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I would like to acknowledge my committee, Dr. Kelly Ward, Dr. Christian Wuthrich, and Dr. Paul Pitre, for their help throughout the entire thesis writing process, from idea to final defense. I would like to particularly acknowledge and thank my committee chair, Dr. Kelly Ward, without whose help and guidance this thesis would not have come to fruition.

I would also like to acknowledge and thank my mom and step-dad, and my dad and step-mom for their support throughout my education. I dedicate this thesis to you.
SUCCESSFUL TRANSITIONS: HORIZONTAL TRANSFER STUDENTS
AND THEIR EXPERIENCES

Abstract

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May 2011

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Horizontal transfer students, those who transfer from one four-year institution to another, are often overlooked in higher education theory and practice. The purpose of this thesis is to explore the transitional issues that horizontal transfers face throughout the transition. Because horizontal transfers are often overlooked, there is a need to better facilitate the transition to increase retention, and in order to do so, more must be learned about the horizontal transfer population. This study is based on the experiences of seven undergraduate, horizontal transfer students who were interviewed to provide their stories of transition to address the following research questions:

1. What are the experiences of horizontal transfer students?
2. How is successful transitioning defined by transfer students?
3. What student services offices aid in successful transfer student transitioning?

Using Tinto’s (1975) theory on student departure as a theoretical background. The findings from this study indicate that while horizontal transfers struggle initially with the transition, all students eventually integrated academically and socially; thereby solidifying their commitment to the institution and their goals for graduation. Students’ responses also provided a solid framework for future programs to be put in place to help with transition and retention.
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

Overview

Student transfer from one college or university to another is a long standing yet often overlooked phenomenon in higher education. The concept of a transfer student is often associated with those students who transfer from a two-year institution to a four-year institution, referred to as vertical transfers. Another population of transfers is the students who start at one four-year institution and transfer to another four-year institution, referred to as horizontal transfers. The success of both transfer student populations is a concern for the institutions students transfer into as well as the administrators that strive to meet the needs of transfer students and to facilitate retention. The need for higher education administrators and institutions to improve the transition for horizontal transfer students is ever more important as they are often a more overlooked sub-population of transfers than those students who are vertical transfers. As more students follow a non-linear path through higher education, institutions are compelled to address the needs of students who move from one institution to another.

Since the establishment of two-year institutions in the late 1800s and early 1900s, a purpose of the community college has been to serve as a transfer institution, a place for students to begin their coursework and then transfer to a baccalaureate institution for degree completion (Cohen, 1998). During the mid-20th century, the role of community colleges changed slightly adding to their purpose that of technical institutes, vocational training centers, and adult education centers yet the transfer function remains. As higher education progresses into the 21st century and beyond, the community college continues to serve mainly as a transfer institution,
especially for those students who are not able to obtain admission into the more selective four-year institutions or who have financial difficulty that prevent students from enrolling at a four-year institution as traditional students.

Transfer student success is an area of increasing concern on college campuses as approximately one-fourth of all community college students will transfer to a four-year institution at some point in their college career (Bradburn, Hurst, & Peng, 2001). According to a National Center for Educational Statistics report on transfer behavior, 35 percent of students who enrolled in post-secondary education beginning in 1989-1990 had transferred by 1994 (McCormick & Carroll, 1997). The report goes on to state that 28 percent of students who started at a four-year institution transferred, and of students who transferred from a four-year institution, 55 percent transferred to another four-year institution. Students who transfer account for a great number of individuals enrolled in higher education.

The current state of the economy is likely to further increase transfer rates. As more and more students, and their parents, look for more cost effective means of obtaining a bachelor’s degree, the likelihood that students will start at a community college or college closer to home to complete their first two years is expected to grow (Associated Press, 2009; Staley & Frankston Lorin, 2009). Some states already have evidence of increased rates of transfer from students leaving private schools, often with costly tuition, for cheaper state schools (Associated Press, 2009; Staley & Frankston Lorin, 2009). Rates of transfer are expected to rise as the cost of tuition at many institutions increases while at the same time, the financial aid available to students decreases, putting the burden of paying for college on the shoulders of students and their parents.
As the number of students who transfer increases, the need to retain students is also ever more apparent. For higher education institutions, it makes financial sense to put more resources into to retention efforts. As a recent report stated, the cost of attrition is double that to retain students as universities pay to recruit and enroll the original students, and then pay to recruit and enroll students to replace those that depart (Raisman, 2009). Cuseo (n.d.) noted that the cost of recruitment efforts far exceeds the cost of retention initiatives. The cost to recruit a student is often three to five times greater than the cost to retain a student (Cuseo, n.d.). Once an institution gets students in the door, it becomes imperative to put retention programs in place to keep them there. Retention is an important issue to consider in regards to transfer students, fiscally, because every student that transfers out of a college or university is dollars lost for that institution. In regards to success and transfer students, retention is significant because students who make multiple transfers, or swirl through higher education, are less likely to obtain their bachelor’s degree than traditional students or students who transfer only once (Adelman, 2006).

Vertical transfer students, those students who transfer from a two-year institution to a four-year institution often struggle with both the academic and social transition. Many vertical transfer students matriculate into their transfer institution ill prepared for the academic rigor of a research university. A majority of vertical transfers often experience transfer shock, or an initial drop in GPA in their first term after transfer (Pierson, Wolniak, Pascarella, & Flowers, 2003). Some two-year to four-year transfer students will also experience transfer trauma, which is characterized by a difficulty in adjusting to the norms, values, and culture or a four-year institution (Bennett & Okinaka, 1990 as cited in Laanan, 2001). Obstacles that students encounter in their social and academic transitions lead to an increased likelihood of departure for
vertical transfers. Various authors postulate that students who transfer from two-year institutions tend to have less success at a four-year university than students who transfer from a four-year university to another four-year university (e.g. Dougherty, 1992; McCormick, 2003). However, research thus far has not shown that horizontal transfer students are in fact more successful than vertical transfer students. In all actuality, very little research has been done that has addressed the transitional issues of horizontal transfers, that is why horizontal transfer students are the focus of this study.

Horizontal transfers, those students who transfer from one four-year institution to another, are a phenomenon of students that have not been studied or well understood. Research speculates that horizontal transfers encounter some of the same transitional obstacles as vertical transfer students such as an initial decline in grades (Bach, Banks, Kinnick, Ricks, Stoering, & Walleri, 2000) and difficulty with social adjustments. While there is not a great deal of literature available that supports these speculations, there is an importance to know more about the horizontal subset of transfer students as the economy and issues of retention give rise to an increase in transfer rates, which provide a need to better facilitate the transfer process.

Statement of the Problem

As the number of all students who transfer within higher education increases, particularly for the subset of students who transfer from one four-year college or university to another, the importance for higher education institutions and administrators to address the transitional needs of the transfer student population is greater now than in the past, and will be even greater in the future due to the changing economy and the importance of retention efforts. Very little research is available on horizontal transfers and the transitional experiences of these students, making it
difficult to facilitate the transition. The need to better facilitate and ease the transition for horizontal transfer students to their graduating institution gives rise to the need to know more about this particular population of transfers before improvements can be made to services offered to four-year to four-year transfers. The goal of this study is to gather more information from four-year to four-year transfer students on their transitional experiences in order to gain more insight into how to better facilitate the transition and aid in the retention of horizontal transfer students.

**Purpose and Significance**

The present study is significant because many services offered by four-year universities in order to facilitate a successful transition are directed toward the traditional student, while at the same time many of the transitional needs of the transfer student are often overlooked by institutions. While traditional students make-up the vast majority of the enrolled population at most four-year institutions, transfer students still account for a significant number of matriculated students on college and university campuses, a phenomenon that is likely to continue given economic trends. For example at Washington State University, the total number of transfer students who entered in the fall of 2009 was 1,631, almost 28 percent of the fall 2009 entering class. Of the total number of fall 2009 entering transfer students, 501 or approximately 30 percent were horizontal transfer students (State of Washington, Office of Financial Management, Higher Education Enrollment Report, Fall 2009). With an entering undergraduate class made up of approximately 72 percent traditional students, it is understandable why many undergraduate transfers often feel ignored by the institution into which they transfer. The purpose of this study is to bring to light the experiences of the often overlooked horizontal transfer student.
Research Question

The study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the experiences of horizontal transfer students?

2. How is successful transition defined by transfer students?

3. What student services offices aid in successful transfer student transitions?

Methodological and Theoretical Framework

The study addresses the research questions using qualitative methodology. The study will be grounded in Tinto’s (1975) theoretical framework on student dropout, which is based on how a student’s integration with campus, socially and academically, leads to a greater chance of retention and graduation. The present study addresses the research questions through the use of interviews with horizontal transfer students. These students are of junior or senior standing and currently enrolled at Washington State University, a large research institution in the northwestern United States. Using semi-structured questions, student interviews address the transfer experience, how successful transfer is defined, as well as identification of student services that have aided in university transitions.

The study is approached from a qualitative research method perspective because of the limited availability of previous research in the area of horizontal transfer students, and the need to build on that limited knowledge base. From an inductive approach qualitative research allows for the generation of ideas and the flexibility for the voice of the students, in this case, to be heard (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). Qualitative research was the best methodological approach for this study because of its inherent design that allows each student’s unique story to unfold and
be told through interviews. Qualitative research is also an appropriate approach for topics like horizontal transfer students as they have not been the subject of much study.

An important component of qualitative research is the use of a theoretical framework to guide research questions and research design, this study utilizes Tinto’s (1975) understanding of student departure as a theoretical framework. Tinto’s theory on student dropout looks at the student departure process in higher education. Specifically, the theory (see Figure 1) looks at how a student’s pre-entry attributes -- family background, skills and abilities, prior schooling -- affect goals and commitments, which are then modified based on a student’s institutional experiences, and in turn affect integration (or not) and commitment to the institution. Tinto’s theory asserts that a student who has negative institutional experiences likely will not integrate, then modify their goals, likely not commit to the university, increasing the possibility of eventual departure.
departure. On the other hand, if a student has positive institutional experiences, they will then integrate, which strengthens institutional commitment and leads to retention and the attainment of a bachelor’s degree.

As applied to transfer students, Tinto’s (1975) theory asserts that this group does not complete their bachelor’s degrees because they have negative institutional experiences -- uninvolved in campus activities, not engaged in academics outside of the classroom, no peer interaction -- and consequently, they do not become integrated, commitment to the institution is weakened, which then leads to dropout or subsequent transfer. One problem of Tinto’s (1975) original theory is his argument that transferring to another institution was considered departure from higher education altogether, this particular component of dropout has since been addressed and revised in subsequent research (Tinto, 1982). Tinto’s (1975) model is particularly appropriate to look at the transitional experiences of horizontal transfer students because the model can not only help to explain the drop point for students from their previous institutions but the model can also be used to understand the transitional issues horizontal transfers face at their transfer institutions.

Qualitative research methods grounded in Tinto’s (1975) theory on student departure are used to address the transitional issues that face horizontal transfer students. Of particular importance in the transition and as part of Tinto’s model are horizontal transfer students’ social and academic integration, which will be evaluated through the use of semi-structured interviews with current horizontal transfer students at Washington State University.
Definition of Terms

There are several terms that will be used throughout this study that are important to understand their meaning and use. Specifically, it is important to distinguish between a traditional student and a transfer student; the two main subset of transfer students: horizontal and vertical/linear transfers; and to define significant concepts such as success, integration, and swirling.

Traditional student

For the purpose of this study, a transfer student is defined as a student who matriculates into a four-year institution in the fall immediately following their high school graduation. This group of students attends only one institution, their graduating institution and no other colleges or universities while an undergraduate (Hilmer, 2000; Peng & Bailey, 1977).

Transfer student

After a review of the literature, it is clear that each researcher has their own way of defining a transfer student (e.g., Arnold, 2001; Hilmer, 2000; McCormick, 2003). However, it is also clear that, even though each definition is uniquely different, there is a general theme in describing the transfer student. A transfer student is an undergraduate student that begins his or her study at one institution of higher education and then enrolls at another college or university.

Horizontal Transfer Student

A horizontal transfer student is a student who has started their higher education enrollment at one four-year college or university and then has matriculated at a second four-year institution to finish their bachelor’s degree (Hilmer, 2000; Willingham, 1973).
Vertical/Linear Transfer Student

Conversely, vertical transfer students are students who have started their careers in higher education at a two-year institution, most often community colleges. This subset of transfers then enrolls at four-year colleges or universities to complete their bachelor’s degree (Hilmer, 2000; Willingham, 1973). The definition of linear transfer is comparable to that of a vertical transfer (Arnold, 2001). For the purpose of this study, a linear transfer is considered to be a transfer from a community college to a baccalaureate granting institution.

Success

Success is a term that is often easily defined in relation to higher education. For most individuals who work in the area of higher education, success for students, simply put, is graduation with a bachelor’s degree, typically in a six-year time period from the date of first enrollment at a post-secondary institution (Poch & Wolverton, 2006). Because graduation rates are looked at as six-year rates, and because transfer students frequently take longer to graduate, this group of students is often considered unsuccessful (Bach, et. al., 2000). For the purpose of this study, the successful student is considered to be a student who integrates, is retained and graduates with baccalaureate attainment in six years from the initial date of matriculation into higher education.

Integration

Integration is a concept in “which the individual shares the normative attitudes and values of peers and faculty in the institution and abides by the formal and informal structural requirements for membership in that community or in subgroups of it” (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005, p 54). For the purpose of this study, the integrated student is a student that is academically
and socially integrated into the university as demonstrated by involvement in activities such as student clubs, intramural sports, study groups with peers and faculty, and participation in faculty research.

**Swirling**

Students are considered to be swirling through higher education when they make multiple transfers, meaning attendance at more than two post-secondary institutions (McCormick, 2003). For the purpose of this study, swirling refers to multiple transfers by one student, which constitute either multiple horizontal transfers -- from one four-year institution to the next to the next, etc. -- or multiple transfers back and forth between two-year and four-year institutions.

These terms are used throughout and their definition provides a frame of reference.

**Summary**

The purpose of the present study is to bring to light the transitional experiences of the often overlooked horizontal transfer student. The transitional experiences of horizontal transfer students are important from the standpoint of retention and success. As more students transfer from four-year institutions to another four-year institution due the current state of the economy, the need to facilitate a successful transition for horizontal transfer students becomes more significant in an effort to retain these students. In the ensuing chapters, this thesis will address what previous research says on transfer students, and go into greater detail about the qualitative research design and methodology used, additionally, results and conclusions are presented toward the end of this thesis.
CHAPTER TWO
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The transitional issues of horizontal transfer students are increasingly a concern for institutions and administrators in higher education as the number of students who transfer increases every year. The following review of the literature provides a contextual background on the importance of understanding the transfer experience by providing a sense of who transfer students are, why it is important to understand the transitional issues of transfer students in the context of retention, and what are the transitional experiences of transfer students. The review of the literature also provides an understanding of the transition using Tinto’s (1975) theoretical perspective on student departure.

The Transfer Phenomenon

Historically, higher education has been an enterprise of four-year institutions. From the establishment of Harvard in the seventeenth century to today, enrollment at four-year institutions has made up the dominate percentage of post-secondary students. Junior colleges, which were later reclassified as community colleges, were established in the late 19th century to early 20th century due to the rise in demand for higher education and the inability of four-year institutions to accommodate all who desired post-secondary education (Cohen, 1998). The original sole purpose of the community college was to educate freshmen and sophomore students, in an effort to prepare them for transfer to four-year institutions where students could finish their junior and senior years. In the century or more since community colleges were established, two-year institutions have added other functions to their educational missions such as vocational and technical training, and adult learning centers; however, the primary purpose of the two-year
institutions has remained and that is to prepare students for transfer to baccalaureate granting institutions (Cohen, 1998).

The horizontal, or four-year to four-year transfer has grown out of an ability for students to be more mobile in higher education, and the increase in articulation agreements among colleges and universities, which makes the transfer of coursework much easier than it may have been in the past. The number of horizontal transfer students is also on the rise with the current state of the economy. More students choose to attend colleges that have lower tuition rates for the first two years before transferring to more expensive institutions that are often farther away from home. More students are also choosing to transfer from more expensive private schools to lower cost public, state institutions because of the inability to pay. With the transfer phenomenon not decreasing anytime in the near future, it is important to understand who transfer students are, and what are their backgrounds.

Who Transfers?

Traditionally, the transfer student was someone who began their college coursework at a community college and then continued on to a four-year institution to complete a bachelor’s degree. The transfer student in the traditional sense of the word has become more uncommon as horizontal transfer students have started to make up a greater percentage of the general population of the transfer student group. A linear transfer progression is slowly becoming a thing of the past (Arnold, 2001; Bach, et. al., 2000) as more students swirl through higher education, making multiple transfers from one institution to the next, passing through numerous two-year and four-year colleges and universities (Kearney, Townsend, & Kearney, 1995). While the percentage of horizontal transfer students is on the rise on many college campuses, very little is
known about these undergraduates as the majority of the literature on the transfer population is based on the vertical transfer student.

A major source of transfer students come from community colleges. Community colleges serve approximately ten million students each year totaling nearly half of the nation’s undergraduate student population (Laanan, 2001). An estimated one-fourth of all community college students are expected to transfer to a four-year institution with the goal of completing a bachelor’s degree. Approximately one-third of this group of transfers earn an associate’s degree prior to transfer. Some research suggests that completion of an associate’s degree prior to transfer provides students with an advantage and more favorable outcomes than if they had not completed their associate’s degree (Grubb, 1991).

Transfer students who begin their coursework at a two-year institution do so for a variety of reasons. For instance, students attend a community college because tuition is inexpensive as compared to a four-year institution, community colleges are closer to home, and are often more conveniently located to a student’s place of employment (Leigh & Gill, 2003; Smith, 1990; Striplin, 1999). The transfer phenomenon is likely to not only continue but also increase due to the current economy, and the cost effectiveness for students to start their higher education careers at community colleges and regional institutions, which often have lower costs of attendance than large, public or private, four-year, research institutions. Vertical transfers, as compared to their traditional student counterparts, are often students who are more indecisive, more likely to identify as being of Hispanic ethnic origin, often have lower high school grade point averages and standardized test scores, and come from low socioeconomic status backgrounds (Hilmer, 2000; Peng & Bailey, 1977; Sandy, Gonzalez, & Hilmer, 2006; Smith, 1990). Furthermore,
students who transfer from two-year institutions are less likely to desire baccalaureate attainment than their traditional student peers (Dougherty, 1992). Vertical transfer students have greater difficulty with their transition to the four-year institution than their traditional student peers.

There is an increased significance to acquire additional information about horizontal transfer students as it is estimated that more than one-half of all students who begin at a four-year institution will attend more than one college or university throughout their higher education career (McCormick, 2003). The research on this subset of undergraduates states that horizontal transfer students tend to be more “geographically mobile” (McCormick, 2003, p. 337) than any other subset of transfers, they are more likely to come from higher socioeconomic statuses, and they often have higher high school grade point averages than their vertical transfer counterparts (Kearney, et.al., 1995).

Retention

As the number of all transfer students rises, the need to attend to issues that surround student retention also increases. Institutions respond to concerns of retention in a myriad of ways including orientation, living-learning communities, and advising to name a few. The first year experience has been the focus of considerable theory and practice due to the considerably high rates of dropout for freshmen students; however, there has been in increase in attrition between the first and second year, and throughout the second year (Stuart Hunter, et. al., 2010) due to the drop off in services for sophomore students as a significant emphasis is placed on the first year experience and student services that are marketed toward freshmen students (Tobolowsky, 2008).
Traditional first year students often have a retention advantage over other groups of students because of the numerous retention programs that are developed, and marketed specifically for freshmen. Students services that are often geared specifically toward first year students as retention programs include orientations, living-learning communities, advising, and common reading programs. These retention efforts “often lead to many students making better grades, persisting to graduation, being more satisfied with their collegiate experiences, and a host of other positive outcomes” (Stuart Hunter, et. al., 2010, p. 1). In other words, retention programs lead to student success, which makes sense since the majority of retention programs are developed based on models of student retention/departure such as Tinto’s (1975) model. Many first year retention programs aid with either academic or social integration, or in the case of most retention programs both academic and social integration. According to Tinto’s (1975) model, getting students academically and socially integrated with the university leads to a greater likelihood of student success, and in turn retention. While retention programs such as orientation and living-learning communities come as a great benefit to first-year students, they often come as a disadvantage to second year students because retention programming is no longer an emphasis for sophomores, which can lead to a sense of abandonment (Stuart Hunter, et. al., 2010).

Because of the increase in attrition during sophomore year, more higher education institutions are developing and implementing sophomore experience programs, which are designed to capture students who are vulnerable to departure (Tobolowsky, 2008) such as students with low GPAs, undeclared or undecided majors, and transfer students. The sophomore or second year experience is thought to play some role in the transfer behavior of many higher
education students. The sophomore experience is considered an essential piece of the student departure puzzle as many sophomore students who are dissatisfied with their collegiate experience do not persist (Stuart Hunter, et. al., 2010) or will transfer (McCormick & Carroll, 1997). The decision to transfer as found in the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) (McCormick & Carroll, 1997) report on transfer behavior states that dissatisfaction with “intellectual growth, teacher ability, institutional prestige, and social life” (p. vi) were the strongest predictors of four-year to four-year transfer behavior. The NCES (1997) report also found that the average time spent at horizontal transfer students’ first institution was 14 months, in other words students transferred in their second year. Stuart Hunter, et. al. (2010) confirms some of the same findings from the NCES report with a few of the major findings from the Sophomore Experience Survey. The Sophomore Experience Survey, completed in 2007, found that the decision to persist or disengage was most highly associated with overall college satisfaction, satisfaction with faculty interactions, and interactions with peers -- or social integration, which was the strongest predictor of overall college satisfaction. In other words, academic and social experiences contribute greatly to a sophomore’s decision to persist or depart.

Retention programs focus on facilitation of the transition to college, which for traditional students is from high school to college. As more students transfer, the transition is from college to college, which most retention programs are not developed to facilitate the transfer transition. With the increase in transfer rates, the development of retention programs aimed just at facilitating the transfer transition will be more important as the point of retention programs is to facilitate integration and provide a smooth transition.
The Transition

It is important to consider a student’s transition after transfer. Successful transition equates to a student’s integration with the institution, and, according to Tinto’s (1975) theory on dropout, integration is the key to retention and, thereby, an avoidance of departure. The majority of literature on the transfer student transition focuses on the academic transition and looks at how students performed, academically, at their previous institution in comparison to their academic progress at their current institution (e.g. Anglin, Davis & Moordian, 1995; Arnold, 2001; Hoyt, 1999). There are few studies that look at students’ social transition to their current institution, which comes as a detriment to the transfer student population as these students often do not socially integrate as well as their traditional student counterparts (Laanan, 2001) nor do they utilize student support services in the same way as traditional students (Anglin, et. al., 1995), which can aid in overall integration and retention.

When students transfer from a community college to a four-year institution, their academic transition is often riddled with bumps in the road. Bennett and Okinaka (1990) describe the transition process for most transfer students as transfer trauma, or a “level of alienation a student experiences when unfamiliar with the norms, values, and expectations at the four-year institution” (as cited in Laanan, 2001, p. 9). One of the major obstacles vertical transfer students come across is what is referred to as transfer shock, which is an initial drop in grade point average that may be attributed to the normal academic adjustment to a new university (Pierson, et. al, 2003). Transfer students state that they do not feel adequately prepared for the academic rigor and competitive nature of a four-year institution (Hoyt, 1999), and is likely the reason many of these students experience transfer shock. While some students
are able to quickly recover from transfer shock, others do not bounce back and are subsequently
dismissed or drop out due to academic deficiency (Dougherty, 1992). Another major academic
obstacle that transfer students experience in the process of transitioning is the loss of course
credit. Loss of credit can be attributed to many things such as community college coursework
does not match up with four-year institutions’ course offerings; students do not receive credit for
courses that four-year institutions believe are upper division courses; or students are denied
credit for courses in which they received a ‘D’ (Dougherty, 1992). Difficulties in academic
transitions often lead to difficulties in a student’s social transition and vice versa.

There are many obstacles to social integration for transfer students. For instance, having
to work because of lack of financial aid, few extra-curricular activities targeted toward transfer
students, and inadequate on-campus housing geared toward this group are all barriers to transfer
students’ social integration and successful transitioning into a four-year institution (Dougherty,
1992). Transfer students may also have familial obligations that present barriers to social
integration. Transfer students who do not successfully transition are thought to have negative
institutional experiences and, therefore, possible that they do not integrate, do not commit, and
will not be retained through graduation (Tinto, 1975; Wolf-Wendel, Ward, & Kinzie, 2009).

The transitions of horizontal transfer students are significant in the consideration of
retention or departure. Horizontal transfer students who do not successfully transition, meaning,
in the context of Tinto (1975), that they do not have positive institutional experience, and hence
do not integrate academically or socially, likely have a higher probability of making another
transfer or departing from higher education altogether.

Tinto’s Theory of Student Departure/Success
There is a great deal of literature available on student retention models and theories, however, it is Tinto’s (1975) theory on student departure that best fits for transfer student success. Tinto’s (1975, 1988) theory on student departure is based on Arnold Van Gennep’s rites of passage. Van Gennep argued that the rites of passage are made up of three stages that constitute “the movement of individuals from membership in one group to membership in another” (Tinto, 1988, p. 440). The three stages are separation, transition, and incorporation, which are each marked by its own ceremonies and rituals (Tinto, 1988). Each stage serves as a progression from adolescence to adulthood, and is distinguishable based on “a change of patterns of interaction between the individual and other members of the society” (Tinto, 1988, p. 441). The rites of passage relate to Tinto’s (1975) theory on student departure in that failure or successful passage through each stage determines whether a student will depart or be retained, respectively. The separation stage is equivalent to the pre-entry attributes and initial commitments/goals component of Tinto’s model (see Figure 1 on p. 7). The transition stage is equal to academic and social integration, and incorporation corresponds to the integration piece of Tinto’s model (Tinto, 1988).

Tinto’s (1975) theory on student departure states that students are less likely to drop out if they have positive institutional experiences, which then leads to integration and commitment to the university; students then develop new goals, namely baccalaureate attainment. In other words, if students do not have a good transition experience they will not successfully integrate and will not persist in obtaining a bachelor’s degree. As applied to transfer students, Tinto’s theory argues that this group does not complete their bachelor’s degrees because they have negative institutional experiences and consequently do not integrate into campus. Transfer
students often stumble in their transition to senior institutions in connecting with student service offices; although there are problems that students encounter at two-year institutions that factor into disengagement and dropout as well. Tinto’s model is applicable to horizontal transfer students in two ways, it helps to explain the student’s departure from their previous institution, and it accounts for the student’s transition to their current institution. Reasons for horizontal transfer students’ departure from their previous institution can be looked at as drop points in Tinto’s model. Tinto’s theory can also be used to understand students’ transitions to their current institution in the context of positive or negative institutional experiences, and academic and social integration.

Several researchers agree that student involvement and engagement, and in turn, integration are keys to a successful transition. For example, Graham and Long Gisi (2000) state that active engagement in the classroom as well as involvement in activities outside the class are vital to a student’s development. Often, more emphasis is placed on investment in activities outside the classroom, particularly the utilization of student services, as opposed to actual academic participation for students to make a connection with the university. It is essential for students to make some kind of connection to the institution if they are to be retained and graduate. It is with Tinto’s (1975) idea about student integration that I undertake this research on horizontal transfer students.

**Criticisms of Tinto.** While Tinto is a highly referenced author (Braxton, Shaw Sullivan, & Johnson, Jr., 1997), his theory does not come without criticism. The critiques that are often mentioned in regard to Tinto’s (1975) model included limited application to minorities (Braxton, Hirschy, & McClendon, 2004; Guiffrida, 2006), insufficient consideration of long term
persistence (Townsend & Wilson, 2009), and lack of attentiveness to external factors (Braxton, et. al., 2004; St. John, Cabrera, Nora & Asker, 2000). One of the most noted criticisms of Tinto’s theory of student departure is its limited applicability to students of color (Braxton, et al., 2004; Guiffrida, 2006). Guiffrida argues that the major barrier to use of Tinto’s theory with minority students is the idea behind the model that students must separate or dissociate themselves in some way from past communities in order to eventually integrate into collegiate life (Tinto, 1988). The major issue with the idea of separation for many minority students is the persuasion for students to disengage from “cultural traditions and supportive relationships” (Guiffrida, 2006, p 452) in an attempt to prompt minority students to assimilate with the college culture, a culture that is largely based on White, middle class values.

Tinto (1988) addressed some of the longitudinal issues with his theory by suggesting that student departure takes place in three stages. The first stage of the three stages is separation where students separate from past communities, namely families and high school relationships, in an effort to then transition to college, which is the second stage. Transition is defined as “a period of passage between the old and the new, between associations of the past and hoped for associations with communities of the present” (Tinto, 1988, p. 444). If students can successfully navigate the transition, they will then move on to incorporation or integration with the university. Failure to separate, transition, or integrate successfully will likely lead to departure. While Tinto’s (1988) three stages present a longitudinal look at student persistence or departure, Townsend and Wilson (2009) argue that little research has been done to account for a long-term look at departure in relation to Tinto’s model. In other words, more research needs to be done that looks at Tinto’s (1975) theory on student departure in the long-term.
Another major criticism of Tinto’s (1975) is the lack of consideration for external factors such as family and finances other than as pre-entry attributes (Braxton, et. al., 1997). The lack of consideration of external factors, particularly finances, has been a major criticism of Tinto’s theory as there are a considerable number of students who transfer, or depart higher education altogether, because of factors such as lack of scholarships and financial aid or an inability to pay (Braxton, et. al., 2004). St. John, et. al. (2000) also note the inability of Tinto’s theory to account for financial influences in a student’s decision to depart, and make suggestions for Tinto’s model that include finances as a factor in the persistence decision. In a revision to Tinto’s (1982) model, finances are considered to play a part in the initial commitment to the institution, and integration with the university, which then essentially influences departure or persistence.

While these criticisms, limited application to minorities (Braxton, Hirschy, & McClendon, 2004; Guiffrida, 2006), insufficient consideration of long term persistence (Townsend & Wilson, 2009), and lack of attentiveness to external factors (Braxton, et. al., 2004; St. John, et. al., 2000), have been brought up in regards to Tinto’s (1975) theory on student departure, these concerns have been addressed by Tinto (1982) in later revisions to his theory. Despite the criticisms of Tinto’s theory, it is still the best theory to use as a theoretical background for this study and to examine the transitional issues that horizontal transfer students face. Research indicates that transfer students often falter in their social and academic transitions, which is a major component of Tinto’s (1975) student departure model. Whether or not students have positive academic and social institutional experiences greatly impacts a student’s decision to continue or to depart. The focus for this study will be on the social and
academic experience piece of Tinto’s model, and how students’ social and academic experiences play into their integration and commitment to the institution, and eventual retention or departure.

Summary

Historically, transfer students have been students who start at a two year institution and then transfer to a four year institution. In recent years, more students who transfer start at a four-year institution then transfer to another four-year institution. While not a lot is known about horizontal transfer student and the transitions they go through, what is understood about this population is that they often struggle in their integration with their current institution. Retention programs that are meant to help with the transition process are typically not as helpful for transfer students as the majority of retention programs are geared toward traditional first year students. Developing retention programs that are geared specifically toward helping horizontal transfer students with the transition is of particular importance as these students often get lost in the shuffle as they attempt to integrate socially and academically. Tinto’s (1975) theory on student departure is appropriate to use in the context of horizontal transfer student as the theory guides understanding of the student’s departure from their previous institution while also providing a frame of references for understanding the transition to the current institution.

More research is available about the vertical transfer student and their transfer experience as compared to the horizontal transfer student, yet there is still so much to learn about both subsets of transfer students particularly the four-year to four-year transfers. More information on this subset of transfer students is needed so that students services can be better tailored to horizontal transfers, the transfer process can be better facilitated between the student and the
four-year institution, and four-year institutions can better retain and graduate horizontal transfer students. The next chapter describes a study that attends to these issues.
CHAPTER THREE
RESEARCH METHODS

Overview

The present study is qualitative and relies on Tinto’s (1975) theory on student departure. Using semi-structured, open-ended interviews the study addresses the following research questions:

- What are the experiences of horizontal transfer students?
- How is successful transition defined by transfer students?
- What student services offices aid in successful transfer student transitions?

Qualitative research was specifically chosen for this study given the need to hear student perspectives through the use of interviews. Qualitative research is the most beneficial to add to the knowledge base on horizontal transfer students by providing a glimpse into students’ own journeys through the transfer process.

More information on the students selected for this study, the procedures used to select students, specifics on interview procedures, and details on the data analysis plan are provided in this chapter. The study received the university’s IRB approval, which is attached as Appendix C.

Study Participants & Campus Setting

The present study addresses the proposed research questions through the use of interviews with seven transfer students who all transferred from another four-year institution to the four-year institution discussed here, Washington State University. Washington State University is a large, research institution in the northwestern United States. Set among the rolling hills of the Palouse, Washington State University is a residential campus located in a
small, rural town in the southeast corner of the state, and is surrounded by farm land.

Washington State University currently enrolls approximately 15,000 undergraduate students and 2,500 graduate students, with transfer students accounting for 30 percent of the incoming fall 2010 semester class (Washington State University, 2010). Multicultural students make up 18 percent of the student body. In-state students account for the majority of the student population (85 percent); nine percent of the student population are from out-of-state; six percent of students are international.

In 2010, transfer students accounted for 30 percent of the incoming fall class at Washington State University. Horizontal transfer students made up just over 28 percent of the fall 2010 incoming transfer student class. Historically, the slight majority of horizontal transfer students come to Washington State University from other institutions outside the state of Washington (Washington State University, 2010). Horizontal transfer students range in class standing from freshman to seniors upon transfer to the university.

The seven students interviewed for the study included six females and one male. Students were of junior or senior class standing as determined by their self-reported class standing. The self-identified racial or ethnic background of the students included the following: four of the seven students are Caucasian; two students are Hispanic; and one student is African American. Using semi-structured questions, student interviews address the transfer experience, how successful transition is defined, as well as identification of student services that have aided in university transitions (See Appendix A).
Study Process and Procedures

The initial communication with horizontal transfer students was made by contacting university staff that work with and have a great deal of connection with transfer students. University staff members were then sent an email (Appendix B) that asked them to identify transfer students that meet the criteria set forth for participants of this study. Only one student was identified via this method of communication. The other six students were recruited by announcing to the undergraduate students who work as university tour guides that students who had transferred to Washington State University from another four-year university were needed for a thesis study. Two of the students that were recruited to be interviewed work directly with the researcher, the other four students recruited to be interviewed are friends of mutual contacts of the researcher. All students, once identified as horizontal transfer students, were emailed and asked if they would like to participate in a 30 minute interview on their transition to the current institution.

Students were provided with two copies of the informed consent form, one which was verbally explained to them and then they were asked sign, and a second copy which was theirs to keep. Students were notified that all responses are confidential and that they will not be identified by name in the study, however, students will be given a pseudonym. The semi-structured, open-ended interview protocol, attached as Appendix A, is based on the interview protocol used by Harrison (1999) in a qualitative study of community college students, which sought to determine the social and academic difficulties vertical transfer face upon transfer. Wanting to understand the transition from one campus setting to another using Tinto’s model, the interview questions addressed student’s journeys from their previous institution to Washington
State University. The interviews started with questions about the students’ journey to Washington State University. They were then asked questions about their experiences at their previous institution, what their transition was like, and what have their experiences at their current institution been like. Students were asked some wrap-up questions about what was a challenge for them transitionally, and conversely, what was the best part about the transfer process.

The interviews took place in four different locations. Most of the interviews took place in the university’s Welcome Center. One interview took place in the lobby of the student services building. One interview took place at the campus’ main library. The final interview took place at a coffee shop located just off-campus. All of the interviews but one lasted approximately 15 to 30 minutes, the one exception to this was an interview that lasted just 11 minutes.

All interviews were audio-taped for later transcription. Audio recordings are stored safely on the researchers computer, and backed up on a thumb drive that is safely stored at the researcher’s residence. All audio recordings are saved under a pseudonym of students’ first name.

**Data Analysis**

Data analysis followed the model outlined by Bloomberg and Volpe (2008), which is a four step process that is designed to reduce the data to coded, reportable findings. In the first step, data is reviewed to identify the major themes, or the “big ideas” (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008, p. 101). In the second step, the data is reread and coded. In step two data summary tables are created as an easier way to sort through interview responses. Journaling or memoing also
takes place in step two as a means to keep track of the thought process that goes into coding and data analysis. In step two, coding schemes are revised and codes are added or eliminated as data is further reviewed. Steps three and four constitute the report and interpretation of findings. See figure 2 for a visual depiction of Bloomberg and Volpe’s (2008) data analysis model.

Figure 2
Bloomberg & Volpe’s (2008) Data Analysis Plan

In the data analysis process, all audio recordings were listened to a first time and transcribed. Interviews were then listened to a second time for accuracy of transcription.
Interview transcripts were then read an initial time to find major themes of students’ responses. The research questions were kept in mind through the initial review of interview transcripts; however, the major themes that developed emerged despite the research questions being kept in mind throughout the initial review. The emergence of major themes could have been due to how the interview questions were written to follow from the research questions. Major themes were related to the three research questions and included reasons for transfer, involvement, academic and social transition, utilization of student services, and definitions of success. Levels of involvement, and the academic and social transition relate to Tinto’s (1975) theory on student departure. Utilization of student service resources also relates to Tinto’s (1975) model on student departure as student’s who utilize student services are often more integrated with the university. Interviews were then reread several times to tease apart minor themes, and for the major and minor themes to be coded and classified. Minor themes included levels of involvement at the student’s prior institution and levels of involvement at their current institution; utilization of student services at the student’s prior institution, at the current institution prior to transfer, and upon transfer to the current institution. Data summary tables were created to better conceptualize the information for some of the major and minor themes. The findings indicate that students transfered for a variety of reasons, they did not utilize student services but were still successful, and students initially struggled in their social transition to Washington State University; however, students managed to integrate after making connections on campus. The findings are presented in more depth in chapter four.

**Trustworthiness.** Trustworthiness is determined by three main characteristics: credibility, dependability, and transferability (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). While there is certain
degree of bias in qualitative research, credibility was determined by audio recording all interviews. Audio recordings were listened to, and transcripts were completed soon after the interviews took place. Audio recordings were listened to three times, and checked against the transcripts for accuracy in verbatim transcription as well to pick up on laughter, and inflections in students’ voices. Interview transcripts were read through multiple times to provide for better accuracy in determining themes, and to better understand the context of the responses.

Dependability can be tracked through the data analysis process that was provided, as well as data analysis notes kept throughout the process of the review of interview responses. Notes were made on themes that emerged during the initial read through, and as the transcripts were read over again, notes were made about what trends were found. Data summary tables were created to visually conceptualize the information found in interview responses, and as a way to better keep track of what students said on the various interview themes. Transferability refers to the ability to which “the reader determines whether and to what extent this particular phenomenon in this particular context can transfer to another particular context (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). Transferability is addressed with the presentation of thick rich descriptions of the context in which the study took place, and participants who were interview. More detailed descriptions of the students are provided in the next chapter.

**Summary**

Using qualitative research methods and Tinto’s (1975) model on student departure as a theoretical background, the present study addresses the three research questions through interviews with horizontal transfer students. Students chosen for this study had transferred to their current institution, Washington State University, from another four-year college or
university, and were of junior or senior standing. The setting for the study is Washington State
University, a large, research university with approximately 15,000 undergraduates, located in the
northwestern United States.

Students’ interview responses were transcribed, and analyzed according to the data
analysis plan. The themes that emerged included reasons for transfer, involvement in campus
activities, definitions of success as personal growth, and utilization (or failure to utilize) student
services. The findings from students’ interview responses are presented in the next chapter as
well as more detailed descriptions of each student’s background.
An Introduction to the Students

In qualitative research the voice and personal experience is paramount hence the need to first meet the students. A brief introduction to the students in the study is presented prior to the presentation of the findings. All students were provided with a pseudonym in an effort to protect anonymity.

**Adrianne.** Adrianne is a 22 year old, Caucasian female student in her last semester of her senior year at Washington State University, majoring in Communication with an emphasis in Public Relations. Adrianne transferred to Washington State University as a sophomore from a public, four-year university in a nearby, western state. Adrianne grew up in the small town where Washington State University is located. She felt she did not have the grades to get into Washington State University as a freshman, and so she made the decision to move out-of-state, gain residency and attend college away from home. Adrianne found that she missed family, friends, her significant other, and the atmosphere of her hometown that Washington State University had to offer, so she started the transfer process toward the end of her freshman year.

**Hattie.** Hattie is a 20 year old, Caucasian, female student in the second semester of her junior year at Washington State University, majoring in Elementary Education. Hattie transferred to Washington State University from a regional, public university in the state. She applied for freshman admission to Washington State University as a high school senior, but was not accepted. Hattie had the option to stay close to home and attend a regional, public university, or attend college in Texas, where her family is originally from. Hattie chose to stay close to
home for college because of family and friends, and enrolled at the regional university just outside of her hometown. Hattie quickly found that she disliked the college she was attending and applied to transfer to Washington State University after her freshman year.

**Caroline.** Caroline is a 20 year old, Latina student in the second semester of her junior year at Washington State University, majoring in Human Development. Caroline came to Washington State University as a sophomore after transferring from a regional university in the state. While Caroline loved Washington State University and had two older sisters who attended, she decided to enroll at a regional university because she was unsure of the large campus and population that Washington State University offered. After her freshman year at a regional state university, Caroline realized that with a bigger campus and larger student populations came more opportunities for involvement and resources for students. Caroline chose to transfer to Washington State University for the increased opportunities for involvement and access to resources.

**Megan.** Megan is a 21 year old, Caucasian, female student in her second to last semester of school at Washington State University, majoring in Math Education. Megan transferred to Washington State University from a small, private liberal arts university in the state after she decided that her first university did not provide Megan with the kind of college experience she was looking for. Megan knew what kind of college experience she was looking for in a university as her two older brother were already attending Washington State University by the time she started the college search process. Megan decided on the small, private liberal arts college because of the great scholarship they offered her; however, after many of her close friends left the university and opportunities for involvement were not as robust as she would
have liked, Megan decided it was time for her to check out her options, and so she transferred to Washington State University.

**Brittany.** Brittany is a 22 year old, African American, female student in her last semester at Washington State University, majoring in Communication with an emphasis in Advertising. Brittany started her higher education journey at Washington State University, she then transferred, after sophomore year, to a small private university on the other side of the state. Brittany transferred back to Washington State University after two quarters at the small private university due to the fact that she could not afford private school tuition. Knowing that she needed to get a job and that it would not be too difficult to obtain a position as a resident advisor at Washington State University, Brittany transferred back to complete her last two years of classes.

**Joel.** Joel is a 21 year old, Caucasian, male student, in his last semester majoring in Business Administration at Washington State University. Joel came to Washington State University after one quarter at a regional university in the state. Joel was hoping to experience diverse leadership opportunities, and was looking for an academic program that could provide him with options after graduation, both things that Joel determined the regional university could not provide. Joel had friends that attended Washington State University, he had visited the campus a couple of times, and determined Washington State University was a better fit for him. Joel determined it would be better to transfer sooner rather than later and so he left after only a quarter at the regional university.

**Paige.** Paige is a 22 year old, Latina student in her second to last semester at Washington State University, majoring in Mechanical Engineering. Paige started her higher education career
at a regional university on the other side of the state. Paige made the decision to transfer when she determined that her academic program did not provide what she wanted in a Mechanical Engineering program. Paige transferred to Washington State University after her freshman year. Paige’s interview was the shortest of all of the interviews lasting only about 11 minutes, and provided the least amount of depth in responses to the questions.

Overview

The findings from the interviews conducted with horizontal transfer students will be presented according to how they fit with the research questions:

• What are the experiences of horizontal transfer students?
• How is successful transition defined by transfer students?
• What student services offices aid in successful transfer student transitions?

Overall, most of the students had consistent experiences in the transition. Themes of the social transition that students experienced as well as levels of current involvement and involvement prior to transfer were found in regards to the first research question. Additionally, why students transferred from their previous institution was found to be related to the first research question. Research question two was approached primarily with the responses to two interview questions that asked students if they thought their transition had been successful, which students answered with a variety of answers, as well as a question that asked students to define what success meant to them. The third research question was looked at from the standpoint of student service use prior to enrolling, use upon enrolling, and recommendations for future transfer students or what resources they would have liked to have had access to as new transfers.
What are the Experiences of Horizontal Transfer Students?

Two common themes emerged in students’ responses that are important in answering the first research question: What are the experiences of horizontal transfer students? The two common themes are: reasons that students transferred and how students’ social experiences and levels of involvement effected their transitions. These two common themes are important to understanding the first research question because understanding why students transfer provides more insight into where in Tinto’s (1975) model the initial departure occurred. If higher education institutions and administrations can better understand why students transfer and where in Tinto’s model the departure occurs, then retention programs can be created to fill the gap. Understanding students’ social experiences and levels of involvement will also aid in retention efforts for transfer students and students on the verge of attrition. Social integration is a major piece of the departure puzzle, and can often make up for the lack of academic integration (Braxton, et. al., 1997). Therefore, it is important to understand how involved and integrated students are socially, and where the challenges lie to social integration to better facilitate the transition and increase retention.

Reasons students transferred. Students noted many different reasons as to why they transferred from their previous institutions to Washington State University. The reasons for transfer ranged from missing a significant other who was at Washington State University, for example, “I was dating [my significant other] at the time and I did miss him actually after a year, believe it or not (laughs)” (Adrianne); to one student leaving because other students in her residence hall were harassing her, for instance, “…second semester sophomore year was terrible.
I had these girls that were... harassing me in my hall...and that was kind of what pushed me over the edge, was that” (Brittany).

A majority of the students indicated that they transferred because the current institution provided an opportunity to get more involved. For instance, Hattie stated, “I didn’t really like it (her previous university) because there was nowhere to fit in.” Megan expressed, “I mean, there wasn’t really enough, you know, variety in what the campus offered.” Caroline also voiced her frustration in the lack of involvement opportunities at her previous institution, “...I wanted to do this alternative service break while I was at [regional university], but it had been cancelled that year because there wasn’t enough, enough funding for it...I felt like a bigger institution had more funding, has more opportunities,... kind of activities or resources that you can make use of.”

The importance of having positive social experiences, as asserted in Tinto’s (1975) theory on student departure, is evident in Hattie, Megan, and Caroline’s explanations for leaving their prior institutions. Positive social experiences and social integration are paramount components of the student departure puzzle as explained by Tinto’s model. Students who do not have positive social experiences often make the decision to depart the institution as illustrated in Hattie, Megan, and Caroline’s situations. Conversely, positive social experiences lead to integration and subsequently retention and graduation. Tinto’s theory is then used in two ways, one to help understand student departure and, two, to guide the understanding of horizontal transfer student transitions.

Finances are also named as a reason for transfer. In particular, Brittany stated, “But as it (her previous institution) was private, I just could not afford it,” Brittany went on later in the
interview to say, “I… could have done the same thing there (get a job as a Resident Advisor) but I wouldn’t have lowered my fee at all. …I still would have been paying $30,000 a year. So, I decided to come back….” Of the seven students that were interviewed, Brittany was a unique transfer as she had started at the current institution transferred to another four-year institution in the state, and then transferred back because as she stated, the other university she attend was private and too expensive. Caroline also noted finances as a reason for transfer:

…the reason I decided to transfer was mainly because… as the next year was approaching, you start receiving… your financial award letter and I wasn’t getting any new scholarships. And so then I decided to apply to WSU…. And so then when I applied I was actually offered two scholarships that were renewable for four years. And so then that was kind of a big thing for me, you know, I could finance school, then I could attend and keep, keep going to school.

For many students, a continuation of scholarships or financial aid can be a deciding factor on whether or not to continue attending their current institution or to transfer to a college or university that is cheaper or can offer more scholarships and financial aid. For some students, the lack of funding can lead them to dropout from higher education altogether.

As with opportunities for social experiences, students list finances as a reason for both departure from their previous institution and transfer to Washington State University. While finances were not considered to be a factor in the departure puzzle in Tinto’s (1975) original theory, subsequent revisions (Tinto, 1982) have incorporated issues of finances into the departure model. Finances are now considered to play a role in the student’s initial commitment to the institution and at the point of integration (Tinto, 1982). In the case of both Brittany and Caroline, finances affected their decision to make a commitment to their previous institutions thereby leading them to depart. Finances also came into play with their commitment to their current institution as well. With Caroline’s situation, her commitment to the current institution
was influenced by her being awarded two scholarships that helped bring down her out of pocket costs.

Academics and academic reputation was another reason that students expressed for transfer. For instance, Adrianne stated as one of her reasons for transfer, “I’m a com major so here the reputation is, that’d be the easiest answer is for reputation.” Joel also responded that he was a construction management major before he transferred and “…transferred because I wanted more options. And they have a construction management program here, so I had the option so that’s why I transferred.” An institution having a good academic reputation can arguably be a positive academic experience for students. Universities having good academic reputations provide a reason for horizontal students to transfer to another university. Providing horizontal transfer students with opportunities for positive academic experiences will foreseeably lead to a greater likelihood of retention as academic integration plays a large role in the departure/retention puzzle (Tinto, 1975).

What is of particular interest to note about students’ academic experiences is that a majority of the students expressed having had poor experiences with academic advising upon transferring to the university. Most students did not have good academic advising experiences until they had decided to switch to a smaller major or until they had certified into their major, which often meant that they now met with a faculty member who had a reduced student advising load and more time to help each individual student. Following from Tinto’s (1975) model, these students should have been at a higher risk for departure due to their negative academic experiences that occurred right after transfer. Negative institutional experiences, academic or social experiences, do not support integration, and in turn weaken institutional commitment and
increase the likelihood of departure. Some researchers argue that positive social experiences may compensate for the lack of positive academic experiences as social integration may play a larger role in retention and departure than academics (Braxton, et. al, 1997).

**How students’ social experiences and levels of involvement effected their transitions.**

For many of the students interviewed, the social transition to their current institution was a tough one. Most of the students expressed the difficulty in meeting new people and making new friends, such as Caroline who stated:

…my biggest challenge was trying to come out of my shell…. And so I feel like that was maybe the toughest… transition period was in that first semester trying to get to know people that didn’t already have friends…. Freshmens (sic) who come in meet friends, make connections, and so transfer students don’t have that when they get here unless they know someone on campus or something.

Adrianne also voiced her frustrations in trying to meet new people, “You know it’s hard, it’s a lot harder to meet people, you’re not in the dorms, or I mean you could be but typically you’re not. You’re not a freshman so it’s just, it’s a lot different to just really integrate yourself into the community,” later in the interview Adrianne goes on to say, when asked what her biggest challenge to transferring, that “…honestly, meeting different people. Like I knew people… who lived here already and everything, but… meeting new people is definitely the biggest challenge.”

The challenge of meeting new people was often remedied when students were persuaded to get involved in campus activities such as clubs or leadership roles by roommates or classmates. For instance, when asked about her biggest challenge to transferring, Megan said:

…getting past myself. You know opening myself up really was tough. My first night here, I was … all by myself in the dorm and didn’t know anybody, and was just like, ‘Oh my God, what did I do?’ You know,… just getting past the whole fear thing. And it really helped because one of my suite-mates was really outgoing and was like, ‘Hey, you should come with us to dinner, you
should come with us to do this, you should come with us for that,’ and you know she ended up being one of my best friends here…. that was really helpful to have somebody… make sure that you’re getting out and doing something.

Caroline also noted that having roommates who were welcoming and who were themselves involved on campus helped her to get involved and meet new people, easing the transition.

Social integration and positive social experiences are a large part of the student departure puzzle (Braxton, et. al., 1997; Tinto, 1975). A student’s social experiences can make up for the lack of academic experiences (Braxton, et. al., 1997). Had Caroline, Megan, and Adrianne not found a social support system in roommates and co-workers soon after their arrival on campus, they may have become one more student in the increasing group of multiple transfers. Students’ ability to become socially integrated may have made up for the negative academic advising experiences that most of the students encountered with poor initial academic advising.

Horizontal transfer students depart their previous institutions for many reasons such as the lack of opportunities to get involved in campus activities, lack of adequate finances, and the lack of robust academic programs. Students’ reasons for departure were often their same reasons for transferring to the current institution. For some students, the dissatisfaction with campus involvement opportunities led them to transfer to Washington State University. If finances were a student’s reason for departure, lower tuition or scholarship opportunities were their reasons for transferring to the current institution. Many of the reasons given for transfer also played into whether or not a student determined their transition to be successful.

**How is Successful Transition Defined by Transfer Students?**

All of the students indicated that their transfer transition was a success. Each student attributed their successful transition to something different; and when asked what success meant
to them each of the students provided a different definition, responses varied from defining success as a good GPA to graduation and getting a job to personal growth. For instance, Hattie defined success as, “I’m doing as best as I can. I’m getting A’s maybe a few B’s occasionally (laughs) so that’s okay…. I have a job, I’m maintaining that and volunteering. So, I think maintaining all of that and still pulling off a decent GPA is success.” Similarly, Adrianne explained success as, “…well graduation with, I don’t know, decent GPA, above a 3.0 would be okay….and then getting a job.” Adrianne’s definition of success falls closely in line with higher education institutions’ definition of success, that is graduation. However, for most students success was defined as something a little more personal than just good grades, graduation, and finding a good job.

A majority of the students defined success in line with something more personal than academics, grades, or graduation. Such as Megan who talked about her success in relation to social integration, “…but I think it has been a complete success simply because I was able to adjust to the classes… I found an amazing group of friends, people were very… inclusive.” Megan later went on to say that her success was attributed to, “…taking advantage of resources because I definitely… went to club offerings, went to… fundraisers, went to hall activities you know just took advantage of everything the dorms had to offer as far as meeting people.” Joel defined success more in terms of personal growth as well, “I always view success in that I’m building upon myself and that I’m bettering myself, not necessarily in the classroom or on a piece of paper that my grades are higher but that I’m gaining skills that will help me in the future.” Elements of personal growth appeared as a result of the transition in the responses of all but one student.
While personal growth is not something that is directly accounted for in Tinto’s (1975) model, factors of personal growth that students mentioned in their interviews tie in directly to Tinto. For instance, Megan expressed that success, to her, was finding a solid group of friends, which relates to positive social experiences and social integration. Megan also stated that taking advantage of campus resources played into her successful transition as a horizontal transfer student.

The meaning of success differed for all students in the study. Overall, success for students equated to positive social and academic experiences, leading to integration and retention. Students considered themselves to be successful despite the limited utilization of student services.

**What student services offices aid in successful transfer student transitions?**

The majority of students interviewed did not utilize student service offices beyond mandatory requirements such as advising or orientation before or after the transfer transition. The reasons for non-use varied. For example, Megan stated, “But as far as a specific office, I didn’t really use it simply because I wasn’t completely sure how it worked.” Confusion that surrounded the use of student service offices for transfer students was also expressed by Caroline when she explained that she was assigned a mentor through Multicultural Student Services but never utilized the service because she was unclear about the purpose of the mentor. Caroline also indicated that she felt student resources are not as readily available to transfer students as they are for traditional, first year students, “If… I wanted to find something out, I had to go out and do it. It wasn’t more like somebody was approaching me, I feel like… that is more given to you when you are a freshman on campus not so much a transfer student. At least that was my
point of view when (laughs) I came.” The rest of the students simply stated that they had not used student services at all or had utilized only student services that were mandatory for incoming students such as orientation and academic advising. While orientation and academic advising are not voluntarily utilized student services, they are still student service programs that aid in the retention of horizontal transfer students.

Each of the students was asked what their recommendations were in regards to the development of student services since research points to limited use of student service offices by transfer students. The most common response from students’ interviews regarding recommendations to ease the transition was the implementation of some sort of transfer meeting. For instance, Hattie expressed that, “…maybe if there was a transfer meeting when you first got here. Just you know they checked up on you, how are things going…. Or maybe gotten together with a group of transfer students and that way we could’ve met with each other and maybe helped each other out if we needed to.” Students also provided a recommendation for other transfer students to get involved right away, for instance Adrianne said, “I would recommend try to get involved, even try to stay in the residence hall…. Try to get involved in different clubs and everything, and just try to integrate yourself as much as you can to make a connection with people.” Similarly, Brittany recommended, “…just don’t be scared, just jump in 150%.” The general consensus was a recommendation for new transfer students to get integrated into the campus community as soon as possible, whether through involvement, meeting other transfer students, or checking in with an advisor.

While students did not utilize student services beyond those that are mandatory such as orientation and academic advising, they still successfully integrated as asserted by Tinto’s (1975)
model and students’ interview responses indicating positive institutional experiences. The fact that students were successful in their transitions signals that students do not have to voluntarily participate in student services to reap the benefits of retention efforts provided by student services.

Summary

While student’s responses to interview questions varied greatly, for most, there was consistency in their overall experience. Students’ reasons for departure and transfer ranged from a desire for more opportunities for involvement, to finances, to wanting more robust academic programs. The social transition for most students was relatively the same in that they struggled initially to make new friends, to get connected to the university, and find ways to get involved in campus activities. However, for most of the students, the social transition had eased by the time the had entered their second semester and had started to make connections with roommates, classmates, and co-workers. Students’ definitions of success differed greatly but mostly related to personal growth. Utilization of student services beyond mandatory services such as orientation and academic advising by the students in the study was minimal to non-existent, which suggests more services need to be developed specifically for the horizontal transfer student population that help these students with their particular transitional needs.

In the final chapter, the findings of the study call for greater discussion in connection to theory, and suggest future research and improved practice. The findings chapter also focuses on the major limitations of the study.
CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Discussion

The purpose of this qualitative thesis study was to obtain more information to better facilitate the transfer process by learning more about the transitions of horizontal transfer students. The need to better facilitate the transition for students who transfer from one four-year institution to another is ever more important as the number of students who transfer in general is on the rise and will continue to be on the rise with the current economic situation that students, their parents and higher education institutions are facing (Bushong, 2009; Townsend, 2007). The hope of this study is to determine from student interviews what the transition was like for each student, to identify some of the challenges they faced, how students overcame these challenges, and recommendations for future transfer students. In other words, how the transitional process could be improved for incoming transfers.

The study relies on Tinto’s (1975) theory throughout, and further analysis will be supported using this theoretical framework. One of the major findings of this study is that a main reason for transfer was the increased opportunities for involvement and access to resources, as stated by four of seven students. What is of importance in this finding is the link to the social integration piece of Tinto’s theory on student departure, and the notion that without social integration there is no commitment to the institution, which is evident in the review of students’ self-reported levels of involvement at their previous universities. All but one of the students had little to no self-reported social involvement at their previous institutions, again a major link to institutional commitment as argued by Tinto. Without social integration, students are more likely
to depart as the students in the study did from their previous institutions. What is of interest to note is that levels of involvement increased upon transfer, essentially solidifying students’ social integration and commitment to the university. In essence, levels of social integration at the students’ first institution contributed to attrition, yet social integration was also ultimately addressed after students transferred.

Many of the students noted in their interviews that one of the biggest challenges for them in transferring was the challenge of meeting new people and making new friends, which could have potentially been a hindrance for these students to socially integrate. Fortunately all students who expressed the frustration with meeting new people were able to make connections, find the social support they were looking for, and become socially integrated with the university. The concern to make new friends and build social connections on campus voiced by students in the study is a very legitimate concern that higher education administrators should be aware of. Christie, Munro, and Fisher (2004) found that of students who did not persist a majority of them noted that lack of a supportive social environment or support services factored into their decision to drop out. In other words, students who lack some sort of social support whether that be family, friends, or on campus support systems such as resident advisors or other staff or faculty will be more likely to depart higher education altogether or transfer, possibly again, to another institution. A major issue with those students that make multiple transfers, those students who swirl through higher education, is that they are less likely to achieve degree attainment (Adelman, 2006).

The idea of swirling or dropout from higher education altogether make the need to better facilitate the transition for transfer students, and to get students academically and socially
integrated all the more important. As noted in the previous chapter, some suggestions made by transfer students include more contact with their academic advisor prior to transferring essentially establishing an academic support system and starting to become academically integrated before they even get to the university. Students also suggested implementation of some kind of transfer meeting, some type of gathering where transfer students could meet other transfer students, who are experiencing some of the same transitional issues that they are. The importance of the transfer meeting is on developing social support and development of the social integration piece of Tinto’s (1975) model.

The two other main reasons given for transfer by students were finances, and academics and academic reputation. While finances are a major aspect in many students’ decision to continue at their current college or university, or to dropout altogether, only two students in the current study noted finances as a reason for transfer. Tinto’s (1975) original theory on student departure did not take into consideration finances as part of a student’s decision making process when determining whether to continue; this has been considered a major limitation of Tinto’s theory (St. John, et. al., 2000), and has even been acknowledged by Tinto (1982) himself as a limitation of his theory in looking at student retention or student departure. It will be increasingly important for research and theory related to departure, transition, and retention to consider finances as part of the overall departure puzzle given the challenging economic times and increased diversity of students.

Students noting academics and academic reputation as a reason for transfer is consistent with Tinto’s (1975) theory in that if students are not academically integrated the likelihood of not committing and eventual departure is higher than if a student was academically integrated.
While many of the students did not mention any activities that would lead one to believe that they were academically integrated at the current institution, most students indicated that their grade point averages were fairly decent -- most at or above a 3.0 GPA -- and all students mentioned having good academic advising experiences. Good academic advising experiences that provide opportunities for development and interactions between students and faculty or staff can lead to increased academic integration (King, 1993). Providing better academic advising experiences for students may ease the transition for horizontal transfers. Many students in their interviews mentioned that having more than one meeting with their advisor prior to transferring would have been helpful, students also indicated that more meaningful meetings with their academic advisors earlier on after their transfer would have been helpful as well. For instance, Adrianne stated that her current advisor, “…takes the time like sits down with you, asks you about your life,… what are your plans for the future, and tries to guide you that way.” Three other students noted that their current academic advisor expressed more concern in their life as a student and about their future plans than the academic advisor who was assigned to them when they first transferred.

One somewhat surprising finding is the lack of use of student service offices, other than those that are mandated by the university such as academic advising and attending an orientation. One would think that as successful as this group of students self-reported being that they would have utilized some of the student service offices on campus to help with the transition. However, Anglin, et. al. (1995) argued that transfer students do not utilize student services in the same manner that traditional students use student services. Additionally, King (1993) asserts
that, “students frequently do not know how to negotiate the system or how to ask for help when they encounter difficulties” (p. 27), which was consistent with the interview findings.

Social integration is a major piece of the departure/retention puzzle (Braxton, et. al., 1997; Graham & Long Gisi, 2000). Because students are not utilizing student services, it is likely that they are getting information about campus elsewhere such as from friends and social support systems. Students may also be obtaining information about campus resources in the preparation called for to transfer to another institution. The success of the students in the study is likely to be attributed to their social involvement and integration on campus.

Overall, the majority of the findings of the study are consistent with the research. Horizontal transfer students struggle with social transitions more so than with academic transitions. Horizontal transfer students, it seems, also face many of the same obstacles upon transferring as vertical transfer students, the initial declines in GPA, and making new friends and getting involved on campus. However, once students got involved in campus activities, their transitional experiences seemed to improve, particularly socially with most of the students reporting very positive social experiences. What was somewhat of a surprise, was the response that many of the students gave about what they believe defines success. For many of the students success what not necessarily defined in terms of GPA or graduation, as had been originally thought, but was defined more so in terms of personal growth. The experiences students had, mainly social experiences and what they learned from these experiences, determined their personal growth and in turn what they deemed to be successful.
Limitations

This study is not without its limitations. Three major limitations include the approach to finding students to interview, the sample of students, and the criticisms of Tinto’s theory. Finding students to interview proved to be quite difficult. As noted in chapter three, university staff members that might work closely with transfer students were contacted to first to determine if they knew of students who might be willing to participate in an interview. The challenge to this approach is that staff had trouble determining who might be a horizontal transfer student as opposed to a vertical transfer student, or staff were only willing to send out messages to email list-servs, which yielded no response. Other staff members provided suggestions for contacting transfer students, which I had already exhausted to no avail of hearing anything back such as contacting the transfer student honor society. The sample of students who were interviewed presents a limitation in that the sample is highly skewed in its gender distribution (six females and only one male), and in the type of student interviewed. All students who were interviewed considered themselves to be highly successful in their transition leaving out those students who may have struggled or may still be struggling in their transition. Often times, students who have struggled or are struggling do not seek out the opportunity to tell their story or talk to someone about their troubles. As discussed earlier in the literature review, Tinto’s theory on student departure does not come without its criticisms. For instance, the theory’s limited applicability to minority students, lack of consideration for external factors, limited application to a long-term look at persistence, and the relative absence of research on the model as a whole. In spite of these limitations, valuable information was gained from the interviews conducted with horizontal transfer students about their transitional experiences.
Recommendations for Future Practice/Research

A few recommendations for future practice become apparent from the findings of the study. The recommendations for future practice have to do with the implementation of retention programs geared specifically toward transfer students. One recommendation would be to revise current orientation programs to better meet the needs of incoming horizontal transfer students. Many of the students in the study expressed that they wished there had been more time devoted to getting to know other transfer students, something that could be implemented as part of the orientation. In order to help with retention, orientation could also be extended to include meetings that take place after students begin classes. These meetings could be both social and educational in nature allowing horizontal transfer students to further get to know each other all the while providing them with information on university resources so they know where to turn when they need help.

Another recommendation to aid in the retention of transfer students is to extend living-learning communities to this group of students as well. While it can be more challenging to develop living-learning communities for transfer students as many of them are coming in with varying transfer credits thereby differing their need for general education requirements, transfer students could be placed into living-learning communities based on their intended major. The living-learning community environment would help transfer students with not only the social transition and getting to know each other but also help in the academic transition with built in study groups and academic support.

A final recommendation for future practice as emphasized by a few of the students in their interviews, would be to implement additional academic advising sessions early on in the
transfer process. Students indicated that they would have liked to have met with their academic advisor more than once prior to starting classes to make sure that they were on track and that their classes were transferring correctly. It would also benefit horizontal transfer students to implement additional advising sessions right after they transfer. For instance, requiring that students meet with their academic advisor twice or more in a semester instead of just once that way advisors could check in more with their students to determine how the transition is going, and pointing students in the right direction if they need help.

There are also a couple of recommendations for future research that become apparent from the findings of the study. One recommendation for future research would be to interview a more diverse group of students. Meaning, try to find students that maybe have not been as successful in the transition to the university and determine what would have helped them in their transfer process. Also, recruiting a more representative sample of the horizontal student population would provide a better look at horizontal transfer students’ transitions.

Another recommendation for future research would be in how students are recruited for interviews. Contacting the academic advisors could prove to be extremely useful in recruiting horizontal transfer students as every undergraduate at Washington State University must meet with their academic advisor before registering for the next semester’s classes. Consequently, the academic advisors have contact with every single undergraduate student at the university, which would possibly result in a greater pool of horizontal transfers to interview.

**Conclusion**

Historically, the transfer student has been associated with students who transfer from a two-year institution to a four-year institution, however, there is another group of transfer students
that is often overlooked not only in higher education institutions but in research as well. The often overlooked group of transfers is comprised of students who start at one four-year institution and then transfer to another four-year institution, or horizontal transfer students. The success and retention of both transfer student populations is an increasing concern for four-year institutions due to the large numbers of students who transfer, and will transfer in the future due to the current economic trends. An overwhelming problem for four-year institutions is to increase the success of both subsets of transfer students. However, before this task can be accomplished, more needs to be known about horizontal transfer students in order to better facilitate their transition and to subsequently increase success and retention. One way to gain more information on horizontal transfer students is by conducting interviews with this population. The goal and intent of this study was to learn more about the horizontal transfer student population and their transitions, which I hope I accomplished.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


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APPENDICES
APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Transitional Issues of Horizontal Transfer Students
Interview Cover Sheet

I am studying the transition process students experience in transferring from one four-year institution to another four-year institution. I’ll start with some questions about your previous institution(s), then I’ll ask you some questions about your transition, and finally I’ll ask about your experiences here at WSU.

Name: ____________________________________________

Age: ___________________ Gender: ______________________

Race/Ethnicity: _______________________________________

Enrolled: 
☐ Full time ☐ Part time ☐ Informed consent

Employed: 
☐ Full time ☐ Part time ☐ Okay to contact w/ follow-up questions

☐ On campus ☐ Off campus

☐ On campus ☐ Off campus

Place of interview: __________________________________________

Time of interview: __________________________________________

Notes:
Do you have any questions before we start?

**Background Questions**

**There**
1. Tell me about your journey to WSU...
   - Which institution(s) you have been in enrolled in prior to attending WSU?
   - How did you decided on previous institution(s)?
   - Why you chose to attend your prior institution?

2. So you went to___________ college/university...
   Could you describe your time and experiences at your prior institution? What was it like there?
   - Live on- or off-campus?
   - Participate in any clubs or activities?

3. Why did you decide to transfer
   - Apply to other institutions?
   - Transferring to WSU a goal upon first enrolling in higher education?

4. Were you a freshman, sophomore, junior, senior when you first enrolled here?

**Transition**
5. Did your previous institution prepare you to transfer? If so, how? Was it enough?

6. What kinds of interactions did you have with WSU before you actually transferred?
   - Connect with any faculty, staff, current students?

7. What is your major? Has this changed since you first enrolled in college?

**Now Here at WSU**
8. Give me a general description of your first semester...
   - Was your first semester different than you expected? If so, how?

**What are the experiences of horizontal transfer students?**
9. How WSU is different from your previous institution?
   - Class size, tests, assignments?
   - Difference in classroom atmosphere
   - Interactions with faculty?
   - Did your GPA change in your first semester at WSU? If so, what do you attribute your change in GPA to?
   - Socially?

10. Describe your experience with your academic advisor at WSU.
- Have you been satisfied with academic advising at WSU?

11. Tell me about your experiences outside of class.
   - Have you found it easy or difficult to make friends at WSU?
   - Do you feel you are a part of WSU?
   - Describe your living situation at WSU.
   - What activities do you participate in?
   - How would you compare it to your previous institution?

**How is successful transitioning defined by transfer students?**

12. Do you consider your transition to WSU a success? Why or why not?

13. How do you personally define success?

**What student services aid in transfer student transitioning?**

14. Describe any student services that you have utilized to ease your transition to WSU.

15. If I were an administrator at WSU, what recommendations would you have for making the transition easier for transfer students at WSU?

**Wrap-up Questions**

16. How would you describe your progress towards graduation? Are you on track?

17. What are your goals after graduation?

18. What has been your biggest challenge with transferring?

19. What has been the best part?

20. If you had to repeat your transfer experience, would you do anything differently?
   - Enroll at WSU as a freshman?
   - Any regrets?
   - Are you satisfied overall with your transfer experience?

21. Is there anything else you would like to tell me about your transfer experience?
APPENDIX B

Hello_____

I am a Master’s student in the Higher Education Administration program here at Washington State University. I am in the process of writing my thesis on the transitioning experiences of horizontal transfer students -- those students who transfer from one four-year institution to another four-year institution. The reason I am contacting you is because of your position within the University, and your work and close contact with transfer students.

I am looking to interview approximately ten transfer students who are of junior or, preferably, senior standing who have transferred from another four-year institution to WSU. If you know of any students who meet this description and believe that they would be interested in being interviewed about their transfer experience, please ask them if it would be alright for me to contact them via email or ask them to contact me at d_ellzey@wsu.edu.

Thank you in advance,

Danielle Ellzey
Candidate for Master’s of Art in Education
Graduate Assistant
Office of Enrollment Management
Washington State University
509-335-4980
d_ellzey@wsu.edu

Sent to:
Heather Page - Academic Advisor, Transfer Center, Center for Advising and Career Development
Chris Gana - Academic Advisor, Transfer Center, Center for Advising and Career Development
Patty Morris - Residential Education Director, McEachern Hall
Joe Nixon - Residential Education Director, Rogers Hall
Scott Simonetti - Residential Education Director, Orton Hall
APPENDIX C
IRB APPROVAL

MEMORANDUM
TO: Kelly Ward and Danielle Ellzey,

FROM: Patrick Conner, Office of Research Assurances (3005)

DATE: 10/5/2010

SUBJECT: Certification of Exemption, IRB Number 11599

Based on the Exemption Determination Application submitted for the study titled "Transitional Issues of Horizontal Transfer Students," and assigned IRB # 11599, the WSU Office of Research Assurances has determined that the study satisfies the criteria for Exempt Research at 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2).

This study may be conducted according to the protocol described in the Application without further review by the IRB.

It is important to note that certification of exemption is NOT approval by the IRB. You may not include the statement that the WSU IRB has reviewed and approved the study for human subject participation. Remove all statements of IRB Approval and IRB contact information from study materials that will be disseminated to participants.

This certification is valid only for the study protocol as it was submitted to the ORA. Studies certified as Exempt are not subject to continuing review (this Certification does not expire). If any changes are made to the study protocol, you must submit the changes to the ORA for determination that the study remains Exempt before implementing the changes (The Request for Amendment form is available online at http://www.irb.wsu.edu/documents/forms/rtf/Amendment_Request.rtf).

Exempt certification does NOT relieve the investigator from the responsibility of providing continuing attention to protection of human subjects participating in the study and adherence to ethical standards for research involving human participants.

In accordance with WSU Business Policies and Procedures Manual (BPPM), this Certification of Exemption, a copy of the Exemption Determination Application identified by this certification and all materials related to data collection, analysis or reporting must be retained by the Principal Investigator for THREE (3) years following completion of the project (BPPM 90.01).
Washington State University is covered under Human Subjects Assurance Number FWA00002946 which is on file with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP).

Review Type: New
Review Category: Exempt
Date Received: 9/23/2010
Exemption Category: 45 CFR 46.101 (b)(2)
OGRD No.: N/A
Funding Agency: N/A

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