To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Kristin Marie Gourley entitled "A Study of Identified Needs and Desires for Parents of College Students." I have examined the final paper copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science, with a major in College Student Personnel.

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A STUDY OF IDENTIFIED NEEDS AND DESIRES FOR PARENTS OF COLLEGE STUDENTS

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Presented for the
Master of Science
Degree
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Kristin Marie Gourley
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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my wonderful parents, Dick Gourley and Greta Gourley, truly great role models and encouragers, and the rest of my family and friends, for always believing in me and encouraging me to work hard and accomplish my goals.

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ABSTRACT

The purposes of this study were to (1) to determine what services parents desire when seeking membership in a parents association, (2) to determine why parents decide to join a parents association, (3) to determine how satisfied parents are with a particular service offered by the parents association, and (4) to determine whether or not members of The University of Tennessee Parents Association are aware of the services offered to them.

Over the last several years, a new form of student services has begun to appear on college campuses around the nation, the parents association. As a new generation of college students begins to fill college campuses, college administrators have started these organizations to meet the needs of the students and their parents.

Despite a preponderance of research on parental involvement in elementary and secondary schools, no research exists to discuss the ramifications or needs of parental involvement on the college level.

This study attempted to discover what desires and expectations today's college parents have regarding colleges and universities and parents associations. Through a descriptive study, the question of what parents want from a parents association was answered. Findings revealed that parents of college students want to feel connected to their student's college or university. According to the findings, parents join parents associations to initiate a connection with the university so they have updated campus information and resources available to them at all times.

A review of the implications of the findings is provided as well as recommendations for further research.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Introduction to the Chapter

Over the last several years, parents and other family members of college students have begun to play a more prominent role on college campuses. From helping students select a college to providing financial support, parents are now playing an active role in their children's college experience (Daniel, Evans, & Scott, 2001, p.3). The students arriving on campuses each fall are now members of the Millennial Generation. According to Howe and Strauss (2000), today's upcoming college students have grown up with parents who have made it a point to be around their children's lives more and to be more involved with them (p. 135). This increased parental involvement plays a significant role in changing a university's relationship with the parents of its students.

As a result of parents' renewed approach to parenting, the college experience no longer serves "...as the kind of place where parents send students to learn from experts while readily abdicating their control" (Daniel et al., p. 3). Parents are no longer content to drop their students off on campus, fade into a distant memory, and reappear to their students over semester breaks. Parents of today's college students want to be involved in the experiences of their children, and institutions of higher education recognize this reality. In an effort to meet the needs of parents, institutions of higher education have begun to design parent programs. As colleges and universities begin to implement these offices to maintain a connection with parents, two questions emerge: What do parents of today's college students want from institutions of higher education, and are schools offering services that family members want? This study sought to answer these questions

and to expound upon the new future for colleges and universities in building relationships with parents. Furthermore, this paper discusses the effects that parental involvement can have on a college student's educational and developmental experience.

Statement of the Problem

While there is a plethora of information regarding parent involvement in the college experience, there is a lack of information about parents associations in general and specifically what services parents want from a parent association. As a result, the principal problem examined in this descriptive study was to identify services that parents seek when becoming members of a parents association. A concomitant problem addressed is the state of current, specific parents associations and the services they offer. Once the primary problem has been answered, this new information can be used to assist current associations with the services they need to offer.

Purpose of the Study

The purposes of this research were (1) to determine what services parents desire when seeking membership in a parents association, (2) to determine why parents decide to join a parents association, (3) to determine how satisfied parents are with a particular service offered by the parents association, and (4) to determine whether or not members of The University of Tennessee Parents Association are aware of the services offered to them.

Significance of Study

As the number of parents sharing an active role in college decision-making increases, colleges and universities will need to find a way to include parents in the life of the university and its culture. According to Scott and Daniel (2001), parents believe they

have a right to take part in the college experience of their children because of several factors, including, but not limited to, the cost of tuition and fees, the evolution of higher education's role in society, and their own denial of their students as children instead of adults (p. 84). In a sense, parents believe that because they are active in paying for their student's education, they should have a voice in the life and comfort of their student's college experience.

In response to this new parental expectation of involvement, colleges and universities across the country have begun parents programs and associations that embrace parents as members of the institutions' communities. This field of college parent organizations is a new area; and as these new programs begin to develop, higher education administrators are beginning to look for information related to this field. At the present time, little or no research or information is readily available that would assist in the development of successful programs. Authors have presented survival books for parents, such as *Almost Grown* and *Don't Tell Me What To Do, Just Send Money,* but these books do not discuss how college administrators can meet the needs of parents and students. The lack of available research for administrators hampers the administrators' abilities to effectively develop successful parent programs. The results and analyses from this study will serve to provide essential information to college and university administrators who are actively seeking to implement new parent programs.

Studies (Hickman, Bartholomae, & McKenry, 2000; Izzo, Weissberg, Kasprow, & Fendrich, 1999; Kenny & Donaldson, 1992; Samuolis, Layburn, Schiaffino, 2001; Smith, English, & Vasek, 2002; Taub, 1997; Tichenor, 1997; Wintre & Sugar, 2000; Wintre & Yaffe, 2000) have shown that students who have parents who are involved in

their academic and educational lives have greater academic and personal development. The primary mission of most schools of higher education is to promote the academic and intellectual development of its students, and this new research is now available to support the influence of parental involvement. School administrators who are aware of these findings will most certainly want to provide an opportunity for increased parental involvement. Furthermore, administrators from institutions of higher education will develop parent organizations that offer programs to meet the needs of parents, thereby indirectly contributing to college student development.

Research Questions

To achieve the study's objectives, the following research questions were proposed.

1. What services do parents desire from membership in Parents Associations?
2. What factors, other than membership services, contribute to parents becoming involved in a parents association?
3. What aspects of current services appeal to parents involved in a parents association?
4. To what extent are parents aware of all services available to them through membership?
5. Will the data reveal that certain variables in the demographics of the participants, such as gender, in state or out of state residence, and parental educational background, influence a parent's needs and expectations of a parents association?

Assumptions of the Study

In conducting the study, the researcher assumed the following:

1. The parents would participate in the survey.
2. The parents would respond truthfully and reliably to the survey.
3. The parents perceived that The University of Tennessee Parents Association provides services they are seeking.
4. The questionnaire was valid and reliable.

Delimitations of the Study

Delimitations set by this investigator were:

1. Only current UT Parents Association members participated in the study.
2. Knowledge of current Parents Associations services could only be found in a brochure (only mailed annually) or on the Parents Association website.

Limitations of the Study

Limitations of the study, as recognized by this researcher, were:

1. The extent that parents were willing to collaborate with the researcher was unknown.
2. The participants of the study were asked to recall information that they may not remember which would introduce possible recall bias to the study.
3. The questionnaire used to determine parents' expectations of membership may not have been reliable and valid.
4. The results of this study only apply to The University of Tennessee Parents Association.

Summary

This chapter has included an introduction of the research topic, a review of the rationale for the study, and an explanation of the research question. As parents associations begin to appear on college campuses nationwide, it will be necessary to have a better understanding of what parents are looking for when contemplating their decision to join an association. Because it is known that parent involvement and healthy parent relationships help to increase a college student's ability to perform well academically and to have stronger intellectual and personal development, colleges and universities can see the benefits of providing a route for parents to get involved with the campus and its students. The following chapter will review the related literature on the subject of parents and their involvement, the laws pertaining to the university and the parent, and students' perceptions of parents and parental involvement in their academic pursuits at institutions of higher education.

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction to the Chapter

The purposes of a review of literature are to determine what information is already known on a specific topic and to establish a need for the proposed research. Because parents associations are a new segment of college and university life, there is little research on parents of college students and their involvement in parents associations, but the body of literature that focuses on parent involvement in secondary and elementary schools, the influence of parental attachment on a student's adjustment to college, and parental relationships and their effect on student identity development show the influence of parent involvement and parents associations in the arena of higher education. This influence is a factor that greatly affects the academic development of today's college students, and through the study of parental involvement, institutions can help create yet another avenue to help students learn and develop. It is through the discussion of these topics on parental relationships that a background of information will be developed to provide an understanding of the importance and purpose of offering opportunities for parents to become involved on the college and university campus. The primary focus of this chapter will be on the effects of parent involvement, college student attitudes regarding relationships with parents, and college student identity development as it relates to parental control and involvement.

Related Literature to the Topic

This portion of the review of literature will cover several studies that pertain to the relationships between students, specifically college students, and their parents. The two main topics that will be discussed include (1) parenting styles and their influence on

student attitude and (2) the new communication technique and the influence of positive and negative communication on students.

Parenting Styles and the Influence on College Students

Parenting style tends to affect young people in how they develop, cope, and grow to maturity. Family situations and relationships also affect a student's ability to grow accustomed to a new way of life and develop relationships outside of the family.

As students enter the college realm, many are thankful for the opportunity to leave situations or family lives that have been filled with stress or conflict. For some students, college is an escape from a destructive lifestyle. As colleges and universities begin to open their doors and encourage parents to become a part of the university community, administrators must educate themselves about some of the negative influences parents may have on students. Several of these issues are important for administrators to take into account when deciding whether or not encouraging parent participation would be a positive addition to a school's services, and if a parents association has been created, these issues are areas to be addressed through programming and information sessions for parents so they may be aware of changes and influences that their students are experiencing.

A crucial factor that influences a student's attitude and adjustment to college life is family life. After years of focusing on how family life affects younger children, researchers have begun to focus on parenting styles and parental attachment and how they influence today's college students. Hall (1997) researched the impact that parental drinking problems can have on college students. Through her research, Hall found that

students whose parents have drinking problems have a lower perception of their own well being, and they did not have competence in cognitive, spiritual, and philosophical areas (p. 162). It is obvious that parental drinking problems can significantly affect a student's ability to adapt, to cope, and to develop to the rigors of college life.

Along with parental drinking problems is the more general issue of parental health. According to Birch, O'Toole, and Kanu (1997), college students are eager to speak with their parents about health issues and concerns to not only help their parents' health but also help their own health (p. 41). As a result, the researchers encouraged college administrators to offer opportunities for students and parents to get involved in learning about health issues together. Along with the need to include both students and parents in health discussions, Birch et al. discussed the benefits of parents "...as potential sources of social support" (p. 41) and determined that colleges and universities should offer programs to help parents learn how to have healthy lifestyles (p. 41). In essence, the researchers realized that parental health is on the mind of many college students, and colleges and universities that desire to meet the needs of their students must address the health concerns of the students' parents.

Barnett, Quackenbush, and Sinisi (1996) looked at factors that influence children's perceptions of their parents' discipline. In the study, they found that college aged children had a better perspective about their parents' discipline approaches than younger children. Essentially, college aged students are able to put their parents' discipline approaches in perspective, and they find that the rules and regulations of life at home were more fair than they originally gave their parents credit for being. Vitulli and Richardson (1998) found that, among college students, paternal relationships are not as

strong as maternal relationships (p. 50). Perhaps this is because in the conventional family make-up, fathers serve as the main disciplinarian. Being away from school and away from the constant parental discipline of life at home, college students can assemble a more objective outlook on their family life, but the damage may have already been done to the paternal relationship. Therefore, the possible tension resulting from the weaker paternal relationships can affect a college student's development once arriving on campus.

Depending upon their upbringing and family support system, some students arrive on a campus better prepared to cope with the challenges that they will face as they encounter the day-to-day activities of college life. In a recent study, Feenstra, Banyard, Rines, and Hopkins (2001) sought to understand how the family situation affects a student's adjustment to college. The authors found that the environment created by the family relates to student's abilities to adjust to college life. This means that the student's family environment and the family's mode of managing problems influence the student's ability to adapt to the challenges of college. In essence, if a student has a healthy approach to handling conflict in her home life, she will have less difficulty in approaching hurdles in college. The coping and conflict management skills gleaned from home life influence a student's ability to relate to other people and control their emotions in difficult situations.

A recent study by Hickman, Bartholomae, and McKenry (2000) discussed the effects of authoritative parenting, which includes "...harsh disciplinary actions and rigid boundaries, expressed both emotionally and psychologically" (p. 42). The researchers found that authoritative parenting has a positive effect on a student's academic

achievement (p. 49). The study also concluded that students from divorced families find adjustment less difficult, possibly because they are separated from a stressful home life (p. 49). Conversely, students familiar with an affectionate and loving environment that encourages open communication "...may have an advantage when making a transition into a college environment" (p. 49) because they have been able to achieve a regulation of their environment as they grew up. These research findings show that students coming to college have been influenced by their home life in one way or another. For some, coming to college is an escape from the stresses and conflict of being at home. Growing up in a home in which healthy communication is a basic function of every day life can contribute to the adjustment of other college students. All in all, family structure, i.e. the environment of student's home life and the style of parenting at home, is one more influence that can affect a student's adjustment and achievement in the college atmosphere. College administrators can use this information to not only help their students as they come to campus, but they also can use this information to help parents adapt to a new way of life for their students. In fact, information about family structure provides a benefit for both the parents and the students. By forming relationships with parents, college administrators can learn how to effectively communicate with their students.

In conjunction with the idea that dominant disciplinarian parents tend to gain appreciation from their children after they arrive on a college campus, Carranza and Kilmann (2000) found that parents who took a vested interest in the lives of their children had a positive influence on their children's relationships with others, even when those children went to college. In fact, students who felt they had an interested and caring

family were more secure in their identity and had stronger relationships with others as a result of their comfort with their families. Coming to college offers many struggles for students, including forming important relationships with other peers, and having a strong base and foundation from a strong family relationship helps students as they forge new friendships (Bradford & Lyddon, 1993, p. 259). Essentially, strong parent relationships can give a student the confidence to develop strong relationships with other students.

Perhaps one of the most significant adjustments that college students must encounter is establishing a sense of who they are and adapting that newfound identity towards relationships with their parents (Samuolis, Layburn, & Schiaffino, 2001, p. 373). Samuolis et al. "...explored the role of attachment to mother and attachment to father on the identity-related constructs of exploration and commitment" (p. 379). They found that women were more open to exploration and commitment than men, and they implied that this was a result of a positive identity development on behalf of the women (p. 380). Essentially, the researchers found that students who are more open to maintaining relationships with parents are more likely to demonstrate beneficial identity development as opposed to those students who avoid or have little contact with parents. This study is just one more in a long list of studies in which researchers advised school administrators to encourage open contact of students with parents.

According to Wintre and Sugar (2000), adjusting to life at a college or university is a significant "...example of a normal but stressful transition during the course of the life span" (p. 202). During this time, students develop a sense of identity and integrity, and it is a time when the position of parents cannot be written off. Through their study of over 400 students, Wintre and Sugar concluded that interaction and communication with

parents and the influence of parents could determine a student's ability to transition from high school to college.

More often than not, people assume that as students matriculate through the world of higher education, they begin to lose contact with their parents and do not depend on parental support as much as when they were younger. This belief, however, is not the case. In fact, today's college students maintain a closeness with their families, and according to Kenny (1990), as graduation approaches, many college students are still as close to their families as they were as younger adults. For so long, attachment to parents at the point of graduation has been seen as a weakness because of the assumption that a sense of independence has not been allowed to develop. On the contrary, today's students consider a close attachment to parents an asset. College seniors think of parents as a support system while their parents are still encouraging the development of independence (p. 43). Receiving feedback from parents, even if it is negative feedback, is very important to today's college students (Lundgren & Rudawsky, 1998, p. 420). The assumption here would be that parents are going to be honest in their outlook on decisions students are going to make. A student may trust his or her father to be honest with him or her where a friend might not be as forthcoming.

It is a common belief that as students get older, they become more autonomous. A general belief that follows with this assumption is that as students become more autonomous, they decrease their attachment to their parents. Taub (1997) discovered that although women may develop a strong sense of autonomy, they do not necessarily have a decreased attachment to their parents (p. 651). According to Taub, seniors in college were more autonomous than freshmen, but their attachment to parents was not automatically

smaller than that of younger students (p. 651). These findings suggested, once again, that attachment to parents and the encouragement of attachment to parents is not always a detrimental characteristic for college students to have. Parents can promote autonomy in their children while still functioning as support for them.

While this attitude of thinking of parents as a support system and as dispensers of advice denotes an increased need and dependence on parents, Valery, O'Connor, and Jennings (1997) showed that students are not constantly asking for advice from their parents (p. 331). According to the study, parents are willing to give advice when it is asked for, but students are not constantly requesting it (p. 331). Another significant finding from the study was that college students are more likely to turn to their mothers for help than from their father because mothers were perceived to have been more open to offering emotional support (p. 331). Perhaps, as reviewed earlier, students find that their fathers are the dominant disciplinarians, and it is not until they have developed further in their college experience that they will approach their fathers for advice.

Communication Approaches

With the advent of technology, maintaining contact with students has become even easier for parents. While some may find that this technology contributes to communication between students and parents, others believe this could be detrimental to the student and parent relationship (Trice, 2002, p. 332). In his study, Trice found that students are communicating with their parents more by email. However, increased communication did not have a negative effect on students and their development (p. 332). Indeed, these messages primarily consisted of a report of events and activities instead of a

constant search for advice or approval. Thus, while technology might contribute to increased contact between families and students, this development has not hampered a student's ability to grow and gain a sense of independence.

With the increased usage of computers, many families have found it easier to maintain a frequent line of communication, and according to Kenny and Donaldson (1992), some parental interaction can have a negative effect on students when the communications foster feelings of guilt, anxiety, and resentment (p. 435). Clearly, some parents do not know how to effectively communicate with their students, which is an area for college administrators to focus on education. In situations in which students are effectively and positively communicating with their parents, the students are flourishing (p. 435). Therefore, it is necessary for college and university administrators to be able to recognize when parents need assistance in learning how to effectively communicate with their students. Until parents know the right approach to communicate with their students, administrators will find a plethora of struggling students who suffer because of family communication problems.

Chickering and Reisser (1993) believed that students take a journey through seven vectors of development as they age and mature, and this development is a key component of the experiences of college students because the development truly begins when they come to college. Chickering and Reisser included the ability to relate to others and control their emotions in the second vector, Managing Emotions (p. 88). The more college students are able to effectively communicate their emotions and feelings, the easier it will be for the students to adapt to college life because they avoid the interference of toxic feelings such as fear and anxiety (p. 90). Students become aware of

their emotions when they allow themselves to feel them and not repress them (p. 101). It is essential for students to not be afraid to admit their feelings for them to positively adapt to life in college.

Current Theoretical Perspectives

In this segment of the review of literature, the studies that have a direct effect on student development and parent involvement will be discussed, as well as parents' expectations for their students. For all intents and purposes, this section will discuss themes directly relevant to the benefits of parent involvement and the desires and expectations of parents who get involved in parents associations.

Parent Involvement and Identity Development

Many researchers believe that parental involvement has a positive effect on students and schools in general, and having an understanding of the benefits of parental involvement is key in successfully implementing a program for an institution of higher education. Others find a strong correlation between parental attachment and successful adjustment and identity development. If a school can successfully make parents of college students feel that they are welcome and a part of the university community, those parents will be a positive influence on their students and each other. Parental relationships with their children should be encouraged to promote healthy student adjustment and development.

For a college or university to be able to encourage such strong relationships between parent and student, the school must have a strong relationship with the family.

To foster a healthy relationship, colleges and universities must find what parents want from a relationship so the schools can offer a beneficial relationship.

According to Tichenor (1997), parental involvement is a key component of a successful education (p. 233). Not only does involvement increase student achievement, attendance, and self-esteem, but it also contributes to parent satisfaction (p. 233). As a result of the significance of parental involvement, Tichenor advocated increased education for prospective elementary education teachers so that they can find effective ways to involve the parents of their students (p. 237). These soon-to-be teachers also professed an interest and a need in learning how to more actively communicate with parents to offer opportunities for the parents to become a more influential and positive contributor to their students' experiences (p. 237). In essence, professors as well as students who plan to be future educators find that involvement of parents is a priority in creating successful learning environments for students. This priority can be translated to the realm of higher education by focusing more on educating college professors and administrators on how to effectively increase parental involvement.

Following with the concept of introducing training on promoting parental involvement for prospective educators, Izzo, Weissberg, Kasprow, and Fendrich (1999) suggested that increasing parental involvement in students' educational environments serves to promote more effective and improved school functioning (p. 818). In their longitudinal study of over 1200 elementary students, the researchers stated, "...Schools need to engage in more proactive outreach efforts to foster parent participation" (p. 834). This clearly states the benefits of continued parental involvement and support. If schools

are willing to open doors for parents to remain attached to their students, the schools help themselves achieve a more effective educational environment.

A multitude of studies discuss the effect of parental involvement on student development and adjustment. While many researchers have studied the effects of parental involvement on young children, few researchers have delved into the life of college students and the effect that parental relationships can have on their growth and development. While none would argue that a parent's involvement in school activities could positively affect a youngster's development, many underestimate the significance of a parents' influence on a young adult.

Wintre and Yaffe (2000) studied the effects of parental relationships on a student's ability to adjust to the rigors of college life, from the development of emotional perspectives to the academic success of the student (p. 9). According to Wintre and Yaffe, the true purpose of the study was to "...identify some of the factors of students' lives that may facilitate adaptation to university life, and to focus on one specific and often neglected area, namely, their relationships with their parents" (p. 10). For the purpose of their study, the researchers limited the dimensions of parental relationships that they would examine. The three dimensions that the researchers focused on were the style of parenting, the present relationships between parent and student, and variables of psychological health (p. 9).

At the conclusion of the study, Wintre and Yaffe (2000) found that where a strong level of mutual reciprocity was evident, the students involved in the parental relationship enjoyed a more successful emotional adaptation to college (p. 14). In essence, a relationship having mutual reciprocity represents a relationship in which all participants

are considered equals, and along with an understanding of mutual equality, people involved in these relationships share an open communication along with an understanding and openness to each other's viewpoint (p. 14). Essentially, the researchers found that students who engage in a relationship with their parents that includes open communication and a mutual respect are more likely to have a stronger sense of emotional health.

Along with the important role of mutual reciprocity, Wintre and Yaffe (2000) discovered that the involvement of a parent in a student's life makes a significant contribution to the student's successful adjustment to life at college. The researchers believed that because the involvement of parents can directly and positively affect a student, it is necessary to provide an opportunity for parents to be a part of the university by informing them of issues involved with university life as well as the challenges that college students face. Therefore, a college parents association that offers services that include information on these topics is meeting the needs of the parents of students, which will indirectly give a benefit to the student.

Perhaps one of the potential downfalls of parent involvement is the domination of the parent to the point that the student does not learn how to develop a sense of autonomy and competence. If parents are accustomed to taking charge and taking the responsibility away from the student, that parent robs the student of the experience of developing a sense of competence.

Smith, English, and Vasek (2002) discussed the efforts of some parents to take charge despite the fact that their students have entered the realm of higher education. In their study about parent involvement with first year students with learning disabilities,

Smith et al. discovered that parents have a difficult time leaving the responsibility of academics to their students, and they do it without being aware that their actions are detrimental to the development of their student (p. 497). Although these parents are well meaning and are only continuing to do what they did for their children when they were in high school, these parents are making the transition from high school to college more difficult for their students (p. 501). In these situations, it would be beneficial for a parents association to be available to consult the parent on the proper actions to take to ensure their student's successful transition and development into a competent adult.

Parental Expectations and Desires

One of the most under researched areas about parent involvement centers on what parents want from a college or university in terms of communication, and as a result, colleges and universities lack essential information that could help them improve on ways to communicate with parents (Bers & Galowich, 2002, p. 68).

In a study conducted by Reed, Jones, Walker, and Hoover-Dempsey (2000), three main factors were discovered that explained why parents got involved in parents associations. The researchers found that "…role construction, sense of efficacy, and perceptions of teacher invitations predict [the] level of parental involvement" (p. 8). Principally, parents wanted to feel that they had a purpose if they were going to become involved in a parents association, and it is the job of the teacher, or in the case of colleges, the leadership of the parents associations, to make parents feel welcome and needed. While this study centered on elementary aged school children and their parents, the same tenets can be applied to the parents of college students. As previously discussed,

parents of today's college students are more involved in their students lives, and that involvement does not end upon graduation from high school.

When parents look at the value of a school or the success of a student, they usually look at the academic records of the school and of their student (Bers & Galowich, 2002, p. 74). Parents do not differentiate between academic achievement and maturity; in fact, most parents see the two as synonymous. To a parent, one of the most important aspects of college is the career development and improvement that results from years of academic study and practical work (Bisset, Borja, Brassard, & Reohr, 1999, p. 395). The most significant finding from Bers and Galowich's study was that parents wanted and expected to be involved with the life of their college student. In today's society, many parents are paying for their children's higher education, and as a result, they want more of a say in what topics are studied and in the general life of their college student. In fact, parents want and expect more information about students' lives, and they want it directly from the institution. In an age when *in loco parentis* is no longer a general approach to college life, parents want updates on their student's class attendance and academic accomplishments. Parents want to assure that their students take advantage of the educational opportunities that are available to them, and the parents are willing to pull the students out of school if they are not performing well.

Parents are not patient with students who are not living up to their full potential and would not hesitate to punish them. However, parents expect full rights for their students if they are facing disciplinary action from the university (Janosik, 2001, p.117). It may be a double standard, but attitudes and desires such as these have resulted in the new wave of parents associations on campuses across the country. These new parents

associations may not inform parents about their students' academic results, but the associations are there for the parent and act as a direct link to the university. If the parent has a question or a concern, the parents association is there to answer the question or act as a liaison for the parent and student.

Conclusions

In conclusion, the topic of parents associations and parent involvement at the college level has been a highly under researched area, but more recently, parents associations have emerged. With the increased awareness of this new field, researchers have begun to take a deeper look at parental involvement at the college level. While there is a plethora of information on college student adjustment as it relates to family structure and communication, little can be found that directly contributes to research on college parents associations and involvement. Although the literature effectively discusses the role that parental attachment has on identity and competence development, little, if any, information exists that ties the needs and wishes of parents and parent involvement on the college level to the success of college students. Previous research has revealed what parents of elementary students want regarding involvement in school activities. While these desires may be easily translated to parents of college students, a study looking into the desires and needs of current parents of college students would be a beneficial addition to the body of literature on parent involvement. To fulfill the needs of the parents of today's college students, college administrators need to know the needs and desires of college parents, and the goal of this research study is to determine just what these parents need.

Summary

The body of literature shows that parental attachment has its benefits and its problems, but the overwhelming majority of information shows the importance of positive parental attachment as a factor in identity development and successful college transitions. In terms of the aspects of membership that parents are most attracted to, research shows that elementary school parents are interested in making a difference and feeling welcome. At this time, no research has been conducted to attain information on the effectiveness of parents associations according to the parents involved in these organizations.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Introduction to the Chapter

In the previous chapter, the review of literature described the current trends regarding parent involvement, and in this chapter, the methods used to conduct this descriptive study will be stated. The primary purposes of this study were to: (a) determine what services members of the parents association expect, (b) determine whether or not parents association members are aware of the services offered to them, and (c) determine what other factors contribute to parents becoming members of the parents association. To successfully complete the purposes of the study, a questionnaire was used to discover the parents' expectations of membership in a parents association. This chapter will describe the necessary procedures that were completed to fulfill the aforementioned purposes. Included in this discussion of methodology will be the selection of the population, sampling procedure, instrumentation, data collection, and analysis procedures.

Methods

This research involves a survey and a descriptive design. Participants who agreed to take part in this research were asked to complete a questionnaire and to furnish demographic information that served as the data collection method for the study. The questionnaire was mailed to the participants with a letter that informed them about the study.

Selection of the Population

The target population of this study was the members of The University of Tennessee Parents Association.

Sample Frame

The sample frame of the study was the membership list from the population of the University of Tennessee Parents Association. At the time of the study, the population of The University of Tennessee Parents Association included 1,700 families, and these families served as the sampling frame for this study.

Sampling and Procedure

Because the sample frame was the families included on the membership list of The University of Tennessee Parents Association, this study used a representative sample of the entire population. Therefore, this study aimed at a sample size of at least 200 families. All parents or guardians of each family selected were asked to participate in the study.

To ensure that this study was as representative of the available population as possible, a random sampling technique was employed. When the membership list of the University of Tennessee Parents Association was received, each family was assigned a number, and after selecting an arbitrary number from a table of random numbers, the researcher found the corresponding family on the numbered list of members. This process of random selection was repeated until the desired number of participants had been selected. Given that there was a possibility that some of the families would not respond to the request for participation, it was desirable to increase the sample size beyond the required 200 families. The researcher sought to include 225 families in the study to guarantee that the sample size was large enough for an effective study.

Another step that was taken to ensure a respectable response rate was to double sample the population. Once the original 225 questionnaires were mailed to potential participants, the researcher once again took a random sample from the remaining University of Tennessee Parents Association members. The selection process was performed again, and another 225 questionnaires were mailed to another selection of the population.

When conducting research with a population such as this, it is necessary to assure participants that their identities and responses will be kept confidential. The participants of the study were guaranteed anonymity because the system of distributing the questionnaires ensured that questionnaires could not be linked to a particular family by any coding mechanisms. Participants were not asked to include any identifying personal information on any of the forms they returned. In fact, once the questionnaire left the participant, there was no way for the researcher to know whose responses were on the form. To further ensure anonymity and confidentiality, the completed questionnaires were stored in a locked section of the researcher's academic department.

Instrumentation

After reviewing the related literature, the researcher did not identify a valid instrument that could be used to answer the study questions. As a result, the researcher developed a new questionnaire to address the study's questions.

To attend to validity and reliability, the researcher performed a pilot test of the questionnaire. This pilot test sought to establish the face validity of the instrument. Face validity "...pertains to whether the test 'looks valid' to the examinees" (Anastasi, 1988,

p. 144). The pilot test of the instrument included three phases. Phase One of the pilot test involved a review of the instrument by the thesis committee. Committee members examined the instrument to insure that the included questions addressed the objectives of the study. Once the thesis committee approved the instrument, the researcher proceeded to Phase Two of the pilot test, a review of the instrument by current student affairs administrators at The University of Tennessee. The administrators were selected because of their expertise in working with parents and their understanding of current research in the field of higher education. The administrators helped determine whether or not the researcher had left any essential elements out of the instrument. They read for clarity and suitability of the questions. After the student affairs professionals had completed their review of the instrument, the researcher moved to Phase Three of the pilot test, the review of the instrument by parents of University of Tennessee college students. The parents provided comments on the readability and clarity of the questions and directions on the instrument. After all these phases were completed, the researcher used the results of the pilot study to improve the survey instrument. Once the validity of the instrument had been established, the instrument was delivered to the randomly selected participants.

Procedures

Data Collection

The first step in the data collection process was the selection of the population and the sample size. Once the questionnaire was prepared, the names of the randomly selected participants were printed onto mailing labels, and the labels were attached to envelopes holding the information to be sent to the participants. This information included the letter of transmittal that explained the instructions for the questionnaire,

discussed the purpose of the study, and guaranteed anonymity and confidentiality. The introduction letter also included a deadline by which the surveys must have been completed. The envelope also included a copy of the questionnaire and an addressed envelope in which the completed questionnaire was to be returned. Data were collected from the participants from the completed questionnaires.

Data Analysis

Upon receipt of the data, the data were entered into a spreadsheet that displayed the complete collection. Once the data were tallied, they were ready to be analyzed. The descriptive statistics (mean, median, mode, and frequencies) were calculated using SPSS version 12.0. A chi-square analysis was used to determine whether the observations were a result of chance or if there was a relationship between the demographics of the participants, e.g. level of education, and their answers. Simple frequencies and means were employed to present a demographic representation of the population that was studied.

The first area to be examined was the demographics of the participants. The purpose of this examination was to determine whether or not this randomly selected participant pool adequately and accurately represented the total population of parents who are members at the University of Tennessee. Simultaneously, the demographic information served to show how participants from different backgrounds responded to the instrument. To address this issue, a chi-square value was computed and then tested for significance. From this analysis, the researcher determined whether or not data observed in the distribution of frequencies were expected based on the likely distribution of

number or was significant because of the influence of the demographics on the data. With this simple statistical analysis of the data in conjunction with the demographic information, the researcher was able to draw conclusions from the study.

In addition to the demographic make-up of the population, the data collected from the survey questions were used to identify which forms of communication and the regularity of which the parents want the information. These data not only provided information about what parents want from their membership but also provided an understanding of what type of participation and involvement the parents want to have with the university. The researcher used the mode of these data to interpret which services are most desired by the participants, the frequency and method in which they want the services, and what levels of involvement the parents want to have.

After both the demographics and the survey questions were analyzed, the researcher drew conclusions from the data. These conclusions determined what services parents look for in a parents association, what level of involvement parents look for in an association, the influence of demographic variables on participants' choices, and whether or not University of Tennessee parents are aware of the services offered to them as a result of their membership. Furthermore, the researcher drew inferences from the correlations between the demographics of the participants and the answers that they provided on the survey. From these inferences, the researcher was able to determine what services parents desire when joining parents associations, why parents join parents associations, and whether or not the members of the University of Tennessee Parents association are aware of the services offered to them. The data and inferences made from the data helped answer the research questions outlined in Chapter I.

Summary

This chapter has discussed the procedures and processes that were implemented to accurately perform this study. In this descriptive study, the data were collected entirely through the mail. After the randomly selected participants completed the questionnaires, the data were processed and descriptive statistics were calculated using SPSS version 12.0. Overall, the results of the survey were used to clarify the needs, satisfaction, and expectations of the parents of college students when they become members of the Parents Association. After the data were collected and analyzed, the researcher drew conclusions, which will be reported in later chapters. Additionally, the implications of these results will be coupled with a discussion of whether or not college and universities can and should meet all of the needs and desires of the parents of college students. To conclude this study, a discussion of the best interests of the student, parent, and institution will be included as it relates to the data found through the survey of the parents who participated in the questionnaire.

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS OF THE STUDY

Introduction of the Chapter

Five hundred potential participants received copies of the instrument, and 203 participants completed and returned the surveys by the requested due date. These responses resulted in a response rate of 40.6%. Six completed instruments were received past the deadline, after the original data had been collected, documented, and analyzed. This chapter will discuss the results of the study and will display tables of the received data.

In this chapter, results of the study are presented in order of the specific questions which were examined: (1) What services do parents desire from membership in Parents Associations; (2) What factors, other than membership services, contribute to parents becoming involved in a parents association; (3) What aspects of current services appeal to parents involved in a parents association; (4) To what extent are parents aware of all services available to them through membership; and (5) Will the data reveal that certain variables in the demographics of the participants, such as gender, in state or out of state residence, and parental educational background, influence a parent's needs and expectations of a parents association?

Services for Parents

Research Question 1 addressed the services that parents desire from membership in a parents association, and Questions 16, 17, 18, and 19 from the instrument directly refer to issues regarding new services the parents association would provide. Participants were asked to select whether or not they desired any of the services mentioned. Questions

and responses addressing services desired by the participants were assessed through the use of a chi-square analysis as a test of goodness of fit.

While participants completed and returned 203 surveys, not every survey included responses for all of the questions that specifically addressed new services that parents wanted from the parents association. Despite the negligible number of missing answers, the data established a clear understanding of the desires of parents. Subjects identified as having a score of one were classified as parents for a particular service while participants with a score of two were classified as parents who did not want a particular service offered.

Table 1 summarizes the responses and chi square values for questions 16, 17, 18, and 19, and these questions asked participants to indicate whether or not they were interested in electronic discussion groups, regional branches of the association, Parent Council, or a Spring Family Weekend. While a majority of participants mentioned that they were not interested in electronic discussions, local branches, or Parent Council, over 80% of participants indicated that they were interested in participating in a Spring Family Weekend.

In Question 16, 70% of respondents indicated that they were not interested in an electronic discussion group. The chi-square value of 32 indicates that the responses were not equally distributed and therefore were not what would be expected to occur by chance. Question 17 researched whether or not members were interested in the formation of small branches of the parents association, and a majority of the participants indicated that they would not be interested in the new service. A chi square value of 2.213 indicates that the responses were not statistically significant at a 0.05 level. The formation of a

Table 1. Frequency Distributions and Chi Square Values for Questions 16-19

Question	Responses		X^2
	Yes	No	
16 – Electronic Discussions	60	140	32*
17 – Local Branches	89	110	2.213
18 – Parent Council	41	155	66.306*
19 – Spring Family Weekend	150	36	69.871*

* Indicates Chi-Square Value significant at 0.05 level

Parent Council was the topic of Question 18, and participants very clearly were not interested in such a group. Almost 80% of participants indicated that they were not interested in such a program, and this dramatic discrepancy between the two possible responses is further demonstrated by the chi square value of 66.306, which indicates a significant departure from the possibility that chance played a role in the distribution of the responses. Finally, Question 19 addressed the option of Spring Family Weekend, and the chi square value was 69.871, which indicates a departure from what would be expected by chance.

In conclusion, an analysis of the frequency distribution and chi square tests of goodness of fit served to determine whether or not responses were a result of chance, i.e. what would be expected if responses were not significant, or if responses indicated certain services that participants would be interested in having as members of a parents association.

Factors Leading to Membership

Research Question 2 asked what factors led parents to join a parents association, and Question 3 on the instrument answered the inquiry as it asked participants to identify reasons why they joined the parents association. Participant responses revealed two main factors that encouraged them to join the association, an opportunity to get up-to-date campus information and a helpful location on campus.

Question 3 included a list of five possible reasons for joining the association, and participants were asked to make the two selections that reflected their reasons for joining. The four of the possible responses were that parents wanted to know what was happening

on campus, to check up on their student, to have a place to go for help at the institution, and to get tickets to football games. An option to write in a response that was not listed was also included. In order to analyze the responses, the question was broken into five separate sub-questions and was given a new name, e.g. Question 3a or Question 3b. Once Question 3 was separated into the five new options, the responses were counted. To signify the selection of one of the answer choices, each sub-question was assigned two values, one and two. One signified that the participant included that answer as one of the reasons why he or she got involved in the association. Two denoted that the participant did not list this selection as one of his or her reasons for becoming a member.

Once the question was broken into the sub-questions, a simple frequency distribution and calculation of percentages were used to calculate the factors leading to membership, and these calculations may be seen in Table 2. Question 3a asked whether or not a desire to know current campus information contributed to participants' decisions to join. According to the data, 96% of the responses indicated that this factor played a part in the decision about membership, and responses to Question 3c demonstrate that a majority of participants included having a place to go for help as one of the reasons that they joined the association. Conversely, only 11% of the responses to Question 3b and 5% of the responses to Question 3d indicated that the respective topics had any effect on the decision for membership. According to the responses, the ability to check in on students or to get football tickets did not play a role in the decision to join the association. Question 3e gave participants the option of writing in a reason that had not already been listed, and over 10% of participants took advantage of the opportunity to write another

Table 2. Frequency Distributions and Percentages for Question 3

Question	Responses			
	Yes		No	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
3a – Campus Information	194	96%	8	4%
3b – Check on Student	23	11%	179	89%
3c – Place to go for Help	114	56%	88	44%
3d – Get football Tickets	11	5%	191	95%
3e– Other	27	13%	175	87%

answer. The responses to the write in portion all addressed one main issue, which was staying connected to events and publications of the institution.

In Question 3, participants were given five options from which they could select to describe the factors that encouraged them to join the parents association, and a majority of the participants listed an opportunity to get up-to-date campus information and a helpful location on campus as the two main reasons that influenced decisions about membership.

Evaluation of Current Services

Research Question 3 sought to evaluate the current services of the parents association, and Questions 1, 2, 4-15, and 20 evaluate the mission, purposes, fees, services, methods of delivery, and staff of the current association. In these questions, participants were asked to rate their satisfaction with the programs as well as highlight particular methods of transmittal and content that they would like to see in future association publications. Questions and responses addressing the evaluation of the services were assessed through the use of a chi-square analysis as a test of goodness of fit. Table 3 recapitulates the responses for Questions 1 – 2, 4 – 9, and 13 – 15, which asked the participants to evaluate the current services of the association, and Table 4 displays the responses for Questions 10 – 12 which asked participants to select which methods of delivery and types of information they would like to receive.

Question 1, Question 2, and Question 4 all addressed the evaluation of the mission and fees of the parents association. Each of the questions was based on a Likert scale with score choices of 0 through 5. The values assigned to the numbers ranged from

Table 3. Frequency Distributions and Chi Square Values for Questions 1-2, 4-9, and 13-15

Question	Responses						X^2
	0[a]	1[b]	2[c]	3[d]	4[e]	5[f]	
1 – Mission Statement	3	5	6	22	106	61	255.45*
2a – Purpose 1: Partnerships	3	2	10	53	91	44	185.35*
2b – Purpose 2: Communication	5	2	11	27	92	65	201.01*
2c – Purpose 3: Involvement	4	2	8	39	105	42	231.82*
2d – Purpose 4: Fundraising	9	2	7	66	89	27	194.20*
4 – Fees	0	3	7	25	105	62	182.95*
5 – Parent Handbook	9	1	4	24	118	46	294.49*
6 – Listserv	22	4	9	22	64	79	142.06*
7 – Family Weekend	27	2	9	52	62	43	88.42*
8 – Parents and Families Fund	48	0	2	72	60	15	90.23*
9 – Newsletter	26	4	5	35	89	42	146.08*
13 – Director	90	0	2	62	34	12	131.20*
14 – Administrative Assistant	92	0	1	63	29	17	139.47*
15 – Graduate Assistant	85	0	4	57	36	17	104.39*

* Indicates Chi-Square Value significant at 0.05 level
[a] = unfamiliar
[b] = very unsatisfied
[c] = not satisfied
[d] = neutral
[e] = satisfied
[f] = very satisfied

Unfamiliar (0) and Very Unsatisfied (1) to Very Satisfied (5). Participants selected one choice as their evaluation, and the responses were analyzed after the completion of the collection of data.

Question 1 asked participants to evaluate their satisfaction with the association's fulfillment of its mission statement, and the responses were found to be significant at a 0.05 level according to the chi square test of goodness of fit. The results of this analysis demonstrated that the observed satisfaction of the participants was influenced by the participants' perception of the mission statement and not by a random anomaly of distribution. Question 2 consisted of four separate queries that each addressed one of the four purposes of the association, developing partnerships, improving communication, promoting involvement, and exploring fundraising options. The analyses of Purposes 1 through 4 in Questions 2a, 2b, 2c, and 2d demonstrate two main findings: 1) a majority of participants were either satisfied or very satisfied with each purpose and 2) each collection of responses for the questions is statistically significant in a chi square test of goodness of fit.

Participants' satisfaction with the membership fee paid at the beginning of the membership process is the topic addressed in Question 4. According to the data, more than 82% of participants are either satisfied or very satisfied with the fee they paid when they joined the association. Once again, the calculation of a chi square test for goodness of fit indicates that the number of responses per option is a departure from what would have been expected had the responses been a result of pure chance. Instead of the responses remaining even for each possible category, the majority of the responses are found in favor of the fee.

Questions 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 13, 14, and 15 addressed participants' satisfaction with the basic services and staff of the parents association, and the frequency distributions and chi square calculations of goodness of fit may be found in Table 3. As with the previous questions regarding the evaluation of the fees and mission of the association, the questions were based on a Likert scale with score choices of 0 through 5, and the same values were assigned to the numbers ranging from Unfamiliar or No Interaction to Very Satisfied.

Current services of the parents association were addressed by Questions 5 through 9, and parents indicated their satisfaction with each of the services. Questions 13 through 15 asked participants to rate their experiences with the three staff members of the parents association, and participants indicated their selection in the same manner as with the evaluation of the services. Each of these questions (Questions 5 – 9 and 13 – 15) was found to be statistically significant through a calculation of the question's chi square goodness of fit. These responses were each found to be significant because they departed from the expected count, which would have been an even distribution of responses for each possible rating. The resulting chi square values may be found in Table 3.

The participants positively evaluated services including the Parent Handbook, the listserv, Family Weekend, and the newsletter with a majority of responses as either satisfied or very satisfied. In Question 8, participants evaluated their satisfaction with the Parents and Families Fund, and the largest percentage (almost 37%) of the responses fell under neutral for this service.

According to the responses from Questions 13, 14, and 15, over 40% of participants indicated that they had no interaction with any of the three staff members of

the association. While this figure is not a clear majority of the participants, it does make up the largest collection of the responses. The second most commonly selected response was a rating of neutral, and nearly all of the remaining responses were either satisfied or very satisfied with the staff members.

Questions 10, 11, and 12 address the modes and contents of publications, and as a result of the possible responses, these questions were evaluated in a different manner. Question 12 was analyzed similar to that of Question 3, as the question was split into different sub-questions addressing each possible answer. The question had seven possible answers, and participants selected all answers that they thought would apply. Answer possibilities were athletics, administration, academics, disciplinary programs, campus safety, and state government. Participants also had the option to write in an answer that was not included on the list. Each possible answer was assigned its own number, i.e. the first available response for Question 12 was given the number of Question 12a. This pattern continued through each available response, resulting in the division of Question 12 into seven separate questions. To denote the selection of one of the answer choices, each answer was assigned two values, one and two. One signified that the participant included that answer as one of the topics he or she wanted included in the newsletter, and two denoted that the participant did not list this selection as one of the newsletter topics desired. Breaking the answers down in this manner allowed for a proper evaluation and frequency count of the responses, and tests of independence were then run on the individual selections of the questions.

Questions 10 and 11 were also analyzed differently because of the nature of their answer possibilities. For both questions, there were three possible answers regarding the

frequency and method of receiving publications, and the participant selected the answer that was most desirable. For Question 10, answer possibilities were once a semester, once a year, and once a month, and Question 11 had answer possibilities of e-mail, website, and postal mail. These answers were assigned the values of one, two, and three, respectively. Chi-square analysis for goodness of fit was performed on each of these questions, and each questions' responses were found to be significant as a result of the calculated chi square. Table 4 summarizes the frequency distributions and chi square values for questions 10 through 12.

In responses to Question 10, almost 57% of participants indicated that they wanted to receive the newsletter once per semester, and only 1 response indicated that one newsletter a month was ideal. Question 11 asked participants to evaluate which method of delivery they preferred for their newsletter, and 62% of participants indicated that they wanted the newsletter to be delivered to them through the postal service.

Question 12 further delved into an evaluation of the newsletter by asking participants what topics they wanted to see covered. Once the question was broken into the sub-questions, a simple frequency distribution was used to calculate the topics to be included in the newsletter. Question 12a asked whether or not a participant wanted information about athletics to be included. According to the data, 63% of the responses indicated that this topic should be included in newsletters, and well over 67% of the responses indicated information on the institution's administration was important to include in the newsletter, as determined by responses to Question 12b. Similarly, responses to Question 12c demonstrate that more than 94% of participants wanted information about academics included in newsletters, and 84% of responses indicated that

Table 4. Frequency Distributions and Chi Square Values for Questions 10 – 12

	Responses			
Question	**1/Semester**	**1/Year**	**1/Month**	**X^2**
10 – Frequency of Newsletter	110	84	1	99.72*
	E-mail	**Website**	**Postal Mail**	**X^2**
11 – Distribution of Newsletter	61	14	122	89.31*
	Yes	**No**	**X^2**	
12a – Athletics	123	72	13.34*	
12b – Administration	132	63	24.42*	
12c – Academics	185	10	157.05*	
12d – Disciplinary Programs	68	127	17.85*	
12e – Campus Safety	164	31	90.71*	
12f – State Government	50	145	46.28*	
12g - Other	35	158	207.97*	

* Indicates Chi-Square Value significant at 0.05 level

campus safety should be included in future newsletters. Participants indicated that these topics were important to include in the newsletter.

Only 35% of participants indicated that discipline was an important topic to be included in the newsletter. Question 12f asked participants whether or not they wanted information on state government concerns included in the newsletter, and only a quarter of participants listed this as an important factor. Question 12g gave participants the option of writing in a topic to be included in the newsletter that had not already been listed, and over 18% of participants took advantage of the opportunity to add a new item. The responses consisted of suggestions for more campus organization and scholarship information as well as information to help parents cope with adjusting to life without their students.

The instrument also provided one other way for participants to write in responses. Question 20 asked participants for any suggestions about how the association could improve upon any of its services. Less than 20 participants took the opportunity to write notes, and of those participants that included any comments, almost all comments were addressed to the researcher wishing her good luck on her studies or thanking her for including parents in her research. Only one response indicated any suggestions for improvement, and that was one participant who requested more up-to-date information on membership services and fees regarding the association.

Research Question 3 delved deeply into an evaluation of the current services and staffing that the parents association offered, and it gave participants an opportunity to evaluate programs and give feedback about certain services they would like to see changed.

Awareness of Services

Research Question 4 wanted to discover whether or not members were aware of the services provided to them. To address whether or not participants were aware of the current services, Questions 5 through 9 and 13 through 15 included a separate answer possibility. Participants were asked to identify whether or not they were familiar enough with a service or staff member to evaluate it. If they were not familiar with the staff member or service, they selected Unfamiliar or No Interaction, which held a 0 value on the Likert scale. Table 5 summarizes the frequency distributions and percentages for Questions 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 13, 14, and 15.

Questions 5 through 9 describe the services offered by the parents association. Responses receiving a zero or unfamiliar score on Questions 5 through 9 did not total more than 25% of responses for any of the respective questions. Questions 13, 14, and 15 addressed the staff members of the parents association, and for each question, at least 42% of participants listed a score of 0 or No Interaction towards the respective staff member. Participants were more aware of services than they were of staff members.

Responses addressing the purpose of Research Question 4 indicated that a majority of participants were aware of the services offered by the association but that participants were not familiar with the staff members of the association. Participants were aware of the services but did not realize who was providing such services.

Demographic Influence

Research Question 5 asked whether or not responses to questions are independent of the demographic variables of the participants. The influence of the different

Table 5. Frequency Distributions and Percentages for Questions 5-9 and 13 - 15

	Responses						
Question	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**% Selecting 0**
5 – Parent Handbook	9	1	4	24	118	46	4.46%
6 – Listserv	22	4	9	22	64	79	11.00%
7 – Family Weekend	27	2	9	52	62	43	13.85%
8 – Parents and Families Fund	48	0	2	72	60	15	24.37%
9 – Newsletter	26	4	5	35	89	42	12.94%
13 – Director	90	0	2	62	34	12	45.00%
14 – Administrative Assistant	92	0	1	63	29	17	45.54%
15 – Graduate Assistant	85	0	4	57	36	17	42.71%

demographic backgrounds of the participants on the responses to the survey was analyzed by the use of a two-dimensional chi-square test of significance. The demographic variables were set against the responses of the participants to each and every question (Questions 1 – 19) to see if there was any relationship between the responses and the variables. Questions 1, 2, 4 – 9, and 13 – 15 were based on a Likert scale. For these questions, a value was assigned to the answers of Unfamiliar or No Interaction. Responses of Satisfied or Very Satisfied were grouped together in the chi square analysis, as were responses of very unsatisfied and not satisfied. Because of this grouping, there were 4 possible responses analyzed in the test of independence. For Questions 3a-e, 12a-g, and 16 through 19, responses were separated into two possible answers, yes and no. Yes indicated that participants indicated the positive choice, and No indicated that participants either selected no or chose not to select an answer.

Four demographic variables were identified on the survey: gender, state residence, level of education, and type of Parents Association membership, and participants made their selections from the survey's list of possible answers. The responses were then analyzed with the demographic information, and the tests of significance drew attention to several different questions and demographic influences. The statistically significant findings will be discussed in the following section.

The first demographic variable tested was gender, and the survey questions were tested against the variables to discover whether or not the questions were independent. A chi square test of independence was calculated between gender and each question. Values were given to each gender. Participants who answered as male were assigned a value of one, and participants who answered as female were assigned a value of two.

According to the results of the chi-square tests for independence, the participants' responses to Questions 3b and 18 were influenced by demographic variables. Table 6 shows the chi-square value for both Question 3b and Question 18 when tested for relationships with gender. Question 3b addressed checking up on students as a factor leading to membership, and the chi-square value was 6.73 and the degrees of freedom were 1. Determining whether or not participants were interested in the creation of Parent Council within the parents association was the goal of Question 18, and the chi-square value was 5.89 and the degrees of freedom were 1.

The second demographic variable that was tested was state residency. As with gender, the surveys questions were tested along with the variables to discover whether or not question responses were independent of the demographic variables. Values were given to each residency option, Tennessee resident and non-Tennessee resident. Participants who answered as residents of the state were assigned a value of one, and participants who answered as from out of state were assigned a value of two. According to the results of the chi-square tests of independence, responses to Questions 3d, 3e, 6, 7, 12a, and 18 were influenced by demographic variables.

Table 7 summarizes the data analyzed between Questions 1 through 19 and the demographic variable of residency. More specifically, Table 7 shows the six questions that were influenced by the demographic variable. Responses to two of the questions asking about factors leading to membership were found to be influenced by residency. Table 7 indicates the chi-square value of 4.13 for Question 3d and a value of 5.99 for Question 3e. Questions 6 and 7 asked participants to evaluate the listserv and Family Weekend. Responses to the evaluation had a chi-square value of 10.74 with 3 degrees of

Table 6. Frequency Distributions and Chi Square Values for Gender and Questions 3b & 18

Question	Responses		X^2
	Yes	No	
3b – Check on Student			
Male	11	43	
Female	11	136	6.73
18 – Parent Council			
Male	5	48	
Female	36	106	5.89

Table 7. Frequency Distributions and Chi Square Values for Residency and Questions 3d, 3e, 6, 7, 12a, & 18

	Responses			
Question	**Yes**	**No**		X^2
3d – Get football Tickets				
Tennessee Resident	3	110		
Out-of-State Resident	8	78		4.13
3e– Other				
Tennessee Resident	9	104		
Out-of-State Resident	17	69		5.99
	Dissatisfied	**Neutral**	**Satisfied**	X^2
6 – Listserv				
Tennessee Resident	10	14	83	
Out-of-State Resident	3	8	57	10.74
7 – Family Weekend				
Tennessee Resident	6	38	53	
Out-of-State Resident	5	13	51	11.40
	Yes	**No**		X^2
12a – Athletics				
Tennessee Resident	60	48		
Out-of-State Resident	61	23		5.90
18 – Parent Council				
Tennessee Resident	29	79		
Out-of-State Resident	12	73		4.61

freedom. The evaluation of Family Weekend had a chi-square value of 11.40 with 3 degrees of freedom. Question 12a had a chi-square value of 5.903 with 1 degree of freedom, and it addressed whether or not participants wanted athletics in the newsletter. Finally, Question 18, once again addressing the Parent Council, had a chi-square value of 4.610.

The third demographic variable tested was level of education, and the surveys' questions were tested along with the variables to discover whether or not demographic information had an influence on the participants' responses. Values were given to each level of education possible. Participants who answered as having no college received a value of one and this continued through participants who identified that they had received a graduate degree. These participants were assigned a value of 4. After running the two-dimensional chi-square test, the results showed that there was no influence on the responses based upon the education of the participant, therefore Questions 1 – 19 were completely independent of the demographic variable of education.

The fourth demographic analyzed was that of the type of membership the participant had within the University of Tennessee Parents Association. Participants were faced with two possible answers, either Annual or Undergraduate Career. Participants who indicated that they were annual members received a value of one, while Undergraduate Career members received values of 2.

The results of the chi-square tests indicated that only one question (Question12d) was not independent of the demographic variable of membership type, and Table 8 summarizes the analysis of Question 12d. Question 12d verifies whether or not

Table 8. Frequency Distributions and Chi Square Values for Membership and Question 12d

Question	Responses		X^2
	Yes	No	
12d – Disciplinary			
Annual	55	87	
Undergraduate Career	12	39	3.83

participants want the topic of disciplinary programs to be included in the association's newsletter, and the chi-square value was 3.83 with one degree of freedom.

Summary

Data were analyzed around the concepts of frequency distributions and two-dimensional chi-square analyses. Participants were differentiated by four demographic variables. The four variables were set against the responses of the participants in a chi-square analysis of the findings, and there were ten different instances in which the demographic background of the participants influenced the responses to the survey. Participants also indicated which new programs they would like to see developed for future services, and frequency distribution clearly defined which services were desired and which were not. The instrument also addressed the factors that participants considered when they joined the parents association, and these factors were also firmly distinguished between those that were strongly influential and those that were not. The instrument also evaluated the participants' satisfaction and awareness of current services provided by the parents association, and while a strong majority of the participants were satisfied with the services currently provided, a strong minority were not aware of the services at all. Trends and significant findings identified from the analyzed data will be discussed in Chapter Five. Conclusions will be drawn and implications for further study will be made.

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSIONS

Introduction of the Chapter

In an ever-changing academic landscape, perhaps the most surprising new player in the realm of higher education is the family of the college student. As discussed previously, parents believe they have a right to take part in the college experience of their children because of several factors, including the cost of tuition and fees, the evolution of higher education's role in society, and their own denial of their students as children instead of adults (Scott and Daniel, 2001, p. 84). Parents want to play a larger role in their college students' lives, and colleges and universities have begun to cater to parents' needs by creating organizations that help them get involved in campus life without becoming permanent fixtures at the institution.

This study was concerned primarily with the needs and desires of parents of college students and with the evaluation of the services already provided by the Parents Association.

Discussion

New Services

When participants were asked about their desire for four new types of services, their answers were not what was expected. Previous research has shown that parents want to become actively involved in their students lives, but the findings of this study show that they do not want to get involved by joining discussion groups, branches of associations in different central locations, or joining the Parent Council. According to these participants, parents want services that will help them get involved in the university community without having to commit to the responsibility of getting involved in smaller

groups within the association. In general, the responses show that parents want services offered to them, but they do not want the added responsibility of organizing or working for a parents association. In a sense, today's parents want to get involved in college life to be served, not to add responsibility to their plates. The data do, however, raise the question as to what other types of services parents want as part of membership in a customer service oriented parents association.

Membership Factors

Responses regarding the reasons and factors for participants joining the parents association were abundantly clear. An overwhelming majority listed the ability to know what was occurring on campus as a major factor in joining. Surprisingly, participants made it abundantly clear that they were not interested in being able to check up on their student, and that option did not appeal to them when they were considering membership with the association. The majority of the subjects selected a place to go for help as a factor in their decision, but the discrepancy between the two options of yes or no was not as extreme as in the two previous options. For the final two options, a large majority selected neither the ability to get football tickets nor another option to write in a response as a selection. In conclusion, the majority of the participants wanted to stay in touch with the happenings of the institution and to have a place to go for help, and those needs influenced these participants to join the association.

Evaluation of Current Services

The evaluation of the current services of the association demonstrated both the needs that participants felt were being met and the areas in which the association could

improve on services. The overall evaluation of the mission, purpose, and fees of the association indicate that a formidable majority of the participants are highly satisfied with the parents association's fulfillment of their goals and objectives. The positive evaluation of the fees of the association show that the participants felt they were getting a good value of services from the money they have paid to join.

The evaluation of the staff members may answer the question about members' satisfaction with the staff, but it also raises questions about the interaction and services provided by the staff. For each evaluation, that of the director, administrative assistant, and graduate assistant, the majority of the participants responded that they had no interaction with that specific person. The second most frequently answered response was either a satisfaction with the staff member or a neutral feeling for the staff member. This shows that members who do have interaction with the staff are mildly satisfied with their encounter, but a majority of the members have never spoken to or do not remember encountering the staff.

The final components of the evaluation of the current services of the parents association are the publications and events. The data show that members are satisfied with the services of the association, as the majority of the evaluations rated these services as satisfactory. Participants also answered questions about the method and modes of delivery of one of the publications of the association, and the responses clearly define that participants are pleased to receive a copy of the newsletter in the mail every semester, which is the current mode and timing of the newsletter. Responses also indicated a major focus on academics, administration, and athletics as the three main

topics that members want information about. This coincides with the factors that contributed to their joining the association that were covered previously.

Awareness of Programs

The responses regarding the awareness of current services were substantial in terms of participants who were not aware of some of the essential services of the parents association. While the evaluation of the services was favorable and positive, approximately 20% of participants indicated that they were not familiar with some of the most basic programs provided by the association. While the parents association may have favorable evaluations of its services, it is important to take note that of this sample population of the association, 20% of the members were not aware of the services that are offered to members throughout the year.

Influences of Demographic Variables

Four demographic variables played an important part in this study. Gender, residency, level of education, and type of membership all had some sort of effect on the responses of the participants.

The first demographic to address is gender. Statistically, the effect of gender can be found in two questions. According to the data, the participants' gender affected responses about whether or not the ability to check in on their student affected a participant's decision to join the association. The data suggest that more men than originally expected were influenced by the ability to check up on their children. Conversely, fewer women indicated this option as one that influenced them in their decision-making. One other question was statistically affected by the influence of gender.

When asked if they would like to be involved in a Parent Council, a majority of the participants responded that they were not interested in such a responsibility. According to the data collected, men were more against this possible service than was originally anticipated, and once again, women were just the opposite of men. Women were more interested in getting involved in such a council, despite the fact that the expected responses were less than what was actually recorded.

Residency is the second demographic factor on which the focus turns, and this was perhaps the most influential of the four demographics in terms of effect on the participants' responses to the questions. All in all, the scores of both Tennessee residents and non-Tennessee residents fell along equal lines. Only a few situations arose in which residency seemed to affect the responses of participants. Out of state residents seemed more interested in getting football tickets, and they indicate that option as one of the factors that led to their decision about joining the association. Out of state residents were also more unfamiliar with the services provided by the association, and these types of participants were more eager to hear about the academic life of the university instead of athletic news. Out of state residents also seemed less interested in taking on new responsibilities in the new service options described to them.

Level of education was yet another demographic that was analyzed to see what, if any, influence it had on the participants' responses to the survey. According to the statistical analysis, the questions functioned independently of the demographic; therefore this demographic had no real effect on participants' responses. The data do show that a majority of the participants have either a college degree or higher. This fact alone may have an influence on the type of services that administrators plan for associations.

Administrators may want to gear events or publications with a different design if they feel the population of the association was a more educated community.

The fourth and final demographic variable was type of membership in the association, and the responses to this variable show the disparity between the two types of membership. Approximately 65% of the participants were annual members, and this percentage follows closely with the actual ratio of the two types of memberships. Participants who were annual members were consistently less aware of the services provided and were more likely to give a neutral evaluation of the services that they were aware of. Undergraduate Career members, members who joined for four years, were more aware of the services and more satisfied by the current services offered. In other areas, there was no real difference between the responses of the two separate types of members.

Conclusions

Based upon the previous discussion, five main conclusions may be drawn from the study. One of the primary research questions of this study was to determine the overall satisfaction of members of the association. This measure of satisfaction would consist of the evaluation of the mission, purpose, fees, programs, services, and staff of the current association. The responses of the participants indicate that there is an overall satisfaction with the organization and its practices. Participants were consistently satisfied or very satisfied with each and every current service or program provided by the organization. The participants' responses also indicated that they were satisfied with the association's ability to fulfill its mission and purpose statements. All in all, participants indicated a strong overall satisfaction with the parents association.

A second conclusion that may be drawn from the results of the study is the desired mode and level of involvement that parents want with their student's institution. The participants in this study indicated that they want and expect information to be disseminated from the institution, and this involvement denotes the parents' desire for the type of relationship they want with the institution of higher education. Their unwillingness to agree to new services that would require more responsibility and open involvement signifies the type of relationship they do not want with the institution. Parents want to stay "in the loop," but they are content to wash their hands of any added responsibility.

Parents' desire to have a constant flow of information coming their way is only reinforced by the responses to why the participants decided to join the association. The majority of the participants indicated that they were interested in finding a resource center and a place to go for help, and that is why they joined the parents association. This need for information and help only serves to solidify the belief that the involvement that parents desire may not be characterized by added responsibility but may be characterized by a desire to be a small and silent part of the university community.

Perhaps one of the more serious conclusions of the study is related to the frequent claim that participants were unaware of the services provided by the parents association. A large percentage of the participants, who had all been members of the association for at least one year, were unaware of the services and programs that the association planned and provided. This finding is serious because associations cannot hope to maintain membership levels if the members are unaware of the services they enjoy as members.

The final conclusion discovered in the study was the seeming insignificance of demographic variables on the responses of the participants. The members of the parents association come from many different backgrounds, and the results of the study point towards equal needs and desires despite the diversity in the membership population. This conclusion may assist administrators as they make decisions regarding future programs and services of the association because they may begin to realize that all parents have similar needs when it comes to their students and their interaction with the institution.

The five conclusions addressed in this section have demonstrated some of the generalities that may be applied to parents associations. In further applying these lessons to parents associations, it is important to understand the limitations imposed on this study.

Limitations

The findings of this study are limited to the sample population. In addition, the extent that participants were willing to collaborate with the researcher is unknown. The participants of the study were asked to recall information that they might not have remembered which would have introduced possible recall bias to the study.

A delimitation of the study is the sample size. Of a possible 500 families, 203 participants completed and returned the survey. A sample size of 203 suggests that the responses were too small to be representative of parents of college students.

A major limitation of the study was related to the instrument used to perform the study. It was created to determine parents' expectations, desires, and needs from membership in a parents association, but it may not have been sensitive to the actual needs of the participants. The instrument may not have offered the proper selection of

responses, and the participants may have felt limited in their ability to accurately respond to the questions.

The literature suggests that parents want to become extremely involved in the lives of their college students both on and off the college campus, but the results of this study show that parents desire a marginal involvement in the life of the college campus. Accepting the former assumption as well as the validity of the instrument used to collect the study's data, it is suggested that a new, more detailed instrument be created to more effectively study the reasoning and arguments for both sides of the discussion regarding the level or depth of parent involvement.

Implications and Areas for Future Research

The conclusions and results of the study have answered many questions, but they have also raised many questions. The conclusions have also highlighted areas that need to be improved upon or readdressed.

In order to better meet the needs of their members, parents associations must improve upon their methods of disseminating information about campus life. They must also make their members more aware of the multitude of services offered to them as part of their membership. If institutions have created parents associations to meet the needs of their parent population, then the associations must do their part to seek opportunities in which they might learn more about what their members need and desire. By meeting the needs of their members, parents associations can more effectively include parents as a small, but essential part of the institution's community.

While this study was successful in discovering new concepts about parents and their relationships with institutions of higher education, there will always be room for

improvement and growth. By far, one of the most important areas for future research is the concept of a nationwide study encompassing parents of college students and their needs and expectations of the relationship between their family unit and the institution in which their student attends. Further study into parents' desire for involvement and the depth of that involvement would be beneficial to administrators of all types of institutions.

While encouraging the exploration of the needs of parents and the benefits of parent involvement is important, it is also imperative to remember that there could be harmful effects on the institution with unhealthy parent involvement. One possible drawback of the development of a parents association is the unintended consequence of developing a group of parents who feel too connected to the institution, i.e. parents feel that they are stakeholders in the actions and development of the school and want a larger voice in the decisions of the institution. This phenomenon could be potentially detrimental to the functioning of the institution because the needs and desires of parents could be contradictory to what the university deems necessary for the development of well-rounded students and the fulfillment of its mission. As a result of this potential trend, research on the impact of heightened parent involvement within the campus community would be essential in the exploration and development of parents associations.

Arguments against the development of parents associations may also be drawn from the results of this study. While the related literature suggests that parents of today's college students are looking for opportunities to personally engage in campus life, the results of this study suggest that instead of offering new avenues and responsibilities,

colleges and universities need to offer sources of information and assistance. A majority of parents want to stay in the loop, but they do not want to take on added responsibilities. What does this concept suggest? Perhaps these findings indicate that a parents association is not necessarily the answer to the problem of finding ways for parents to stay engaged with the institution.

Conceivably, institutions may be able to develop better, more effective, and certainly more efficient ways to meet the needs of parents. Exploring such options as a staffed parent information hotline or an ombudsperson to address complaints or concerns may be more beneficial options to an institution. According to this study, a large percentage of participants were not aware of the actions of the staff members of the parents association. Perhaps parents do not care who sends them information from the institution as long as they get the kind of information they want in the format that they want to receive it. These potential options certainly introduce new topics and subjects for future research as institutions search for ways to meet the needs of parents.

Further research and improvement of programs that meet the needs of this unique segment of the higher education community can only serve to strengthen the relationship between these institutions and the families sending their students to learn, grow, and develop.

Summary

The general purpose of this study was to determine what services parents desire when seeking membership in a parents association and to determine what administrators can do to improve the relationship between parents and colleges and universities. Specifically, the following questions were examined: What services do parents desire

from membership in Parents Associations? What factors, other than membership services, contribute to parents becoming involved in a parents association? What aspects of current services appeal to parents involved in a parents association? To what extent are parents aware of all services available to them through membership? Will the data reveal that certain variables in the demographics of the participants, such as gender, in state or out of state residence, and parental educational background, influence a parent's needs and expectations of a parents association?

A research model was developed to further explore the questions raised as a result of the new attention to the parents of college students. An instrument was developed and the population of the parents association at a large, public institution was used as the sample population. A random sample was taken of the population, and the selected participants were asked to complete the instrument. 203 completed instruments were returned, and data were organized through the completed instruments.

Data were analyzed by a count of the frequency distributions of the responses, and chi-square tests were performed on the data and demographic values. The majority of the participants reported that they were satisfied or very satisfied with a bulk of the services provided by the parents association. Additional analysis tested whether or not demographic variables, such as gender, residence, education, or type of membership, had any influence on the responses given by the participants.

A discussion of the findings, conclusions, limitations, implications, and opportunities for future research were presented. The proper inclusion of parents as a member of the university community is essential if administrators wish to find new advocates for higher education.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: INSTRUMENT

Parents Association Survey

A graduate student in the College Student Personnel program at The University of Tennessee will use this research for completion of her Master's degree. The results may or may not be used by the Parents Association in an effort to serve parents and family members of Tennessee students. Thank you for completing this survey.

Parent Information (Indicate your answer by circling it.)
Gender: Male Female

I am a resident of the state of Tennessee. True False

Please select the highest level of education you have completed.
No College
Some College
College Degree
Graduate Degree

Please select what type of membership you have with the Parents Association.
Annual (one year of membership)
Undergraduate Career (membership lasting length of student's college career)

Parents Association Mission
Please indicate your answer by circling it.

1. **How satisfied are you with the Parents Association's fulfillment of its Mission Statement?** (Mission Statement of the Parents Association: The mission of the Parents Association is to provide support and information to the parents or guardians of UT students and help them become partners with the university in the education and development of every student.)

Unfamiliar	Very Unsatisfied	Not Satisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
0	1	2	3	4	5

2. **How satisfied are you with the Parents Association's fulfillment of its purpose statements?**

    a. **Purpose 1: To provide opportunities for parents and guardians to become partners with the university in the educational experiences of students**

Unfamiliar	Very Unsatisfied	Not Satisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
0	1	2	3	4	5

b. **Purpose 2: To enhance communication and serve as a liaison between parents or guardians and The University of Tennessee**

Unfamiliar	Very Unsatisfied	Not Satisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
0	1	2	3	4	5

c. **Purpose 3: To involve parents or guardians in university activities**

Unfamiliar	Very Unsatisfied	Not Satisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
0	1	2	3	4	5

d. **Purpose 4: To support fundraising efforts for the University of Tennessee Parents and Families Fund in providing special programs of interest to parents and students**

Unfamiliar	Very Unsatisfied	Not Satisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
0	1	2	3	4	5

3. **What reasons did you have for becoming a member of the Parents Association? (Please select your two top answers by circling them.)**

Wanted to know what was happening on campus.
Wanted to be able to check up on my student.
Wanted to have a place to go for help at the university.
Wanted to be able to get football tickets.
Other (please specify)

_____

Parents Association Policy
Please indicate your answer by circling it.

4. **How satisfied are you with the Membership fee you paid to join the Parents Association?** (The fee is $35 for an Annual Membership and $100 for an Undergraduate Career Membership.)

Unfamiliar	Very Unsatisfied	Not Satisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
0	1	2	3	4	5

Evaluation of Parents Association Programs
Please evaluate the current services of The University of Tennessee Parents Association. Indicate your answer by circling it.

5. How satisfied are you with the Parent Handbook?

Unfamiliar	Very Unsatisfied	Not Satisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
0	1	2	3	4	5

6. How satisfied are you with the Parents E-mail List (listserv)?

Unfamiliar	Very Unsatisfied	Not Satisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
0	1	2	3	4	5

7. How satisfied are you with Family Weekend?

Unfamiliar	Very Unsatisfied	Not Satisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
0	1	2	3	4	5

8. How satisfied are you with the Parents and Families Fund?

Unfamiliar	Very Unsatisfied	Not Satisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
0	1	2	3	4	5

9. How satisfied are you with the newsletter, *Tennessee Family*?

Unfamiliar	Very Unsatisfied	Not Satisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
0	1	2	3	4	5

10. You now receive the newsletter once a semester. If given a choice, how often would you like to receive the newsletter?

Once a Semester Once a Year Once a Month

11. You now receive the newsletter via postal mail. If given a choice, how would you like to receive the newsletter?

Via e-mail Via a website Via Postal Mail

12. What type of information would you like the newsletter to include? (Please circle all that apply.)

Athletics Administration Academics Disciplinary Programs Campus Safety

State Government Other (please specify) _____

Parents Association Personnel

Please indicate your answer by circling it.

13. How satisfied are you by your interaction with Dr. Keith Goforth, Interim Director?

No Interaction	Very Unsatisfied	Not Satisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
0	1	2	3	4	5

14. How satisfied are you by your interaction with Janice Brown, Administrative Assistant?

No Interaction	Very Unsatisfied	Not Satisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
0	1	2	3	4	5

15. How satisfied are you by your interaction with Kristin Gourley, Graduate Assistant?

No Interaction	Very Unsatisfied	Not Satisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
0	1	2	3	4	5

Future Parents Association Services
Please indicate which services you would like to receive from the University of Tennessee Parents Association. Indicate your answer by circling it.

16. **Would you like to be involved in electronic discussions with other parents of students at the University of Tennessee via email and/or an electronic chat room?**

YES NO

17. **Would you like to be involved in local branches of the University of Tennessee Parents Association to become acquainted with other Tennessee parents?**

YES NO

18. **Would you be interested in participating in Parent Council?** This council would be made of Parents Association members who would like to get more involved in event planning for students and parents and in fundraising for the Parents and Families Fund.

YES NO

19. **Would you attend a Spring Family Weekend?**

YES NO

20. **If you have any suggestions on how the Parents Association can improve on any of its services, please share them. You can use the space below to write your suggestions.**

Thank you for completing this survey.
Please place your completed survey in the addressed and stamped envelope that was included in your packet.
All surveys must be returned by April 1.

APPENDIX B: LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

February 27, 2004

Dear Parents Association Member,

My name is Kristin Gourley, and I am a Masters student in College Student Personnel at the University of Tennessee. Under the direction of Dr. E. Grady Bogue, Educational Administration and Policy Studies Department, I am conducting my thesis research on the expectations and satisfaction of parents who belong to the University of Tennessee Parents Association. The purpose of my research is to better understand the needs of parents of college students so that parents associations may better serve their members.

You have been randomly selected from a pool of current University of Tennessee Parents Association members to be included in the study. Enclosed in this envelope, you will find a Parents Association Survey and an envelope in which you may return the survey once you have completed it. I want to stress that participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you do not wish to participate, you do not need to return the uncompleted survey. Neither you nor your University of Tennessee student will be penalized in any way if you choose not to participate.

If you choose to participate, please complete the enclosed survey and place it in the mail by **March 27, 2004**. By completing the survey, you will be indicating that you give your informed consent to participate in this study. The survey should take you approximately fifteen minutes to complete, and you may use pen or pencil. Responses to your survey are confidential. and anonymous. Be assured that there will be no attempt to identify that the answers to your survey are coming from you. The entire collection of completed surveys will be kept confidential and will be stored in a locked cabinet in a departmental office on campus. The surveys will not be used for any other study but the one I am performing, and the surveys will be destroyed after three years.

Thank you very much for your participation. Please feel free to contact me at (865) 974-4546 or Kristin@utk.edu if you have questions, need additional assistance, or would like a final copy of the data report. You may also contact Dr. E. Grady Bogue, A319 Claxton Addition, 1126 Volunteer Boulevard, Knoxville, TN 37996 at (865) 974-6140 or bogue@utk.edu should you have questions. If you have any questions or concerns about this research, you can contact the Research Compliance Services office at (865) 974-3466.

Sincerely,

Kristin M. Gourley
Masters Graduate Student
College Student Personnel
The University of Tennessee

Enclosures (2)

VITA

Kristin Marie Gourley was born in Omaha, Nebraska on May 22, 1980. She was raised in Germantown, TN and went to middle school at Germantown Middle School. She graduated from Germantown High School in 1998. From there, she went to the University of Tennessee, Knoxville and received a B.S. in Business Administration with an emphasis in Accounting in 2002 and a M.S. in College Student Personnel in 2005.

Kristin is currently employed as the Student Activities Intern at Maryville College, Maryville, TN.

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