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**RELIGION AND SPIRITUALITY: A STUDY OF UNDERGRADUATE
STUDENT SENTIMENTS AND TRANSCENDENCE**

by
Robert Yufer

A Thesis

Submitted to the
Department of Educational Services, Administration, and Higher Education
College of Education

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For the degree of

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at

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Thesis Chair: Burton Sisco, Ed. D.

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ABSTRACT

Robert Yufer

**RELIGIOSITY AND SPIRITUALITY: A STUDY OF UNDERGRADUATE
STUDENT SENTIMENTS AND TRANSCENDENCE**

2011/12

Burton R. Sisco, Ed.D.

Master of Arts in Higher Education Administration

This study took place at a public university located in Glassboro, NJ. The purpose of this study was to determine the religiosity, religious crisis, and spirituality levels of Rowan University undergraduate students. A survey was sent to all undergraduate students at least 18 years old to participate in the study. The instrument is partitioned and includes a religiosity section and a spirituality section with statements and questions. The survey data suggest that Rowan undergraduates fall within the normative range when it comes to religion and spirituality. The responses have also indicated that Rowan students are, as a whole, not experiencing a religious crisis in their lives. Moreover, correlations were found linking religiosity to race and religious affiliation, although these correlations are considered weak. Since Rowan University is a public institution of higher education, it is recommended these results be considered in context, and may not agree with results from a religiously affiliated institution.

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Simply and irrefutably, without the unwavering support of my parents, this thesis would not have been possible. Their

I would like to thank my classmates, who I have become friends with, and fond of over the past two years.

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Chapter I

Introduction

Colleges and universities educate a variety of undergraduate students with the assumption that receiving a diploma will further their ambitions. Throughout the years of learning, and while experiencing personal development, these students are faced with many challenges. Dilemmas occur and choices need to be made. A prominent area of discourse impacting the decisions students make and the paths they choose may be related to religious, spiritual, or secular beliefs. It is not only beneficial to be accepting of what other people believe, but also advantageous to know why they respond in a certain way. Since these personal and spiritual fulfillments are important, they shape the foundations of our belief systems and alter our very perception of the world. Jacobsen and Jacobsen (2008) make light of this by stating, “Progressive or conservative or something in between, there is no question that religion can promote powerful, even cataclysmic social change” (p. 47). The range of changes resulting directly from religion are numerous and can include legally restricting abortion, social strife or reform, or when sharia law defines the jurisprudence of a nation. Therefore, it is valuable to have an understanding of what college undergraduates believe, with respect to religion, spirituality, and secularism; as these philosophies will shape the future of the country.

Statement of the Problem

Since the 1990s years, a myriad of literature has been presented on religion in higher education. However, these studies are limited in their scope and do not offer an in depth firsthand look at what college students report about religion and spirituality. Mayrl

and Oeur (2009) recognize, that despite an increased public and scholarly interest in religious matters, social scientific scholarship on the roles it plays on college and university campuses is limited. Instead, these studies focus on various issues, such as how organized religion, including Christianity, has adopted new roles as the scenery of college campuses change. Additionally, studies have been presented demonstrating how religion has been or could be transformed and improved on campuses. Moreover, studies have been conducted to assess the opinions and attitudes of professors who teach religion related courses (Cherry, Deberg, & Porterfield, 2001). The secularization theories of Douglas Sloan, and James Burtchael, suggest that colleges are more secular institutions, and religion on their campuses is fading (Cherry, et al., 2001). However, other experts in the field do not always agree. Cherry et al. state, “Frankly we are suspicious about their adequacy from the outset for a number of reasons... religion as taught and practiced has been alive and well in the institutions of higher education that we have occupied” (p. 4). There are two opposing views, whether institutions of higher education are religious sanctuaries or secular moderating organizations. The former is not to suggest that colleges and universities are driven by religion, but whether the student body is religiously motivated within a campus atmosphere.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to better understand the religious, spiritual, and secular beliefs of selected undergraduate college students. A survey was conducted and data were collected from freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors at Rowan University in Glassboro, NJ during the Spring of 2012 semester. Understanding the makeup of students in regards to their religious and spiritual beliefs can help professors

and administrators better understand personal choices made by these students; subsequently allowing them to generate new solutions for existing problems and be more prepared for future problems. The influence of religion and spirituality on some students is present, and professors and administrators should be aware of this knowledge.

Significance of the Study

The motivation behind this study is not only to better understand the beliefs of others, but to also understand the mindset of college students today. This additional knowledge provides a basis for being able to identify the type of environment college students desire because of their reported beliefs. The influence of religious, spiritual, and secular views is massive. The identity of students with regards to religious or anti-religious beliefs should not go unnoticed or undervalued. Implications for students who do not share the same views as the majority or plurality of others can include intimidation or disassociation. A more in depth look, at not only what people believe, but also why they have certain beliefs, may be a further advancement of this study. According to Jacobsen and Jacobsen (2008), the realm of religion is a significant area of study because it is so embedded in Western society, addressing the fact,

Stories related to religion appear with regularity on the nightly news, in the paper, on talk radio. These stories range from the analysis of religious tensions that feed military struggles across the globe to the analysis of the spiritual journeys of presidential candidates. (p. 44)

Due to the ubiquitous nature of religion it is not surprising that such matters have worked their way into higher education: college president forced to resign after removing a cross from a chapel; Muslim students requesting a place for daily prayers, or for the pool to close so females of the faith can swim; a new religion

course sparks a national debate over the role of religion in the classroom, are examples of such interconnectedness. Butler (1989) recognizes the overwhelming reach of religion when he states,

Religion is quantitatively and qualitatively more diverse and more present on campus than it ever has been. Responsibilities for the sake of students and the institution must include religion as a natural and universally present component of culture and life experience. (p. 15)

Although the responsibilities of institutions is up for debate, as to how much religion can be tolerated without violating first amendment rights, there is no doubt it remains alive and well in the minds of college students. Due to the overlap between the religious and academic worlds, Jacobsen and Jacobsen (2008) question how educators, especially those in the liberal arts, have been so casual in their attention on this matter.

Furthermore, contrasting this survey with a similarly completed one at a religiously affiliated institution, could offer insight to whether those students are, in fact, more inclined to be religious or spiritual. Additionally, it could test the hypothesis that religious parents are more likely to send their children to religiously affiliated institutions. However, such a survey may be limited by conditions such as socio-economic status or geographic location.

Assumptions and Limitations

The scope of this survey relied strictly on the feedback from selected undergraduates at Rowan University, and does not reflect all the types of colleges and universities in the United States including private, denominational, vocational, or

research oriented. Additionally, vast differences may exist between schools of differing types, and the results in this study cannot be applied to them all in a general sense. For example, the levels of religiosity and spirituality at a Catholic university may have noticeably higher levels than Rowan. The sample is not divided equally between male and female undergraduates. This is because the participants were selected at random and responded to the survey items at their own discretion. Additionally, the survey does not decipher between gender lines. The survey does not express the university as a whole since graduate students, faculty, and staff were not included. Another limiting factor is that the student population at Rowan is approximately 11,816 with about 10,438 being undergraduate students. With a population size of 10,438, in order to obtain a margin of error of ± 3 with a confidence level of 95%, 968 students needed to be surveyed. The beliefs of the students participating in the study serve only as an estimation of all undergraduate students during the spring of 2012 semester at Rowan University. As previously mentioned, the margin of error was $\pm 0.03\%$, assuming more than 968 students completed the survey.

Since the study was sent to students via email, and was labeled as a religiosity and spirituality survey, it could have affected the types of students who decided to participate. It may have garnered an audience that was predominantly religious or spiritual and be ignored by atheists or agnostics due to indifference of the survey subject. It also could have had the reverse effect; in which atheists or agnostics wanted their opinions to be heard, and therefore participated in disproportionately high numbers. Along those lines, there is the potential for researcher bias, that could alter or influence the results of the study.

Operational Definitions

1. College Students: Undergraduate students from Rowan University; who are traditional freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors during the 2011-2012 academic school year.
2. Generational Names: These include the Millennial Generation: People born after 1981; Generation Xers: Born between 1965 and 1980; Baby Boomer Generation: Born between 1946 and 1964; The Silent Generation: Born between 1928 and 1945; The Greatest Generation: Born before 1928.
3. Liberal Arts Education: As stated by the American Association of Colleges and Universities; “The approach to higher learning that best serves individuals, our globally engaged democracy, and innovating economy is liberal education” (as cited in Carpenter, 2007, p. 26). The aims of liberal education are to develop intellectual and ethical judgment, expand cultural, societal, and scientific horizons, cultivate democratic and global knowledge, and prepare for work in a dynamic and evolving economy.
4. Miracle: Phenomenon that is believed to be unexplainable through physical or scientific means, and therefore requires a supernatural influence or force to have occurred.
5. Religion: “This is an abstract word which we have coined for our convenience, to indicate certain of our ideas, emotions, attitudes, situations, acts, which seem to have a common recurring quality that warrants our bracketing them under a single head” (Sperry, 1968, p. 2). Chickering, Dalton, and Stamm (2006) believe religion is an institution through which a conceptual framework is identified and

then recognized as a guide for governing society's moral values. Religion is to identify a specific set of beliefs and practices related to an established sect.

6. Religious Affiliation: Believing in a certain religion makes a person religiously affiliated. This includes, but is not limited to, going to church, holding demonstrations, teaching, and promulgation of religious ideals.
7. Secular: Of or pertaining to worldly things, or things not regarded as religious or spiritual.
8. Spiritual (Spirituality): "...marked by a highly personal search for ultimate meaning, purpose, and values, wherever they may be found (Chickering, Dalton, & Stamm). Spirituality may in some ways resemble religion, but the difference is that spirituality is not based on any specific religion. "Personal religion (spirituality) is about meaning and experience in the present, about why life matters, about knowing who one is and what one is called to do, and about 'being centered' in a busy and distracting world" (Jacobsen & Jacobsen, p. 46). Spirituality can be seen as something that comes from within, while religion is more closely related to external factors.

Research Questions

The study addressed the following research questions:

1. How religious are undergraduate students at Rowan University?
2. Are undergraduate students at Rowan University experiencing a religious crisis?
3. How spiritual are undergraduate students at Rowan University?
4. Is there a significant relationship between the religiosity of Rowan undergraduate students and race or religious affiliation?

Overview of the Study

Chapter II discusses the origins of education in the American system and explains how the dynamics of this early setting have changed over time. It then identifies and dissects current studies relating to the beliefs of Americans as a whole, and specifically, on college campuses. It follows with evidence as to whether higher education campuses are places that cause students to lose their faiths, or strengthen them. This section offers opinions by scholars in the field. Moreover, the theory for the formation of such belief systems is addressed. Finally, a determination is made concluding with why this study is significant.

Chapter III describes the study methodology and procedures. The following details are discussed: the context of the study, the population and sample selection, the data collection instrument, the process through which data were collected, and analysis of the data.

Chapter IV addresses the findings of the study. Tables are constructed to display the information along with correlations. The purpose of this section was to answer the research questions introduced in Chapter I of this study.

Chapter V summarizes and discusses the major findings of the study, with conclusions and recommendations for practice and further study.

Chapter II

Review of the Literature

A History of Institutions of Higher Education

In order to make sense of undergraduate students' religious and secular philosophies, it is worthwhile to have brief foundational knowledge of the history of American higher education. The original directions and purposes of colleges and universities has drastically changed, and over time these changes have created new missions, and a sense of what is to be and not to be taught in the classroom. Institutions of higher education in the United States were founded upon, and were traditionally a place, where people learned about religious principles and experienced ecclesiastical customs. Burton (1925) states, " In this country at least, and not in a few others, what we know is the college has most frequently owed its origin to religious motives, and has very often been the creation of a group of people whose primary associating motive has been religion" (para 1). For instance, Harvard College, the first institution of higher education in the United States, began in the 17th century in 1636, mainly as a means to educate Puritan clergymen. Additionally, debates regarding the most appropriate way to train ministers directly led to the founding of Yale College in 1701, followed by William Tennent's, which now exists as Princeton. King's College, later Columbia, and Philadelphia College, later the University of Pennsylvania had connections to the Anglican Church and as dictated by their missions, taught religion as part of the education (Cherry, DeBerg, & Porterfield, 2001). Nieli (2008) credits this by stating,

“Virtually all the institutions of higher learning established in America in the colonial times and most of those started in the nineteenth century were founded by individuals or groups affiliated with Protestant Christian religious denominations” (p. 312). The goal of these universities was to spread the moral, intellectual, and religious traditions of Christianity to the nation’s students. For instance, even as late as the 1880s, Jane Stanford encouraged the university trustees of Stanford University to, “prohibit sectarian instruction, but to have taught in the university the immortality of the soul, the existence of an all-wise and benevolent Creator, and that obedience to his laws is the highest duty of man” (Nieli, p. 313). Another example is The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, established in 1789; where all students had to attend daily morning and evening religious services. In addition, students were expected to have Sunday evening examinations on the principles of morality and religion (Nieli, 2008).

For colonists, European models of faith and society were a natural extension. Thus it is not surprising to find connections between the early institutions of higher educations and the academic and religious ways found in their home countries. Each institution was therefore tied to a particular denomination; “Princeton was formed by Presbyterians, Columbia by Episcopalians, Brown by Baptists, Rutgers by members of the Dutch Reformed Church, and Dartmouth by Congregationalists” (Butler, 1989, p. 4).

It was not until the late 19th, and early 20th centuries, that religious teachings were largely replaced by academic disciplines established upon secular principles. Up until this point, “they (educators) believed that a thorough grounding in religious principles and biblical knowledge supported advances across the educational spectrum”

(Cherry et al., p. 2). Secular and religious education harbor a myriad of differences, but at the core, Ream (2007) articulates,

...the secular is a state of consciousness in which individuals and the institutions they establish view themselves as being self-initiating. By contrast, religion is a state of consciousness in which individuals and the institutions they establish view themselves as being initiated by God. (p. 152)

According to this statement, it is not the alleged warfare between religion and science spreading the divide, but the assumptions concerning the role of religion in higher education.

Initially it was believed that science and religion were mutually compatible and could be taught side-by-side, clear of unresolvable partitions. However, over time, new research and academic learning became normal, and respectable, while the enterprise of academic curriculums became useful, due to advances in research. Furthermore, a more informed and accepting public, became aware of the plethora of religions of the world, and had become uneasy with the idea of a singly empowered one, or of the ability of one to control higher education. Historian George Marsden, who has written extensively on Christianity in higher education, believes colleges and universities have not become secular by doing away with religion completely, but by removing all considerable authority from them. Religion was therefore confined to the realms of volunteer campus groups, and courses about religion, where personal convictions are suppressed. Similarly, Levine writes, “education became the secular religion of the twentieth-century American society” (as cited in Cherry et al., p. 3). The new standards of public institutions coupled

with the prevailing intellectual demands have in fact pushed religious sentiment out of the forefront of educational programs. Because of the inherent dogmatic principles established by religion, it seemed very unlikely to create new ways of thinking, research, and developing problem solving skills without questioning the very foundations upon which religion rests. These new secular institutions forced freedom of thought, open inquiry, and along with it came the fall of religious teachings (Burton). Most social scientists considered Christianity, for instance, as a “rather quaint legacy from the oral tradition of a largely agrarian society” –that is, “ultimately of little importance to the main intellectual and social currents of society” (Schmalzbauer, 2003, p. 8).

The German Influence on American Higher Education

The new religion-secular distinction, according to Ream (2007), was due to the subject-object operative in continental Europe, particularly Germany, in the late-1700s and early-1800s. Students studying in Germany were exposed to idealism, which had a primary influence on their academic learning. These students brought back this knowledge to the United States, and even though idealism never fully took hold it gave rise to pragmatism. Under the guise of pragmatism, the separation between subject and object is reified in the religion-secular distinction in institutions of higher education. To clarify, Ream concluded that, “Once religion becomes the object of a subject, the subject’s sense of self-dependence forces the religion-secular distinction” (p. 153). Diehl, as cited by Ream, claimed that American students studying in Germany not only gained their structural knowledge from German institutions, but their very conception of what scholarship was.

Johns Hopkins University is arguably the first research university in the United States and inaugurated Daniel Coit Gilman on February 22, 1876 as its first president. Gilman visited Berlin on separate occasions, where he met with professors including Karl Ritter, where he experienced idealism, and developed his own philosophy. The faculty at Johns Hopkins, in Gilman's estimation, was to be defined by, "its power to pursue independent and original investigation, and to inspire the young with enthusiasm for study and research; the willingness to cooperate in building up a new institution; and the freedom from tendencies toward ecclesiastical or sectional controversies" (Ream, p. 160). Using academic institutions as a means to generate useful results would make John Hopkins the most influential university for at least the first 20 years of its history (Ream). This new institutional philosophy was at odds with the earlier generations' pursuit of receiving and interpreting God's revelation.

During this time, other influential educators including Charles Eliot of Harvard, Andrew Dickson White of Cornell, Frederick Bernard of Columbia, and James Angell of the University of Michigan, believed that Protestant denominational education could no longer keep pace with an industrial and science-based society (Nieli, 2008). Nieli further contends that many leading scholars in the later half of the 19th century were graduate students who studied in Germany, and were impressed with the structuring of the German model. As Marsden writes,

It would be rare to find either a university leader or a major scholar (in the latter part of the nineteenth century) who had not spent some years studying in Germany... Americans stood in awe of the German universities... For Americans, who in university building were behind just

about every European country, an appeal to a German precedent could be an intimidating argument. (as cited in Nieli, p. 317)

Science and religion had remained peaceful with one another until the needs of a largely industrializing society brought the advantages of the German research university to the attention of higher education. The rise of science along with higher criticisms of the bible, accompanied by an increase in secular public life set in motion institutional redefinition that included electives to the core curriculum and the notion of academic freedom and open inquiry (Carpenter, 2007). Promulgation of religious dogmas became increasingly marginalized, and the new university was born.

Higher Education: A Secularizing Mechanism or a Sanctuary of Religious Thought

The apparent change within colleges and universities from ecclesiastical to secular has given rise to the proposition that students in higher education experience a decline of their religious sentiments. Higher education typically offers students the opportunity to be acquainted with secular ideals or at least ones at odds with their own religious beliefs; such as opposing religious faiths or spiritual practices. Also, students who are away from their parents and family develop a broadened sense of freedom, which may be unlike any previous experiences. This allows students to cease participation in activities they find uninteresting or not held in high esteem by peers, such as church services. Regnerus, Uecker, and Vaaler (2007) noticed, “The young adult years of many Americans are marked by a clear decline in outward religious expression, which is popularly thought to hit bottom during – and perhaps because of – the college experience”. The results of the research by Regnerus et al. are mixed on this view,

because the data demonstrate that even though students are vastly more likely to abandon religious services, they still closely adhere to their faiths. More explicitly, 70% of those who participated in the survey attended church less frequently while only one fifth claimed their religious convictions had weakened. Additionally, only one in six had completely disaffiliated from the church or lost his or her religious affiliation. Regnerus et al., sums this up by stating, “For most, it seems religious belief systems go largely untouched for the duration of their education” (p. 1683).

The first proposed reason for untouched religious belief systems is that students need not discuss or have any intellectual conversations about religion while in university settings. The college has disengaged itself from any necessary religious education and students therefore have no need, and subsequently, no desire to participate in open religious activities; especially daily conversation. Faith, is then, not something often articulated among peers and professors, but remains in the backgrounds of student’s lives, at least as it pertains to institutions of higher education. Furthermore, campuses have grown to show a respect for opposing ideologies or at least a tolerance for them. Institutions of higher education have religiously affiliated clubs and organizations that provide support and direction for students who have ideological dissonance. These organizations also provide a platform for like-minded students to gather and share their beliefs and opinions without fear of rejection or ridicule. Due to the commonness and acceptable nature of these organizations, and the non-academic related, religious functions on campuses, Regnerus et al. observe, “Together with heightened emphasis on religious tolerance and emerging emphases on spiritual development, antireligious hostility on campus may even be at a decades-long low” (p. 1684). Cherry et al. had

come to a similar conclusion after performing research on four university campuses relating to religion, deriving, “On all four campuses, respect for religious difference was pervasive at both the academic and the practical levels” (p. 294).

The second proposed reason for students in higher education adhering to their faith is that these students do not have a need to resolve the academic teachings of higher education with their own faith. In other words, they do not see incompatibility with the two schools of thought. Moreover, it was found that many students who enter college are under-socialized when it comes to religious faith that they fail to recognize any material that does in fact challenge their faith (Regnerus et al.).

There are professors who believe higher education should not be controlled or be passive when it comes to religion. Carpenter, one such professor, believes when a student graduates from an institution of higher education, especially one engaged in the liberal arts, “with the same fundamentalist beliefs she had when she entered, her education has failed her” (Carpenter, 2007, p. 25). Expanding scientific horizons is one of the goals of the liberal arts education and Carpenter confirms that epistemological methodology is the basis for all academic disciplines, and this has no place for the supernatural. The supernatural is an untestable hypothesis and because of this Daniel Dennett (as cited in Carpenter) concludes that religion’s role in the liberal arts can only be as an object of study. Dennett puts it robustly when he maintains, “It is high time that we subject religion as a global phenomenon to the most intensive multidisciplinary research we can muster, calling on the best minds of the planet” (as cited in Carpenter, p. 27). The phrase Christian liberal arts is oxymoronic because it inherently imposes limits on what ought to be free and open inquiry; faith-based beliefs cannot be used to make truth claims. The

reason why the acceptance of religion is so widely accepted according to Carpenter is, “because college administrators are loathe to give any appearance of religious ‘discrimination,’ students requesting religious exemptions or alternatives to course requirements are generally accommodated” (p. 27). Carpenter and Dennett do not wish to ban religion from campuses, and believe students should have the freedom to practice their own faiths; however they contend that religious beliefs are antithetical to a liberal arts education.

Other schools of thought taking place in student affairs oppose the beliefs demonstrated by Carpenter, Dennett, and other scholars who share the same views. These people argue that, “college curricula should be designed to encourage ‘holistic student development,’ and that education that does not attend to the spiritual development of students is incomplete” (Mayrl & Oeur, 2009, p. 260). This belief may be substantiated when the Higher Education Research Institute’s (HERI) 2004 survey, “The Spiritual Life of College Students” is taken into account. The study reports that 83% of students believe in the sacredness of life; 80% indicated an interest in spirituality; and 47% contend that it is essential or very important that they seek opportunities to grow spirituality (as cited in Mayrl & Oeur, p. 262). These, as well as the statistics within the following section can be used as justification for a holistic approach involving spirituality.

Separation of Religion and Spirituality

The push for secularization driven by societal and scientific needs does not necessarily mean that college students have given up on religion, spirituality, or a God. Even today, the United States is more religious than all European countries besides Ireland and Poland (Reichley, 2002). However, throughout the course of generations the

general sentiment pertaining to religious beliefs is changing (Grossman, 2010). A report called, “Religion Among the Millennials,” has shown that starting with the Greatest Generation, people born before 1928, and ending with the Millennial Generation, people born after 1981, there has been a continual decline in religious affiliation. The Greatest Generation had only 5% of its participants report they do not have ties within a religious tradition; Generation Xers, people born from 1965 to 1980, had 20% of its participants report they do not have any religious affiliation; and the Millennial Generation proclaims 26% of its participants as not affiliated with a religious organization (Landsberg, 2010).

However, this information may be misleading. Although a distinct decline in religious affiliation has been identified, there is still a substantial belief in an afterlife, and miracles. Approximately 75% of Americans believe in an afterlife and even more, 79%, said they believe in miracles (Landsberg). This would appear to be antithetical to a steep religious drop-off; however, religious sentiments are not directly equivalent to the intrinsic spiritual nature of human beings.

There are differences between belonging to a religious organization and spiritual identity. Spirituality has an extensive history as a part of theology, and because the terms religion and spirituality are used so interchangeably, it is imperative to distinguish between the two in providing statistics. Religion, according to Palmer, has three aspects to it. The first is the experience or quest for the ‘ultimate;’ the second is having core religious experiences expressed and communicated by means of stories and symbolism; the third element of religion is the reflection of these processes into doctrine and dogma (Love, 2002). Spirituality is the process through which people try and make sense out of life using the most comprehensive human dimensions. As stated in Love, Parks described

spirituality to be, “a personal search for meaning, transcendence, wholeness, purpose, and apprehension of spirit as the animating essence of the core of life” (p. 358).

Demonstrating the dissimilarity between religion and spirituality, Grossman (2010) reveals, “Young adults today are less church-connected than prior generations were when they were in their twenties. But a new study finds they are just about as spiritual as their parents and grandparents were at those ages” (p. 10B). Throughout the past 50 years there has been a change in the way Americans view religion, and organized practices. People have been moving away from these archaic institutions for some time and are concentrating more on personal and unique experiences. These personal experiences are defined as more spiritual than religious (Chickering et al.). Janet Nelson Cooper, chaplain at Rhode Island’s Brown University commented on this trend. In a PBS report, she predicted, “the more open-ended spirituality category will claim ever more students if established churches do not respond to the urgent issues of the new century” (as cited in Krattenmaker, 2008, p. 15A).

The designer of the *Assessment of Spirituality and Religious Sentiments* (ASPIRES), Ralph Piedmont, comments on the differences between religion and spirituality. Piedmont determined that religion is a result of personal sentiments,

An old term in psychology, and reflects emotional tendencies that develop out of social traditions and educational experiences. Sentiments can be very powerful motivators for individuals and have very direct effects on behavior. However, sentiments like love, gratitude, and patriotism, do not represent innate, genotypic qualities like spirituality. That is why the expression of sentiments can and do vary across cultures and time periods. Sentiments may also be more amendable to

change and modification. Spiritual transcendence, on the other hand, is hypothesized to represent a fundamental, inherent quality of the individual.

(Piedmont, 2005, p. 8)

Piedmont distinguishes between the two, and also believes that religious views are more susceptible to change than are spiritual ones. This is reflective of the information suggesting that younger generations are less religious, but just as spiritual. Even though they are, as a whole, less religious, their spirituality has remained consistent with past generations.

Spirituality is an inherent framework, a system of personal beliefs that do not necessarily compliment any particular organized religion. These beliefs, although independent, carry as much authority as those born from the orthodoxy in terms of decision-making. It sheds light on the fact that people's views are not transparent or easily calculated, but complicated and changing.

Religion and Spirituality: Facts and Figures

As mentioned, the millennial generation believes in afterlives and miracles in high numbers, and is also just as likely to engage in prayer as the generations before them. The following statistics show a relationship describing the similarities between the newer Millennial Generation, and that of previous generations, relating to prayer and belief in a God. Millennials admit they pray daily with 41%, compared to 42% of Generation Xers. Additionally, 53% of Millennials are certain God exists while 55% of Generation Xers believe god exists (Grossman, 2010). These statistics reflect the Generation Xers as young adults, not as they currently are. This is in light of the fact that as each generation becomes older, they are more likely to pray and adopt religious ideals.

For instance, when baby boomers were in their 20s or early 30s in the 1970s, 39% stated religion was significant, contrasted to 60% today. Moreover, 47% of Baby Boomers as young adults admitted to praying at least once a day, contrasted to 62% over two decades later (Grossman, 2010). In a survey demonstrating similar results, *Religion Among the Millennials* (The PEW Forum, 2010), revealed that 35% of Americans read scripture weekly, and 58% prayed daily. From ages 18 to 29 these figures dropped, indicating that about 27% read scripture weekly and 48% pray daily. Therefore, the daily prayer frequencies of Millennials today (48%) are about equivalent to the previous generation (47%) at their age.

The Higher Education Research Institute's (HERI) landmark survey of 112,000 freshmen at 236 colleges and universities has also produced comparative results. Overall, it found that 83% of the students were affiliated with a denomination. Out of the students claiming to belong to an organized religion, only 9% were non-Christian. The HERI survey also found that 79% of the students believe in God (Mayrl & Oeur, 2009). Although these numbers are high, religious participation reveals a more complex picture. The HERI survey indicated that 81% of incoming freshmen students attended religious services weekly, while later studies patterned this number to drop increasingly. As cited in Mayrl and Oeur, a survey conducted by Bryant, Choi, and Yasuno found that out of 3,680 students from 50 colleges, only 27% claimed to attend religious services frequently at the end of their freshmen year. Additionally, as cited in Mayrl and Oeur, a study by Hurtado and colleagues discovered that only 23% of sophomores reported to attend religious services frequently. These studies present a trend in which rates of attending religious services deteriorates significantly after entering a college or university.

However, the decline in organized participation does not seem to have a direct effect on marginalizing religious beliefs in general.

In order to evaluate college-aged students on how often they attend religious services, their figures need to be placed in the context of the overall population. A study by The PEW Forum, *U.S. Religious Landscape Survey (2007)*, addresses the rates of religious service attendance. Out of the total population, 39% of people report attending services at least weekly. The same survey contrasts cross-generations and found that 33% of young adults, between 18 and 29, attend religious service at least weekly. Senior citizens (65 and older) attend religious services, at least weekly with the most frequency (53%). Across all generations, the group attending religious services the least, is the 18 to 29 year old bracket.

These statistics represent a diverse American landscape, including how various generations evaluate their religious and spiritual beliefs. To demonstrate these varying views, a website article, *Many Americans Mix Multiple Faiths: Eastern, New Age Beliefs Widespread*, by the PEW Forum (2009, para. 1) evaluates the current trends,

The religious beliefs and practices of Americans do not fit neatly into conventional categories. A new poll by the Pew Research Center's Forum on Religion & Public Life finds that large numbers of Americans engage in multiple religious practices, mixing elements of diverse traditions. Many say they attend worship services of more than one faith or denomination -- even when they are not traveling or going to special events like weddings and funerals. Many also blend Christianity with Eastern or New Age beliefs such as reincarnation, astrology and the

presence of spiritual energy in physical objects. And sizeable minorities of all major U.S. religious groups say they have experienced supernatural phenomena, such as being in touch with the dead or with ghosts.

Race appears to be a factor for religious affiliation according to the responses over questions of faith. When asked if they had a religious or mystical experience, defined as a “moment of sudden religious insight or awakening,” about half (49%) of Americans reported they have (The PEW Forum, 2009, para 6). However, blacks were on the average, more likely than whites to admit to having one of these experiences; 69% compared to 47% respectively. Among Hispanics, 44% reported having a mystical or religious experience (The PEW Forum, 2009). People, who identified as agnostics or atheists and did not claim a religious affiliation, had only 18% report a religious or mystical experience (The PEW Forum).

In addition to having religious or mystical experiences, the belief in God seems to vary considerably by race. Bartlett found that the overwhelming majority of blacks, 95%, believe in God; compared to 84% of Latinos, 78% of whites, and 65% for Asian Americans (as cited in Mayrl & Oeur, p. 261).

In an article titled, ‘Is God silenced on college campuses? Or is the conversation simply changing?’, Tom Krattenmaker (2008) makes light of a survey conducted by the Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA. This study finds that over half of college students in their junior year believe “integrating spirituality” is essential to their lives. Out of the same group of students, 67% say praying daily is commonplace, while 41% believe having “religious teachings” is vital.

Religious switching seems to be common among Americans. One of three distinct transitions will occur when religious switching transpires. The first is when a person who is affiliated with a certain religion becomes unaffiliated. An unaffiliated person can either be religious, but not adhere to any specific organization, or simply become detached from religion entirely. The second possible transition is from unaffiliated to affiliated. The third possible transition is switching from one faith tradition to another. In this instance, a person stays affiliated, but adopts another organized religion in light of internal and external factors. In total, 44% of Americans forgo at least one type of religious transition. The category claiming the most adherents is from one faith tradition to another with 27%. The second largest is an affiliated individual who becomes unaffiliated at 13%. The least common example of religious switching is unaffiliated to affiliated with only 4% (PEW Forum, Religion Among the Millennials, 2007). Since almost one out of two (44%) of Americans experience religious change in their lives; whether affiliated to unaffiliated, unaffiliated to affiliated, or one faith to another faith, it raises the question: does religious affiliation impact religiosity? In other words, do certain religious groups have more religiously committed members?

According to Taylor, (as cited in Mayrl & Oeur, 2009) the number of students who worship, pray, and participate in religious organizations seems high and even alarming. However, the number of students involved in these activities is generally lower than that of the population as a whole. Regardless, the assumption that institutions of higher education are breeding grounds for apostasy is clearly unjustified. Even though students become less likely to attend religious services, discuss religion, and pray or meditate as their college careers lengthen, there is little evidence this changes their core

faith-related beliefs. There is a fair amount of ambiguity when trying to discern the role of higher education in religious transformation. Mayrl and Oeur portray it accurately when they derived, “Studies repeatedly show that students become less religious on traditional indicators of religious practice over the course of their collegiate careers, though the extent to which this is an affect of college per se is unclear” (p. 265).

The Overall Picture

In the 2007 *Religious Landscape Survey*, The Pew Forum addresses religious composition in the United States. Overall, 78% of Americans identify as Christian. The two Christian sects representing the plurality of Americans were, Protestant (51%) and Catholic (24%). All other religions comprised only 5% of the overall population. Within this category were Jewish (2%), Muslim (1%), Buddhist (1%), and Hindu (0.5%) religions. Among the unaffiliated, Atheists and Agnostics both represented Americans with 2% of the categories each.

The survey also recorded attitudes toward religious beliefs. When asked how important religion is in your life, 56% of the overall population contended it was very important. However, within the 18 to 29-age bracket, only 45% agreed it was very important. The group declaring religion as very important more than any other, was Americans over the age 65, with 69%.

Faith Development

In order to understand how students of higher education arrive at their religious or non-religious sentiments, faith development provides insight and answers. Having an understanding of how students come to their convictions is beneficial to creating a working framework for the future. Without a structured system for religious thought, it

may seem arbitrary and unworthy of study. In the field of the psychology of religion, one theory that maintains credibility and is widely considered to be seminal in describing how people come to identify with their faith is, James Fowler's, Stages of Faith Development. Chickering et al. explain the theory along with the evolution of its stages. Fowler's theory builds upon Erikson's theory of psychosocial development, Piaget's theory of cognitive development, and Kohlberg's theories of moral development. Fowler's theory contains six stages of development, and although only three or four are likely to be reached, none can be skipped, and must be attained in sequential order. A new stage emerges when a person becomes aware of the limitations of the previous stage and desires to move beyond it. Fowler, as mentioned in Chickering et al., believes that faith is an inherent aspect of humanity and describes it by stating,

How these capacities are activated and grow depends to a large extent on how we are welcomed into the world and what kind of environments we grow in. Faith is interactive and social; it requires community, language, ritual, and nurture. Faith is also shaped in initiatives from beyond us and other people, initiatives of spirit or grace. How these latter initiatives are recognized and imaged, or unperceived and ignored, powerfully affects the shape of faith in our lives. (p. 53)

Prior to the first stage is a condition known as primal faith. This takes place during the first two years of life. It is during this stage that Fowler asserts individuals are born with inherent spiritual capacities. Children build upon the trust of others, and this trust is interpreted as a form of faith. Stage one is called intuitive or projective faith and takes place from the ages of three to seven. During this time children develop linguistic abilities, and much of their faith is filled by fantasies and imitation. They are influenced

easily by examples, actions, and the words of adults. According to Butler (1989), feelings dominate this stage, and are fused with knowledge. The second stage is known as the mythic or literal faith, and takes place during 7 and 11 years old. The individuals in this stage associate sequential order with their former experiences and apply them to their community of faith. Stage three, synthetic or conventional faith, takes place during adolescence. In this stage life becomes more diverse and faith is a way to make sense of it. A self-identity emerges and a need to acquire stability arises; through which a person in this category may substantiate by correlating his or her ideas with an authority figure or role model. Persons in this stage have a lack of personal identity and the ability to make autonomous decisions (Butler). Stage four is titled, individuated or reflective faith, and takes place in young adulthood. People in this stage begin to critically self-reflect and take responsibility for their own beliefs. This stage can sometimes prove problematic as excess self-critique and analytical thoughts can dominate a person (Chickering et al.) Stage five is named the conjunctive stage, and occurs during early midlife. In this stage a conscious effort is made to unify opposites. A person in this stage is susceptible to being passive, compliant, and cynical. Stage-five faith, “involves a reappropriation of past patterns of commitment and ways of making meaning” (Butler, p. 21). The sixth and final stage is the universalizing stage, and takes place during midlife and beyond. Fowler believed that this stage of development being attainable is unlikely, but considered it to be the ideal stage to strive for. Chickering et al. up Fowler’s sixth stage by stating, “They have become the incarnation of the spirit of an inclusive and fulfilled human community, and they work to liberate humanity from the “shackles” of social, political, economic, and ideological expectations and constraints (2006, p. 56). Fowler’s theory is applicable to

any faith-developing situation, as he regards it as inclusive of all faiths .The introduction to, and completion of these stages are important, Love (2002) states,

Student affairs professionals need to reflect on their own spiritual development. If spirituality and spiritual development is inherent in all people, then student affairs professionals need to consider this developmental process in their own lives. This means considering how they create meaning, purpose, and direction in their lives, the forms of dependence that exist in their relationships, and the types of communities to which they belong. (p. 370)

The college is a place where students experience cognitive development, and in all likelihood this process will contribute to their spiritual development. Piedmont (2005) addresses various categorical responses to existential spiritual questions, by offering the following explanations,

For example, some individuals may perceive their lives within the immediate context they inhabit, responding to the specific needs and demands of the here and now. Others may view their lives as part of a specific generation or cohort, and personal meaning develops in relation to how these people view their commitments to others in their generation and those that follow them. Finally, still others may view their lives as part of some eternal ontological pathway that involves responsibilities toward others in both the here and now and in the next life. (p. 6)

These existential views, and the environment contribute to faith development. Through personal spirituality and transgression, administrators can assemble programs that help students adapt and grow cognitively and spiritually as well. As discussed earlier, any

marriage between higher education and spirituality is skeptical, and may not be in the best interest of students. Nonetheless, since the polling estimates show about half of students as spiritual, being able to interpret faith development is a vital component for administrators to comprehend spiritual students.

Summary of the Literature Review

Religious thought is a uniquely strong force through which people base their decisions and the technique of faith-applied living has held up in the United States. If the religions of the world were wholly irrelevant, and inconsequential to our lives, they more than likely would have been forgotten long ago. As William L. Sperry determined, “we must believe that their (religions) amazing will to live is something more than a professional conspiracy of priests; that it has its roots in man’s nature and needs and his place in the universe” (1940, p. 6). One of Sperry’s colleagues, Professor George Foot Moore, stated that anthropologists have discovered religious humans everywhere. He concludes that since irreligious civilizations have not been encountered, that religion is a natural response to environment and experience. Such a natural inclination of the human mind should not be understudied. However, others believe that the natural inclination of humans to accept religion as truth are lacking in information. If science can answer questions about the universe, then religion (God) becomes an ever-receding pocket of scientific ignorance. They argue that, simply because something is unknown, it should not automatically be presumed to be divinely created. The research presented here is meant to produce an understanding of current conditions for students in higher education. Subsequently, allowing people to identify with, or oppose, certain generalizations or findings that were documented.

According to the stated research, it would seem that although public institutions of higher education do not specifically condone any one religion, or address religion in any formal manner, they do not discourage personal faiths or organizations supporting, and for the purpose of, promulgating their core values. Religion on campuses remains aloof in the professional and open discourse spectrums, while it still has a substantial hold on students of higher education in their personal and private lives. This distinction must be made in order to understand how students can retain a faith-based value system, while being indoctrinated into a world that removes all credibility from it.

A large majority of students do in fact belong to a specific faith; most often this faith is a form Christianity. However, after the indoctrination into a college or university, the praying, meditation, discussion of, and attendance of religious services diminishes greatly. Because of this distinction, it is hard to access the exact effect higher education has on the religious, spiritual, and secular views of students.

The beliefs of the founding fathers on religious matters helped shape the constitution of the United States. At the time of the American Revolution there was no majority religion. The founding fathers did not believe a coercive religion was promising, and instead, viewed it as a hindrance to unity. The ability to freely choose a religion was instead proposed and accepted (Reichley, 2002). Religious convictions can establish themselves and intervene in the political world, where it can manifest as a factor in electing the President of the United States. For instance, in the year 2000 presidential election, citizens who reported going to religious services, at least once a week, voted in favor of George W. Bush a majority of the time. This group supported Bush with 58% of their votes, compared to only 40% for Al Gore. Being unaffiliated with any religious

institution was even more prevalent in the polls. People with no religious connection supported Gore with 65% of their votes, while only 35% favored Bush (Reichley). It is vital to understand the value systems of students in higher education, particularly religion and spirituality. Unaware or passive faculty members and administrators in regards to religion or spirituality will impede forward progress in the realm of student affairs and educational goals. A genuine knowledge and understanding of these beliefs will shape, transform, and alter the world going forward. Knowing current estimates and the development leading to them can help identify the future of higher education, and the country.

CHAPTER III

Methodology

Context of the Study

The study was conducted at Rowan University, located in Glassboro New Jersey. Rowan focuses on liberal education and professional development offering degrees from the baccalaureate to the doctorate. The university is medium in size and is located between Philadelphia, PA, and Atlantic City, NJ. The colleges of study are business, communication, education, engineering, fine and performing arts, liberal arts and sciences, professional and continuing education, and the graduate school. During the spring of 2012 semester, the complete student body consisted of about 11,816 students, while about 10,438 were undergraduates, and 1,378 were graduates. Approximately 3,540 students lived on campus in one of eight resident halls and five apartment complexes. Residents could live in singles, doubles, and in some cases be tripled. Freshmen are generally placed in resident halls, while the apartments are more reserved for upper classmen. The minority enrollment is 22.6%, and Rowan maintains a diverse student population by geographical location as well; students are from 28 states and 19 foreign countries. The student to faculty ratio is 16:1; the average class size is 20.37 students. The campus promotes social and cultural diversity and has over 130 clubs and organizations to become a part of. Along with that are 30 intramural activities to join per year, as well as 17 organized sport programs. Professors, not teaching aids, teach all of the classes at Rowan. Moreover, faculty with a doctorate/terminal degree is 89%.

(2012, <http://www.rowan.edu/fastfacts/>)

Population and Sample Selection

The target population was every undergraduate student in the United States during the 2012 academic year. The available population was the undergraduate students at Rowan University, in Glassboro, NJ, Gloucester County, during the 2011-2012 academic school year.

Survey distribution was completed through a mass electronic mailing process. All undergraduates at Rowan received an email with an attached survey. The emails were only sent to official Rowan accounts, ending in '@students.rowan.edu.' In order to send these emails, the Director of Rowan's Instructional Technology Department was responsible for the request and the Office of Institutional Effectiveness at Rowan was tasked with creating the list. The mass email was broken down into six sections due to the amount of students being sent the survey. No graduate student was sent the survey.

The email sent to all undergraduate students contained a brief description of the survey, its purpose and acknowledged that there was no personally identifiable information, along with no penalty for declining to participate. Additionally, a disclaimer was provided directing that the subject must be at least 18 years of age. Finally, the email contained a hyperlink to the online survey.

Once a student decided to participate, he or she clicked on the hyperlink, and was directed to the online survey, provided through SurveyMonkey. The SurveyMonkey service is an online tool used by millions of people worldwide for creating and collecting survey data. There is a large array of possible surveys available, including, customer feedback, product feedback, market research, performance review, employee satisfaction, healthcare, event, education, and non-profit surveys (2012, <http://www.surveymonkey.com/mp/use-cases/>).

The survey contained three sections that could be navigated through the web page. The answers in each section were fillable and questions could be skipped if the participant did not desire to answer them. Participants did not need to choose any answer as a prerequisite for any other and could fill out the survey wholly or partially. Once the subjects finished taking the survey, the responses were logged. There was no need for the survey to be submitted or sent anywhere by the participants, this feature was automatic.

Since this study was only introduced to Rowan students, through their email accounts, the sample was one of convenience. However, no background information was required by the participants, as to learn special expertise or qualifications, nor did the students surveyed knowingly be representative of the target population.

Instrumentation

The instrument used to assess the religious and spiritual convictions of the undergraduate students at Rowan University is the *Assessment of Spirituality and Religious Sentiments* (ASPIRES) (Appendix A), developed by Ralph L. Piedmont, professor at Loyola College in Maryland, in the department of Pastoral Counseling. The ASPIRES has two major components. The first section relates to Religious Sentiments (RS) and the second pertains to Spiritual Transcendence (ST).

The RS component is split into two domains and has a total of 12 items. The first eight questions pertain to religiosity, or the extent to which a person is engaged in religious practices and activities. The other domain within the religiosity section measures the level of religious crisis, which examines whether a person may be experiencing problems, difficulties, or conflicts with the God of their understanding and/or faith community.

The second dimension, spiritual transcendence (ST), contains 23 statements and represents a motivational construct, reflective of efforts to create meaning in life through *prayer fulfillment, universality, and connectedness*. Piedmont describes these three,

Prayer fulfillment, a feeling of joy and contentment that results from personal encounters with the God of one's understanding; universality, a belief that all life is intimately tied together; and connectedness, a belief that one is part of a larger human reality that cuts across generations and groups. (Piedmont, p. 50)

People scoring high on the ST scale believe to have a purpose beyond this time and place, and those who score low on the scale, are more likely to be concerned with the concrete aspects of here and now.

Responses for both the religiosity and spirituality sections are assigned a number value, depending on the available responses. For instance on a scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree, the scoring would be as follows: strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), neutral (3), agree (4), and strongly agree (5). Although the responses available for some questions may vary, the responses are scored in the same manner. The mean scores of all the questions are added together, whereby the higher the score, the higher level of religiosity or spirituality is portrayed.

In developing the Spiritual Transcendence Scale (STS), a consortium of theological experts from diverse faith traditions, including Buddhism, Hinduism, Quakerism, Lutheranism, Catholicism, and Judaism was assembled (Piedmont, 2005).

In his technical manual, Piedmont states, "The ASPIRES is a nondenominational measure that is relevant for working with individuals across a wide range of faith traditions as well as appropriate for use with non-religious or agnostic persons" (p. 6).

Piedmont has produced data to determine internal consistency, convergent validity, and discriminant validity; he states, “The data have provided considerable support for the construct validity of the APSIRES scales. They are independent of the FFM (Five-Factor Model) personality domains and converge well with a wide range psychosocial variables that should be related to numinous qualities” (p. 31).

The findings of the survey have been compared to the normative data. According to Piedmont, the normative data were, “obtained from a sample of 424 individuals. Participants were obtained from four different locations: Massachusetts, Illinois, Mississippi, and Maryland. Most were undergraduate students, but also included were graduate students in pastoral counseling and general adults” (Piedmont, p. 10). The average age of the participants was 21, and most, 83.7% (355 out of 424), identified as Caucasian. Twenty-five identified as black; Asian, 13; Hispanic, 14; Arabic, 3; and not indicated, 14 (Piedmont, p. 10). The students comprising the normative data comprised a wide variety of faith affiliations, although most identified as Christians (Piedmont). The ASPIRES Technical Manual manual reports internal consistency estimates of .89 for the religiosity section, and .75 for the religious crisis section. The estimates reported for spiritual transcendence (ST), *ST prayer fulfillment*, *ST universality*, and *ST connectedness* were .89, .94, .78, and .49 respectfully.

Data Collection

Permission to distribute the surveys to Rowan University students was granted by Rowan University’s Institutional Review Board (Appendix B). Rowan University's Institutional Review Board's website states their “mission is to assure the safe and ethical treatment of human participants in research. Federal and university regulations require

that all research involving human participants conducted by Rowan faculty, staff, and students be reviewed and approved by the IRB before initiation” (2012, http://www.rowan.edu/open/provost/research/Integrity_and_compliance/Irb/Irb.cfm). The survey was distributed only after was permission was granted.

Data Analysis

The data collected from the ASPIRES surveys were entered into a computer software program called Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). With coding provided in the technical manual by Piedmont, the information was assigned certain variables to answer the research questions. This was done through correlations (Pearson product-moment calculations) and descriptive statistics (frequency distribution, measures of central tendency and dispersion, and percentages) provided by SPSS. The results produced were compared to the normative data provided by Piedmont to determine the religiosity, spirituality, and levels of religious crisis of Rowan undergraduate students. The normative scores calculated by Piedmont are discussed in relation to the results analyzed in this survey in Chapters IV and V. Additionally, for general comparison purposes, the findings were also compared to studies by the PEW Forum and the Higher Education Research Institute.

Chapter IV

Findings

Profile of the Sample

The subjects in this study were undergraduate students, at least 18 years of age, at Rowan University, enrolled during the Spring 2012 semester. The survey instrument was distributed, via email, to a total of 10,140 undergraduates, with an average age of 22.6. The survey consisted of demographic inquiries, and two sections; religiosity and spirituality. Although the response rate for each question varied, the highest response rate is 1,008 while the lowest is 819. Assuming a confidence level of 95%, using these figures produces a margin of error, or confidence interval, ranging from 2.93 to 3.28 depending on the number of responses. The subsequent tables identify how many responses were provided per question by the variable “*n*.”

The demographics of the study are shown in Tables 4.1 through 4.4. The status of Rowan students is represented in Table 4.1. These variables were determined by credit hours, and are independent of age. To clarify status by credit hours, the following formula was adopted. Freshmen were considered to be students with 30 or less credit hours; sophomores had 30 to 59 credits; juniors had 60 to 90 credits; and seniors had over 90 credits. The term ‘Super Senior’ was a choice in the survey but still denoted students with over 90 credits. The variation between senior and super senior is testament to additional time required to receive a degree that is beyond a four year period. For instance, students who were in their sixth year of obtaining a bachelor’s degree may considered themselves super seniors. However, both groups had 90 or more credits, and

for all intents and purposes of this survey, were considered seniors. The final row of the table identifies both seniors and super seniors as a single unit. The results of the survey concluded that the plurality of students who responded were seniors with 373 (37.4%) responses. The next largest group was juniors with 298 (29.9%) members. Sophomores made up the third largest group with 168 (16.8%) of the responses. Lastly, freshmen accounted for the smallest total respondents with 159 (15.9%) participants.

Survey responses per class are similar to the overall composition of the Rowan student population. According to the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, Research, & Planning (IERP), freshmen account for 14.73%; sophomores, 18.85%; juniors, 28.91%; seniors, 37.51%. Both of these demographics are detailed in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1

Status at Rowan by Credits (n = 998)

Variable	Survey Results		Actual Student Population
	<i>f</i>	%	%
Freshman	159	15.9	14.73
Sophomore	168	16.8	18.85
Junior	298	29.9	28.91
Senior & Super Senior	373	37.4	37.51

Table 4.2 shows the racial composition of students who participated in the survey. From the 1,008 students who provided their races, the majority of students identified as white, with 80.8% of the responses. The total minority percentage of students who responded was 19.3%. Since the minority enrollment at Rowan is estimated at 22.6%, the minority response rate was 3.3% below anticipated results. However, this can be due to the enrollment of minority masters students, who were not included in the survey but are included in Rowan's overall minority enrollment.

Table 4.2

Race (n = 1,008)

Variable	<i>f</i>	%
Arabic	3	0.03
Asian	33	3.3
Black	57	5.7
Hispanic	55	5.5
White	814	80.8
Multiracial	26	2.6
Other	20	2.0

Table 4.3 reflects the religious affiliation of Rowan students, by direct choice, not through the assessment of other items. For this question, 1,001 students responded and of them, the largest affiliation was Catholicism with 281 (28.1%) responses. The next largest group was Atheists, representing 178 (17.8%) participants. Among the choices available, the Atheist and Agnostic groups were the only two variables that are not considered established religions. Together (Atheists and Agnostics) comprised 30.2% of the total responses while the remaining established religions constituted 69.8% of the total responses combined. The only category not represented by any participants was Mormon.

Table 4.3

Religious Affiliation? (n =1,001)

Religious Affiliation	<i>f</i>	%
Catholic	281	28.1
Unitarian	4	0.4
Other Christian	150	15
Buddhist	6	0.6
Lutheran	16	1.6

Baptist	47	4.7
Jewish	31	3.1
Atheist	178	17.8
Agnostic	124	12.4
Methodist	38	3.8
Presbyterian	29	2.9
Muslim	12	1.2
Episcopal	9	0.9
Mormon	0	0
Hindu	9	0.9
Other Faith Tradition	67	6.7

Table 4.4 demonstrates the religious affiliation of the participants' parents during most of their childhood. This question addressed the parents' religious affiliation during *most* of the students' childhoods in the event parents adopted a new religion or denounced their former with no replacement. The goal was to obtain the type of religious atmosphere Rowan students were raised in for most of their childhood regardless of any later parental conversions or denouncements. The results showed that both mothers and fathers of Rowan students identified as Catholic 50.4% and 47.9% of the time, respectfully; therefore representing the largest group. Mormon, representing the smallest group for the religion of students polled, with zero, was also the lowest represented group for parental affiliation, with 2% for both mother and father categories. However, the Atheist and Agnostic parents were less numerous than the levels of students identifying in one of these categories. Agnostic and Atheist mothers represented 3.7% of the total parental affiliations. While fathers were 2.1 times more likely to identify as either of these groups, with 7.8% of the total percentage. Therefore the total percentage of parents

who identified as Atheist or Agnostic was 11.5%, while the total amount of students identifying as one or the other was 30.2%. Therefore, the amount of students identifying as either atheist or agnostic was 2.6 times greater than how they identified both their parents.

Table 4.4

Religion of Students' Parents During Most of Their Childhood (n = 986 for mothers; n = 949 for fathers)

Variable	Mother		Father	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Catholic	497	50.4	455	47.9
Unitarian	3	0.3	0	0
Other Christian	135	13.7	125	13.2
Buddhist	6	0.6	5	0.5
Lutheran	33	3.3	31	3.3
Baptist	53	5.4	60	6.3
Jewish	36	3.7	34	3.6
Atheist	14	1.4	38	4
Agnostic	23	2.3	36	3.8
Methodist	68	6.9	62	6.5
Presbyterian	43	4.4	36	3.8
Muslim	10	1	12	1.3
Episcopal	23	2.3	16	1.7
Mormon	2	0.2	2	0.2
Hindu	10	1	9	0.9
Other Faith	30	3	28	3.0

Analysis of the Data: Religiosity Section

Research Question 1: How religious are undergraduate students at Rowan University?

To answer this question, normative data, provided by Piedmont in the ASPIRES Technical Manual, was compared to data collected from the survey of Rowan students. The religiosity questions have a rating system to calculate the scores and make meaning from the results. Greater levels of religiosity were marked by higher weighted responses. The average score for each question was added together, producing an overall religiosity score. The normative data suggest that the average score for men and women up to 21 years old is between 21.5 and 28.5. Between ages 21 to 30, the range is 21.5 to 29.5. For both men and women ages 17 to 25, the actual normative score was 25.78. The average score for Rowan students falls within both normative data ranges, at 23.87.

Table 4.5 displays the normative religious ranges and the average religiosity score of Rowan Students. The data show that for each age group, the Rowan mean score falls within the normative range of scores.

Table 4.5

Normative Ranges Compared to Rowan Student Religiosity

Age Group	Normative Religious Transcendence Range	Rowan Students' Average Religious Transcendence Score
Up to age 21	21.5-28.5	23.87
Ages 21 to 30	21.5-29.5	23.87

The following tables ranging from 4.6 to 4.10 are representative of the religiosity section of the survey instrument. There are a total of 12 questions to assess religiosity and the data collected in this section is done so by varying methods. The first six items on the Religious Sentiments scale, according to Piedmont,

Have always been used as convergent validity criteria for the STS. However, more recent research examining the empirical utility of religious versus spiritual constructs has shown the predictive and incremental validity of religious constructs in their own right. As such, it was deemed appropriate to include these items along with the STS. (ASPIRES Technical Manual, p. 7)

Two of the remaining items are reflective of a person's commitment to his or her beliefs and the status of those commitments. The final four questions are grouped together in the survey and are labeled as "God and Faith Group" questions and are included to address the issue of religious crisis. These items are of interests because they appear to represent the negative side of religiosity.

The first three questions utilize a scale ranging from never to several times a week and are represented in Table 4.6. The questions are in reference to the frequency of reading religious/non-religious literature and frequency of prayer. When it comes to reading the Bible, Torah, Koran, or Geeta the majority of students, 51.4% selected never and when asked how often do you read religious literature *other* than the Bible, Torah, Koran, or Geeta, 56.3% responded never. Based on this response, it appears that the majority of students on campus do not read religious literature.

When asked how often students pray, there was an apparent split between never (35.8%) and several times a week (31.8%). However, the percentage of students who prayed, regardless of how often, remained the majority at 64.2%. Students classified as Atheist or Agnostic accounted for the majority of students who never prayed, since their total percentage of the population was 30.2% (in relation to the 35.8% who never prayed).

Table 4.6

Religiosity by Literature and Prayer

Question	Never		About once or twice a year		Several times a year		About once a month		2 or 3 times a month		Nearly every week		Several times a week	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
How often do you pray? <i>n</i> =965, <i>M</i> =3.93, <i>SD</i> =2.62 missing=48	345	35.8	62	6.4	64	6.6	43	4.5	52	5.4	92	9.5	307	31.8
How often do you read the Bible/Torah/Koran/Geeta? <i>n</i> =966, <i>M</i> =2.57, <i>SD</i> =2.11 missing=47	497	51.4	133	13.8	92	9.5	39	4.0	38	3.9	73	7.6	94	9.7
How often do you read religious literature other than the Bible/Torah/ Koran/Geeta? <i>n</i> =964, <i>M</i> =2.20, <i>SD</i> =1.81 missing=49	543	56.3	156	16.2	83	8.6	39	4.0	44	4.6	50	5.2	49	5.1

Table 4.7 addresses how often students attended religious service and a union with God. When asked how often do you attend religious services, the plurality, 31.4% of students stated never, followed by rarely with 27.9%. Contrasted to only 10.7% responding often and 14.8% responding quite often. These results appear to follow the trend relating to the indifference college students have towards formal religious participation, while prayer tends to be a more common practice among students at Rowan.

The majority of students (54%) claimed to never or rarely feel a union with God and gain spiritual truth. Only about one quarter (27.2%) stated they felt this experience happened often or quite often.

Table 4.7

Question	Never		Rarely		Occasionally		Often		Quite Often	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
How often do you attend religious services? <i>n</i> =961, <i>M</i> =2.50, <i>SD</i> =1.41 missing=52	301	31.4	268	27.9	146	15.2	103	10.7	142	14.8
Do you have experiences where you feel a union with God and gain spiritual truth? <i>n</i> =953, <i>M</i> =2.45, <i>SD</i> =1.48 missing=60	398	41.8	117	12.3	179	18.8	126	13.2	133	14.0

To what extent students have a personal, unique, close relationship with God is detailed in Table 4.8. The results of this question showed that students who did not at all feel a personal, unique, close relationship with God (37.3%), were more than two times greater in number, than those who felt very strongly they did (16.4%). However, that statistic may be misleading considering that the majority (62.7%) of students felt they had a relationship with God on some level, although in some instances it may only be slight.

Table 4.8

Question	Not at all		Slight		Moderate		Strong		Very Strong	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
To what extent do you have a personal, unique, close relationship with God? <i>n</i> =957, <i>M</i> =2.62, <i>SD</i> =1.51 missing=56	357	37.3	119	12.4	172	18.0	152	15.9	157	16.4

Regarding religious beliefs, Rowan students as a whole felt these are important. Less than half (40.7%) of students classified religious beliefs as varying degrees of unimportance, while 59.3% regarded these beliefs as varying levels of importance. Table 4.9 represents the percentages for each scale, ranging from not at all important to extremely important.

Table 4.9

Importance of Religious Beliefs

Question	Not at all important		Fairly unimportant		Somewhat unimportant		Fairly important		Very important		Extremely important	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
How important are your religious beliefs? <i>n</i> =964, <i>M</i> =3.68, <i>SD</i> =1.92 missing=49	235	24.4	81	8.4	76	7.9	178	18.5	149	15.5	245	25.4

Data in Table 4.10 focus on the stability of religious interests and involvements. The question asked whether, over the past year, religious interests and involvements had decreased, stayed the same, or increased. Responses to this question are based on a scale from 1 to 7; where 1 represents a severe decrease and 7 portrays a vast increase in religious activities. A response of 4 was provided when there was no increase or decrease in religious interests or involvements. Almost half of the Rowan students who responded (44.4%) maintained that their religious involvements and interests had stayed the same over the past year. However, 14.3% admitted their religious interests and involvements had sharply decreased by choosing '1' while only 8.8% chose '7,' representing the most intense increase. The two opposing ends of the spectrum (decrease/increase) had almost the exact percentage of students reporting for them. Overall, 27.8% of students had an increase and 27.7% had a decrease in religious interests and involvement.

Table 4.10

Religious Interests and Involvements

Question	1		2		3		4		5		6		7	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
In the last year, have your religious interests and involvements decreased, stayed the same, or increased? <i>n</i> =961, <i>M</i> =3.92, <i>SD</i> =1.69 missing=52	137	14.3	61	6.3	68	7.1	427	44.4	99	10.3	84	8.7	85	8.8

*1 represents the most significant decrease and 7 represents the most significant increase. A response of 4 denotes no change.

Research Question 2: Are undergraduate students at Rowan University experiencing a religious crisis?

The final four items regarding religious crisis within the religious sentiments scale are detailed in Table 4.11. These statements, although part of the religion portion of the survey, stand separate in their utility from the first eight questions, which determine religiosity. Although they do not play a role in calculating religiosity, their function is to determine religious crises.

Overall, students at Rowan did not appear to possess a pressing religious crisis based on the survey results. The levels of religious crisis are calculated by comparing the results of Rowan students to the normative data provided by Piedmont. Each possible answer, *strongly disagree*, *disagree*, *neutral*, *agree*, and *strongly agree*, is assigned a number value from one to five, respectfully. On this scale, the value of the number directly correlates with a heightened level of religious crisis. For instance, a score of one (strongly disagree) represents a low level of religious crisis while five (strongly agree) demonstrates the highest level of religious crisis. The mean values for each question were added together to produce an overall picture on religious crisis landscape.

For both men and women, up to age 21, the normative data suggest scores between 6 and 10 are considered average. The average score determined by Rowan students was 7.57, which fell within the average range of the normative scores for this age group. Combining the average scores for men and women, ages 21 to 30, the average range was slightly elevated, 6.5 to 10.5. Regardless of either age group, the religious crisis scores were still considered to be average.

Table 4.11

Religious Crisis Questions

Statement	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
I feel abandoned by God. <i>n</i> =953, <i>M</i> =1.62, <i>SD</i> =0.95 missing=60	615	64.5	134	14.1	166	17.4	24	2.5	14	1.5
I feel that God is punishing me. <i>n</i> =954, <i>M</i> =1.66, <i>SD</i> =0.96 missing=59	567	59.4	161	16.9	190	19.9	23	2.4	13	1.4
I feel isolated from others in my faith group. <i>n</i> =947, <i>M</i> =1.89, <i>SD</i> =1.09 missing=66	500	52.8	152	16.1	213	22.5	63	6.7	19	2.0
I find myself unable or unwilling to involve God in the decisions I make about my life. <i>n</i> =953, <i>M</i> =2.40, <i>SD</i> =1.40 missing=60	365	38.3	159	16.7	230	24.1	77	8.1	122	12.8

Table 4.12 expresses the normative data range compared to the average religious crisis score of Rowan students. It can be seen from this table that Rowan students experienced an average religious crisis.

Table 4.12

Age Group	Normative Religious Crisis Range	Rowan Students' Average Religious Crisis Score
Up to age 21	6-10	7.57
Ages 21 to 30	6.5-10.5	7.57

Table 4.13 shows the mean scores of the religious crisis questions for Rowan students, compared to the mean scores taken from the normative data. The normative mean scores are representative of both men and women between the ages of 17 and 25, as calculated by Piedmont. For each of the four items, the mean values of both surveys are complimentary. Thus, the lowest to highest means for Rowan students, were in the identical order as the normative crowd, for the same items.

Table 4.13

Statement	Rowan Survey <i>M</i>	Normative Data* <i>M</i>
I feel abandoned by God.	1.62	1.68
I feel that God is punishing me.	1.66	1.81
I feel isolated from others in my faith group.	1.89	2.01
I find myself unable or unwilling to involve God in the decisions I make about my life.	2.40	2.22

*Means for the normative data are reflective of both male and females between the ages of 17 and 25.

Analysis of the Data: Spirituality Section

Research Question 3: How spiritual are undergraduate students at Rowan University

In order to draw meaning from the spirituality questions, the responses were assigned a number value. The possible responses and their assigned values were, strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), neutral (3), agree (4), and strongly agree (5). Thus, the higher

the number value, the more spiritual the response. The average value of each statement was added together, producing an overall average that was compared to Piedmont's normative data.

The overall score obtained for the normative data, for both men and women between the ages of 17 and 25, was 78.47. Additionally, Piedmont created a normative range of scores that are representational of average levels of spirituality. For men and women up to age 21, the range is from 72 to 83. For men and women ages 21 to 30, the range is more varied, from 69 to 83. After an analysis of the scores taken from the survey subjects, Rowan students received a score of 73.69, suggesting they are on average a more spiritual group. Table 4.15 addresses the statements and responses provided by Rowan undergraduates regarding their spirituality. The final column on the table represents items comprising the spiritual transcendence facet scales. This scale is mentioned in the instrumentation section of Chapter III, and consists of connectedness (C), universality (U), and prayer fulfillment (PF).

Out of the top four scores for spirituality, based on mean scores, three belong to the connectedness category. However, the number one spot belongs to universality. The statement "All life is interconnected" received the highest average responses from students, with a mean score of 3.68. Overall, 60.2% of students selected strongly agree or agree to this statement while only 7.5% disagreed. The second highest statement was "Although dead, memories and thoughts of some of my relatives continue to influence my current life" with a mean score of 3.60. Rowan students responded strongly agree or agree to this statement 64.8% of the time. The third top statement on the survey had a mean score of 3.58 and stated "Death does not stop one's feelings of emotional closeness

to another.” More than half of Rowan students (58.7%) responded strongly agree or agree to this question. The fourth highest statement was “I am concerned about the expectations that loved ones have of me,” with a mean score of 3.56 with 62.2% of Rowan students responding strongly agree or agree.

Regarding spirituality, the four lowest statements by mean scores, all fell under the prayer fulfillment category, suggesting that prayer is not a deep-seated spiritual factor for Rowan students. The lowest of these was the statement “I meditate and/or pray so that I can reach a higher spiritual level” with a mean score of 2.76. A total of 35% of responses were claimed by the strongly disagree and disagree choices. The second to last lowest spiritual statement was “I meditate and/or pray so that I can grow as a person,” receiving 39% of responses as strongly disagree or disagree and a mean score of 2.89. The third from last statement, with a mean score of 2.92 “Spirituality is a central part of my life” had 38.6% of students reply strongly disagree or disagree. The fourth from lowest mean score, 2.97, belonged to the statement “I have experienced deep fulfillment and bliss through my prayers and/or meditations” and garnered 35% of the strongly disagree or disagree responses.

Table 4.14 shows the average Rowan student score with the normative data ranges.

Table 4.14

Normative Ranges Compared to Rowan Student Spirituality

Age Group	Normative Spiritual Transcendence Range	Rowan Students' Average Spiritual Transcendence Score
Up to age 21	72-83	73.69
Ages 21 to 30	69-83	73.69

Table 4.15 lists the 23 statements from the spirituality portion of the survey and along with response rates by Rowan students.

Table 4.15

Spirituality Statements

Statement	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree		Facet Scale
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	
All life is interconnected. <i>n</i> =829, <i>M</i> =3.68, <i>SD</i> =1.15 missing=184	62	7.5	41	4.9	227	27.4	267	32.2	232	28.0	U
Although dead, memories and thoughts of some of my relatives continue to influence my current life. <i>n</i> =824, <i>M</i> =3.60, <i>SD</i> =1.23 missing=189	83	10.1	74	9.0	133	16.1	330	40.0	204	24.8	C
Death does not stop one's feelings of emotional closeness to another. <i>n</i> =826, <i>M</i> =3.58, <i>SD</i> =1.25 missing=187	92	11.1	43	5.2	206	24.9	261	31.6	224	27.1	C
I am concerned about the expectations that loved ones have of me. <i>n</i> =824, <i>M</i> =3.56, <i>SD</i> =1.16 missing=189	69	8.4	78	9.5	164	19.9	347	42.1	166	20.1	C
There is an order to the universe that transcends human thinking. <i>n</i> =827, <i>M</i> =3.50, <i>SD</i> =1.31 missing=186	106	12.8	61	7.4	203	24.5	228	27.6	229	27.7	U
The praise of others gives deep satisfaction to my accomplishments. <i>n</i> =823, <i>M</i> =3.46, <i>SD</i> =1.17 missing=190	85	10.3	65	7.9	204	24.8	327	39.7	142	17.3	C
I believe that on some level my life is intimately tied to all of mankind. <i>n</i> =827, <i>M</i> =3.36, <i>SD</i> =1.28 missing=186	113	13.7	81	9.8	195	23.6	272	32.9	166	20.1	U
I feel a connection to some larger Being or Reality. <i>n</i> =834, <i>M</i> =3.36, <i>SD</i> =1.48 missing=179	169	20.3	68	8.2	127	12.5	230	27.6	240	28.8	PF

I feel that on a higher level, all of us share a common bond. <i>n</i> =819, <i>M</i> =3.22, <i>SD</i> =1.27 missing=194	132	16.1	72	8.8	223	27.2	268	32.7	124	15.1	U
I want to grow closer to the God of my understanding. <i>n</i> =819, <i>M</i> =3.20, <i>SD</i> =1.53 missing=194	207	25.3	48	5.9	159	19.4	183	22.3	222	27.1	PF
Although there is good and bad in people, I believe that humanity, as a whole is basically good. <i>n</i> =824, <i>M</i> =3.19, <i>SD</i> =1.19 missing=189	92	11.2	131	15.9	236	28.6	256	31.1	109	13.2	U
I have strong emotional ties to someone who has died. <i>n</i> =825, <i>M</i> =3.16, <i>SD</i> =1.33 missing=188	136	16.5	110	13.3	223	27.0	200	24.2	156	18.9	C
I have done things in my life because I believed it would please a parent, relative, or friend who had died. <i>n</i> =825, <i>M</i> =3.13, <i>SD</i> =1.34 missing=188	153	18.5	106	12.8	175	21.2	263	31.9	128	15.5	C
In the quiet of my prayers and/or meditations, I find a sense of wholeness. <i>n</i> =825, <i>M</i> =3.07, <i>SD</i> =1.34 missing=188	287	22.7	69	8.4	210	25.5	215	26.1	144	17.5	PF
My prayers and/or meditations provide me with a sense of emotional support. <i>n</i> =824, <i>M</i> =3.06, <i>SD</i> =1.46 missing=189	205	24.9	80	9.7	160	19.4	222	26.9	157	19.1	PF
I find inner strength and/or peace from my prayers and/or meditations. <i>n</i> =826, <i>M</i> =3.03, <i>SD</i> =1.44 missing=187	206	24.9	73	8.8	186	22.5	212	25.7	149	18.0	PF

There is a higher plane of consciousness or spirituality that binds all people. <i>n</i> =819, <i>M</i> =3.02, <i>SD</i> =1.32 missing=194	169	20.6	78	9.5	256	31.3	197	24.1	119	14.5	U
Prayer and/or meditation appeal to me. <i>n</i> =825, <i>M</i> =3.01, <i>SD</i> =1.44 missing=188	205	24.8	87	10.5	175	21.2	211	25.6	147	17.8	PF
Although individual people may be difficult, I feel an emotional bond with all of humanity. <i>n</i> =819, <i>M</i> =2.96, <i>SD</i> =1.21 missing=194	124	15.1	161	19.7	237	28.9	217	26.5	80	9.8	U
I have experienced deep fulfillment and bliss through my prayers and/or meditations. <i>n</i> =834, <i>M</i> =2.97, <i>SD</i> =1.42 missing=179	211	25.3	81	9.7	204	24.5	201	24.1	137	16.4	PF
Spirituality is a central part of my life. <i>n</i> =828, <i>M</i> =2.92, <i>SD</i> =1.42 missing=185	207	25.0	113	13.6	190	22.9	177	21.4	141	17.0	PF
I meditate and/or pray so that I can grow as a person. <i>n</i> =824, <i>M</i> =2.89, <i>SD</i> =1.42 missing=189	214	26.0	107	13.0	183	22.2	195	23.7	125	15.2	PF
I meditate and/or pray so that I can reach a higher spiritual level. <i>n</i> =834, <i>M</i> =2.76, <i>SD</i> =1.41 missing=179	211	25.3	81	9.7	204	24.5	201	24.1	137	16.4	PF

Religiosity Correlations: Race & Religious Affiliation

Research Question 4: Is there a significant relationship between the religiosity of Rowan undergraduate students and race or religious affiliation?

Significant correlations were found between religiosity levels and race.

Additionally, significant correlations were found between religiosity levels and religious

affiliation. These findings indicate that both race and religious affiliation have an effect on how religious Rowan students reportedly are.

Pearson product-movement correlation coefficients were computed to determine the relationship between two demographics; *religious affiliation* and *race*, and the impact each had on the religiosity levels of selected Rowan students. An analysis of the data indicated significant negative correlations between religious affiliation and the religiosity questions as displayed in Table 4.16. Out of the 12 items on religion, nine showed significant correlations involving religious affiliation. From these nine, eight of them were significant at the 0.01 levels and are considered weak correlations.

Table 4.16

Significant Correlations: Religious Affiliation and Religiosity

Item	<i>r</i> coefficient	<i>P</i> level
How often do you read the Bible/Torah/Koran/Geeta? <i>n</i> =956, <i>M</i> =2.57, <i>SD</i> =2.11	-.200**	.000
How often do you pray? <i>n</i> =955, <i>M</i> =3.93, <i>SD</i> =2.62	-.333**	.000
How frequently do you attend religious services? <i>n</i> =951, <i>M</i> =2.50, <i>SD</i> =1.41	-.336**	.000
To what extent do you have a personal, unique, close relationship with God? <i>n</i> =947, <i>M</i> =2.62, <i>SD</i> =1.51	-.279**	.000
Do you have experiences where you feel a union with God and gain spiritual truth? <i>n</i> =943, <i>M</i> =2.45, <i>SD</i> =1.48	-.250**	.000
How important are your religious beliefs? <i>n</i> =954, <i>M</i> =3.68, <i>SD</i> =1.92	-.220**	.000
I feel that God is punishing me. <i>n</i> =945, <i>M</i> =4.38, <i>SD</i> =0.96	-.067*	.039
I feel abandoned by God. <i>n</i> =944, <i>M</i> =4.38, <i>SD</i> =0.95	-.150**	.000
I find myself unable or unwilling to involve God in the decisions I make about my life. <i>n</i> =944, <i>M</i> =3.60, <i>SD</i> =1.40	-.198**	.000

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Additionally, negative significant correlations between race and religiosity are captured in table 4.17. From the 12 religion questions, nine significant correlations were found between race and religiosity. From these nine, eight of them were significant at the 0.01 levels and are considered weak correlations.

Table 4.17

Significant Correlations: Race and Religiosity

Item	<i>r</i> coefficient	<i>P</i> level
How often do you read the Bible/Torah/Koran/Geeta? <i>n</i> =961, <i>M</i> =2.57, <i>SD</i> =2.11	-.106**	.001
How often do you pray? <i>n</i> =960, <i>M</i> =3.93, <i>SD</i> =2.62	-.166**	.000
How frequently do you attend religious services? <i>n</i> =956, <i>M</i> =2.50, <i>SD</i> =1.41	-.110**	.001
To what extent do you have a personal, unique, close relationship with God? <i>n</i> =952, <i>M</i> =2.62, <i>SD</i> =1.51	-.152**	.000
Do you have experiences where you feel a union with God and gain spiritual truth? <i>n</i> =948, <i>M</i> =2.45, <i>SD</i> =1.48	-.158**	.000
How important are your religious beliefs? <i>n</i> =954, <i>M</i> =3.68, <i>SD</i> =1.92	-.115**	.000
In the last year, have your religious interests and involvements decreased, stayed the same, or increased? <i>n</i> =956, <i>M</i> =3.92, <i>SD</i> =1.69	-.092**	.005
I feel abandoned by God. <i>n</i> =948, <i>M</i> =4.38, <i>SD</i> =0.95	-.076**	.020
I find myself unable or unwilling to involve God in the decisions I make about my life. <i>n</i> =944, <i>M</i> =3.60, <i>SD</i> =1.40	-.198**	.000

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Chapter V

Summary, Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Summary of the Study

This study was based on the survey, *Assessment of Spirituality and Religious Sentiments*, created by Ralph Piedmont (2005). The survey measures the religiosity and spirituality of participants based on normative data. Additionally, there is a domain within the religiosity section that measures religious crisis. The survey was distributed to all undergraduate students, at least 18 years of age with an official email address, at Rowan University, during the spring of 2012. All survey responses were created online and transported into SPSS for further analysis. The responses were compared to the normative data, through a scaling system, to determine the religious and spiritual levels of the participants, as well as determining religious crisis. The survey was not distributed to any faculty, staff, or graduate students.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to determine the religiosity and spirituality of Rowan undergraduates, as well as inspect religious crises. Moreover, correlations between religious affiliation and religiosity, and race and religiosity were explored. Also, explored was the importance of religion and spirituality in the lives of many college and university students. The overall sentiments and beliefs of Rowan students were analyzed and discussed. The results of this survey are designed to be comparable to college-aged students, but the message should be transferable to any level of public education. Administrators, professors, and teachers should be aware of the religious and spiritual nature of students. Even though the public schools cannot condone or support religion, there are programs and clubs that can be created to allow students to express their views;

while a sense of understanding and acceptance is required to balance spiritual beliefs. Educators should compare the results of this study to past surveys and Piedmont's normative data in effort to understand students at their respective institutions. Religion and spirituality are major influences in the lives of students and the general population, and there should be a reasonable attempt by educators to take this into consideration when creating policy or implementing strategy for learning environments.

Discussion of the Findings

Research Question 1: How religious are undergraduate students at Rowan University?

The average religiosity level of Rowan students falls within the normative range provided by Piedmont. The normative data suggest that the average score is between 21.5 and 28.5, for men and women up to age 21. Between the ages of 21 and 30, the normative data suggest the average range of scores is 21.5 to 29.5. The actual score was 25.78 for ages 17 through 25. The average score for Rowan students was 23.87. Piedmont puts meaning to this by affirming, "Those scoring in the range are average in their religious involvements. They attend services and read religious materials as most other individuals in our normative sample" (Piedmont, p. 51). Those scoring higher are very much involved in religious activities, and lower scores generally convey a sense of disinterest in religious participation and lack of usefulness for such activities.

Out of the eight questions asked to determine religiosity, the plurality of students chose the response expressing the least religious view, for six of them. Despite this outcome, enough responses were provided, in favor of religiosity to counter the less religious, thereby shifting the overall score into the lower half of the average range.

When students were asked how important their religious beliefs are to them, 59.4% answered that they were either, fairly important, very important, or extremely important. While 40.6% declared them as somewhat unimportant, fairly unimportant, or not at all important. Overall, this suggests that the majority of Rowan students consider their religious views as some degree of importance. In the *2007 Religious Landscape Survey*, The Pew Forum addresses the importance of religious beliefs. The survey found that 56% of all Americans contend their religious sentiments are very important to them, while 45% from ages 18-29 felt these views are very important. These statistics are similar to what Rowan undergraduates reported in the ASPIRE survey.

The question receiving the least amount of religious support, concerned how often students read religious material other than the Bible, Torah, Koran, or Geeta. A total of 5.1% of students responded they participate in this activity several times a week, contrasted to 56.3% of students who responded never. Therefore, according to the survey, students who never involve themselves in reading miscellaneous religious literature, form the majority opinion. On a separate, but related question, students were asked how often they read the Bible, Torah, Koran, or Geeta. A total of 9.7% responded at least several times a week, and the majority of students, 51.4%, selected never. In the article, “Religion Among the Millennials” (The PEW Forum, 2010), it states that 35% of Americans read scripture weekly. However, this survey suggests the percentage of Rowan undergraduates reading scripture on a weekly basis is only 5.2%. The survey suggests a substantial drop in scripture reading, when compared to Americans as a whole.

The question demonstrating the greatest amount of religious involvement was the frequency of prayer by Rowan students. Of the polled students, 31.8% declared they pray

at least several times a week. However, the percentage of students who never pray, constitute 35.8% of the same opinion. Overall, 64.2% of students in this survey utilized prayer in their lives, although for some it may only be once or twice a year. According to Grossman (2010), 41% of Millennials contend they pray daily. This statistic suggests Rowan students are less likely to pray daily than the national average of people around their age.

When asked about the frequency of attending religious services, 14.8% of Rowan undergraduates responded quite often, while 31.4% chose never. The HERI survey indicated that 81% of incoming freshmen students attended religious services weekly, while later studies saw this number to drop increasingly. As cited in Mayrl and Oeur (2009), a survey conducted by Bryant, Choi, and Yasuno found that out of 3,680 students from 50 colleges, only 27% claimed to attend religious services frequently at the end of their freshmen year. Additionally, as cited in Mayrl and Oeur, a study by Hurtado and colleagues discovered that only 23% of sophomores reported to attend religious services frequently. There is an apparent drop in religious service attendance after students enter college. The percentage of Rowan students attending religious services, at least often, is 25.5%.

Research Question 2: Are undergraduate students at Rowan University experiencing a religious crisis?

The questions regarding religious crisis strongly suggest that students at Rowan are comfortable with their beliefs, and in fact, do not feel a pressing religious crisis. On three out of the four questions, less than 10% agreed to have a God or Faith group dilemma in their lives. Results from the survey suggest that Rowan undergraduates have

the most difficulty including God in their life decisions, with 20.9%, claiming they are unwilling or unable to involve God in life decisions.

In the ASPIRES Technical Manual, Piedmont discusses the religious crisis questions specifically by acknowledging,

What is of interest about these items is that they appear to address the negative side of religiosity. For example, when faith and belief become sources of personal distress... Concerning the religious Crisis scale, scores here are reflecting the degree to which one's relationship with the Transcendent may be disrupted or creating distress for the individual. (p. 8)

The religious crisis questions encompass punishment, abandonment, isolation, and an inability to include God in life decisions. From the responses, only 1.5% of students felt abandoned by God and 1.4% felt God is punishing them. In both cases, the majority of students did not feel abandoned or punished by God. Out of the four questions, the one demonstrating the most significant religious crisis involved students who found themselves unwilling or unable to include God in their life decisions. Those who answered this question, affirmed with 12.8%, they are unable or unwilling to include God in their life decisions. The majority of students, 52.8%, strongly disagreed they felt isolated from others in their faith group, while only 2.0% strongly agreed with that statement.

The average score for religious crisis of Rowan students, 7.57, falls within the range of the normative data (between 6 and 10 for students up to age 21; and from 6.5 to 10.5 for students 21 to 30 years old). Piedmont suggests, "average scores may indicate

little problems with one's faith community and God" (p. 52). Piedmont goes on to describe scores lower or higher than the average,

Low scores will reflect individuals who are very comfortable and satisfied with their religious practices and feel content... However, high scores indicate an individual in a current crisis. This may be a crisis of faith, or it may reflect a specific conflict occurring within his/her own religious community. High scores will indicate higher levels of personal emotional distress. (p. 52)

Despite the results of Rowan students falling within the normal range of data, the majority of students strongly disagreed when asked if they were experiencing a certain religious crisis on three out of the four questions. The average responses of the students, indicating that they strongly agreed to having a religious crisis, is only 4.4%, providing more evidence that Rowan students are not in the midst of a major religious crisis, if any at all.

Research Question 3: How spiritual are undergraduate students at Rowan University?

The spiritual transcendence scale measures three correlated facets; *prayer fulfillment, universality, and connectedness* (Piedmont). Each of the 23 statements in the spirituality portion of the survey pertains to one of these facets. Based on the responses by Rowan students, a sense of connectedness, a belief that one is part of a larger human reality that cuts across generations and groups (Piedmont), was the strongest spiritual quality. Connectedness questions only comprised 6 (26.09%) of the 23 statements on the survey, but had three of the highest mean scores in the top four. The average rank for connectedness items was 6.67. The connectedness item with the highest mean score was,

“Although dead, memories and thoughts of some of my relatives continue to influence my current life,” with a mean score of 3.60.

After connectedness, the universality statements, or a belief that all life is intimately tied together, received, as a whole, the next highest spirituality ratings. Universality items accounted for 7 (30.43%) of the 23 spirituality statements and had an average ranking of 9.86. A universality item had the highest level of agreement among students. The statement was “All life is interconnected,” with a mean score of 3.68 and can be regarded as the most spiritual quality of Rowan students.

The final facet, prayer fulfillment, does not offer competitive levels of student agreement until seven other statements are credited. This is especially notable considering the fact prayer fulfillment questions comprise 10 (43.48%) items in the survey. The average ranking of prayer fulfillment items is 16.70. The prayer fulfillment statement garnering the most agreement was, “I feel a connection to some larger being or reality,” with a mean score of 3.36. Eight of the 10 least spiritual statements were prayer fulfillment related. Among these were, “I meditate and/or pray so that I can reach a higher spiritual level,” and “I meditate and/or pray so that I can grow as a person.”

The responses for the spirituality section were number coded in order to be compared to Piedmont’s normative data. The actual score obtained for the normative data, for both men and women between the ages of 17 and 25, was 78.47. Additionally, Piedmont created a normative range of scores that is representational of average spirituality. For men and women up to age 21, this range is from 72 to 83. For men and women ages 21 to 30, this range is more varied, from 69 to 83. Rowan students received an overall average score of 73.69. Thus, the average spirituality of participating Rowan

students falls within the normative range. Piedmont explains what this means by stating, “If your score falls within this range, then you have an interest in understanding broader, transcendent issues, but also have concerns for immediate needs” (Piedmont, p. 50).

Scores above the average range denote people who adjust their values and meaning in life in accordance with some larger understanding or purpose of the universe. Scores lower than the tabled values are suggestive of individuals more focused on tangible realities of everyday life. Usually this group puts more emphasis on personal concerns than spiritual ones, and tends to have a self-oriented focus (Piedmont).

Research Question 4: Is there a significant relationship between between the religiosity of Rowan undergraduate students and race or religious affiliation?

This question sought to identify any linear relationships between religiosity and race or religious affiliation. From the 12 questions listed on the religiosity portion of the survey, nine were significantly correlated with *race*. From these nine, the two most strongly correlated questions with religiosity were, “How frequently do you attend religious services” with an *r* coefficient of $-.336$; and “How often do you pray” which had an *r* coefficient of $-.333$. Although nine significant correlations were found between religiosity and race, these negative correlations are considered weak.

From the 12 questions listed on the religiosity portion of the survey, nine were significantly correlated with *religious affiliation*. From these nine, the two most strongly correlated questions with religiosity were “I find myself unable or unwilling to involve God in the decisions I make about my life” with an *r* coefficient of $-.198$; and “How often do you pray” with an *r* coefficient of $-.166$. Although nine significant correlations were found between religiosity and race, these negative correlations are considered weak.

Conclusions

The findings of this study revealed that Rowan University undergraduate students demonstrate average levels of religiosity, spirituality, and religious crisis. Further analysis reveals that even though the scores of Rowan students for religiosity and spirituality, and religious crisis fall within the average range of scores, they are well within the bottom half of the provided ranges. This indicates religiosity and spirituality levels at Rowan are slightly lower than scores postulated by the normative data. It is also important to note that although religious crisis scores fell within the normative range, this does not indicate half of Rowan students are experiencing a religious crisis. The normative scores, as well as those shaped by students at Rowan, are representative of minimal religious crises among students. Moreover, there were weak negative significant correlations found between religiosity, race, and religious affiliation.

Recommendations for Practice

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

1. The Center for Academic Advising and Exploration and individual academic departments should critically evaluate advising practices and develop strategies to improve advising methods that will cater to the individualistic spiritual needs of students.
2. The Counseling and Psychological Services Center should evaluate the services offered to students and develop strategies for communicating with students who are deeply religious or spiritual in nature.

3. Professors and administrators should be aware of the importance students place in their religion, and spiritual nature. Understanding these beliefs can help guide students.
4. Rowan University should continue to offer extensive extracurricular programming and support services to involve students in activities that are dedicated to their spiritual well being and allow their religious beliefs to be communicated to peers. The same would apply for non-religious groups.

Recommendations for Further Research

Based on the findings of this study, the following suggestions for future research are recommended.

1. A broader study should be conducted at Rowan University to include not only undergraduates, but graduate students as well.
2. Since Rowan University is a public institution, it should be compared to a denominational higher institute of education for comparison purposes. This would be the starting point for determining if denominational colleges or universities were, overall, more religious and/or spiritual.
3. Colleges and universities of varying religious affiliations can have their religious and spirituality levels compared to one another.
4. A study involving how levels of religiosity are impacted by religious affiliation and/or race could create answers in faith switching.
5. A study dissecting student rationale behind their religious and spiritual identities would communicate critical knowledge.

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APPENDIX A
Survey Instrument

Religiosity & Spirituality at Rowan

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. What is your status at Rowan (by credits):

- Freshman Sophomore Junior Senior Super Senior

2. What is your Race?

- Arabic
 Asian
 Black
 Hispanic
 White
 Multiracial
 Other

3. What is your Religious Affiliation?

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="radio"/> Catholic | <input type="radio"/> Jewish | <input type="radio"/> Episcopal |
| <input type="radio"/> Unitarian | <input type="radio"/> Atheist | <input type="radio"/> Mormon |
| <input type="radio"/> Other Christian | <input type="radio"/> Agnostic | <input type="radio"/> Hindu |
| <input type="radio"/> Buddhist | <input type="radio"/> Methodist | <input type="radio"/> Other Faith Tradition |
| <input type="radio"/> Lutheran | <input type="radio"/> Presbyterian | |
| <input type="radio"/> Baptist | <input type="radio"/> Muslim | |

4. Which of the following statements most clearly reflects your current religion?

- My current religion is the religion I was brought up in as a child
 My current religion is not the religion I was brought up in as a child, but I have not formerly converted
 My current religion is a result of formal conversion
 I am not currently religious

Other (please specify)

Religiosity & Spirituality at Rowan

5. Which statement most clearly reflects your religious education prior to college?

- I had no formal religious education
- After school or on the weekends, I went to a religious school
- I went to a religious day-school for at least part of my education

Other (please specify)

6. What religion were your parents during most of your childhood?

Mother

Father

Religious Affiliation

Religiosity & Spirituality at Rowan

RELIGION SECTION

1. How often do you read the Bible/Torah/Koran/Geeta?

- Never About once a month Several times a week
 About once or twice a year 2 or 3 times a month
 Several times a year Nearly every week

2. How often do you read religious literature other than the Bible/Torah/Koran/Geeta?

- Never About once a month Several times a week
 About once or twice a year 2 or 3 times a month
 Several times a year Nearly every week

3. How often do you pray?

- Never About once a month Several times a week
 About once or twice a year 2 or 3 times a month
 Several times a year Nearly every week

4. How frequently do you attend religious services?

- Never Rarely Occasionally Often Quite Often

5. To what extent do you have a personal, unique, close relationship with God?

- Not at all Slight Moderate Strong Very Strong

6. Do you have experiences where you feel a union with God and gain spiritual truth?

- Never Rarely Occasionally Often Quite Often

7. How important are your religious beliefs?

- Not at all important Fairly important
 Fairly unimportant Very important
 Somewhat unimportant Extremely important

8. In the last year, have your religious interests and involvements...

1 decreased | 4 stayed the same | 7 increased

- Decrease to Increase 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Religiosity & Spirituality at Rowan

9. God & Faith Group Questions:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I feel that God is punishing me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel abandoned by God.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel isolated from others in my faith group.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I find myself unable or unwilling to involve God in the decisions I make about my life.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Religiosity & Spirituality at Rowan

SPIRITUALITY SECTION

The following questions are for the Spirituality portion of the survey. Please take your time. Your answers are greatly appreciated.

1. Spirituality Questions

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. I have experienced deep fulfillment and bliss through my prayers and/or meditations.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. I feel a connection to some larger Being or Reality.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. I believe that on some level my life is intimately tied to all of humankind.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. I meditate and/or pray so that I can reach a higher spiritual level.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. All life is interconnected.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. There is an order to the universe that transcends human thinking.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. Death does not stop one's feelings of emotional closeness to another.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. In the quiet of my prayers and/or meditations, I find a sense of wholeness.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. I have done things in my life because I believed it would please a parent, relative, or friend who had died.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. Although dead, memories and thoughts of some of my relatives continue to influence my current life.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11. Spirituality is a central part of my life.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12. I find inner strength and/or peace from my prayers and/or meditations.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
13. Although there is good and bad in people, I believe that humanity as a whole is basically good.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
14. I have strong emotional ties to someone who has died.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
15. There is a higher plane of consciousness or spirituality that binds all people.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
16. Although individual people may be difficult, I feel an emotional bond with all of humanity.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
17. I meditate and/or pray so that I can grow as a person.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
18. Prayer and/or meditation appeal to me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
19. My prayers and/or meditations provide me with a sense of emotional support.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
20. I feel that on a higher level all of us share a common bond.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
21. I want to grow closer to the God of my understanding.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
22. The praise of others gives deep satisfaction to my accomplishments.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
23. I am concerned about the expectations that loved ones have of me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

APPENDIX B

Institutional Review Board Approval Letter

January 18, 2012

Robert Yufer
33 Aspen Hill Court
Deptford, NJ 08096

Dear Robert Yufer:

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: 2012-138

Project Title: Religiosity, Spirituality and Secularism at Rowan University

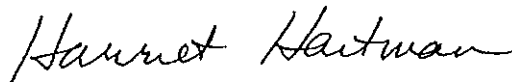
In accordance with federal law, this approval is effective for one calendar year from the date of this letter. If your research project extends beyond that date or if you need to make significant modifications to your study, you must notify the IRB immediately. Please reference the above-cited IRB application 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. Shreekanth Mandayam, Associate Provost for Research (shreek@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 black ink that reads "Harriet Hartman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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

c: Burton Sisco, Educational Services, Administration and Higher Education, Education Hall