 2000) is a standardized scale consisting of 30 items designed to assess the extent of student's involvement, as well as the different areas in which youth can be involved. Respondents are asked to indicate the extent to which they have participated in each of the activities, using a five-point response format ranging from 0 (they never did this over the previous year) to 4 (they did this a lot over the previous year). Psychometric properties for the scale are generally very good, with an alpha of .90, and test-retest measures at .61 after two years (Pancer, Pratt & Hunsberger, 2000). The present study obtained an overall Cronbach's alpha of .87 for the scale. The YII is comprised of four subscales measuring various types of activities. These subscales include political activities, community activities, responding activities, and helping activities. Sample items include "participated in a political party, club or organization", "helped organize neighbourhood or community events", "gave help to friends or classmates who needed it", and "participated in or helped in a charity organization".

Consequences phase

The third phase of the framework focuses on the consequences associated with involvement. Several measures assessing various aspects of emotional adjustment were administered to participants in order to examine the relationship between involvement and adjustment. The measures pertaining to this phase include: the SACQ, the LOT, the CES-D, the SES, and the CDP.

The Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ)

The 67-item Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ; Baker & Siryk, 1984) assesses the student's experiences at university. Participants are asked to indicate how well each statement applies to them "at the present time (within the last few days)," using a nine-point response format (1= doesn't apply to me at all; 9= applies very closely to me). Some items on the scale are reverse scored. The SACQ contains four subscales measuring different dimensions of university adjustment. These include academic adjustment (24 items), social adjustment (20 items), personal emotional adjustment (15 items), and attachment to the school (15 items). Some items are double counted on the subscales. Higher scores indicate better university adjustment; overall scores could range from 67 to 603. Reliability of the SACQ is quite high, with Cronbach's alpha between .92 and .94 for six administrations of the test (Baker & Siryk, 1984). The present study also obtained a Cronbach's alpha of .92 for the scale. Sample items include "I feel that I fit in well as part of the university environment", "I know why I'm in university and what I want out of it", "being on my own, taking responsibility for myself has not been easy", and "I'm not working as hard as I should at my course work".

Life Orientation Test (LOT)

(Optimism Scale)

The Life Orientation Test (LOT; Scheier & Carver, 1985) is an 8-item scale designed to measure dispositional optimism. Respondents are asked to indicate the extent to which they agree or disagree with the statements presented. Ratings are made using a nine-point response format, ranging from –4 (very strongly disagree) to +4 (very strongly agree). Some items on the scale are reverse scored. According to Scheier and Carver (1985), the LOT provides a psychometrically sound measure of optimism, defined in terms of the favourability of a person's generalized outcome expectancy. The LOT possesses an adequate level of internal consistency, test-retest reliability, and convergent as well as discriminant validity (Scheier & Carver, 1985). Results generated from the present study yielded a Cronbach's alpha of .88, which is quite good. Sample items include "In uncertain times, I usually expect the best", and "I hardly ever expect things to go my way".

Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale (CES-D)

The CES-D was developed by Radloff (1977), and differs from other measures of depression in that it is not designed as a clinical intake measure for the severity of depression. The CES-D was not intended to be a clinical diagnostic tool. It was designed to be a measure more useful for surveys of the general population, because it assesses depressed mood, not the full range of depressogenic symptoms. The scale has good reliability, with split-half correlations of .85 for patient groups and .77 for normal groups. Radloff (1977) reported test-retest reliabilities ranging from .32 for 12 months to .67 for 4 weeks. The CES-D also correlates .81 with the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI). The present study obtained a Cronbach's alpha of .88 for the scale, which is quite acceptable.

The 20 items contained in the measure represent the major components of depressive symptomatology that Radolff identified in both the clinical literature and factor analytic studies of existing measures of depression. The items in the measure were selected to reflect each of the following six components of depressive symptomatology: depressed mood, feelings of guilt and worthlessness, feelings of helplessness and hopelessness, psychomotor retardation, loss of appetite, and sleep disturbance. Respondents are asked to indicate how frequently they experienced the symptom within the past week, using a four-point response format. Responses include "1=rarely or none of the time (less than 1 day)," "2=some or a little of the time (1-2 days)," "3=occasionally or a moderate amount of the time (3-4 days)," and " 4=most of the time (5-7 days)". Some items on the scale are reverse scored. Higher scores on this measure indicate a higher frequency of depressive symptomatology. Sample items for this scale include "I felt that everything I did was an effort", "I was bothered by things that usually don't bother me", and " I felt that I was just as good as other people".

The Self-Esteem Scale (SES)

This 10-item scale was designed by Rosenberg (1965) to measure respondents' levels of self-esteem. The SES is scored using a four-point response format ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 4 (strongly disagree), with higher scores representing higher levels of self-esteem. Some items on the scale are reversed scored.

This scale has demonstrated good internal consistency. Dobson (1979) obtained a Cronbach alpha reliability of .77, while Fleming and Courtney (1984) reported a Cronbach alpha reliability of .88. The present study found a Cronbach alpha of .87 for the measure. Test-retest correlations were adequate at .85 and .82 (Fleming & Courtney, 1984). Considerable discriminant validity has also been demonstrated for the SES. There were no significant correlations found between SES scores and grade point averages (.10), locus of control (-.04), or Scholastic Aptitude Test verbal (-.06) and quantitative scores (.10) (Fleming & Courtney, 1984). Sample items for the scale include "I feel that I have a number of good qualities", "I feel I do not have much to be proud of", and" On the whole, I am satisfied with myself".

Career Decision Profile (CDP)

The CDP is a 16-item measure designed by Jones and Lohmann (1998), to assess student's level of career decidedness and comfort with career-related decisions. The scale contains three subscales: career decidedness, career comfort, and career decision needs. The decidedness subscale is designed to assess the extent to which students feel they have a particular career path already in mind. Three-week test-retest reliability alphas of .66 and .85 were obtained for this subscale (Jones & Lohmann, 1998). The comfort subscale assesses the ease with which students believe they can make a career decision, and yielded three-week test-retest reliabilities of .76 and .82. The decision needs subscale indicates the extent to which students feel they require information regarding a particular career, as well as how to make the proper career choice. This subscale generated three-week test-retest reliability alphas of .77 and .80. The present study obtained a Cronbach's alpha of .86 for the overall scale. Respondents are asked to rate the extent to which they agree or disagree with the statements provided, using an eight-point response format ranging from 1(strongly disagree) to 8 (strongly agree). Higher scores on this scale represent increased levels of career decidedness. Occupational information is also requested, assessing the amount of information students feel they have access to concerning their career, such as potential salary, information regarding programs of study and the availability of job positions in that area. Sample items from the scale include "I don't have interests in any occupational field", "I have an occupational field in mind that

I want to work in", and " I feel at ease and comfortable with where I am in making a career decision".

Results

Antecedents phase results

The primary purpose of the antecedents phase was to investigate which motivational factors influence students' decisions to get involved in extracurricular academic and/or community activities. The motivation scale developed to examine this issue has an overall Cronbach's alpha of .9061. Five items were removed during the development of the scale in order to improve the alphas for the subscales. These items included "to learn more about myself"; "because a friend or family member is involved"; "because I consider myself to be a loving and caring person"; "to gain experience dealing with emotionally difficult topics"; and "because people should do something about the issues that are important to them". Removing these items produced the final reliabilities generated for the subscale. Reliabilities of the eight subscales were in an acceptable range with alphas ranging from .66 to .83. See Table 2 on pages 17-19 for item, scale and subscale reliabilities. Correlational analyses were performed using the eight subscales of the motivation scale to examine the relationship among the subscales. Table 3 presents the correlations that were obtained.

Table 3 Correlations for motivation subscales

	Values	Interest	Personal development	Community concern	Esteem	Enhance career	Academic Develop-ment	Course required
Values/beliefs	1	.473**	.247*	.520**	.192	.035	.027	-.072
Interest		1	.482**	.731**	.136	.031	.084	-.078
Personal development			1	.525**	.418**	.353**	.286*	.109
Community concern				1	.108	.275*	.315*	.042
Esteem enhancement					1	.272*	.227	.159
Job/career						1	.767**	.614**

enhancement								
Academic development							1	.767**
Course requirement								1

** correlation is significant at the .01 level

* correlation is significant at the .05 level

The third subscale, representing personal development as a motivating factor for involvement, was related to each of the other subscales with the exception of subscale eight, course requirements. Means and standard deviations were obtained for the motivation scale and are presented in Table 4.

Table 4 Means for motivation subscales, separated by gender

	Female		Male	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Overall	201.86	27.84	179.45	27.28
Values/beliefs	26.33	4.03	24.18	4.56
Interest	17.47	2.74	15.95	2.65
Personal development	27.37	4.14	24.41	6.65
Community concern	21.81	3.55	20.05	4.18
Esteem enhancement	20.47	4.99	18.09	7.09
Job/career enhancement	30.19	6.68	24.18	6.61
Academic development	19.95	6.44	18.09	5.59
Course requirement	13.53	6.55	12.23	5.31

N= 43 females, N= 22 males
Total N= 65

Responses on the motivation scale were also analyzed for gender differences. An independent samples t test was performed in order to examine whether the means for

males and females differed significantly from each other. A significant difference was obtained between the means of overall level of motivation generated for males and females, indicating that females tended to score significantly higher than males, t (63)= 3.091, p<.003 (sixty-five of the ninety participants responded to the scale, fifty-five of which were involved at the time of data collection, and ten (6 female, 4 male) participants completed the measure using recent involvement as a basis for responses). The means obtained for female participants were in fact higher for each of the eight subscales compared to the means generated for male participants. However, significant differences between these two groups were found only for subscales two, three and six, representing motivational factors of interest/enjoyment, personal development and career enhancement, t (63)= 2.129, p<.03; t (63)= 2.209, p<.03; and t (63)= 3.44, p<.001 respectively. No significant differences were found between means for the other subscales.

A within-ANOVA design was conducted with each of the eight subscales entered as levels of a factor (motivation), and gender entered as the between factor. This additional analysis was done in order to examine whether there were any gender by subscale interactions present. Results indicated that there were no significant interactions between gender and subscales, signifying that the gender difference in overall level of motivation obtained is free of any specific subscale.

The items on the motivation scale were analyzed in order to examine which items were most generally important to people in making the decision to get involved. These items included: "to develop new social networks", "enjoy participating in what involved in", "to make new friends", "to gain experience", "believe in the cause", " enhance resume or school application", "enjoy helping others", "increase chances of gaining employment in area of study", and "gain information about a potential career".

Experiences phase results

The experiences phase is the second phase in the involvement process model and focuses on issues surrounding involvement. Student involvement in extracurricular activities was measured using the EII and the YII. Table 5 presents the means and standard deviations that were obtained for the EII and YII, separated by gender.

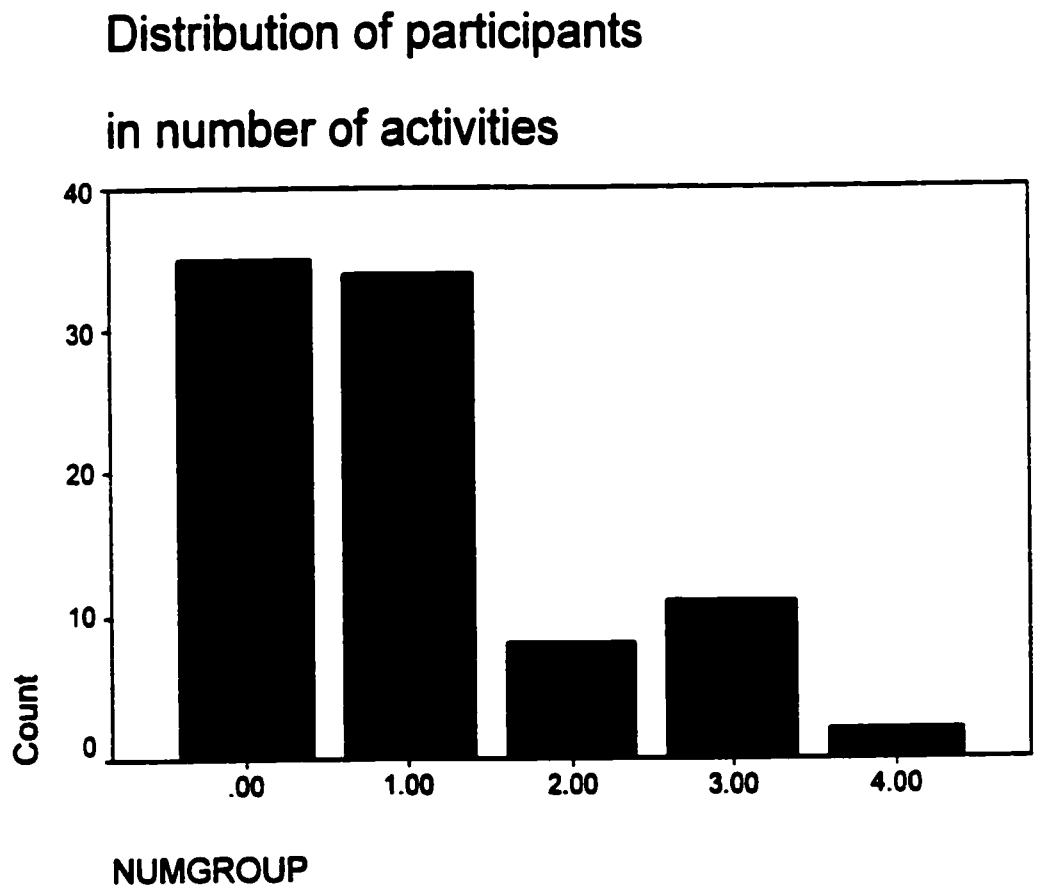
Table 5 Means for involvement separated by gender

	Female		Male	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
EII	21.72	24.46	25.00	22.29
YII	35.95	17.08	32.68	18.77

N= 59 females, N= 31 males

According to the results obtained, no significant differences were found between males and females and extracurricular involvement, as the t tests performed did not reach significance, t (88)= .835, p<.406 for the YII, and t (88)= .624, p<.534 for the EII. Of the ninety participants who took part in the study, fifty-five indicated they were involved in extracurricular activities (35 female, 20 male), and thirty-five indicated they were not involved (24 female, 11 male). See Figure 1.

Figure 1



This chart represents the number of students from the total number of participants (Y axis) and the number of groups each was involved in (X axis). Thirty-five indicated that they were not involved in any extracurricular activity, thirty-four indicated being involved in one activity, eight in two activities, eleven in three activities, and two in four activities. Of the ninety participants, fifty-five were involved and thirty-five were uninvolved.

The number of groups that students were involved in was positively correlated with both measures of involvement, producing a correlation of $r(88) = .681$, $p<.01$ with the EII and $r(88) = .415$, $p<.01$ with the YII. Both measures of involvement were positively related to each other, yielding a correlation of $r(88) = .374$, $p<.01$, indicating that both measures did in fact assess involvement adequately. In addition, the YII possesses four subscales, each assessing a different type of activity. These include political activities, community activities, responding activities, and helping activities. Inter-scale correlations for these four subscales were obtained and are presented in Table 6.

Table 6 Correlations for YII subscales

	YII total	political	community	responding	helping
YII total	1	.605**	.460**	.360**	.925**
political		1	0.175	0.1	.415**
community			1	0.097	.406**
responding				1	.266*
helping					1

** correlation is significant at the .01 level

* correlation is significant at the .05 level

Subscale four of the YII, representing helping activities, was significantly related to each of the other three subscales, indicating that a desire to help others is a prevalent theme in each of the other types of activities represented in the YII.

Consequences phase results

The consequences phase of the involvement process represents the psychological outcomes with respect to social/emotional adjustment, related to involvement in extracurricular academic and/or community activities. Adjustment was assessed using five measures. These included the SACQ, a measure of adjustment to university; the

CES-D, a measure of depression; the LOT, a measure of optimism; the SES, a measure of self-esteem; and the CDP, a measure of career decidedness. Means were generated for each measure of adjustment and separated by gender. These results are presented in Table 7.

Table 7 Means obtained for each measure of adjustment

	Female		Male	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
SACQ	394.60	63.17	413.29	71.01
Depression	37.15	9.39	35.10	9.99
Optimism	50.73	10.43	46.00	14.97
Self-esteem	32.49	4.75	33.77	5.68
Career decidedness	11.17	4.03	10.03	4.55

N's ranged from 58 to 59 for females, and 30 to 31 for males.

Means pertaining to adjustment to university, as assessed by the SACQ, did not differ significantly between males and females, t (87)= -1.273, p<.206. Mean differences for males and females on the depression, optimism, self-esteem, and career decidedness scales also did not reach significance, t (87)= .955, p<.342; t (88)= 1.752, p<.083; t (88)= -1.136, p<.259; t (88)= 1.217, p<.227, respectively.

Correlations were obtained between each of the five measures of adjustment in order to examine the relationship between the measures. Table 8 illustrates the inter-scale correlations that were obtained as a result of this analysis.

Table 8 Correlations for each measure of adjustment

	SACQ	Depression	Optimism	Self-esteem	Career decidedness
SACQ	1	-.654**	.493**	.440**	.263*
Depression		1	-.541**	-.662**	-.163
Optimism			1	.623**	.247*
Self-esteem				1	.050
Career decidedness					1

** correlation is significant at the .01 level

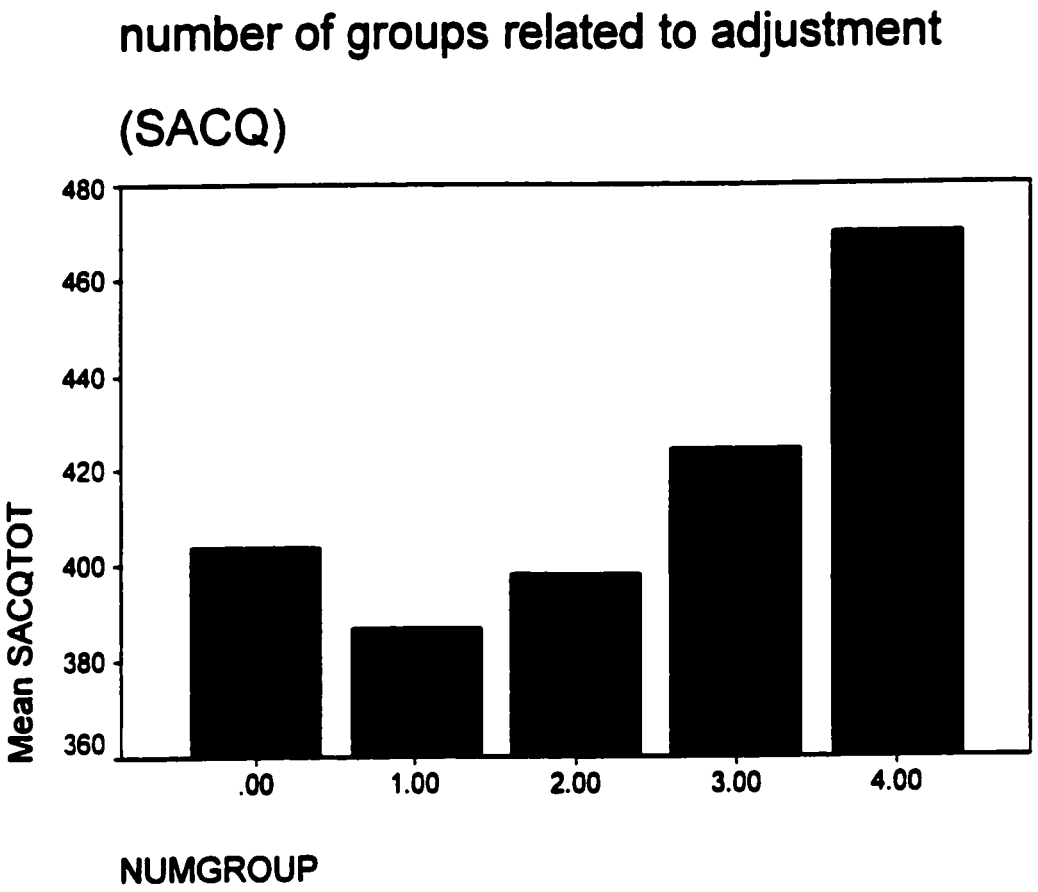
* correlation is significant at the .05 level

The SACQ (adjustment to university) was negatively related to frequency of depressive symptoms and positively related to both level of optimism and level of self-esteem. Adjustment to university was also associated with increased levels of career decidedness and an increased amount of comfort students felt with respect to choosing a career. Following this logic, university adjustment was also negatively related to students' need to obtain more information regarding potential career paths.

Relationship between involvement and social/emotional adjustment

It was hypothesized that student involvement in extracurricular activities would be significantly related to better social/emotional adjustment to university, regardless of the type of activity engaged in (either academic and/or community). See Figure 2 in Appendix A. In order to test this hypothesis, correlational analyses were conducted between the measures of involvement and the measures of adjustment. The YII and SACQ produced a correlation coefficient of $r(88) = .216$, $p < .05$, indicating that students who were involved in extracurricular academic or community activities, as assessed by the YII, showed better adjustment to university compared to students who were not involved. This offers support for the first hypothesis, that student involvement would be associated with better social/emotional adjustment to university. See Figure 3.

Figure 3



As indicated by the graph, students who were involved in extracurricular academic and community activities (as assessed by the number of groups involved in- students who were uninvolved would indicate zero) demonstrated higher scores on the SACQ, indicating better emotional adjustment to university than students who were uninvolved. A scatterplot of the data was examined, and the relationship between the two variables was linear in nature.

The difference between those who are uninvolved and those who are involved in one group or activity is non-significant. This could be a result of the time the data for the study was collected, as both groups of students had five months of exposure to the university environment to which to adapt. Perhaps a clearer distinction between these two groups would be apparent if the data were gathered immediately after the students entered university.

Table 9 presents the correlations that were obtained from the analysis of the two measures of involvement (YII and EII) and each of the five measures of adjustment.

Table 9 Correlations among measures of adjustment and involvement

	YII	EII
SACQ	.216*	0.118
depression	-0.08	-0.123
optimism	0.157	0.152
self-esteem	0.115	0.017
career	.224*	0.159

* correlation is significant at the .05 level

Items contained in the EII and YII are different from each other, therefore there is no overlap between the items. The YII contains items designed to measure involvement in both academic and community settings, including a wider range of activities, whereas items on the EII are designed primarily to measure involvement in academically based activities. Items on the EII also focus almost exclusively on the length and intensity of student involvement instead of the type of involvement.

The second hypothesis, that student involvement in extracurricular academic and/or community activities would be associated with each of the five measures of adjustment was not supported. Correlations between the EII and YII and depression, optimism, and self-esteem did not reach significance.

However, involvement, as measured by the YII, was positively correlated with career decidedness, in that students who were involved tended to also possess a greater degree of decidedness with respect to their future career paths. These students also indicated that they were more satisfied with the amount of information they felt they possessed pertaining to their career field, and felt as though they based their career choice on a more informed decision.

The SACQ contains four subscales, each reflecting a different component of overall psychological adjustment. The first subscale involves academic adjustment. This subscale assesses how well students are adjusting to the academic demands placed on them at university. The second subscale examines social adjustment, how well students are coping with their new social environment, such as making new friends and meeting new

people. The third subscale centers on emotional adjustment. This subscale assesses how well students are coping psychologically with the transition to university, as well as with all the emotions they are experiencing. The fourth subscale of the SACQ represents issues surrounding attachment to university.

Correlational analyses performed between the subscales of the SACQ and the subscales of the YII and EII yielded the results presented in Table 10.

Table 10 Correlations among the subscales of the YII, EII and SACQ

	SACQ	YII	EII	Political activities	Community activities	Responding activities	Helping activities
SACQ	1	.216*	.118	-.005	.201	-.058	.220*
Academic adjustment	.834**	.187	-.047	-.020	.191	-.071	.221*
Social adjustment	.776**	.313**	.303**	.087	.268*	.118	.266*
Emotional adjustment	.704**	-.044	.013	-.104	-.080	-.238*	.005
Attachment	.816**	.230*	.175	.002	.296**	.045	.202

** correlation is significant at the .01 level

* correlation is significant at the .05 level

All four subscales of the SACQ were positively correlated with the overall scale. Both the subscale representing social adjustment and the subscale representing attachment were positively related to involvement, as assessed by the YII. The social adjustment subscale was the only subscale related to the EII. Social adjustment and attachment were also associated with the second subscale of the YII, community activities. According to the results generated from the correlational analysis performed, emotional adjustment was negatively related to the responding subscale of the YII, indicating that students who are better emotionally adjusted tend to engage in fewer activities that are in response to some need presented. It should be noted, however, that the relationship generated between these two variables is not a very strong one (see Table 10). None of the other

subscales of the SACQ were related to the responding subscale, which measures behaviours such as signing a petition. Academic and social adjustment were positively related to the helping subscale of the YII, indicating that students who are better psychologically adjusted with respect to academics and the social aspects of their lives, also tend to engage in behaviours that are performed for the purpose of helping others. The only subscale of the YII that was related to the overall measure of adjustment (overall SACQ scores) was the helping activities subscale. Relationships among the political activities subscale of the YII and each of the four subscales of the SACQ, including the overall measure of the SACQ, did not reach significance.

Relationship between motivation and involvement

The underlying motivational factors that influence students' decisions to get involved were also analyzed, specifically investigating what motivates students to get involved in extracurricular academic and community activities. Table 11 presents the correlations that were obtained for involvement and overall motivation, as well as separate motivational factors.

Table 11

	YII	EII	Values	Interest	Personal dev	Community concern	Esteem	Enhance career	Academic Dev	Course require
YII	1	.374**	.418**	.572**	.325**	.487**	.125	.028	.055	-.106
EII	.374**	1	.201	.205	.139	.221	.018	-.123	-.081	-.209
Over-all motiv ation	.310*	.004	.417**	.461**	.650**	.633**	.515**	.755**	.790**	.603**

** correlation is significant at the .01 level
* correlation is significant at the .05 level

Level of overall motivation was positively correlated with students' level of involvement, as assessed by the YII, revealing that students who were involved in extracurricular activities also tended to have higher levels of motivation. The first four subscales of the motivation scale were significantly related to involvement. The relationship between involvement and subscales five through eight did not reach

significance. Relationships between the EII and overall level of motivation, as well as individual motivation subscales, did not reach significance.

Correlational analyses indicated that overall level of motivation was also positively related to students' overall social/emotional adjustment to university (SACQ), $r(88)= .330$, $p<.01$, such that students who were highly motivated also tended to be better adjusted than students who scored lower on the motivation scale. Overall motivation scores also demonstrated a positive relationship with levels of career decidedness, $r(88)= .329$, $p<.01$, indicating that students who felt they possessed definite ideas as to which career path they would choose also tended to have higher scores on the motivation scale compared to students who indicated confusion and uncertainty with respect to their future careers.

Analysis of the relationship between the eight subscales of the motivation scale and the four subscales of the YII indicated that the relationship between the political activities subscale of the YII and each of the motivation subscales did not reach significance. Table 12 presents the significant correlations that were obtained between the subscales of the two measures.

Table 12 YII subscales

Motivation subscales	Community act	Responding act	Helping act
Values	.300*	—	.443**
Interest	.303**	.395**	.591**
Personal dev	.333**	—	.357**
Community concern	.300*	.349**	.498**
Academic dev	.335**	—	—

** correlation is significant at the .01 level

* correlation is significant at the .05 level

— correlation did not reach significance

Discussion

The study of transitions has been of major interest to social science researchers because they often are times of upheaval in self-definition and in interpersonal relationships, carrying with them potential implications for long-term mental health and social functioning (Ruble & Seidman, 1996). From the perspective of the mutual influence of contextual and psychological factors, a transition may be described as "a disturbance in one or more aspects of the constancy of relations or transactions between an individual and one or more dimensions of the context" (Ruble & Seidman, 1996, p. 831).

The new social and academic demands experienced by students making the transition to university have the potential of becoming sources of risk and vulnerability for students. It is of utmost importance that this risk and vulnerability be diminished as much as possible, as the presence of symptoms caused by these new sources of stress, such as anxiety, depression and feelings of loneliness and isolation, interfere with students' abilities to create new social relationships which may be desperately needed during this difficult time.

Many studies have shown the alarmingly high numbers of students who are negatively affected by the stress induced from making the transition to university (Compas et al., 1986; Dukes & Gaither, 1984; Pace, 1984). Studies such as that conducted by Fisher and Hood (1987) have demonstrated that major life events have the possibility of exerting adverse effects on psychological functioning. However, although literature exists documenting the existence of psychological distress in students entering university, there has been surprisingly little work done on determining what in fact can be done to ease this stress and aid students in completing the transition more smoothly. The information obtained from this study has provided us with some direction in this area.

Antecedents phase

With respect to antecedent factors, this study investigated possible underlying motivating factors influencing students' decisions to get involved, using a conceptual framework consisting of three phases representing the phases of the involvement process. The first phase, or antecedents phase, sought to answer the question of why students get

involved. In this framework, the involvement process unfolds over time as antecedents-phase variables give way to experience-phase variables, which, in turn, lead to the consequences of involvement (Omoto & Snyder, 1995). There may also be utility in conceiving of involvement as a process of sustained helping or personal development in which events at earlier phases affect events and outcomes at later phases of the process. See Figure 2 in Appendix A.

Omoto and Snyder (1995) identified recurring themes in motivations for volunteers in their study that they feel are not sample specific, and therefore may be common to diverse forms of volunteerism and involvement. Having been adapted from the measure implemented by Omoto and Snyder (1995), there is confidence that the motivation scale developed for the purposes of this study reliably taps into motivational factors influencing student involvement.

As indicated in Table 3, motivational factors centering on aspects of personal development (subscale 3 of the motivation scale) were related to each of the other motivational factors, except those involving course or degree completion (subscale 8). This stands to reason, as subscales one through seven could all be thought of as being involved in a quest for personal development to some extent (Omoto & Snyder, 1995). The eighth subscale, however, contains items that indicate that the student's involvement in a particular extracurricular activity was engaged in for the sole purpose of completing a component of a course or degree, such as fulfilling the requirements for a field placement. This subscale conveys the message that if the activity in question were not required, then the student would not have engaged in it as a result of his/her own motivational reasons. This having been said then, it is not surprising that subscale eight is not related to factors centering on aspects of personal development, while each of the other seven subscales are. Each of the other subscales all involve some degree of personal influence or need to better oneself, whether this need or desire is expressed as upholding values, giving something back to one's community, or engaging in academic development and enhancing one's career prospects. Omoto and Snyder (1995) contend that volunteers motivated by more self-oriented concerns, such as their values or a desire for personal development, may actually provide greater benefits to others through their increased devotion and inherent interest in the activity.

A gender difference was found with respect to overall level of motivation (see Table 4), with females scoring significantly higher on the motivation scale than males, indicating that females tend to be more highly motivated in general than males. Breaking down this score of overall motivation into the eight subscales represented, mean differences in gender were apparent in only three of the eight subscales. According to these results, motivating factors reflecting one's personal interests, personal development and enhancing one's career potential/prospects, were more influential for females in making the decision to become involved in extracurricular academic and/or community activities than they were for males (Omoto & Snyder, 1995).

It is difficult to explain why a gender difference was not obtained for level of involvement, yet was obtained for level of motivation. It was thought that perhaps males and females become involved in different types of activities, and that perhaps the motivations listed on the motivation measure may have been geared to specific types of activities not engaged in by males. However, supplemental analyses indicated that no gender difference was present for the types of activities that male and female students were involved in. The possibility that there are some kinds of motivations for males that exist and yet were not tapped by the measure still remains.

Experiences phase

Student involvement in extracurricular academic and/or community activities was assessed using two measures of involvement, the EII and the YII. Means were obtained for these two measures, separating responses given by males and females (see Table 5). Independent samples *t* tests were performed on both measures in order to determine if gender differences existed with respect to student involvement. However, no significant differences were found between the levels of male and female involvement, nor with the types of activities students engaged in. Students making the transition to university tend to experience similar negative symptoms (Fisher & Hood, 1987) regardless of gender, as transitions involve change for all students. Thus, male and female students alike would seek to reduce these negative symptoms, such as alienation, loneliness and depression. Should involvement in extracurricular activities possess the predicted benefits mentioned earlier, then students of both genders may become involved in order to reduce

psychological stress, and a gender difference in student involvement would not be evident.

The YII contains four subscales representing various types of activities that students could become involved in. Those activities represented include political activities, community activities, responding activities, and helping activities. Results indicated that the fourth subscale, that reflecting helping activities, was positively related to each of the other three types of activities represented on the scale. Therefore, according to these results (see Table 6), the desire to engage in behaviours intended to help others is also expressed through political, community and responding-type activities, as represented by the YII. It is possible then, that students may become involved in a wide variety of activities for the same underlying reason. The desire to provide assistance to those who are in need is a fundamental aspect of human nature, and is a desire that may be fulfilled through a variety of outlets, including involvement in each of the activities listed on the YII.

Potential explanations as to why the EII correlated so poorly with all other measures (except the YII) used in this study include the fact that this measure generated a reliability alpha that was considerably lower than each of the other measures utilized. Cronbach's alpha for the EII was only .66, while all other alphas ranged from .86 to .92. This brings the EII's reliability and its usefulness in this particular study into question.

Another possible explanation stems from examining and comparing the types of items found on each of the two measures of involvement. Items on the YII address specific types of activities that students could possibly become or already be involved in. The nature of the activities assessed by the YII include both academic and community-related activities, thus providing a more comprehensive look at which types of activities students are engaged in. The EII is much less detailed than the YII, with respondents providing information centering more on the number of hours per week they devote to an activity, and the number of groups or organizations to which they belong. Items on the EII also focus more heavily on academically-based activities, such as school-based sports and student government or publication activities. Perhaps the YII is a superior measure for tapping into the diverse types of activities that students are involved in, providing a more comprehensive examination of the possible benefits of all types of student involvement.

Consequences phase

The consequences phase sought to examine the potential psychological benefits obtained from involvement in extracurricular academic and community activities. See Figure 2 in Appendix A.

Each of the measures of adjustment that was implemented in the study was analyzed for the presence of gender differences. Results indicated that means obtained for males and females for each of the five measures did not display any gender-related differences (see Table 7). According to these results, males and females do not differ with respect to the level of social/emotional adjustment experienced at university, nor do they differ with respect to level of general optimism and level of career decidedness. No gender differences were found in level of self-esteem, a result that is somewhat unexpected, as previous studies have obtained gender differences in this area (Lu, 1994) representing the stereotypic belief that females generally tend to have lower levels of self-esteem than males. Results found pertaining to the lack of gender differences obtained on the measure of depression are also somewhat unexpected, as several studies have reported finding clear gender differences with respect to the occurrence of more depression in females (Radloff, 1977; Beck, 1967).

The discrepancy in results obtained for the existence of gender differences could be explained by taking into account the emotional context of the situation being evaluated. As mentioned earlier, transitions involve a period of change and heightened psychological stress for all students. Perhaps no clear gender differences were found as a result of males and females undergoing similar social/emotional changes and upheaval at the same time. Therefore, the results obtained from the measures of adjustment may not differ by gender, as was found in other studies, yet differ based on students' level of transition involvement, either involved or uninvolved. Perhaps gender differences do exist on these measures during times when both males and females are not experiencing the same type of psychological disturbance and are not in the midst of struggling to regain stability in their lives.

Inter-scale correlations were obtained among the five measures of adjustment (see Table 8) in order to investigate the type of relationship that exists between each of the measures utilized. It stands to reason that students who are better socially/emotionally

adjusted to university would also experience fewer depressive symptoms than students who were having a more difficult time adjusting to their surroundings. Following this logic, students who are better psychologically adjusted should also possess higher levels of optimism and self-esteem compared to students who are psychologically stressed; this is precisely the result that was obtained. With respect to depression, results indicated that frequency of depressive symptoms experienced was negatively related to both general level of optimism and level of self-esteem. This result would be expected, as individuals who experience a high frequency of depressive symptoms tend to exhibit a more pessimistic outlook towards life and their future, as well as reduced levels of self-esteem (Radloff, 1977). In fact, Aspinwall and Taylor (1992) proposed that optimism and self-esteem have direct effects on psychological well-being, motivation, productive work and general health, all of which are related to emotional/social adjustment. Buehler, Griffin, and McDonald (1997) also found that optimistic expectancies about specific events may predict positive outcomes, in that these optimistic expectancies may cause people to be motivated to achieve their goals, and may also lead people to focus on ways of achieving those goals. It stands to reason, then, that level of general optimism and level of self-esteem were positively related, indicating that individuals who possess an optimistic outlook also tend to have increased levels of self-esteem.

With respect to career decidedness, results indicated that students who evidenced better adjustment to university also tended to indicate increased satisfaction with the amount of information they felt they possessed pertaining to various career fields. These students also indicated that they were more confident and certain in their decision as to which career path they had chosen to pursue. Adjustment to university was not the only variable that was related to career decidedness. Increased levels of optimism were also positively related to certainty of career choice.

There exist some clinical implications that can be drawn from these results involving the benefits of students possessing high levels of career decidedness. As results indicate (see Table 8), students who have a clear understanding of which career path they wish to pursue also tend to be better emotionally and socially adjusted. Student counseling services may wish to aid students who are not adjusting effectively to university by providing them with career counseling. This would allow the student to obtain more

information regarding various careers and perhaps gain a sense of purpose and direction with respect to their lives and their studies. This sense of purpose and direction would then provide students with a reason for being at university, and allow them to create goals towards which to work. Counselors could counsel students to get involved in various activities as part of a solution for career in-decidedness.

Supplemental analyses were performed in order to examine whether involvement in certain types of activities was more beneficial to students experiencing career in-decidedness. This information would allow counselors to encourage troubled students to participate in these activities, thereby increasing the students' chances of receiving much needed benefits from the activity. Correlations were therefore obtained between the four subscales of the YII, which measure various types of activities, and level of career decidedness. Results indicated that the community activities subscale was positively associated with career decidedness, including satisfaction with the amount of career information students felt they possessed. The helping activities subscale was also positively related to level of career decidedness, indicating that students who are involved in these types of activities tend to have higher levels of career decidedness. The nature of these relationships must be interpreted with caution. It could be that students who are involved in these types of activities have higher levels of career decidedness, or the reverse could be true; that students with higher levels of career decidedness choose to partake in these types of activities. The final possibility is that both directions of this relationship are present. Regardless, it is of benefit to students suffering from career in-decidedness to be encouraged to become involved in extracurricular activities. Even though the exact nature of the relationship between type of activity and increased levels of career decidedness is difficult to determine, results indicating a positive association between elevated levels of career decidedness and community and helping activities is an important area in which to begin encouraging student involvement.

Involvement and social/emotional adjustment

The results obtained in this study demonstrate that the proposed link between emotional/social adjustment and student involvement does in fact exist. It is possible then, to suggest that one method effective in counteracting psychological stress

experienced during the transition to university is involvement in extracurricular academic/community activities, such as joining clubs, teams, religious organizations, or volunteering. The first hypothesis included in this study was in fact supported, in that students who were involved in various academic/community activities showed better adjustment to university than students who were uninvolved (see Table 9). Some potential benefits of involvement include a reduction in stress and discomfort, felt as a result of unfamiliarity experienced with respect to the new students' surroundings.

These results suggest that counselors at student centers may aid students who are not adjusting well to university by encouraging them to become involved in activities available either on campus or within the community. This may provide troubled students with a means of meeting new people and forming social relationships. Counselors could also suggest living in closer proximity to the school, to students who live farther away from campus, and who are having difficulty adjusting. This suggestion is based on the findings presented by Chickering (1974) and Astin (1985), indicating that students who live closer to campus tend to become more involved in extracurricular activities than students who live farther away from campus.

Students making the transition to university may also experience feelings of homesickness and alienation. However, volunteer organizations often invest much effort in increasing the integration of their volunteers into the organization, using such means as regular meetings with organization staff, newsletters, and volunteer recognition and appreciation events (Omoto & Snyder, 1995). These efforts exerted by organizations may provide newly involved students with the social interaction and support that they require during this particularly turbulent time in their life.

Interestingly, however, the second hypothesis of the study, that involvement would be associated with each of the components of adjustment (self-esteem, optimism, and depression) was not supported (see Table 9). There are several possible explanations to account for why these relationships did not reach significance. The data for the study were collected after students had been immersed in the university environment for five months; therefore, they have had time to adapt to certain aspects of their new surroundings. After the passage of this amount of time, it becomes difficult to disentangle what exactly influenced the students' psychological state and how. This logic would also

apply to the SACQ; however, there exists several factors external to the university environment that may influence self-esteem, level of optimism and depression. Events occurring within the home or workplace can influence individuals in very profound ways, and should a student be experiencing depression, low levels of self-esteem or optimism for reasons unrelated to circumstances specific to the university environment, then perhaps involvement in extracurricular activities would not have the same benefits as would be experienced with university-related issues.

Also, the measure of adjustment implemented in this study, the SACQ, was designed to measure adjustment to the university environment, whereas the measures of depression, self-esteem and optimism could be implemented just as effectively in settings outside of university. It may very well be for these reasons that the correlations obtained between these three measures and involvement, which may be more geared toward the university environment, did not reach significance.

Involvement was, however, positively related to one of the outcome measures, career decidedness (see Table 9). Students who were involved tended to indicate that they felt relatively comfortable with the amount of information they had concerning potential careers, and were more decided as to which career path they were going to pursue, compared to students who were not involved. This increased career decidedness could be due to involved students receiving more exposure to various career fields as a result of participating in activities/organizations in their school or community. Students who are involved also have the opportunity to discuss career options and opinions with others in a variety of career fields, allowing them to develop a more extensive knowledge base with respect to career information and decisions (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). The reverse of this relationship could also be operating. For instance, it is possible that students who have decided on a certain career are more likely to become involved in extracurricular activities, thereby receiving volunteer experience relevant to pursuing their career.

The SACQ, a measure of adjustment implemented in the study, contains four subscales; each is designed to assess a specific component of psychological adjustment. Issues surrounding how well students are coping with the new academic demands being placed on them, such as heavier course loads and an increased amount of required dedication to school work, comprise the focus of the first subscale, entitled academic

adjustment (Baker & Siryk, 1984). The second subscale, entitled social adjustment, reflects how students are coping with the social aspects of their lives, such as their ability to meet new people and make new friends in a new and unfamiliar environment. Emotional adjustment is the focus of the third subscale of the SACQ, and centers on how well students are coping with the various emotions they are experiencing in university. These may include loneliness, alienation, depression, anxiety, insecurity and self-doubt. Emotional adjustment is an extremely important part of being psychologically healthy. The final subscale of the SACQ examines issues surrounding attachment. This subscale assesses the extent of student attachment to their academic institution. Having a sense of pride with respect to one's school can possess positive benefits for students (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). Students may be motivated to work academically, as well as more likely to become involved in school activities, such as joining clubs and teams (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991).

Correlations were obtained among the subscales of the SACQ and the YII and EII in order to examine the type of relationship, if any, that exists between these measures (see Table 10). Results indicated that involvement, as assessed by the EII, was related only to the social adjustment subscale of the SACQ. Involvement as assessed by the YII, was positively associated with two subscales of the SACQ, subscales two and four, representing social adjustment and attachment. These relationships indicate that students who are involved in extracurricular academic and/or community activities tend to exhibit better social adjustment as well as increased attachment to their university. Being involved in various extracurricular activities may provide students with increased opportunities to meet other students who share similar interests, thereby allowing them to become more socially adjusted. Involvement in activities in one's community or in one's school may also bolster the sense of pride and affiliation a student experiences with respect to the community in which they reside or with their academic institution. Increasing this sense of affiliation has the potential of being psychologically beneficial for students, as they may feel as though they belong, thereby reducing feelings of loneliness, alienation and anxiety they may be experiencing (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). Results obtained in this study could potentially support this notion, as it was found

that students who were involved in extracurricular activities tended to demonstrate better psychological adjustment compared to students who were not involved.

Turning to the results for the subscales of the YII and SACQ (see Table 10), academic and social adjustment were positively related to helping activities, as was the overall measure of the SACQ. These results indicate that students who are better academically and socially adjusted engage in behaviours aimed at helping others to a greater extent than students who are less well academically and socially adjusted. As a result of the correlational nature of this research, it is difficult to determine if being more academically and socially adjusted influences people to become more involved helping others, or whether engaging in behaviours to help others enables students to feel more academically and socially adjusted. The possibility that a third factor is exerting an influence here should also be entertained.

The emotional adjustment subscale of the SACQ was found to have a negative relationship with the responding activities subscale of the YII (see Table 10), indicating that students who are better emotionally adjusted engage in activities that are in response to requests less frequently than students who are less emotionally adjusted. It is not clear why this particular result was obtained.

With respect to level of involvement, there may in fact be an optimal level of involvement that exists, after which point involvement may no longer be as beneficial, in that students who participate in too many activities may experience distress because they are suffering academically, for example. Students involved in too many activities may also experience interference with academic or home activities/commitments. Becoming overly consumed in one area of one's life has the potential of negatively affecting most other areas, be they one's home/family life, social life, academic pursuits or mental functioning (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

With the present data it is difficult to determine if such a pattern of optimal involvement exists, as working with a sample of ninety, too few students have indicated being involved in more than four activities to study the issue. There was only one participant who indicated involvement in five activities. However, due to the minimal number of students indicating involvement in such an elevated number of activities, this participant was simply added to the group indicating involvement in four activities, the

highest group commonly represented. Perhaps with a larger sample size there might have been more students indicating involvement in a higher number of activities, which might then illustrate more clearly a pattern regarding optimal levels of involvement emerging.

Motivation and involvement

It was predicted that the motivating factors influencing students to become involved in extracurricular activities would differ depending on the type of involvement they were engaged in, either community or academic. However, the distinction between the factors operating for the two types of involvement was not as clear-cut as was predicted (see Table 11). Some factors were geared more specifically toward one or the other type of involvement; however, both types of involvement had the majority of the factors in common.

As Table 11 indicates, involvement, as assessed by the YII, was positively associated with motivational factors centering on one's values and beliefs, interest, personal development, and community concern (see Table 11). Therefore, students may choose to become involved in order to uphold values or particular beliefs they possess, thereby reinforcing their ideals. For example, an individual may believe that we possess an inherent responsibility to help those in need, and therefore may become involved in charity organizations, serving the function of upholding their beliefs (Omoto & Snyder, 1995). Involvement, as assessed by the EII, however, was not related to any aspect of motivation. These results could have been obtained as a result of the lower reliability that the scale possesses in comparison to the YII, as well as a result of the different structure of the items found on the EII compared to the YII. As previously mentioned, the EII and YII, although both measuring involvement, contain extremely different items. The YII contains items that are specific to various types of activities that students are engaged in. Perhaps simply indicating the intensity of student involvement, as does the EII, renders a weaker relationship between motivation and involvement, as the nature of such involvement is not taken into account in the same amount of detail, as is the case with the YII.

Individuals may also decide to engage in a certain activity out of interest in a particular organization or activity (see Table 11). For instance, students involved in

various political activities may have chosen to participate as a result of possessing an interest in politics. Such engagement may allow these individuals to learn more about a particular area of interest and derive enjoyment from their involvement.

Motivational factors representing the desire for personal development also exert an influence on individuals' decisions to get involved (see Table 11). Individuals may engage in various activities as part of a quest or desire to develop as a person. This quest may be accomplished by upholding one's values/beliefs, by pursuing one's interests, or by helping one's community. This may be precisely why this factor is also represented to some degree in each of the other three factors being discussed.

Another factor motivating involvement is a concern for one's community (see Table 11). Individuals may become involved in various organizations or activities throughout their community as a means of helping others within their community. For instance, individuals may help out at community fundraising events, at community centers or hospitals, or with various environmental activities, in order to help improve the area in which they live, both for their own benefit, as well as for the benefit of others residing in their community.

It is interesting to note that involvement and subscale five, esteem enhancement, were not related. According to this, it appears as though getting involved for the sole purpose of feeling better about oneself is not as influential a factor as helping others or meeting new people. Esteem enhancement therefore, may simply be an added perk to involvement, a pleasant benefit that one experiences, but one that is not the primary reason for engaging in an activity initially. Factors centering on enhancing one's career and developing academically were also not related to involvement. The relationship between involvement and being motivated by a desire to fulfill a course requirement yielded a negative correlation; however, it did not reach significance. This result was expected, as the participants of the study were all first-year university psychology students, and therefore would not be enrolled in any courses that had a field placement component.

Students who scored higher on overall motivation (cumulative score on the motivation scale) also indicated higher levels of career decidedness (see Table 11). This paints a larger picture of students who are highly motivated tending to be involved and having a

greater understanding of their future career goals than students who are not involved. Enhanced motivation, according to Aspinwall and Taylor (1992) is associated with greater persistence at tasks and a correspondingly greater likelihood that one will succeed in achieving one's goals. Following from this logic, overall levels of motivation were positively related to students' overall social/emotional adjustment to university, such that students who were highly motivated also tended to be better adjusted than students who scored lower on the motivation scale.

Motivating factors may differ within individuals, and could be contingent upon the context in which the decision to get involved was made. For example, at the time this study was conducted, students had already been exposed to their new environment for five months. The motivating factors that influenced their decision to get involved at that time could very well be different from those that would exert their influence during another period in their lives, such as the first couple of weeks after making the initial transition to university. It is proposed that it is during the first two to four weeks after the initial transition has been made that the individual experiences the most stress and is at the highest risk psychologically (Wiseman, 1997). It stands to reason then, that the factors motivating students' behaviour during this critical time would differ from those operating during more relaxed and comfortable times. The majority of respondents who indicated they were involved in an activity/organization also indicated that the issue of making new friends and meeting new people was of great importance to them when making their decision to get involved initially, as indicated by the elevated scores given to items number eight and eleven on the motivation scale. Perhaps this factor would exert its' strongest influence during times of distress and loneliness, whereas factors involving increasing one's awareness of a certain career field may exert a more prominent influence during times of increased focus and productivity. This could serve as an important focus for future research in this area.

With respect to motivation and type of activity engaged in, results indicated that motivating factors were also related to three of the four subscales of the YII (see Table 12). These subscales include community activities, responding activities, and helping activities. The relationship between the subscale involving political activities, which is designed to measure an individual's politically oriented activities, and motivating factors

did not reach significance. The community activities subscale assesses activities that are performed in a community setting, and was significantly related to motivating factors involving values, beliefs, and concerns, interest and enjoyment, personal development, community concern, and academic development, indicating that community involvement is motivated by a variety of factors (see Table 12). Getting involved in one's community, then, seems to stem from a concern for the community and its members, as well as a desire for personal development, whether this is sought through academic development means or out of interest/enjoyment (Omoto & Snyder, 1995). With respect to community activities being influenced by academic development, students may feel as though they are able to gain important information or insight with regard to certain academic fields, thus learning by doing.

The responding activities subscale of the YII is designed to measure behaviours that are conducted in response to needs that are required or expressed (Pancer, Pratt, & Hunsberger, 2000). This subscale was significantly related to motivating factors centering on interest/enjoyment and community concern (see Table 12). It stands to reason then, that these types of behaviours would be motivated in part by a concern for the well-being and needs of others in one's community, as these activities are primarily performed out of a response to a call for assistance. The individual's interest or enjoyment in a certain activity or organization also may exert an influence on responding behaviour, as individuals may be more apt to respond to the need for assistance if they have some interest in, or derive some enjoyment from the activity.

The helping activities subscale of the YII measures involvement centering on activities designed to aid others, such as involvement in charity organizations and volunteering at hospitals or retirement centers (Pancer, Pratt, & Hunsberger, 2000). This subscale was positively related to motivating factors including values, beliefs, and concerns, interest/enjoyment, personal development and community concern (see Table 12). Thus, students may engage in helping behaviour as a result of possessing underlying values and beliefs, either religious or secular, which drive them to fulfill and uphold these values by aiding others and participating in one's community. Helping others may also be involved in an individual's quest for personal development, where making a difference in someone's life or in one's community is experienced as a component of personal growth.

It is crucial to identify the motivating factors that influence students' decisions to get involved in various groups and/or organizations, especially with respect to the development of university programs for new students. Such programs could create various clubs, groups, and organizations intended for new students, as well as making the existence of such activities known to the student body. Membership in such organizations and clubs could very well prove to be beneficial as people may feel less lonely and alienated as a result of being involved, and thus reap the benefits of having a stable network of peers in which to confide. Students who are involved may also be exposed to increased interaction with students who have already made the transition to university, thereby allowing the new students to gain valuable information regarding effective coping strategies to help them through this difficult transition. Feeling as though one is accepted and liked by others bolsters people's sense of self-worth and increases their general satisfaction in the type of person they feel they are, thus increasing one's level of self-esteem (Wilson et al., 1974). Membership in such clubs could also aid in reducing the sense of unfamiliarity and anxiety new students experience upon arrival at a new school and perhaps new city, thus reducing the overall level of stress and discomfort that is felt by students. To encourage continuing involvement and favourable attitude change, Omoto and Snyder (1995) have suggested that organizations may want to stress the ways in which individuals personally benefit from their involvement, rather than just underscoring how their efforts benefit others.

As a result of comprehending the underlying motivating factors that are influencing student behaviour in this area, there exists a greater potential for such programs to be successful, both in enticing students to participate and also in maintaining their interest and enjoyment in the program. The end product could potentially be a lower attrition rate experienced by universities and an increased number of psychologically healthy students who are able to progress through the difficult transition to university more easily.

This study does not claim to have provided an exhaustive catalog of involvement motivations; in fact, it is recognized that attempts to measure motivations for university students' involvement from other theoretical perspectives may reveal additional motives (Omoto & Snyder, 1995). However, there are parallels between this set of motivations and attempts to construct catalogs of basic human needs, fundamental dimensions of

personality, goals mediated by social interaction and other attempts to measure motivations for volunteerism (Omoto & Snyder, 1995). The motivating factors represented on the measure are intended to reflect the desire to satisfy basic human needs that arise in people's lives, such as the need for social contact and interaction, the need to feel as though one belongs, and the need to obtain a sense of purpose and direction in one's life.

Involvement may be motivated by underlying values that dictate that one should make contributions to society; it may serve the function of satisfying students' intellectual curiosity about other people; or it may serve a more social function by providing students with opportunities to make friends and to develop social ties (Ruble & Seidman, 1996).

Based on the findings presented in this study, there are several possible implications to consider. It is important for institutions to consider the organizational climates that may be conducive to sustained involvement. It is also beneficial for them to shape the educational and interpersonal experiences and settings of their campus in ways that will promote learning and achievement of the institutions' educational goals. Finally, it is important for institutions to induce students to become involved in those activities and to exploit these settings and opportunities to their fullest. The enhancement of coping with stressful life events, as well as fostering the development of satisfying social networks, both represent appropriate targets for prevention efforts (Compas et al., 1986).

The context of the situation is an important element to consider. It would be interesting to examine whether the pattern of relationships in terms of volunteering and student involvement in extracurricular activities would differ if people were not in a period of transition. Do individuals seek out participation in different kinds of activities depending on their needs at that particular time? If this adaptation of involvement does occur, what would be the implications for long-term emotional and social adjustment? One possibility is that such adaptation to one's changing environment would prove to be a psychologically healthy maneuver, as people would then be focusing on coping with each transition they experience, by actively ensuring that the particular needs that arise out of each situation are fulfilled. This would allow them to regain a sense of stability and equilibrium in their lives.

Another aspect of involvement and context that should be considered is the effect of age on the type of activities one chooses to become involved in, as well as the motivation behind such decisions. For instance, it is possible that people of a certain age may be more likely to become involved in activities motivated by the desire to meet a potential romantic partner. This motivation would then be reflected in the activities they choose to become involved in.

The financial situation of students making the transition to university may also play an influential role in their emotional and social adjustment to their new environment. Many students today are burdened by increasing financial obligations, such as rising tuition and cost of living expenses. As a result, more and more students are taking on part-time jobs while attending school (Steinberg & Cauffman, 1995). Contrary to popular notions that exist with respect to the benefits of student employment, studies have found that working does not enhance students' feelings of social obligation, social tolerance, or social belongingness (Greenberger & Steinberg, 1986). With extra time devoted to working, the majority of these students would not have the time to engage in extracurricular activities. Therefore, students who work may be missing out on the benefits associated with involvement. In fact, Steinberg (1999) found that students who worked long hours, defined as twenty hours or more per week, are less satisfied with their lives than are students who work fewer hours. It is reported that the nature of students' typical type of work is often dull, monotonous, and stressful (Steinberg, 1999), which would contribute to decreases in satisfaction with one's life.

A study conducted by Steinberg and Cauffman (1995) noted that working longer hours leads to disengagement from school. This finding is of concern, considering the psychological benefits associated with students possessing a sense of affiliation or attachment to one's school. Steinberg and Cauffman (1995) suggest that working may actually be associated with increases in deviance and aggression. Considering that almost eighty percent of today's high school students will have worked before graduating, and therefore are likely to continue to do so throughout their first year of university, the negative effects of student employment become quite a concern.

Whereas employment tends to hurt performance at school, increase delinquency, and heighten drug and alcohol use (Steinberg, 1999); participating in school and community-sponsored extracurricular activities seems to have the reverse effects.

Limitations

There are some important limitations to this study that must be acknowledged. A first concerns the self-report nature of the measures utilized, in that the relations among the variables may be inflated. Also, the correlational nature of the study prevents establishing causation with respect to the results obtained. Thus the direction of the relationship between variables is unclear, and the possibility exists that the direction of the relationships reported could in fact be the reverse. It is not clear whether involvement is producing better adjustment, or whether better emotional adjustment is producing involvement, or both, or neither.

Another limitation involves the time the study was conducted. Data for the study were gathered in February; therefore students participating in the research had been in the university environment for five months already. There is the possibility that these students had time to adapt to the new environment, thereby altering the results obtained in the study.

However, by changing the design of the study, it would be possible to eliminate each of these limitations. Future research could build on the findings presented here, working from the basis that a significant relationship between involvement and adjustment exists. The ideal research design to examine the issues presented here would be to administer questionnaires to students before they begin the transition to university and collect data from these same students after they have made the transition. This design would allow for an investigation as to whether a pattern emerges with respect to involvement and psychological stress (adjustment), as responses given by students before experiencing the transition could be compared to responses given after they have completed the transition. This design would also allow increased confidence in the direction of the relationship between variables obtained in the results.

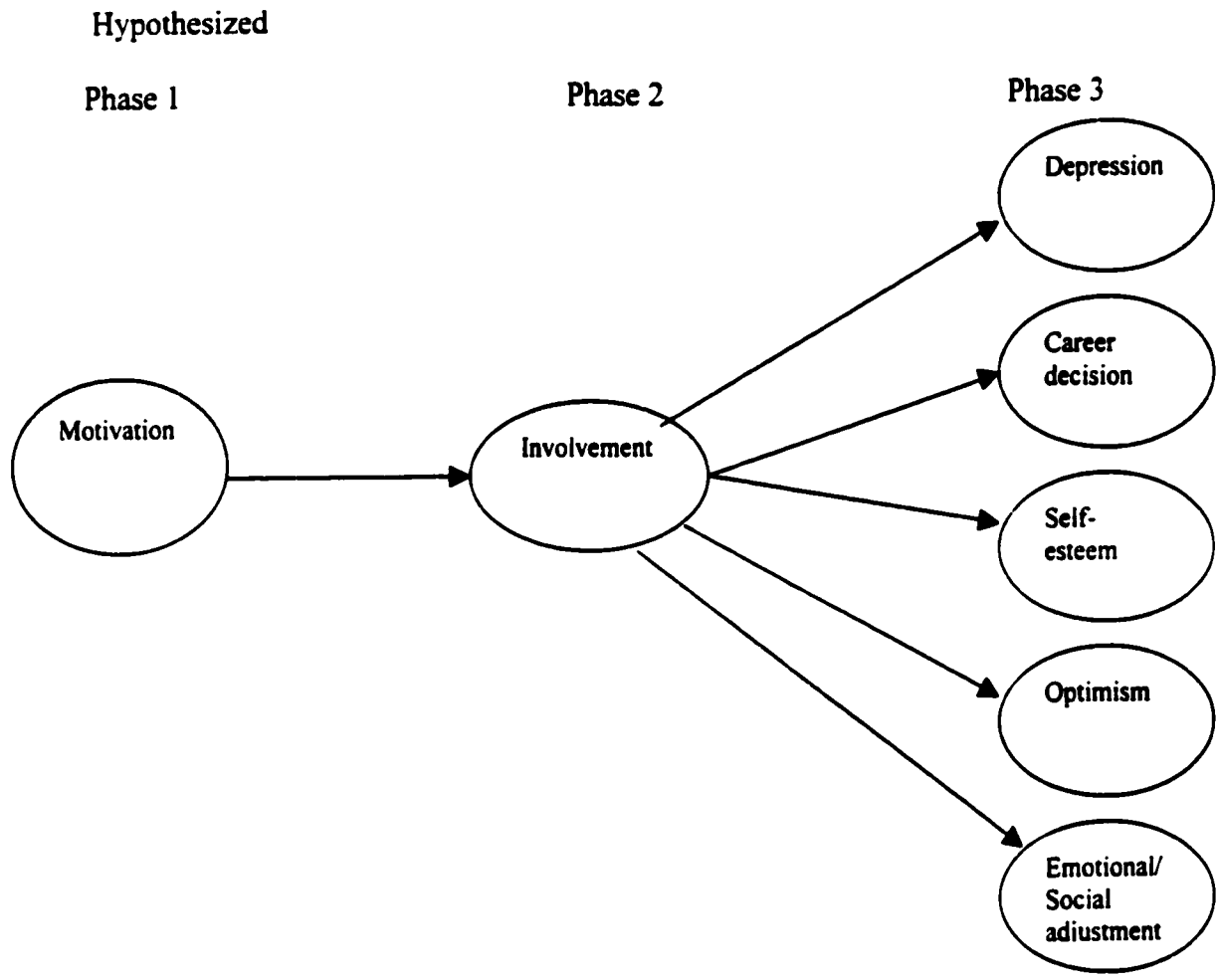
Transitions provide important opportunities for primary prevention efforts (Ruble & Seidman, 1996). However, understanding social behaviour requires an analysis of the

pattern of the relation between persons and context, rather than just the content of the elements (Ruble & Seidman, 1996). For this reason, the study of transitions provides a unique opportunity to examine what is basic to differences in relations over time.

APPENDIX A

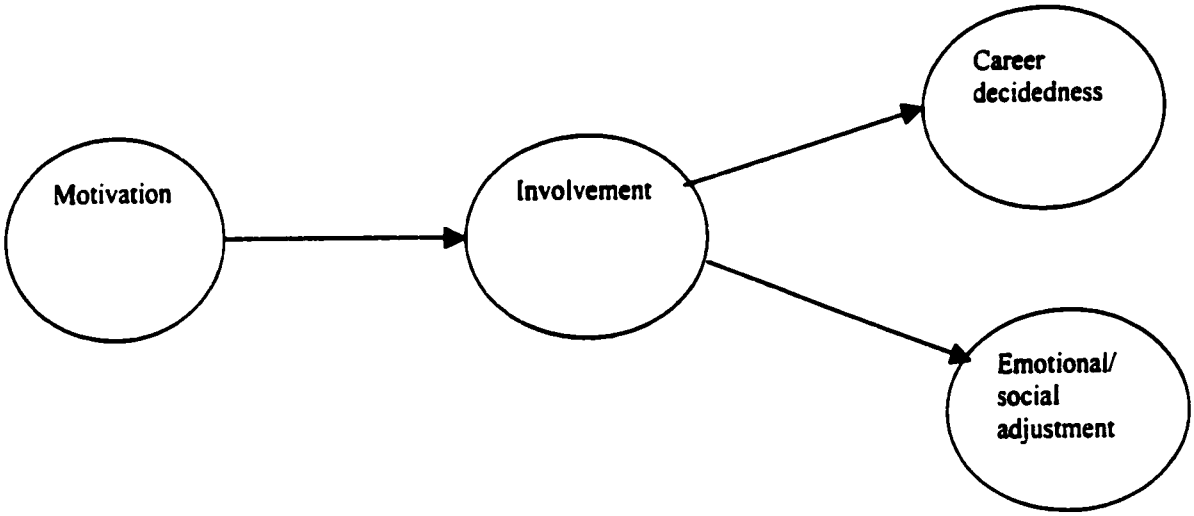
Figure 2

Involvement & Adjustment



Results

Phase 1 Phase 2 Phase 3



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APPENDIX B- Measures

Background Information

1. Sex (circle one): M F

2. Age: _____ years

3. Where are you currently living?

___ in residence
___ off campus
___ at home
___ other (specify):_____

4. What program of study are you in?

___ arts
___ science
___ business
___ music
___ phys-ed
___ other (specify):_____

5. What year of study are you in? _____

6. How many groups or organizations are you a member of at university? _____
(e.g., departmental club, drama club, student government, sports teams)

The Extracurricular Involvement Inventory (EII)

The following questions focus on groups or organizations you may PRESENTLY be involved in. Please note that involvement in these groups or organizations must be strictly VOLUNTARY AND WITHOUT PAY. We ask that you please complete a section below for each group/organization you are involved in. For each group or organization, please indicate: (1) the name of the group/organization, (2) the type of organization it is, (3) the approximate number of hours you have been involved (for example, attending meetings, working on projects, or playing games) with this group or organization in the *last four weeks*, and (4) leadership held, if any. Then answer questions one through five below. If you are not involved in any groups or organizations please continue on to the next part of the survey.

Group/Organization #1

1. What is the name of the group or organization? _____

2. What type of organization is it? (Check one.)

( ) Social Fraternity/Sorority
( ) Religious
( ) Academic Honorary
( ) Intramural Sports Team
( ) Service or Charity
( ) Intercollegiate Athletic Team
( ) Academic (e.g., academic department or major related) club or society
( ) Programming (e.g., Student centre/union, lecture or concert committee)
( ) Student Publication (e.g., newspaper, magazine, or yearbook)
( ) Performing Group (e.g., choir, drama production, debate team)
( ) Governance (e.g., student government, student judiciary)
( ) Other (Please specify): _____

3. **In the last four weeks**, for approximately how many hours have you been involved with this group or organization and its activities or programs? ____ **hours per month**

4. **In the last four weeks** have you held an office in this organization or a position equivalent to one of the following offices? (Check one.)

( ) President/Chairperson/Team Captain/Editor
( ) Vice-President/Vice-Chairperson
( ) Secretary
( ) Treasurer
( ) Committee/Task Force/Project Chairperson
( ) I held no office or leadership position
( ) Other Office (Please specify): _____

Please respond to the following statements about your involvement in the above student group or organization. Check the one best response for each statement.

DURING THE PAST FOUR WEEKS....

1. When I attended meetings, I expressed my opinion and/or took part in the discussions.

( ) Very often ( )Often ( ) Occasionally ( ) Never
( ) I attended no meetings in the last four weeks.
( ) The group/organization held no meetings in the last four weeks.

2. When I was away from the group/organization, I talked with others about the organization and its activities, or wore a pin, jersey, etc. to let others know about my membership.

( ) Very often ( )Often ( ) Occasionally ( ) Never

3. When the group/organization sponsored a program or activity, I made an effort to encourage students and/or members to attend.

( ) Very often ( )Often ( ) Occasionally ( ) Never
( ) The organization had no program or activity during the past four weeks.

4. I volunteered or was assigned responsibility to work on something that the group/organization needed to have done.

( ) Very often ( )Often ( ) Occasionally ( ) Never

5. I fulfilled duties or responsibilities to the group/organization on time.

( ) Very often ( )Often ( ) Occasionally ( ) Never
( ) I had no duties or responsibilities except to attend meetings.

The Youth Inventory of Involvement (YII)

The following is a list of school, community, and political activities that people can get involved in. For each of these activities, please use the following scale to indicate whether, in the last year....

0 you never did this
1 you did this once or twice
2 you did this a few times
3 you did this a fair bit
4 you did this a lot

1.____visited or helped out people who were sick
2.____took care of other familie's children (on an unpaid basis)
3.____participated in a church-connected group
4.____participated in or helped in a charity organization
5.____participated in an ethnic club or organization
6.____participated in a political party, club or organization
7.____participated in a social or cultural group or organization (eg. Choir)
8.____participated in a school academic club or team
9.____participated in a sports team or club
10.____led or helped out with a children's group or club
11.____helped with a fund-raising project
12.____helped organize neighbourhood or community events
13.____helped prepare and make verbal and written presentations to organizations, agencies, conferences, or politicians
14.____did things to help improve your neighbourhood
15.____gave help to friends or classmates who needed it
16.____served as a member of an organizating committee or board for a school club or organization
17.____wrote a letter to a school or community newspaper or publication
18.____signed a petition
19.____attended a demonstration
20.____collected signatures for a petition drive
21.____contacted a public official by phone or mail to tell him/her how you felt about a particular issue
22.____joined in a protest march, meeting or demonstration
23.____got information about community activities from a local community information center
24.____volunteered at a school event or function
25.____helped people who were new to your country
26.____gave money to a cause
27.____worked on a political campaign
28.____ ran for a position in student government
29.____participated in a discussion about a social or political issue
30.____volunteered with a community service organization

Motivation Scale

Please indicate the extent to which you believe each of the following statements played a role in your decision to get involved with either academically-based or community-based activities. Please indicate NA at the top of the page if you are not involved.

-3 strongly disagree
-2 moderately disagree
-1 slightly disagree
0 neither agree nor disagree
+3 strongly agree
+2 moderately agree
+1 slightly agree

1. ____ because of my humanitarian obligation to help
2. ____ because of my personal values, convictions, and beliefs
3. ____ to learn more about the organization
4. ____ to make a difference
5. ____ to develop social networks
6. ____ because I enjoy participating in what I am involved in
7. ____ to escape from the pressure and stresses of everyday life
8. ____ to make new friends
9. ____ to gain experience
10. ____ because I want to feel needed by others
11. ____ to meet new people
12. ____ in order to feel less lonely
13. ____ because I have an obligation to my community/school
14. ____ because I believe in the cause
15. ____ to feel better about myself
16. ____ to expand my knowledge
17. ____ to enhance my resume or school application
18. ____ because a friend or family member is involved
19. ____ to test or challenge my skills and abilities
20. ____ to get to know people who are similar to myself
21. ____ because I consider myself to be a loving and caring person
22. ____ to learn more about the people the organization serves
23. ____ to learn about myself- my strengths and weaknesses
24. ____ to make my life more stable
25. ____ to help members in my community/school
26. ____ to gain experience dealing with emotionally difficult topics
27. ____ because I enjoy helping others
28. ____ because of a course/degree requirement
29. ____ because people should do something about the issues that are important to them
30. ____ to increase my chances of gaining employment generally
31. ____ to enhance my skills specific to my area of study
32. ____ to get better grades
33. ____ because it is valued in my area of study
34. ____ to remain competitive in the job market
35. ____ to meet faculty in my area of study
36. ____ because I could not graduate without it (degree requirement)
37. ____ because I wanted a course that had a placement requirement
38. ____ to increase my knowledge in a certain area of study
39. ____ to remain competitive academically
40. ____ because I received or will be receiving bonus percentage points for it
41. ____ to increase my chances of gaining employment in my area of study
42. ____ to gain more information about a potential career

The Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ)

The 67 items included in this survey are statements that describe university experiences. Read each one and decide how well it applies to you at the present time (within the last few days). For each item, record the appropriate number in the space next to that item.

-4 -3 -2 -1 0 +1 +2 +3 +4

<——— applies very closely to me ———> doesn't apply to me at all

1.* ______ I feel that I fit in well as part of the university environment. (Social)
2. ______ I have been feeling tense or nervous lately. (Personal-emotional)
3.* ______ I have been keeping up to date on my academic work. (Academic)
4.* ______ I am meeting as many people, and making as many friends as I would like at university. (Social)
5.* ______ I know why I'm in university and what I want out of it. (academic)
6. ______ I am finding academic work at university difficult. (Academic)
7. ______ Lately I have been feeling blue and moody a lot. (Personal)
8.* ______ I am very involved with social activities in university. (Social)
9.* ______ I am adjusting well to university. (Social)
10. ______ I have not been functioning well during examinations. (Academic)
11. ______ I have felt tired much of the time lately. (Personal)
12. ______ Being on my own, taking responsibility for myself, has not been easy. (Personal)
13.* ______ I am satisfied with the level at which I am performing academically. (Academic)
14.* ______ I have had informal, personal contacts with university professors. (Social)
15.* ______ I am pleased now about my decision to go to university. (Attachment)
16.* ______ I am pleased now about my decision to attend this university in particular. (Attachment)
17. ______ I'm not working as hard as I should at my course work. (Academic)
18.* ______ I have several close social ties at university. (Social)
19.* ______ My academic goals and purposes are well defined. (Academic)
20. ______ I haven't been able to control my emotions very well lately. (Personal)
21. ______ I'm not really smart enough for the academic work I am expected to be doing now. (Academic)
22. ______ Lonesomeness for home is a source of difficulty for me now. (Social)
23.* ______ Getting a university degree is very important to me. (Academic)
24.* ______ My appetite has been good lately. (Personal)
25. ______ I haven't been very efficient in the use of study time lately. (Academic)

-4 -3 -2 -1 0 +1 +2 +3 +4

<— applies very closely to me — doesn't apply to me at all —>

26.* _____ I enjoy living in a university residence. (Please omit if you do not live in a residence; any university housing should be regarded as a residence.) (Social)
27.* _____ I enjoy writing papers for courses. (Academic)
28. _____ I have been having a lot of headaches lately. (Personal)
29. _____ I really haven't had much motivation for studying lately. (Academic)
30.* _____ I am satisfied with the extracurricular activities available at university. (Social)
31. _____ I've given a lot of thought lately to whether I should ask for help from the Psychological/Counselling Services Centre or from a counsellor outside of university. (Personal)
32. _____ Lately I have been having doubts regarding the value of a university education. (Academic)
33.* _____ I am getting along very well with my roommate(s) at university. (Please omit if you do not have a roommate.) (Social)
34. _____ I wish I were at another university. (Attachment)
35. _____ I've put on (or lost) too much weight recently. (Personal)
36.* _____ I am satisfied with the number and variety of courses available at university. (Academic)
37.* _____ I feel that I have enough social skills to get along well in the university setting. (Social)
38. _____ I have been getting angry too easily lately. (Personal)
39. _____ Recently I have had trouble concentrating when I try to study. (Personal)
40. _____ I haven't been sleeping very well. (Personal)
41. _____ I'm not doing well enough academically for the amount of work I put in. (Academic)
42. _____ I am having difficulty feeling at ease with other people at university.
43.* _____ I am satisfied with the quality or calibre of courses available at university.
44.* _____ I am attending classes regularly.
45. _____ Sometimes my thinking gets muddled up too easily.
46.* _____ I am satisfied with the extent to which I am participating in social activities at university.
47.* _____ I expect to stay at this university for a bachelor's degree.
48. _____ I haven't been mixing too well with the opposite sex lately.
49. _____ I worry a lot about my university expenses.
50.* _____ I am enjoying my academic work at university.
51. _____ I have been feeling lonely a lot at university lately.
52. _____ I am having a lot of trouble getting started on homework assignments.
53.* _____ I feel I have good control over my life situation at university.
54.* _____ I am satisfied with my program of courses for this term.
55.* _____ I have been feeling in good health lately.

-4 -3 -2 -1 0 +1 +2 +3 +4

<——— ———>

applies very closely to me doesn't apply to me at all

56. _____ I feel I am very different from other students at university in ways that I don't like.
57. _____ On balance, I would rather be home than here.
58. _____ Most of the things I am interested in are not related to any of my course work at university.
59. _____ Lately I have been giving a lot of thought to transferring to another university.
60. _____ Lately I have been giving a lot of thought to dropping out of university altogether and for good.
61. _____ I find myself giving considerable thought to taking time off from university and finishing later.
62.* _____ I am very satisfied with the professors I have now in my courses.
63.* _____ I have some good friends or acquaintances at university with whom I can talk about any problems I may have.
64. _____ I am experiencing a lot of difficulty coping with the stresses imposed on me in university.
65.* _____ I am quite satisfied with my social life at university.
66.* _____ I am quite satisfied with my academic situation at university.
67.* _____ I feel confident that I will be able to deal in a satisfactory manner with future challenges here at university.

Career Decision Profile

Directions: This measure will help you think about your career choice. There are no right or wrong answers. Just give the answer that best fits you. Do not spend too much time on any one statement.

Have you decided on an occupation? How certain are you? Think about it for a moment... Now circle the appropriate number (1-8) below to show how much you agree with the following statements:

Decidedness

1. I have an occupational field in mind that I want to work in (e.g., medicine, agriculture, management, or the performing arts).
   STRONGLY DISAGREE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 STRONGLY AGREE

2. I have decided on an occupation (e.g., electrical engineer, nurse, or cook).
   STRONGLY DISAGREE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 STRONGLY AGREE

Now that you have indicated how decided you are, how do you *feel* about where you are in the process of making a choice?

Comfort

3. I feel at ease and comfortable with where I am in making a career decision.
   STRONGLY DISAGREE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 STRONGLY AGREE

4. I'm not worried about my career choice.
   STRONGLY DISAGREE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 STRONGLY AGREE

Career Decision Needs

Now you will read statements people make when talking about making an occupational choice. Please read each statement and circle the number that shows the extent to which you agree or disagree that it describes you.

Section A

5. I wish I knew which occupations best fit my personality.
   STRONGLY DISAGREE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 STRONGLY AGREE

6. I need to have a clearer idea of what my interests are.
   STRONGLY DISAGREE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 STRONGLY AGREE

7. I need to have a clearer idea of my abilities, my major strengths and weaknesses.
   STRONGLY DISAGREE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 STRONGLY AGREE

Section B

8. I need information about educational programs I want to enter.
   STRONGLY DISAGREE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 STRONGLY AGREE
9. I do not feel I know enough about the occupations that I am considering.
   STRONGLY DISAGREE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 STRONGLY AGREE

10. I know what my interests and abilities are, but I am unsure how to find occupations that match them.
    STRONGLY DISAGREE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 STRONGLY AGREE

Section C

11. I feel relieved if someone else makes a decision for me.
    STRONGLY DISAGREE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 STRONGLY AGREE

12. I am an indecisive person; I delay deciding and have difficulty making up my mind.
    STRONGLY DISAGREE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 STRONGLY AGREE

13. I frequently have difficulty making decisions.
    STRONGLY DISAGREE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 STRONGLY AGREE

Section D

14. I don't need to make a vocational choice at this time.
    STRONGLY DISAGREE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 STRONGLY AGREE

15. My future work or career is not that important to me right now.
    STRONGLY DISAGREE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 STRONGLY AGREE

16. I don't have strong interests in any occupational field.
    STRONGLY DISAGREE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 STRONGLY AGREE

Occupational Information

Please answer the two questions below using the following scale:

1 = little amount
2 = fair amount
3 = moderate amount
4 = large amount
5 = tremendous amount

1. _____ How much information do you have on what one does in the career area(s) you prefer?

2. _____ Currently, how much information do you have on jobs, organizations and the job market?

Optimism Scale

The statements in this measure address your attitudes about, and ways of coping with, day to day events. Use the scale to indicate the extent of your agreement or disagreement with each.

-4= very strongly disagree
-3= strongly disagree
-2= moderately disagree
-1= slightly disagree
+4= very strongly agree
+3= strongly agree
+2= moderately agree
+1= slightly agree
0= neither agree nor disagree

1.____ In uncertain times, I usually expect the best.
2.____If something can go wrong for me, it usually will.
3.____I always look on the bright side of things.
4.____I am always optimistic about my future.
5.____I hardly ever expect things to go my way.
6.____Things never work out the way I want them to.
7.____I'm a believer in the idea that every cloud has a silver lining.
8.____I rarely count on good things happening to me.

Self-Esteem Scale

Please indicate usuing the scale below, the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statements below.

1. strongly agree 2. Agree 3.disagree 4. Strongly disagree

1.____I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on an equal basis with others.
2.____I feel that I have a number of good qualities.
3.____All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.
4.____I am able to do things as well as most other people.
5.____I feel I do not have much to be proud of.
6.____I take a positive attitude toward myself.
7.____On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.
8.____I wish I could have more respect for myself.
9.____I certainly feel useless at times.
10.____At times I think I am no good at all.

CES-D
(Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale)

Below is a list of the ways you might have felt or behaved recently. Please tell me how often you have felt this way during the past week.

During the past week:

1= rarely or none of the time (less than 1 day)
2= some or a little of the time (1-2 days)
3= occasionally or a moderate amount of time (3-4 days)
4= most or all of the time (5-7 days)

1. I was bothered by things that usually don't bother me. _____
2. I did not feel like eating; my appetite was poor. ____
3. I felt that could shake off the blues even with help from my family or friends. ____
4. I felt that I was just as good as other people. ____
5. I had trouble keeping my mind on what I was doing. ____
6. I felt depressed. ____
7. I felt that everything I did was an effort. ____
8. I felt hopeful about the future. ____
9. I thought my life had been a failure. ____
10. I felt fearful. ____
11. My sleep was restless. ____
12. I was happy. ____
13. I talked less than usual. ____
14. I felt lonely. ____
15. People were unfriendly. ____
16. I enjoyed life. ____
17. I had crying spells. ____
18. I felt sad. ____
19. I felt that people dislike me. ____
20. I could not get "going". ____