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AN EVALUATION OF GRADUATE STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF MATTERING
AT ROWAN UNIVERSITY

by
Christopher A. D'Angelo

A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the
Master of Arts in Higher Education Administration
of
The Graduate School
at
Rowan University
October 14, 2010

Thesis Chair: Burton R. Sisco, Ed.D.

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ABSTRACT

Christopher A. D'Angelo

AN EVALUATION OF GRADUATE STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF MATTERING AT ROWAN UNIVERSITY

2009/10

Burton Sisco, Ed.D.

Master of the Arts in Higher Education Administration

The purpose of this study was to determine whether graduate students at Rowan University felt as though they mattered to the university. The subjects in this study consisted of 320 full-time and part-time matriculated graduate students at Rowan University during the spring 2010 semester. Data were collected using a revised version of the *Mattering Scales for Adult Students in Higher Education*, which consists of 45 Likert scale statements meant to gain insight into how students felt about their graduate school experience, and how they felt their needs were being met by the university community. Data analysis found that participants generally reported that they mattered in regards to each of the five subscales. However, responses to some statements in the Advising and Faculty Subscales indicated lower perceptions of mattering. Additionally, women reported significantly higher levels of mattering on the Peers Subscale than male students. Several significant differences were also found among students from different colleges and age groups in regards to the Advising, Administration, Faculty and Peers Subscales. However, no significant differences were found in regards to students' races/ethnic backgrounds or types of employment.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

In recent years, national graduate school enrollment and graduate application rates have risen steadily (U.S. Department of Education, 2009). This increase in graduate student enrollment has become a significant source of revenue for higher education institutions across the United States. As graduate students become a more integral part of college campuses it is important that higher education administrators pay close attention to the needs of this non-traditional group of students. Given the diverse makeup of this group (age, race, socioeconomic status, marital status, etc.) their needs often differ from those of their undergraduate counterparts. Therefore, the services and efforts needed to ensure graduate students feel as though matter are sometimes overlooked by administration, faculty, and staff.

Statement of the Problem

A growing body of research has focused on the topic of student involvement at college campuses and the associated benefits. Much of this research looks at the undergraduate population's needs and behaviors. In several instances researchers have noted the benefits of creating connections among students, faculty, and staff (Schlossberg, 1989). However, less research has concentrated on the graduate student. In particular, little research has focused specifically on whether campuses meet the needs of these students and make them feel as though they matter to the university community.

Schlossberg's (1989) theory of mattering and marginality among adult learners is the primary construct of this study's theoretical framework. Mattering theory addresses adults' potential for feeling marginalized, particularly during transitions. It also emphasizes the importance of mattering among adult learners, particularly in relation to keeping them engaged, forming connections, having satisfying educational experiences, and completing degree programs.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine whether graduate students at Rowan University feel as though they matter to the university. Using quantitative research, the study focuses on gaining insight into how these students felt about their graduate school experience, and how they felt their needs were being met by the university community.

Survey research focused on graduate students' perceptions of mattering in regards to five specific areas of campus life; administration, advising, peers, multiple roles, and faculty. The overall perception of mattering among the graduate student population was analyzed and discussed in relation to these different areas. Differences and similarities among various subgroups of graduate students were also observed.

Significance of the Study

Astute student affairs professionals at colleges and universities spend much time and effort in creating programs and facilities that meet the needs of the undergraduate population. Rowan University, in particular, places a strong emphasis on the needs of its undergraduate population. Graduate students, however, are not provided with many of the same opportunities as their undergraduate counterparts, such as a formal orientation.

The findings of this study may provide insight for a graduate school staff attempting to increase student satisfaction and connectedness amongst the graduate student population. The feedback provided by the students in this study can assist professors and advisors in better meeting the varying needs of their students. The findings of this study may also be used by student affairs professionals to create and strengthen support services and programming for graduate students.

Assumptions and Limitations

As researcher, I assumed that the subjects who completed the survey responded accurately, truthfully, and without malice. Several limiting factors were also present in the study. The study is limited to graduate students enrolled at Rowan University during the spring 2010 semester, and did not look graduate students at other institutions. Another limitation is the potential for researcher bias. As a current graduate student at Rowan University, I developed my own opinion regarding the Rowan graduate student experience. Another limitation is that only those who returned the surveys actually participated in the study, so I was unable to obtain responses from the entire Rowan University graduate student population. Sending the email to the students' Rowan email account can also be viewed as a limitation. This might not be the primary email address for all students, and for this reason, may not be checked regularly, if at all.

Operational Definitions

1. Graduate Students: Both full-time and part-time students enrolled in one of the Graduate School at Rowan University's Doctorate, Master's or Certificate programs.

2. Involvement: As defined by Astin (1984), “involvement refers to the investment of physical and psychological energy in various objects” (p. 519). In this case, primarily focusing on energy devoted to activities related to the pursuit of graduate education.
3. Marginality: Feeling marginalized, or that we do not belong, particularly during the transitions taking place during participants graduate education experience at Rowan University.
4. Mattering: “The feeling that others depend on us, are interested in us, or are concerned with our fate” (Schlossberg, 1989, p. 6). Measured among five dimensions: administration, advising, peers, multiple roles, and faculty.
5. Perceptions: Graduate students’ views on the five specified dimensions, based on their experiences as graduate students at Rowan University during the spring 2010 semester.
6. Transitions: “Any event, or non-event, that results in changed relationships, routines, assumptions, and roles” (Schlossberg, Waters, & Goodman, 1995, p. 27). The transitions in this study are those directly, or indirectly, caused by pursuing a graduate education at Rowan University.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

1. Do graduate students at Rowan University feel as though they matter in regards to: administration, advising, peers, multiple roles, and faculty?
2. Is there a significant difference in perceptions of mattering among graduate students of different enrollment statuses, degree types, and colleges?

3. Do demographic factors of gender, age, race/ethnic background, and on-campus employment impact graduate students' perceptions of mattering at Rowan University?

Overview of the Study

Chapter II provides a review of the scholarly literature that is important to the study. The section includes a brief overview of the graduate student, as well as Schlossberg's transition theory and theory of mattering and marginality. Also, there are sections pertaining to theories of student involvement and engagement.

Chapter III describes the study methodology and procedures. The following details are included in this description: the context of the study, population and sample selection, the data collection instrument, the data collection process, and how the data were analyzed.

The results of the study are presented in Chapter IV. In Chapter V, the findings of the study are summarized, conclusions are reached, and recommendations for further practice and further research are offered.

CHAPTER II

Review of Literature

The Graduate Student

Coulter, Goin, and Gerard (2004) describe graduate students as “consumers of a unique service designed to foster intellectual growth, build expertise through a concentrated area of study, and provide enriching and relevant professional experiences” (p.15). These students, whom are as unique as the service provided to them, are primarily made up of international and non-traditional students (e.g, adult, part-time, fully employed, parents, etc.).

In recent years, national graduate school enrollment and graduate application rates have been on a steady rise (Ebersole, 2004; U.S. Department of Education, 2009). According to the U.S. Department of Education (2009), graduate student enrollment has risen about 67% between 1985 and 2007. In 2007, graduate students and professional students were 14.5% of all students enrolled in U.S. colleges and universities (U.S. Department of Education).

The increase in graduate degree attainment during the 21st century can be partially attributed to the rise in women and, Blacks and Hispanics pursuing graduate education during that time span (Ebersole, 2004). Given the increase in graduate degree attainment among women, it is very likely that the degree attainment rate for women will eventually surpass that of men (Ebersole).

In recent years the majority of students enrolled in graduate programs have been 30 years of age and older (Ebersole, 2004). In many instances these students are balancing multiple roles such as work and family commitments. This has led to an increase in online and hybrid graduate course offerings. Drexel University, for example, offers several of its master's level courses online. Recently, Rowan University started its own College of Professional and Continuing Education in an attempt to offer "high quality academic programs for individuals seeking education, training, and enrichment in a convenient and affordable setting" (Rowan University College of Professional and Continuing Education, 2010).

Due to their varying backgrounds, graduate students within a particular university and/or academic program may have different sets of needs. Therefore, it is important for higher education institutions to assess the needs of their students and the effectiveness of services provided. Referring to adult students, Neugarten (as cited by Schlossberg, Lynch, & Chickering, 1989) noted adults become less similar to one another as they grow older, especially compared to the similarities that can be found in groups of children and teenagers; further supporting the competing sets of needs within this large and diverse population.

More recently researchers have begun to use different forms of assessment to pay closer attention to the needs of graduate students. Dicket and Lockley (1997), investigated an expanding graduate program at a private liberal arts college in Mississippi and found that although students were generally satisfied with the program there was a clear need for updated library resources and projected class schedules. Luna and Cullen

(1998) conducted research at a large comprehensive university and found that 83% of the graduate students surveyed felt that mentors were an important part of their graduate school experience.

Other researchers focused on the needs of specific graduate student populations. Reismann, Lawless, and Robinson (as cited by Coutler et al., 2004), conducted research targeting the needs of part-time evening students and found that this subgroup wanted to be better integrated into the educational system and university community. Similar research done by Rimmer, Lammert, and McClain (1982) found that graduate students at a public Midwestern university sought better career planning services and a wider selection of professional development workshops.

Graduate Education at Rowan University

The Graduate School at Rowan University has been steadily expanding throughout the past decade. As of fall 2009, the Graduate School offers 55 master's degree programs; 7 professional certification programs; 25 graduate certification of graduate study programs; 6 teacher certification programs, and a doctoral program in educational leadership (Rowan University, November 2009). Since 2003, the total number of graduate students has increased from 1,356 to 1,499, marking a 10.5% increase over the past seven years (Rowan University Institutional Research and Planning, 2003 & 2010).

The Graduate Executive Council, the representative body of The Graduate School, plays an integral role in guiding graduate academic policy and curriculum. This

council is made up of faculty members from departments across the Rowan University community.

There is only one student organization available for graduate students at Rowan University; the Upsilon Chapter of Alpha Epsilon Lambda (AEL) Honor Society for Graduate and Professional Students. This honor society aims to recognize the academic and leadership accomplishments of graduate and professional school students (The Graduate School at Rowan University, 2010).

Broyles (2005), a former Rowan University graduate student, took an in depth look at the first year graduate student issues, needs, and concerns. Her study analyzed quantitative and qualitative data from 80 full-time graduate students during the 2004-2005 school year. Broyles also conducted interviews with members of the Graduate School staff. Overall, the majority of students were satisfied with their first year of graduate school at Rowan University and made the transition to graduate school with relative ease. Some of the primary issues facing this group were balancing jobs, family commitments, and their graduate course workloads.

During the 2003-2004 school year, the Graduate School at Rowan University offered its first ever graduate student orientation. However, attendance was very poor and students felt as though they were not properly informed of the event (Broyles, 2005). In the 2004-2005 school year the graduate school attempted their second orientation and faced a similar result. Broyles (2005) reported that 90% of students surveyed either did not know about the orientation or did not attend. In recent years there has not been an attempt to put together another campus wide graduate student orientation even though

research supports the use of orientations and similar transition programs.

Rowan University graduate students that completed Broyles' (2005) survey also expressed a desire for the Graduate School to provide more professional development and networking events. Broyles' (2005) research did not find a clear demand for a graduate student association; however, it did recommend that the Alpha Epsilon Lambda Honor Society make effort to create the programming opportunities that often accompany a graduate student association (i.e. professional development, networking, thesis workshops).

During the 2006-07 academic school year Duncan (2007) conducted interviews with 10 randomly selected first and second year graduate students holding graduate assistant positions. Duncan used socialization theory as the framework to examine how graduate assistants at Rowan University connected to the campus community. The results of the study showed that graduate assistants had positive experiences with their peers and faculty inside the classroom, however out-of-classroom interaction was lacking.

Duncan (2007) also observed that half of the students interviewed felt as though the institution did not meet their expectations. Some students felt as though there was a lack of consistency throughout their respective programs, often times stemming from a lack of communication. Others were displeased with the numbers of changes regarding program requirements without consulting or informing the students affected by the changes.

Student Involvement

In 1984, the Study Group on the Conditions of Excellence in American Higher

Education issued a report entitled *Involvement in Learning: Realizing the Potential of American Higher Education*. This report, sponsored by the National Institute of Education (1984), listed assessment and feedback, high expectations regarding conditional outcomes, and student involvement as the three key conditions for improving undergraduate education in the United States. The study defined student involvement as “how much time, energy, and effort students invest in the learning process” (1984, p.17).

Alexander Astin served on the *Involvement in Learning* study group, and was credited with the development of student involvement theory. Astin’s (1984) theory describes involvement as the amount of physical and psychological energy that the student devotes to various objects. The purpose of the theory, now known as student involvement theory, was to provide a simple theory that could better explain previous research on the impact environmental influences had on student development (Astin). It was also meant to be used as a guide for researchers to understand student development, and by faculty and administrators to create more effective learning environments. Astin’s theory is based upon five principles.

1. Involvement refers to the investment of physical and psychological energy in various objects. Objects can be broad or specific.
2. Different students invest various amounts of energy into different activities.
3. Involvement has both quantitative and qualitative features.
4. The amount of learning and development received from an educational program is directly proportional to the quality and quantity of student involvement put into that program.

5. Effectiveness of any educational policy or practice is directly related to its ability to increase student involvement. (1984, p. 519)

Involvement theory stresses the importance of active participation in the learning process (Astin, 1984). More of an emphasis is put on what the student is doing; specifically how motivated the student is and how much time and energy the student devotes to learning, both inside and outside the classroom (Astin). According to Astin, “the most precious student resource may be time” (p. 522). The more time and effort devoted towards reaching a specific developmental goal, the more likely the goal will be reached. It is understood that students have a limited amount of psychic and physical time and energy. This time and energy is stretched across numerous aspects of their lives, which include academics, family, friends, jobs, and extracurricular activities.

Research by Astin (1977, 1984) supports the notion that greater levels of involvement with campus activities and resources influence student academic achievement, satisfaction, and persistence towards graduation. The work of Astin has continued to influence higher education professionals and student development theorists for more than two decades. In particular, the work of Astin (1984), as well as Pace, and Kuh and his colleagues (as cited by Pike & Kuh; Pascarella et al., 1996), laid the groundwork for Kuh’s (2001) student engagement theory, and eventually Schlossberg’s adult mattering theory.

Schlossberg’s Transition Theory

Nancy Schlossberg’s transition theory focuses on the “factors related to transition, the individual, and the environment that are likely to determine the degree of impact a

given transition will have at a particular point in time” (as cited in Evans et al., 1998, p. 111). Although it is typically defined as an adult development theory, the transition theory can be applied to undergraduate students as well. For the purpose of this study, this review focuses primarily on transitions among adult learners.

Schlossberg et al. (1995) defined a transition as “any event, or non-event, that results in changed relationships, routines, assumptions, and roles” (p. 27). Perception is a key aspect of defining transitions; meaning a transition only exists if the individual experiencing it defines it as one (Evans et al., 1998; Schlossberg et al., 1995). It is not necessarily the event or non-event that occurs but rather how much these changes alter the lives of individuals, how they are perceived, and how one copes with the transition (Schlossberg et al., 1995). An individual’s reaction and perception of the transition typically changes over time as the change is integrated into the individual’s life (Schlossberg, 1989; Schlossberg et al., 1995).

In order for an individual to understand the meaning of a transition, he/she must consider the type, context, and impact of the transition (Evans et al., 1998; Schlossberg et al., 1995). The three types of transitions are anticipated, unanticipated, and nonevents. Anticipated events are those that can be predicted. Unanticipated events are not predictable or scheduled. Nonevents are events that are expected to occur but never do (Evans et al.; Schlossberg et al.). The context of the transition refers to the relationship an individual has to the event or nonevent and where it takes place (Evans et al.; Schlossberg et al.). Transitions can include those that happen directly to the individual or ones that friends or family are experiencing. Once the type and context are concluded it is

important to measure the impact the transition has on an individual. The impact is the degree to which a transition alters an individual's daily life (Evans et al.; Schlossberg et al.).

Schlossberg recommended breaking down adult learner transitions into three stages: moving into the learning environment, moving through, and preparing to leave or moving on (Evans et al., 1998; Schlossberg, 1989). Moving in typically includes familiarizing oneself with the norms and expectations of the new surroundings. Louis showed that a more systematic approach to the moving in stage among new employees minimized employee turnover (as cited by Schlossberg, 1989).

Moving through is the process of balancing one's new position with other life roles. At this point, it is not uncommon for individuals to question personal decisions and need help sustaining their energy and commitment levels (Evans et al., 1998; Schlossberg et al., 1989). Moving on, however, is the culmination of an event or series of events. Adults in this stage may go through the process of mourning due to a loss of goals, friends, and/or structure (Schlossberg et al.).

Four sets of factors are highlighted in Schlossberg's theory that impact an individual's ability to cope with transition. These factors include: situation, self, support and strategies, are known as the "4 Ss" (Evans et al., 1998; Schlossberg et al., 1989; Schlossberg et al., 1995). Schlossberg (1989) stated that "looking at the balance of resources and deficits in each of these categories, it is possible to predict how a person will cope" (p. 17).

Mattering Theory

Mattering in higher education is not an entirely new concept. As previously mentioned, college administrators have been trying to get students more involved on their campus for years. In addition to academic achievement, student satisfaction and persistence towards graduation, involvement also increases a sense of community among students, faculty, and staff (Astin, 1977; Astin, 1984; Schlossberg, 1989). Meaningful involvement and a sense of community can lead to a greater sense of mattering among students. Conversely, mattering and marginality among students can be the reasons they chose whether to get involved in particular activities (Schlossberg).

Rosenberg and McCullough (1981) defined “mattering” as “a motive: the feeling that others depend on us, are concerned with our fate, or experience us as an ego extension” (p. 165). In other words, mattering determines individuals’ behaviors. Using the concept of mattering, Rosenberg and McCullough (1981) examined the interpersonal relationships of 6,568 adolescents and found that the individuals were more likely to care about those who, they believed, cared about them. The adolescents in this study that felt as though they mattered were also less likely to commit delinquent acts (Rosenberg & McCullough). At the opposite end of the spectrum, the adolescents that felt they mattered little to their parents were found to be more depressed and unhappy (Rosenberg & McCullough).

“Marginality,” on the other hand, can be defined as feeling as though one does not belong. Marginality is something everyone experiences at one time or another in one of the following three contexts. Sometimes it is a temporary condition during a transition,

such as the transition back to school. Other times it describes a personality type, typically leading to extreme self-consciousness and sensitivity (Schlossberg, 1989). In some instances, such as that of a bicultural individual, the feeling of being trapped between two different cultures may lead to a permanent state of marginality (Schlossberg). For the purpose of this study, however, the literature focuses primarily on those individuals experiencing a temporary condition of marginality.

Through her work in transition theory, Schlossberg (1989) applied this concept of mattering to college students and observed that those taking on new life roles, such as that of a student, are more likely to feel as though they do not matter. It is essential that these individuals make an effort to create connections that ties them to a university and gives them a sense of meaning, ultimately leading to a feeling of mattering (Schlossberg; Schlossberg et al., 1990).

Schlossberg, Lassalle, and Golec (1990) operationalized the concept of mattering to focus specifically on adult learners when they developed the *Mattering Scales for Adult Students in Higher Education (MHE)*. The *MHE* focuses on five dimensions of mattering: administration, advising, peers, multiple roles, and faculty (Schlossberg et al.):

1. Administration – The administration subscale measures adult students perceptions of the extent to which campus policies and procedures are sensitive to adult student concerns.
2. Advising – The advising subscale measures adult students’ perceptions of the extent to which advisors and other information providers attend to their questions and concerns.

3. Peers – The peers subscale measures adult students’ perceptions of the extent to which they feel they belong on campus and are accepted as peers in the classroom.

4. Multiple Roles – The multiple roles subscale measures the adult students’ perceptions of the extent to which the campus acknowledges competing demands on their time.

5. Faculty – The faculty subscale measures adult students’ perceptions of the extent to which faculty members accept them in the classroom. (1990, p. 15)

This instrument was developed to “assess the perceptions of adult students concerning the five dimensions of the higher education environment and how well this particular group of students feels they fit in this environment” (Schlossberg et al., p. 12).

Studies conducted at several different institutions across the country have looked at varying types of adult students over the past two decades. Butcher (1997) looked at adult students at a two-year community college and found that women students perceived the institution as being more accommodating to their multiple life roles than the men surveyed. Butcher (1997) also observed that women scored higher in the peer subscale than their peers. The same difference was also noted in Fauber’s (1996) study of a state-supported, urban doctoral granting institution. In contrast, Kent (2004) and Hillard (2001), found no significant difference between men and women on any of the five subscales.

Several studies (Fauber, 1997; Hillard, 1996; Kent, 2004) focused on how the concept of mattering, as measured by the MHE, impacted persistence among non-

traditional students. None of the studies found were able to identify a statistically significant relationship between mattering and persistence. Hillard's (1996) research at a community college found enrollment status to be the only factor with a significant relationship to persistence.

Other research was used to determine how satisfied non-traditional students were with their college experience. Kariotis (2000) found that non-traditional students at the University of Missouri-Kansas City were generally satisfied with their experience, yet were slightly less satisfied with the Administration and Faculty subscales.

Kettle (2001) compared traditional and non-traditional undergraduate students' perceptions of mattering at the University of Arkansas. Kettle found a statistically significant difference between the perceptions of both groups in four of the dimensions of the study. Traditional undergraduate students perceived they mattered significantly more in the areas of administration, advising, multiple roles and peers than their non-traditional counterparts.

In Kettle's (2001) frequency distribution for each dimension, except administration, it was shown that most mean scores were neutral ratings in the 3.00 to 3.99 range. The researcher concluded this either meant the respondents "felt the question applied to them but had neutral feelings about the item" or "the respondent did not understand the question, did not feel the question was relevant to their experience, or simply chose to have a neutral opinion for a myriad of reasons" (p. 142). However, both groups of students had a low perception of mattering in regards to the administration dimension.

Vampatella (2000) examined adult students at a rural two-year technical college and found students perceived they mattered most on the faculty subscale and least on administration subscale. There was also a significant difference in the perceptions of male and female adult students on the administration, advising, and multiple roles subscales, with women scoring higher in all three. Vampatella also observed that students who were not employed had statistically significant higher means than employed students on the administration, advising, and multiple roles subscales.

Compared to previously mentioned studies focusing on the relationship between mattering and persistence, it is likely that the *MHE* can be used more effectively in measuring student satisfaction and perceptions of mattering at a specific university. Schlossberg et al. (1990) stated that this survey was meant to be used as a “campus ecology measure,” in order to obtain information about the campus environment one would not be able to gather through “personal experience, intuitive assessment, chance remarks of colleagues, or random complaints or compliments from the very satisfied or the very dissatisfied” (p. 12).

Summary of the Literature Review

Recent trends show an increase in graduate student enrollments at colleges and universities throughout the United States. The needs of these graduate students are just as diverse as the group itself. With more women and minorities returning to school, as well as adults from different age groups, universities are presented with the task of meeting the needs of such a diverse group of students. Rowan University in particular has seen a 10.5% increase in graduate student enrollment since fall of 2003.

The concept of mattering in higher education has its roots in several of the student involvement and transition theories that have come before it. These theories emphasize the importance of meaningful student involvement, building a sense of community, and helping students transition to and from college. Colleges and universities have been actively seeking ways to increase student involvement and satisfaction, but like most student development theories, have primarily catered to the traditional undergraduate student.

The Mattering Scales for Adult Students in Higher Education (MHE) focus solely on adult students. Research using the *MHE* has primarily examined perceptions of mattering among non-traditional undergraduate students. Researchers have observed differences in perceptions of mattering among men and women, as well as over all satisfaction of adult student populations. There is, however, a lack of research pertaining to perceptions of mattering among graduate students in higher education. Given the current knowledge base, it is important to pay attention to graduate students' perceptions of mattering.

CHAPTER III

Methodology

Context of the Study

This study was conducted at Rowan University, in Glassboro, New Jersey. Rowan University's history dates back to its establishment in 1923 as Glassboro Normal School. Over the past 87 years the institution has undergone many changes. In 1958, it transitioned from New Jersey State Teachers College at Glassboro to Glassboro State College (Rowan University, 2009). Upon receiving a generous \$100 million gift donation from Henry and Betty Rowan in 1992, its name was then changed to Rowan College of New Jersey, and eventually to Rowan University in 1997 (Rowan University, 2009).

According to the Carnegie Classifications, Rowan University is a public, medium sized, four-year, primarily residential institution. As of spring 2010, Rowan University had an enrollment of approximately 10,958 students; 9,303 of which are undergraduate students and 1,655 graduate students (Rowan University Institutional Research and Planning, 2010). The university consists of seven colleges and offers 58 undergraduate majors, as well 55 majors leading to master's degree; 7 professional certification programs; 25 graduate certification of graduate study programs; 6 teacher certification programs, and a doctoral program in educational leadership (Rowan University, 2009).

Population and Sample Selection

The target population for this study was the total population of matriculated graduate students at Rowan University in the spring 2010 semester. As of spring 2010, there were 1,334 matriculated graduate students at the university, 352 of which were full-time and the other 982 were part-time students. There was 957 (72%) female graduate students, compared to 377 (28%) males.

Instrumentation

The instrumentation used in this study was *The Mattering Scales for Adult Learners in Higher Education* (MHE), developed by Nancy Schlossberg et al. (1990). This instrument includes 45 statements “to assess the perceptions of adult learners about their educational environment” (Schlossberg et al., 1990, p. 4). The *MHE* (Appendix B) focuses on five dimensions of mattering: administration, advising, peers, multiple roles, and faculty (Schlossberg et al.). It aims to provide a comprehensive “campus ecology measure” for administration, faculty, and adult students by answering two primary questions (Schlossberg et al.):

1. Do I feel I matter to the institution?
2. Do I feel noticed, appreciated, welcomed?

According to Schlossberg et al. (1990) the *MHE* is both valid and reliable. The researchers also note that “Individual responses are considered to be uninterpretable. Evidence of reliability and validity refer to group applications and reflect the current state of research on the scales” (1990, p. 18). Evidence of reliability was measured with

internal consistency coefficients using Cronbach alpha (Schlossberg et al., 1990). The five dimensions had the following coefficient alphas: administration (.850), advising (.820), peers (.860), multiple roles (.770), and faculty (.820).

The *MHE* was reformatted when it was transferred from print to online. Each page of the survey consists of nine Likert scale items arranged according to; strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree or disagree, agree, and strongly agree. The final page of the survey asked students to identify demographic information.

The survey used in this study was piloted with a group of 12 students from the College of Education's Master's in Collaborative Education program. Based on the pilot, the final survey was developed for implementation. In the piloted survey, items referred to the participants as "adult students." After completing the pilot study, I decided to switch "adult students" to "graduate students" in questions 4, 21, 38 and 43 to ensure the items focus more specifically on the study's target population (Appendix C).

Cronbach's alpha was used to test the internal consistency of the modified *MHE* across the five dimensions yielding the following coefficient alphas: administration (.704), advising (.815), peers (.849), multiple roles (.708), and faculty (.808). A comparison of Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the original *MHE* and the modified *MHE* are very similar indicating the instrument to be internally consistent and therefore reliable.

Data Collection

An Institutional Review Board (IRB) application was submitted for review on December 1, 2009. The IRB approved the application on December 16, 2009

(Appendix A). The survey instrument was then transferred to my account on the SurveyMonkey website. SurveyMonkey is private company that allows users to create their own web-based surveys.

Before I could collect data, I needed to gain access from the Director and Associate Provost of Rowan University's Information Resources and Network and System Services Departments. Once permission was granted, the surveys were emailed (Appendix D) to all matriculated graduate students on March 26, 2010. The subjects were given until April 5, 2010 to complete the survey. In an attempt to collect more responses another email was sent April 5, 2010 giving subjects an additional four day period to complete the survey instrument. On April 10, 2010 the online survey was closed, and no further completed surveys were accepted.

Data Analysis

All data collected using the online survey were entered into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) computer software. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to calculate frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations. The data were primarily used to answer research question 1 (RQ1).

Next, several independent-samples *t* tests were run to compare various demographic factors (enrollment status, college affiliation, degree type, gender, age, race/ethnicity and employment factors) with items on the survey. The data obtained from the comparison of the means of the different subgroups were used to answer research questions 2 (RQ2) and 3 (RQ3).

CHAPTER IV

Findings

Profile of the Sample

The subjects in this study consisted of 320 full-time and part-time matriculated graduate students at Rowan University during the spring 2010 semester. The respondents were both male and female and were pursuing Master's, Doctorate or Certificate degree programs. The survey instrument was originally sent to the total population of 1,334 matriculated graduate students. However, 49 of the emails were not able to be delivered, leaving me with a total population of 1,285 students. Out of the 1,285 surveys the researcher distributed, 350 were returned for a response rate of 27%. Out of the 350 returned 320 were usable. The other surveys were not used due to missing or incomplete information; this brought the usable response rate of the survey to 25%.

Table 4.1 shows the demographics of the subjects who participated in the study. There were 239 females (75%) and 81 males (25%). Of the 320 subjects surveyed, 198 (62%) were 24 and under, and 68 (21%) were between the ages of 25 and 29. The other 54 (17%) participants fell between the ages of 30 and 44. None of the participants were 45 or older. The next part of the table represents the ethnic/racial background of the participants. The majority of the students were Caucasian (79%), while African Americans were the next most represented group (12%). Four percent were Hispanic/Latino and 3% were Asian or Pacific Islander. Less than 1% of the student

population was composed of Biracial and Middle Eastern participants.

The following section contains data pertaining to enrollment status, degree program, and college affiliation of the participants. One hundred and seventy-two of the participants (54%) are enrolled part-time, while the other 148 (46%) were enrolled full-time. The majority (82%) were enrolled in a Master's level program. The College of Education (51%), College of Continuing and Professional Education (14%) and College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (11%) were the three most represented colleges amongst the participants.

The last section of the table focuses on the participants' employment patterns. Most of the participants reported working 31-40 hours a week (32.5%) or over 40 hours a week (29.1%). Sixty-three of the participants (19.7%) worked on campus, while the remainder were employed off campus.

Table 4.1

Participant Demographics (N=320)

Variable	<i>f</i>	%
Gender		
Male	81	25.3
Female	239	74.7
Total	320	100
Age		
24 and under	198	61.9
25-29	68	21.3
30-34	37	11.6
35-39	14	4.4
40-44	3	.9
Total	320	100

Racial/ Ethnic Description		
African American/ Black	37	11.6
Asian or Pacific Islander	11	3.4
Biracial	3	.9
Caucasian/White	254	79.4
Hispanic/ Latino(a)	13	4.1
Middle Eastern	2	.6
Total	320	100
Enrollment Status		
Full-Time	148	46.3
Part-Time	172	53.8
Total	320	100
Type of Degree Program		
Master's Level	262	81.9
Doctoral Level	34	10.6
Certificate Program	24	7.5
Total	320	100
College Affiliation		
Business	30	9.4
Communication	23	7.2
CPCE	45	14.1
Education	164	51.3
Engineering	23	7.2
Fine & Performing Arts	2	.6
Liberal Arts & Sciences	33	10.3
Total	320	100
Hours worked per week		
0-10 hours	42	13.1
11-20 hours	28	8.8
21-30 hours	53	16.6
31-40 hours	104	32.5
Over 40 hours	93	29.1
Total	320	100
Work on campus		
Yes	63	19.7
No	257	80.3
Total	320	100

Analysis of the Data

Research Question 1: Do graduate students at Rowan University feel as though they matter in regards to: administration, advising, peers, multiple roles, and faculty?

The Administration Subscale measures adult students' perceptions of the extent to which campus policies and procedures are sensitive to adult students' concerns.

Questions in this section focused on policies, activities fees, and registration procedures.

Table 4.2 describes Rowan University graduate students' perceptions of mattering in regards to the Administration Subscale of the *MHE*. The highest possible score for this subscale was 55 and the lowest was 11. The mean score for this subscale was 35.13. A majority of the graduate students reported high perceptions of mattering in regards to the times at which classes are offered (67%) and the faculty and administrations' sensitivity to their other responsibilities (51.6%). Conversely, a majority of graduate students reported low perceptions of mattering in regards to the campus rules and regulations (54.7%) and the use of activity fees (62.2%).

Table 4.2

Administration Subscale

Statement	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neither Agree or Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Classes are offered at times that are good for me. <i>M</i> =3.55, <i>SD</i> =1.049, <i>N</i> =320	11	3.4	60	18.8	33	10.3	173	54.1	43	13.4
The faculty and administration are sensitive to my other responsibilities. <i>M</i> =3.23, <i>SD</i> =1.147, <i>N</i> =320	25	7.8	75	23.4	55	17.2	133	41.6	32	10

The university's policy of transfer credits penalizes graduate students. <i>M=3, SD=.674, N=320</i>	9	2.8	35	10.9	232	72.5	34	10.6	10	3.1
The administration seems to consider graduate student priorities as important as undergraduate student priorities. <i>M=3, SD=1.131, N=320</i>	34	10.6	81	25.3	77	24.1	107	33.4	21	6.6
The administration makes efforts to accommodate graduate students. <i>M=2.93, SD=1.027, N=320</i>	22	6.9	105	32.8	75	23.4	109	34.1	9	2.8
The registration process is complicated and not explained well to graduate students. <i>M=2.90, SD=1.188, N=320</i>	23	7.2	99	30.9	65	20.3	90	28.1	43	13.4
The university offers alternatives to the traditional semester-length course. <i>M=2.80, SD=1.129, N=320</i>	41	12.8	99	30.9	81	25.3	80	25.0	19	5.9
The administration sets things up to be easy for them, not the students. <i>M=2.76, SD=1.111, N=320</i>	13	4.1	83	25.9	85	26.6	93	29.1	46	14.4
The university does not commit enough resources to off-campus courses. <i>M=2.73, SD=.888, N=320</i>	8	2.5	44	13.8	146	45.6	96	30.0	26	8.1
The school newspaper doesn't discuss graduate student issues. <i>M=2.55, SD=.770, N=320</i>	2	.6	12	3.8	182	55.9	87	27.2	37	11.6
Campus rules and regulations seem to have been made for undergraduate students. <i>M=2.51, SD=1.038, N=320</i>	13	4.1	43	13.4	89	27.8	125	39.1	50	15.6

I feel my activities fees are spent in a way that is meaningful to me.

$M=2.20, SD=1.084, N=320$ 107 33.4 92 28.8 78 24.4 37 11.6 6 1.9

The Advising Subscale measures adult students' perceptions of the extent to which advisors and other information providers attend to their questions, concerns, and needs (Schlossberg et al., 1990).

Table 4.3 describes Rowan University graduate students' perceptions of mattering in regards to the Advising Subscale of the *MHE*. Forty was the highest possible score; eight was the lowest. The mean score for the surveyed participants was 26.21. A majority of the graduate students reported high perceptions of mattering in regards to advisors' willingness to seek out the answer of questions they didn't know the answer to (71.3%), the times at which classes are offered (67.5%), staff's ability to answer questions (60%), and advisors' availability to talk when they have questions. There were not any items on the Advising Subscale in which the 50% or more of the graduate student participants perceived that they did not matter.

Table 4.3

Advising Subscale

Statement	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neither Agree or Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
If my advisor didn't know the answer to my question, I'm sure he or she would seek out the answer. $M=3.69, SD=1.015, N=320$	15	4.7	31	9.7	46	14.4	174	54.4	54	16.9

Classes are offered at times that are good for me. <i>M</i> =3.55, <i>SD</i> =1.049, <i>N</i> =320	11	3.4	60	18.8	33	10.3	173	54.1	43	13.4
Administrative and professional staff are helpful in answering my questions. <i>M</i> =3.35, <i>SD</i> =1.030, <i>N</i> =320	14	4.4	72	22.5	42	13.1	173	54.1	19	5.9
There has always been an advisor available to talk with me if I need to ask a question. <i>M</i> =3.25, <i>SD</i> =1.099, <i>N</i> =320	20	6.3	72	22.5	68	21.3	129	40.3	31	9.7
There has always been someone on campus who could help me when I had a question or problem. <i>M</i> =3.23, <i>SD</i> =1.059, <i>N</i> =320	17	5.3	76	23.8	69	21.6	134	41.9	24	7.5
My advisor doesn't seem to remember things we have discussed before. <i>M</i> =3.21, <i>SD</i> =1.243, <i>N</i> =320	61	19.1	76	23.8	80	25.0	75	23.4	28	8.8
The administrative rules and policies are clear to me. <i>M</i> =3.12, <i>SD</i> =1.135, <i>N</i> =320	28	8.8	78	24.4	70	21.9	117	36.6	27	8.4
My advisor has office hours at times that I am on campus. <i>M</i> =2.82, <i>SD</i> =1.122, <i>N</i> =320	40	12.5	95	29.7	88	27.5	77	24.1	20	6.3

The Peers Subscale measures adult students' perceptions of the extent to which they feel they are accepted as peers in the classroom and belong on campus (Schlossberg et al., 1990). The questions in this subscale focus on issues such as interpersonal relationships with peers, and provide insight into adult students' perceptions of how they fit into the university community.

Table 4.4 describes Rowan University graduate students' perceptions of mattering in regards to the Peers Subscale of the *MHE*. The highest possible score for this subscale

was a 55 and the lowest was an 11. The mean score of this study was 41.73. A majority of the graduate students reported high perceptions of mattering in regards to the relationships with their classmates (90.3%), the support they receive from their classmates (87.5%), and the classroom atmosphere (80.7%). There were not any items on the Peers Subscale in which the 50% or more of the graduate student participants perceived that they did not matter.

Table 4.4

Peers Subscale

	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neither Agree or Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
I get support from my classmates when I need it. <i>M</i> =4.21, <i>SD</i> =.953, <i>N</i> =320	8	2.5	19	5.9	13	4.1	137	42.8	143	44.7
I have a good relationship with my classmates. <i>M</i> =4.17, <i>SD</i> =.713, <i>N</i> =320	2	.6	9	2.8	20	6.3	192	60.0	97	30.3
Fellow students don't seem to listen to me when I share my life experiences. <i>M</i> =3.97, <i>SD</i> =.777, <i>N</i> =320	66	20.6	200	62.5	38	11.9	11	3.4	5	1.6
The classroom atmosphere encourages me to speak out in class. <i>M</i> =3.95, <i>SD</i> =.875, <i>N</i> =320	6	1.9	19	5.9	37	11.6	180	56.3	78	24.4
I feel my classmates react positively to my experience and knowledge. <i>M</i> =3.93, <i>SD</i> =.760, <i>N</i> =320	5	1.6	15	4.7	30	9.4	219	68.4	51	15.9
My classmates would help me catch up with new technologies if I needed it. <i>M</i> =3.85, <i>SD</i> =.801, <i>N</i> =320	3	.9	17	5.3	61	19.1	183	57.2	56	17.5

I feel like I fit in amongst my classmates. <i>M</i> =3.81, <i>SD</i> =.995, <i>N</i> =320	14	4.4	28	8.8	27	8.4	188	58.8	63	19.7
My age sometimes gets in the way of my interactions with fellow students. <i>M</i> =3.70, <i>SD</i> =.915, <i>N</i> =320	50	15.6	171	53.4	57	17.8	38	11.9	4	1.3
I have adequate opportunities to get to know fellow students. <i>M</i> =3.51, <i>SD</i> =1.020, <i>N</i> =320	9	2.8	64	20.0	37	11.6	175	54.7	35	10.9
As an adult student, I feel welcome on campus. <i>M</i> =3.47, <i>SD</i> =.926, <i>N</i> =320	8	2.5	45	14.1	85	26.6	154	48.1	28	8.8
I sometimes feel alone and isolated at the university. <i>M</i> =3.16, <i>SD</i> =1.187, <i>N</i> =320	45	14.1	95	29.7	72	22.5	83	25.9	25	7.8

The Multiple Roles Subscale measures adult students' perceptions of the extent to which the campus acknowledges competing demands on their time (Schlossberg et al., 1990). Questions in this subscale focus on the availability of special services, and the amount of attention paid to both time and physical restraints.

Table 4.5 describes Rowan University graduate students' perceptions of mattering in regards to the Multiple Roles Subscale of the *MHE*. Thirty-five was the highest possible score, seven was the lowest. The mean score of this study was 22.98. A majority of the graduate students reported high perceptions of mattering in regards to going back to the college environment (69.4%), and the time limits on completing course requirements (67.2%). There were not any items on the Multiple Roles Subscale in which the 50% or more of the graduate student participants perceived that they did not matter.

Table 4.5

Multiple Roles Subscale

	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neither Agree or Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
I will have a hard time finishing my degree because of time limits on completing course requirements. <i>M</i> =3.70, <i>SD</i> =1.015, <i>N</i> =320	67	20.9	148	46.3	55	17.2	43	13.4	7	2.2
It's hard for me to go back to the college environment. <i>M</i> =3.70, <i>SD</i> =1.000, <i>N</i> =320	62	19.4	160	50.0	44	13.8	49	15.3	5	1.6
Unless I have another student my age in my class, no one really understands how hard it is to be here. <i>M</i> =3.60, <i>SD</i> =.955, <i>N</i> =320	47	14.7	151	47.2	76	23.8	39	12.2	7	2.2
I don't have time to complete the administrative tasks this institution requires. <i>M</i> =3.36, <i>SD</i> =1.127, <i>N</i> =320	42	13.1	137	42.8	51	15.9	73	22.8	17	5.3
Departmental rules sometimes make my goals difficult or impossible. <i>M</i> =3.19, <i>SD</i> =.927, <i>N</i> =320	17	5.3	107	33.4	133	41.6	47	14.7	16	5.0
The campus facilities do not accommodate graduate students. <i>M</i> =2.94, <i>SD</i> =.955, <i>N</i> =320	21	6.6	87	27.2	82	25.6	112	35.0	18	5.6
The administration offices are not open at times when I need them. <i>M</i> =2.48, <i>SD</i> =1.062, <i>N</i> =320	5	1.6	66	20.6	66	20.6	124	38.8	59	18.4

The Faculty Subscale measures adult students' perceptions of the extent to which faculty members accept them in the classroom (Schlossberg et al., 1990). Questions in

this subscale focus on adult students' attitudes towards their professors. Faculty members' attitude, patience and defensiveness towards adult learners are examined.

Table 4.6 describes Rowan University graduate students' perceptions of mattering in regards to the Faculty Subscale of the *MHE*. The highest possible score for this subscale was 40 and the lowest was eight. The mean for this study was 30.23. A majority of graduate students reported high levels of mattering in regards to professors acceptance of experience-based comments (81.9%), and professors' recognition of students regardless of age (71%). Conversely, a majority of graduate students reported low perceptions of mattering in regards to professors ignoring their comments or questions (74.7%), and professors wanting them to hurry up and stop speaking (70.7%).

Table 4.6

Faculty Subscale

	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neither Agree or Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
My questions seem to put faculty members on the defensive. <i>M</i> =3.50, <i>SD</i> =1.071, <i>N</i> =320	47	14.7	142	44.4	73	22.8	39	12.2	19	5.9
My professors interpret assertiveness as a challenge to their authority. <i>M</i> =3.47, <i>SD</i> =.985, <i>N</i> =320	29	9.1	164	51.3	67	20.9	47	14.7	13	4.1
My professors seem to recognize younger students but not me. <i>M</i> =3.85, <i>SD</i> =.854, <i>N</i> =320	68	21.3	159	49.7	75	23.4	13	4.1	5	1.6
Sometimes my knowledge base feels out of date in the classroom. <i>M</i> =3.84, <i>SD</i> =.862, <i>N</i> =320	55	17.2	197	61.6	34	10.6	30	9.4	4	1.3

My experience-based comments are accepted by my professors. <i>M</i> =3.95, <i>SD</i> =.750, <i>N</i> =320	4	1.3	10	3.1	44	13.8	202	63.1	60	18.8
Some of the jokes my professors tell make me feel uncomfortable. <i>M</i> =4.09, <i>SD</i> =.855, <i>N</i> =320	106	33.1	160	50.0	37	11.6	12	3.8	5	1.6
My professors sometimes ignore my comments or questions. <i>M</i> =3.77, <i>SD</i> =.961, <i>N</i> =320	6	1.9	41	12.8	34	10.6	179	55.9	60	18.8
I sometimes feel my professors want me to hurry up and finish speaking. <i>M</i> =3.76, <i>SD</i> =.937, <i>N</i> =320	7	2.2	29	9.1	58	18.1	165	51.6	61	19.1

Table 4.7 illustrates the descriptive statistics of the research sample and normative sample. The research data from this study are largely in line with that of the normative data. Graduate students at Rowan University did score slightly higher than adult students at other 4-year universities in the Administration, Peers, Multiple Roles, and Faculty Subscales.

Table 4.7

Descriptive Statistics for Normative and Research Samples by Subscales

Subscale	Group	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
	2-year	39.25	3.13	7 institutions
	4-year	33.04	4.13	16 institutions
	Combined	34.93	4.78	23 institutions
	Rowan	35.13	6.30	320 students
Advising	2-year	30.22	1.95	7 institutions
	4-year	27.97	2.58	16 institutions
	Combined	29.63	2.53	23 institutions
	Rowan	26.21	5.79	320 students

Peers	2-year	41.36	0.89	7 institutions
	4-year	37.84	3.30	16 institutions
	Combined	39.02	3.20	23 institutions
	Rowan	41.73	6.33	320 students
Multiple Roles	2-year	22.66	0.95	7 institutions
	4-year	21.90	2.08	16 institutions
	Combined	22.13	1.82	23 institutions
	Rowan	22.98	4.31	320 students
Faculty	2-year	29.65	0.95	7 institutions
	4-year	27.84	2.12	16 institutions
	Combined	28.39	2.08	23 institutions
	Rowan	30.23	4.78	320 students

Research Question 2: Is there a significant difference in perceptions of mattering among graduate students of different enrollment statuses, degree types, and colleges?

To answer Research Question 2 multiple independent-samples *t* tests were performed. These test compared different subcategories of graduate students' mean scores on each of the five *MHE* subscales; administration, advising, peers, multiple roles, and faculty.

An independent-samples *t* test comparing the means scores of the full-time students and the part-time students found a significant difference between the means of the two groups on the Multiple Roles Subscale. The mean of the full-time students ($M=23.49$, $SD =4.458$) was significantly higher than that of the part time students ($M=22.53$, $SD =4.144$). The difference between the two is statistically significant at the .05 level ($t=1.992$, $df=318$, $sig=.047$). There were not any other statistically significant differences between full-time and part-time students on the other four subscales.

Three separate independent-sample *t* tests were executed to compare the mean scores of Master's, Doctoral, and Certificate level students. A significant difference was found between Master's and Doctoral students on the Peers Subscale. The mean of Doctoral students ($M=43.97$, $SD=5.691$) was significantly higher than that of Master's level students ($M=41.49$, $SD=6.450$). The difference between the two is statistically significant at the .05 level ($t=-2.138$, $df=294$, $sig=.033$).

A significant difference was also found between Doctoral and Certificate students, this time on the Administrative Subscale. The mean of Doctoral students ($M=36.91$, $SD=6.022$) was significantly higher than that of students enrolled in Certificate programs ($M=33.21$, $SD=7.022$). The difference between the two is statistically significant at the .05 level ($t=-2.153$, $df=56$, $sig=.036$).

Independent-samples *t* tests were also used to find a number of significant differences among the Rowan University's colleges. Graduate students from the College of Continuing and Professional Education (CPCE) had significantly higher scores on the Administration Subscale ($M=39.53$, $SD=4.775$) than the College of Education ($M=33.71$, $SD=6.053$) and College of Engineering ($M=33.35$, $SD=8.194$). The differences between the CPCE and College of Education ($t=-6.811$, $df=86.797$, $sig=.000$), as well as the College of Engineering ($t=3.342$, $df=29.849$, $sig=.004$), are significant at the .01 level. The CPCE students also had a significantly higher score on the Advising Subscale ($M=27.27$, $SD=5.327$) than students from the College of Education ($M=25.24$, $SD=5.952$). The difference between the two is statistically significant at the .05 level ($t=-2.064$, $df=207$, $sig=.040$).

Students from the College of Education scored significantly higher on the Peers Subscale ($M=42.39$, $SD=5.501$) than students from the College of Business ($M=39.57$, $SD=5.110$) and College of Engineering ($M=38.22$, $SD=9.313$). The differences between the College of Education and College of Business ($t=-2.612$, $df=192$, $sig=.010$), as well as the College of Engineering ($t=2.098$, $df=24.198$, $sig=.047$), are significant at the .01 and .05 levels.

Research Question 3: Do demographic factors of gender, age, race/ethnic background, and on-campus employment impact graduate students' perceptions of mattering at Rowan University?

To answer Research Question 3 multiple independent-samples t tests were performed. These tests compared different subcategories of graduate students' scores on each of the five *MHE* subscales; administration, advising, peers, multiple roles, and faculty. The demographics factors used in the independent-samples t tests were, gender, age, race/ethnic background, and on-campus employment.

An independent-samples t test comparing the means scores of male and female students found a significant difference between the means of the two groups on the Peers Subscale. The mean of the female graduate students ($M=42.14$, $SD=6.160$) was significantly higher than that of the male graduate students ($M=40.51$, $SD=6.160$). The difference between the two is statistically significant at the .05 level ($t=-2.016$, $df=318$, $sig=.045$).

A few significant differences were discovered after completing independent-samples t tests for the various combinations of age groupings. Graduate students aged 24

and under scored higher on Peers Subscale ($M=42.10$, $SD=6.271$) than students between the ages of 30-34 ($M=39.62$, $SD=6.697$) and 35-39 ($M=40.14$, $SD=7.326$). Graduate students 24 years old and younger also scored significantly higher on the Faculty Subscale ($M=30.70$, $SD=4.411$) than those between the ages of 40-44 ($M=24.67$, $SD=13.279$).

Graduate students between the ages of 35-39 had a much higher mean ($M=38.00$, $SD=6.645$) on the Administration Subscale than their 24 and under ($M=35.28$, $SD=6.375$) and their 25-29 year old ($M=33.29$, $SD=6.383$) counterparts.

Independent t sample tests were also conducted to compare the mean scores among graduate students of different race/ethnic background, as well as graduate students that work on campus compared to those that work off campus. No significant differences were found between any of these groups.

CHAPTER V

Summary, Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Summary of the Study

This study is based on the research and theoretical knowledge base of Nancy Schlossberg. Through her work in transition theory, Schlossberg (1989) applied the concept of mattering to college students and observed that those taking on new life roles, such as that of a student, are more likely to feel as though they do not matter. She believed it was essential that these individuals make an effort to create connections that tied them to a university and gave them a sense of meaning, ultimately leading to a feeling of mattering. In this study, Schlossberg's *The Mattering Scales for Adult Learners in Higher Education* was distributed to the total population of matriculated graduate students at Rowan University. The data were analyzed to determine the students' perceptions of mattering.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine whether graduate students at Rowan University feel as though they matter to the university. Survey research focused on graduate students' perceptions of mattering in regards to five specific areas of campus life; administration, advising, peers, multiple roles, and faculty. The overall perception of mattering among the graduate student population in relation to these different areas was analyzed and discussed. Differences and similarities among various subgroups of

graduate students were also observed, analyzed, and discussed.

The findings of this study may provide insight for The Graduate School staff attempting to increase student satisfaction and connectedness amongst the graduate student population. Professors and advisors from different colleges within Rowan University can reference this study to get an idea of how students' perceive their services. The findings of this study may also be used by student affairs professionals to create and strengthen support services and programming for graduate students at the Rowan University campus.

Methodology

This study attempted to investigate the total population of matriculated graduate students at Rowan University in the spring 2010 semester. As of spring 2010, there were 1,334 matriculated graduate students at the university, 352 of which were full-time and the other 982 were part-time students. There were 957 (72%) female graduate students, compared to 377 (28%) males.

The instrumentation used in this study was *The Mattering Scales for Adult Learners in Higher Education* (MHE), developed by Nancy Schlossberg et al. (1990). This instrument includes 45 statements “to assess the perceptions of adult learners about their educational environment” (Schlossberg et al., 1990, p. 4). The *MHE* (Appendix B) focuses on five dimensions of mattering: administration, advising, peers, multiple roles, and faculty (Schlossberg et al.). It aims to provide a comprehensive “campus ecology measure” for administration, faculty, and adult students by answering two primary questions (Schlossberg et al.):

1. Do I feel I matter to the institution?
2. Do I feel noticed, appreciated, welcomed?

An Institutional Review Board (IRB) application was submitted for review on December 1, 2009. The IRB approved the application on December 16, 2009 (Appendix A). Shortly after receiving approval, the survey used in this study was piloted with a group of 12 students from the College of Education's Master's in Collaborative Education program. Based on the pilot, the final survey was developed for implementation. In the piloted survey, items referred to the participants as "adult students." After completing the pilot study, I decided to switch "adult students" to "graduate students" in questions 4, 21, 38 and 43 to ensure the items focus more specifically on the study's target population.

The *MHE* was reformatted when it was transferred from print to online. Each page of the online survey consisted of nine Likert scale items arranged according to; strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree or disagree, agree, and strongly agree. The final page of the survey asked students to identify demographic information.

Before I could collect data, I needed to gain access from the Director and Associate Provost of Rowan University's Information Resources and Network and System Services Departments. Once permission was granted, the surveys were emailed to all matriculated graduate students on March 26, 2010. The subjects were given until April 5, 2010 to complete the survey. In an attempt to collect more responses another email was sent April 5, 2010 giving subjects an additional four day period to complete

the survey instrument. On April 10, 2010 the online survey was closed, and no further completed surveys were accepted.

Data Analysis

All data collected using the online survey were entered into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) computer software. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to calculate frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations. The data were primarily used to answer research question 1 (RQ1).

Next, several independent-samples *t* tests were run to compare various demographic factors (enrollment status, college affiliation, degree type, gender, age, race/ethnicity, and employment factors) with items on the survey. The data obtained from the comparison of the means of the different subgroups were used to answer research questions 2 (RQ2) and 3 (RQ3).

Discussion of the Findings

Research Question 1: Do graduate students at Rowan University feel as though they matter in regards to: administration, advising, peers, multiple roles, and faculty?

In comparison to the normative data provided, Rowan University graduate students reported higher perceptions of mattering in the Administration, Peers, Multiple Roles, and Faculty Subscales than other adult students at 4-year institutions. However, Rowan students did score lower than average on the Advising Subscale.

There were two statements in the Administration Subscale in which a majority of the students felt as though they mattered. These statements pertained to faculty and administration's sensitivity towards other responsibilities and class offerings. There were

also two statements in which the majority of participants felt as though they did not matter to the administration. Sixty-two percent of the participants felt as though their activities fees were not spent in a way that is meaningful to them. Fifty-five percent believed campus rules and regulations were made more so for undergraduate students than graduate students.

The statements in the Advising Subscale that Rowan University graduate students' agreed with most pertained to advisors availability and willingness to help. Over 71% were sure his or her advisor would seek out the answer to their question if they did not know the answer. It is worth noting that the Advising Subscale is the only subscale in which the research participants scored lower than the normative data.

The Peers Subscale showed some of the highest levels of mattering in the study. Over 87% of the students felt as though they got support from their classmates when they needed it. Moreover, a total of 90.3% of students believed they had a good relationship with their classmates. This subscale also did not have an item in which 50% or more graduate students felt as though they did not matter.

Two statements in the Multiple Roles Subscales indicated that the majority of students believed the campus acknowledged multiple demands on their time. Students surveyed did not feel as though they would have trouble completing course requirements because of time limits. They also felt as though people understand and recognize their other responsibilities outside of the classroom.

There were three statements in the Faculty Subscale in which a majority of the students felt as though they mattered. These statements pertained to faculty being

receptive to assertiveness and experience-based comments in the classroom. There was also one statement in which the majority of participants felt as though they did not matter to the administration. Seventy-five percent of the participants felt as though their professors sometimes ignore their comments or questions.

Kettle's (2001) comparison of non-traditional and traditional students found that most scores were neutral in all scales except the Administration Subscale. Similar trends of neutral feelings can be seen throughout several of the subscales in this study. This trend of neutral responses could be an indication that the instrumentation is not addressing concerns relevant to the research participants.

Research Question 2: Is there a significant difference in perceptions of mattering among graduate students of different enrollment statuses, degree types, and colleges?

There was a significant difference in full-time and part-time students' perceptions of mattering on the Multiple Roles Subscale. The mean of the full-time students ($M=23.49$, $SD=4.458$) was significantly higher than that of the part time students ($M=22.53$, $SD=4.144$).

A significant difference was also found between Master's and Doctoral students on the Peers Subscale. The mean of Doctoral students ($M=43.97$, $SD=5.691$) was significantly higher than that of Master's level students ($M=41.49$, $SD=6.450$). Doctoral students all participate in Rowan University's Ed.D. program. Perhaps the higher level mattering in the Peers Subscale is due to the increased interaction among the same cohort year in and year out.

More significant differences were found when independent-samples *t* tests were used to compare the differences in means among all of the colleges of Rowan University. Graduate students from the College of Professional and Continuing Education (CPCE) had significantly higher scores on the Administration Subscale ($M=39.53$, $SD=4.775$) than the College of Education ($M=33.71$, $SD=6.053$) and College of Engineering ($M=33.35$, $SD=8.194$). The CPCE students also had a significantly higher score on the Advising Subscale ($M=27.27$, $SD=5.327$) than students from the College of Education ($M=25.24$, $SD=5.952$). Students from the College of Education scored significantly higher on the Peers Subscale ($M=42.39$, $SD=5.501$) than students from the College of Business ($M=39.57$, $SD=5.110$) and College of Engineering ($M=38.22$, $SD=9.313$).

It is interesting to observe that students of the College of Professional and Continuing Education (CPCE) reported higher levels of mattering in regards to administration and advising than graduate students enrolled in the Colleges of Education and Engineering. Typically CPCE students spend less time on campus, as most of their courses are offered online or in hybrid form, than students from other colleges. Perhaps the CPCE consciously pays closer attention to advising and providing administrative assistance to these students.

Research Question 3: Do demographic factors of gender, age, race/ethnic background, and on-campus employment impact graduate students' perceptions of mattering at Rowan University?

A significant difference was found between male and female graduate students on the Peers Subscale. The mean of the female graduate students ($M=42.14$, $SD=6.160$) was

significantly higher than that of the male graduate students ($M=40.51$, $SD=6.160$). This difference among male and female students supports the work of Butcher (1997) and Fauber (1996), who found that women were significantly more satisfied on the Peer Subscale than their male counterparts. Fauber (1996) hypothesized that women's reliance on support and encouragement from others makes this subscale a strong indicator of the level of connectedness among peers. However, both Kent (2004) and Hillard (2001) found no significant difference between men and women on all five subscales.

Significant differences were also found between graduate students aged 24 and younger and their older counterparts. Graduate students aged 24 and under scored higher on Peers Subscale ($M=42.10$, $SD=6.271$) than students between the ages of 30-34 ($M=39.62$, $SD=6.697$) and 35-39 ($M=40.14$, $SD=7.326$). Graduate students 24 years old and younger also scored significantly higher on the Faculty Subscale ($M=30.70$, $SD=4.411$) than those between the ages of 40-44 ($M=24.67$, $SD=13.279$). Unlike many of the previous studies done using the *MHE*, this study has a much lower mean age range. A majority of the participants (61.9%) are either 23 or 24 years old, and continuing their graduate education directly after completing their undergraduate degree program.

However, graduate students between the ages of 35-39 had a much higher mean ($M=38.00$, $SD=6.645$) on the Administration Subscale than their 24 and under ($M=35.28$, $SD=6.375$) and their 25-29 year old ($M=33.29$, $SD=6.383$) counterparts.

Conclusions

The findings of this study revealed that the students at Rowan University reported higher perceptions of mattering than the normative data on the Administration, Peers,

Multiple Roles, and Faculty Subscales. The only subscale on which they scored lower than the normative data was the Advising Subscale.

Regardless of the lower score on the Advising Subscale, graduate students at Rowan University did not report that they felt as though they did not matter in any particular subscale. Graduate students at Rowan University actually have a rather high perception of mattering, especially in regards to the Peers and Advising Subscales.

However, there were some particular statements in which a majority of participants felt as though they did not matter. On the Administrative Subscale participants felt as though their activities fees were not being used in a way that was meaningful to them and campus rules and regulations were aimed more so towards undergraduate students. The Faculty Subscale findings indicated that a majority of students felt as though their professors ignored their comments/questions and wanted them to hurry up and finish speaking.

Like previous research done in regards to mattering, limited significant relationships were found between demographic factors and perceptions of mattering. The findings suggest that female students at Rowan University perceive higher levels of mattering among their peers, and CPCE students feel as though they matter more in regards to Advising and Administrative Subscales.

Similar to previous studies (Kent, 2004; Kettle, 2001; Vampatella, 2000), a majority of statements yielded a neutral response. Perhaps this is an indicator that the statements on the *Mattering Scales for Adult Students in Higher Education* could use a revision to make them more applicable to current adult students.

Recommendations for Practice

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following suggestions for practice are presented:

1. Colleges and departments, particularly the College of Education and Engineering, should evaluate their advising to ensure students' needs are being properly met.
2. Faculty members need to make a conscious effort to address students concerns both inside and outside of the classroom.
3. Rowan University administration needs to develop graduate organizations, clubs, and networking events that promote interdisciplinary peer interaction.

Recommendation for Further Research

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following suggestions for further research are presented:

1. More research needs to be conducted on the subject of mattering among adult students, particularly among graduate students.
2. The Mattering Scales for Adult Students in Higher Education (*MHE*) should be analyzed and revised to fit the changing needs, concerns and demands of the current student.
3. Continue research with the same, or similar, instrument over a longer time period to evaluate graduate students' perceptions of mattering throughout their entire graduate career.

4. Administer a mixed method study, which includes the *MHE* and qualitative research such as focus groups or one-on-one interviews.
5. Create a focus group of university administrators, faculty and students to discuss the needs and concerns of the graduate population.

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APPENDIX A

Institutional Review Board Approval Letter



December 16, 2009

Christopher D'Angelo
117 Wycombe Court
Deptford, NJ 08028

Dear Christopher D'Angelo:

In accordance with the University's IRB policies and 45 CFR 46, the Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects, I am pleased to inform you that the Rowan University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has approved your project:

IRB application number: 2010-083

Project Title: An Evaluation of Graduate Students' Perceptions of Mattering at Rowan University

In accordance with federal law, this approval is effective for one calendar year from the date of this letter. If your research project extends beyond that date or if you need to make significant modifications to your study, you must notify the IRB immediately. Please reference the above-cited IRB application number in any future communications with our office regarding this research.

Please retain copies of consent forms for this research for three years after completion of the research.

If, during your research, you encounter any unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects, you must report this immediately to Dr. Harriet Hartman (hartman@rowan.edu or call 856-256-4500, ext. 3787) or contact Dr. Gautam Pillay, Associate Provost for Research (pillay@rowan.edu or call 856-256-5150).

If you have any administrative questions, please contact Karen Heiser (heiser@rowan.edu or 856-256-5150).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Harriet Hartman".

Harriet Hartman, Ph.D.
Chair, Rowan University IRB

c: Burton Sisco, Educational Leadership, Education Hall

Office of Research
Bole Hall Annex
201 Mullica Hill Road
Glassboro, NJ 08028-1701

856-256-5150
856-256-4425 fax

APPENDIX B

The Mattering Scales for Adult Students in Higher Education

MATTERING SCALES

Purpose

We are interested in learning more about the different ways in which adult learners feel they matter--to whom, under what circumstances, and what this means to them. To help us learn more about mattering, we would appreciate your taking the time to fill out this form. Also, please feel free to add any comments you wish to make.

Please circle the response which best describes your feelings. Please select a response for each item.

SD = STRONGLY DISAGREE **D** = DISAGREE **N** = NEITHER AGREE OR DISAGREE
A = AGREE **SA** = STRONGLY AGREE

		SD	D	N	A	SA
1. The university's policy of transfer credits penalizes non-traditional students.						
2. My advisor doesn't seem to remember things we have discussed before.						
3. I will have a hard time finishing my degree because of time limits on completing course requirements.						
4. The administration seems to consider adult student priorities as important as traditional student priorities.						
5. I get support from my classmates when I need it.						
6. My questions seem to put faculty members on the defensive.						
7. The faculty and administrators are sensitive to my other responsibilities.						
8. I sometimes feel alone and isolated at the university.						
9. The administrative rules and regulations are clear to me.						
10. My professors interpret assertiveness as a challenge to their authority.						
11. The administration sets things up to be easy for them, not the students.						

MATTERING SCALES

	SD	D	N	A	SA
12. It's hard for me to go back to the school environment.					
13. If my advisor didn't know the answer to my questions, I'm sure he or she would seek out the answers.					
14. The classroom atmosphere encourages me to speak out in class.					
15. I feel my classmates react positively to my experience and knowledge.					
16. My professors seem to recognize the younger students but not me.					
17. I don't have time to complete the administrative tasks this institution requires.					
18. There has always been someone on campus who could help me when I had a question or problem.					
19. I feel like I fit in my classes.					
20. The administration offices are not open at times when I need them.					
21. The administration makes efforts to accommodate adult students.					
22. I have a good relationship with my younger classmates.					
23. Sometimes I feel out of date in the classroom.					
24. The university does not commit enough resources to off-campus courses.					
25. There has always been an adviser available to talk with me if I need to ask a question.					

MATTERING SCALES

SD D N A SA

- 26. My classmates would help me catch up to the new technologies if I needed it.

--	--	--	--	--	--
- 27. My experience-based comments are accepted by my professors.

--	--	--	--	--	--
- 28. It takes too long to register or correct registration problems.

--	--	--	--	--	--
- 29. Administrative staff are helpful in answering my questions.

--	--	--	--	--	--
- 30. Fellow students don't seem to listen to me when I share my life experiences.

--	--	--	--	--	--
- 31. Unless I have another student my age in class, no one really understands how hard it is to be here.

--	--	--	--	--	--
- 32. The university offers alternatives to the traditional semester-length course (like weekends).

--	--	--	--	--	--
- 33. I have had adequate opportunities to get to know fellow students.

--	--	--	--	--	--
- 34. Campus rules and regulations seem to have been made for traditional-age students.

--	--	--	--	--	--
- 35. My age sometimes gets in the way of my interactions with fellow students.

--	--	--	--	--	--
- 36. Some of the jokes my professors tell make me feel uncomfortable.

--	--	--	--	--	--
- 37. Classes are offered at times that are good for me.

--	--	--	--	--	--
- 38. As an adult student, I feel welcome on campus.

--	--	--	--	--	--
- 39. The desks weren't made for adults.

--	--	--	--	--	--

MATTERING SCALES

SD D N A SA

- 40. I feel my activities fees are spent in a way that is meaningful to me.

--	--	--	--	--	--

- 41. My advisor has office hours at times that I am on campus.

--	--	--	--	--	--

- 42. Departmental rules sometimes make my goals difficult or impossible.

--	--	--	--	--	--

- 43. The school newspaper doesn't discuss adult student issues.

--	--	--	--	--	--

- 44. My professors sometimes ignore my comments or questions.

--	--	--	--	--	--

- 45. I sometimes feel my professors want me to hurry up and finish speaking.

--	--	--	--	--	--



MATTERING SCALES

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Please provide the following information about yourself:

Racial/Ethnic Descriptions *(please check one)*

- Black Non-Hispanic
- American Indian or Alaskan Native
- Asian or Pacific Islander
- Hispanic
- White Non-Hispanic
- Non-Resident Alien
- Unknown
- Other

What is your enrollment status?

- full-time student
- part-time student

How many years have you been a student at this institution?

Are you enrolled in a degree program?

- yes
- no

If yes, major area of study.

Education

- High school graduate
- College (but less than a bachelor's degree)
- B.A. (or equivalent) or higher

Gender Female Male

Occupation

Hours worked/week

Do you work on campus? Yes No

Do you have dependents? Yes No

How many?

Their ages?

How many hours are you on campus each week?

APPENDIX C

Revised Materring Scales for Adult Students in Higher Education

While your participation in this survey is voluntary and you are not required to answer any of the questions herein, your cooperation and participation are important to the success of the project and greatly appreciated. The following survey is being conducted to fulfill the thesis requirement for the M.A. in Higher Education program. The purpose of this research is to examine graduate students' perceptions of mattering at Rowan University. Please be aware that all responses will be kept anonymous and confidential. If you have any questions or problems concerning your participation in this study, you may contact Christopher D'Angelo by phone at (609) 471-2069, or email at dangel57@students.rowan.edu or Dr. Burton Sisco by phone at (856) 256-4500 x. 3717 or email sisco@rowan.edu.

Demographic Data

Gender: Male Female

Ethnicity: African American/ Black Hispanic/Latino(a)/Chicano(a)
 Asian/Asian American Native American
 Caucasian/White Middle Eastern
 Biracial Other (specify) _____

Age Range: 24 & under 25-29 30-34 35-39 40-44 45 & older

Enrollment Status: Full Time Student (9 or more credits) Part Time Student (6 or less credits)

How many years have you been a Graduate student at this institution? _____

How many hours a week are you on campus? _____

Type of Program:

_____ Master Level _____ Doctoral Level _____ Certificate Program

College Currently Enrolled In:

- College of Business College of Communication
- College of Continuing and Professional Education College of Education
- College of Engineering College of Fine & Performing Arts College of Liberal Arts & Sciences

Do you work on campus?: Yes No

Please respond to the following statements with one of the responses listed below:

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neither Agree or Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

1. The university's policy of transfer credits penalizes graduate students.
2. My advisor doesn't seem to remember things we have discussed before.
3. I will have a hard time finishing my degree because of time limits on completing course requirements.
4. The administration seems to consider graduate student priorities as important as undergraduate student priorities.
5. I get support from my classmates when I need it.
6. My questions seem to put faculty members on the defensive.
7. The faculty and administrators are sensitive to my other responsibilities.
8. I sometimes feel alone and isolated at the university.
9. The administrative rules and policies are clear to me.
10. My professors interpret assertiveness as a challenge to their authority.
11. The administration sets things up to be easy for them, not the students.
12. It's hard for me to go back to the college environment.
13. If my advisor didn't know the answer to my questions, I'm sure he or she would seek out the answers.
14. The classroom atmosphere encourages me to speak out in class.
15. I feel my classmates react positively to my experience and knowledge.
16. My professors seem to recognize the younger students but not me.
17. I don't have time to complete the administrative tasks (registration, financial aid, parking permit, etc) this institution requires.
18. There has always been someone on campus who could help me when I had a question or problem.
19. I feel like I fit in amongst my classmates.
20. The administration offices are not open at times when I need them.

21. The administration makes efforts to accommodate graduate students.
22. I have a good relationship with my classmates.
23. Sometimes my knowledge base feels out of date in the classroom.
24. The university does not commit enough resources to of-campus courses.
25. There has always been an advisor available to talk with me if I need to ask question.
26. My classmates would help me catch up with new technologies if I needed it.
27. My experience-based comments are accepted by my professors.
28. The registration process is complicated and not explained well to graduate students.
29. Administrative and professional staff are helpful in answering my questions.
30. Fellow students don't seem to listen to me when I share my life experiences.
31. Unless I have another student my age in class, no one really understands how hard it is to be here.
32. The university offers alternatives to the traditional semester-length course (like weekends).
33. I have had adequate opportunities to get to know fellow students.
34. Campus rules and regulations seem to have been made for undergraduate students.
35. My age sometimes gets in the way of my interactions with fellow students.
36. Some of the jokes my professors tell make me feel uncomfortable.
37. Classes are offered at times that are good for me.
38. As an adult student, I feel welcome on campus.
39. The campus facilities do not accommodate graduate students.
40. I feel my activities fees are spent in a way that is meaningful to me.
41. My advisor has office hours at times that I am on campus.
42. Departmental rules sometimes make my goals difficult or impossible.
43. The school newspaper doesn't discuss graduate student issues.
44. My professors sometimes ignore my comments or questions.
45. I sometimes feel my professors want me to hurry up and finish speaking.

APPENDIX D

Email to Participants

Hello Fellow Graduate Students,

My name is Christopher D'Angelo. I am currently a candidate for my Master's degree in Higher Education Administration here at Rowan University. Over the past two semesters I have been interning at Rowan University's Graduate School and preparing my thesis project, titled "Graduate Students' Perceptions of Mattering at Rowan University". My hope is that the analysis of the data collected through this research will be able to benefit graduate students, staff and professors at the university in the future.

In order to successfully complete my thesis requirement I need your help. Please follow the link below and take the online survey by Thursday, April 1st. It should only take between 5-10 minutes to complete, and all responses will remain anonymous and confidential. Thank you very much for your time and cooperation.

Click link below to participate in survey:
http://www.surveymonkey.com//CDAngelo_MatteringScales

Sincerely,
Christopher D'Angelo
dangel57@sudents.rowan.edu

