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Student affairs programs at Rowan University and their impact on students' sense of mattering

Sarah M. Olsen

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**STUDENT AFFAIRS PROGRAMS AT ROWAN UNIVERSITY
AND THEIR IMPACT ON STUDENTS'
SENSE OF MATTERING**

by
Sarah M. Olsen

A Thesis

Submitted to the
Department of Educational Services, Administration, and Higher Education
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In partial fulfillment of the requirement
For a degree of
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at
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Thesis Chair: Burton R. Sisco, Ed.D.

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Dedication

*I would like to dedicate this manuscript to my father, Robert M. Olsen.
For all he has taught me about hard work and never quitting.*

Acknowledgments

I would like to express my appreciation for Rhiannon Napoli's continued assistance and advisement with not only this thesis but all aspects of this program. I would also like to thank my mother, Julie Olsen, for her continued support and love throughout this project, my time in graduate school, and my entire life. My sister, Théa Olsen, also deserves to be acknowledged for the time she has taken out of her life to let me bounce ideas and thoughts off of her, without that I would not have gotten to this point in my program.

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Abstract

Sarah Olsen
STUDENT AFFAIRS PROGRAMS AT ROWAN UNIVERISTY
AND THEIR IMPACT ON STUDENTS'
SENSE OF MATTERING
2014/15
Burton R. Sisco, Ed.D.
Master of Arts in Higher Education Administration

The purpose of this study was to determine the attitudes of student participants of the Rowan After Hours' program on mattering. The subjects of this study were 400 Rowan University student participants of the Rowan After Hours program. Data were collected using a variation of the *College Mattering Inventory* (Tovar et al., 2009) which contains a 37 Likert scale statements consisting of seven subscales that sought to determine students' attitudes toward mattering in seven subscales. Results indicated that students participating in the Rowan After Hours program had a positive attitude towards mattering overall, and the highest subscale was the subscale that dealt with mattering to the Rowan After Hours program. The lowest subscales were mattering versus marginality and mattering to instructors. The results of the current study were compared to the normative sample from the 2009 study by Tovar, Simon, and Lee as well as a previous study on mattering conducted at Rowan University (McGuire, 2012) with undergraduate students. Correlations were found between frequency of attending the RAH program and connection to campus.

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Chapter I

Introduction

With the increasing focus in higher education on creating a connected campus community, recent research has focused on what helps students feel connected to campus. A student's sense of connection can come from many different sources during their time in college. Connections can come from campus traditions, pride and participation in athletics, a variety of sponsored activities, and programs designed to create an inclusive campus.

Poor connection to campus can have many negative effects on a student's experience. Failing to connect to the campus community can result in poor grades, lower retention, lack of persistence, departure and a sense of marginality, and a feeling as if one does not matter. Many studies have shown that the more students feel they matter to and are included in a college or university the more connected they feel to campus (Astin, 1984; Kuh, 1995; Schlossberg, 1989).

A sense of mattering is promoted in college by creating connections with other students, faculty, and staff (Schlossberg, 1989). These connections are made and strengthened during times when students become involved within their campus communities. Involvement, particularly in extracurricular activities, has been shown to foster connections between peers, thus allowing students to feel accepted as members of a peer group. Feeling a sense of mattering during college lessens a sense of marginality leading to an increase in retention and persistence and graduation rates.

Unfortunately, feelings of marginality happen to students who do not assimilate to campus, which occurs more often for non-traditional students (Schlossberg, 1989). Students who fail to assimilate to campus have a higher chance of leaving the university because of a lack of connection to people on campus and the campus as a whole. This sense of marginality could be decreased by students becoming more involved within their campus communities. The Division of Student Affairs at Rowan University plays a significant role in increasing students' involvement on campus, and in doing so, helps increase their sense of mattering.

Developing programs that focus on creating a welcoming environment for students within the university population promotes a feeling they matter to the institution. Having programs that cater to a wide audience can help colleges and universities create a welcoming and inclusive environment. Programs that facilitate many different styles of activities for different genders, sexual orientations, ethnicities, races and religions will most likely have a higher chance of gaining participation from a larger percentage of the campus population. Campus programs which include these elements may have a higher chance of fostering mattering for students across campus. The Rowan After Hours' (RAH) program seeks to include all students at Rowan University. RAH is an initiative from the Office of Student Activities, whose mission is:

Rowan After Hours (RAH) provides late-night/weekend opportunities for Rowan University students to become active in campus life by executing diverse, quality programs in a safe and welcoming environment. (About, n.a, para. 1).

Statement of the Problem

There is a lack of research within the higher education community on what types of programs assist in creating a sense of mattering for students and increase students' connection to campus. Activity programs have shown to be one of the means through which students become involved on campus and are able to facilitate relationships with peers (Astin, 1984). As one of the largest activities programs on campus, RAH gives students a space to get involved, and assists them in becoming more involved in the Rowan community. Research is needed to determine if students involved in RAH are having an experience that assists them in feeling a sense of mattering and a connection to campus. Since creating a safe and welcoming environment and executing diverse programs is stated in the Rowan After Hours mission, it is essential to know if the program is meeting its mission and if in doing so, promotes a feeling of mattering for students.

Purpose of the Study

This study sought to determine if selected student affairs programs and activities created a sense of mattering for students. In order to gain this information, a quantitative study was used to assess student attendees of the Rowan After Hours programs' sense of mattering as a Rowan University student. The instrument used to assess students' sense of mattering is an adapted version of the *College Mattering Inventory (CMI)* developed by Tovar, Simon, and Lee (2009) which highlights six areas of mattering: general mattering, mattering versus marginality, mattering to counselors/advisors, mattering to instructors, mattering to students, and perception of value. This instrument has the ability

to produce results on a large and diverse population while still focusing on the information that Schlossberg used to analyze mattering and marginality (Tovar et al., 2009).

Background information was collected and analyzed as it relates to the factors of mattering emphasized in the *CMI*. Students were asked to provide background information as a part of the survey; ethnicity, gender, class status, GPA, and citizenship. In addition, probative areas focused on students' interactions with the RAH program including frequency of attendance, nights a month attended, specific night of the week most attended, and the type of RAH events that interested them most.

Significance of the Study

Schlossberg's (1989) theory on mattering and marginality is influenced by Astin's theory of involvement; suggesting that the more involved a student is or the more time and energy a student puts into an activity/program, or spends in the campus community as a whole, the more likely a student is to feel he/she matters to the campus.

McGuire (2012) conducted a study to see if undergraduate students of Rowan University felt they mattered overall. The results of her study revealed that generally students felt they mattered in all areas of the *College Mattering Inventory*. Over 75% of the sample said they did not feel isolated while involved in student activities at Rowan. A question within the survey focused on evaluating how students felt staff at the university appreciated their involvement, with 58% agreeing and 42% disagreeing. What programs are facilitating a sense of appreciation for involvement and which are not? To gain more information on which areas of extracurricular involvement are seen as having

appreciative staff could assist in creating more welcoming programs and environments and contribute to greater involvement. This is what the current study looked to clarify. This study sought to take the information from McGuire's (2012) study, stating that approximately half of Rowan University students did feel their involvement was appreciated, and determine what type of influences RAH, as one of the largest programs on campus, had on students' sense of mattering.

Knowing that involvement in campus activities decreases a student's sense of marginality, it would be helpful to determine if these extracurricular programs are impacting students in general and if they are impacting a wide audience of students. The focus question this study sought to address is, Do students at Rowan University who attend RAH feel as though they matter?

Having information on this topic would be helpful in a variety of ways; to the RAH program, Rowan University and the student affairs division, and to the higher education community as a whole. The findings of this study would also be able determine if the mission of RAH, in regards to creating a safe and welcoming environment with diverse programs, is being fulfilled. Moreover, Rowan's Student Affairs Division will have a better sense of the impact RAH has, as a model for other campus programs.

The results of this study can fill a gap in the knowledge base within higher education research. The gap in knowledge base is whether student activities programming plays a role in promoting mattering or marginality. Little research exists on how activity programming promotes a sense of mattering for students on college campuses in general and at Rowan University specifically.

Assumptions and Limitations

The study assumed that the feeling of mattering increases a student's sense of connection to the campus community. It is also assumed that RAH's mission of creating a safe and welcoming environment is being promoted by the staff which coordinates these events. Students' responses to the survey items were taken as truthful.

The limitations of the study involved the use of convenience sampling which limits the generalizability of the findings. Convenience sampling was used to the available population, Rowan After Hours participants. There is also the limitation of possible researcher bias due to my position as a member of the Office of Student Activities, the department through which RAH is sponsored.

Operational Definitions

- 1.) Advisor: A staff member at the university which assists students in selecting courses as well as counsels them on other matters pertaining to their degree attainment.
- 2.) Campus Connection: The ability for a student to connect to people or groups on campus, through involvement in the university community, to feel a sense of community while attending the institution.
- 3.) Counselor: (a) a staff member in the career center that assist students with planning for their internships, jobs and or overall career path; (b) another term for advisor.

- 4.) Inclusive Environment: A space, specifically dealing with a programming space, where any type of person or persons feel their interests are being taken into account.
- 5.) Involvement: Being present at an event associated with RAH on campus, taking time out of one's schedule to participate in RAH. Astin (1984) refers to involvement as a physical and a psychological act that a student specifically puts his/her energy into.
- 6.) Marginality: The feeling of being out-of-place and unaccepted at RAH; possibly due to prejudices, within a culture or society in which the individual wants to find his/her place (Schlossberg, 1989).
- 7.) Mattering: The feeling that RAH and the RAH staff are interested in students, are concerned with their fate, or are interested in seeing they belong (at RAH, on campus, and/or in general).
- 8.) Rowan After Hours (RAH): A student centered program run through the Rowan University Office of Student Activities which runs every Thursday, Friday, and Saturday night during the academic year; including programs such as bands, novelty nights, magicians, comedians, and the like.
- 9.) Safe Environment: An environment in which students feel they are comfortable and will not be in harms way.
- 10.) Welcoming Environment: A space that creates a sense of comfort and allows individuals and groups to feel free of judgment or discrimination of any kind.

Research Questions

The study sought to address the following questions:

1. Do students who attended RAH report having attitudes of mattering in the following areas; general college mattering, mattering versus marginality, mattering to counselors or advisors, mattering to instructors, mattering to students, and perceptions of value?
2. Do RAH subjects report having attitudes that they matter to/at the Rowan After Hours program?
3. How do the mean scores of the six subscales in the study of students attending Rowan After Hours compare to previous research?
4. Is there a significant relationship between frequency of attendance to RAH and a feeling of connection to the campus community?

Overview of the Study

Chapter II provides a review of the scholarly literature that informs this study. It examines the history of student organizations and programming on college and university campuses, the purpose of student programs and organizations, an overview of involvement and mattering theories as well as related studies, a review of the research on the survey instrument used in the study, a review of the RAH and Rowan University, and a summary of the literature review.

Chapter III reviews the methodology of the study including the context, population, the survey instrument used and explanation of how data were gathered and analyzed.

Chapter IV presents the data demographics and analysis from the completed surveys. The data are presented both in the form of tables and written descriptions.

Chapter V summarizes the study, the methodology used, the data collected and analyzed, discusses the findings, offers conclusions, and provides recommendations for practice and further research.

Chapter II

Review of the Literature

Introduction

Over the past century there has been an increasing interest in the student affairs side of higher education. Theories have arisen to assist in determining the validity of programs within colleges and universities that extend beyond the classroom. For example, it has been determined that out-of-class room experiences can have a strong impact on students' growth during their postsecondary education. Involvement has been one of the most influential theories shaping programs developed within student affairs. The theory of involvement gave way to another key theory relating to student affairs, the theory of mattering and marginality. Involvement has been shown to influence a student's feeling of mattering within the college community. Thus, it is essential, with the growing populations on college campuses, that student affairs departments institute programs that make all students feel they matter and that they belong within the institution. In this study, there is an association drawn between student affairs programs, specifically RAH which looks to cater to all students, involvement theory and mattering theory as they relate to a student's sense of mattering to the institution, and their connection to campus.

An Overview of the History of Student Organizations and Programs

Out-of-class experiences on college and university campuses have been a vital part of a student's education since the end of the eighteenth century. Though first established for social reasons, some campus organizations such as fraternities offered dubious results. Wechler (n.a.) points out that fraternities were formed so the more

affluent students could separate their living space from the lower class students. What was continued from those original campus organizations, such as fraternities was the creation of a variety of campus social groups and clubs that created an environment for students to be surrounded by a peer group of like individuals. It was not until the 1800s that clubs and organizations on college campuses formed for noble reasons. In normal schools for example, academic organizations formed to discuss what was taking place in the classroom as a group outside of the academic setting (Ogren, 2003). Literary societies, or organizations that typically reviewed books or information from classes, were especially popular among normal school students. A normal school was used as a postsecondary school in the late 1800s and early 1900s to prepare lower income students for teaching positions. These literary groups, one of the first student organizations, were used at normal schools to allow students from like backgrounds to feel a sense of connection or belonging, which allowed them to feel included in the college community.

The formation of campus organizations took shape in a variety of higher education institutions throughout the United States. With the increasing number of students enrolling in higher education since the mid 1800s and the shift away from higher education being a preparatory institution for ministers, caused a need for social organizations and a sense of community on campus to become necessary. “These organizations contributed to the vibrant campus intellectual life, which enabled students to grow immensely through intense interaction with one another, their professors, and campus visitors” (Ogren, 2003, p. 399). This late nineteenth century framework of

campus organizations was the spring board to what is common at college and university today.

In the mid 1900s the area currently known as student affairs was becoming active on campuses across the country and the American Council on Education (ACE) was taking a vested interest in this area of higher education (Nuss, 2003). The importance of out-of-class involvement of college students was presented in the ACE's *Student Personnel Point of View* published in 1949; this report indicated that there had become a need for higher education to focus on the student's development not just academically but on a personal level (Nuss, 2003). This task was given to administration heading the programs, organizations, and clubs on campus. In the 1960s the role of the administration in student affairs shifted from "disciplinarian" to "coordinator and educator" (Nuss, 2003). Student affairs' professions moved from being completely separate from academics to a more holistic development of a student in the 1970s. The profession and goal of student affairs has been developing ever since and these changes spurred a need for research on the subject of what do students need to mature and develop while in college. The research by scholars such as Alexander Astin and Nancy Schlossberg gave student affairs professionals the background needed to understand the importance of student life within higher education. From the 1980s through the 90s and still today, there is a conscious effort being made to determine how to give students a holistic developmental experience during their college years.

Current Role of Student Affairs Programs on College and University Campuses

Social organizations and programs fulfill many purposes surrounding the mission of their institutions and students. Elkins, Forrester, and Noël-Elkins (2011) suggest that an overwhelming factor in participating in campus organizations and activities is to have a better experience for campus residents. Students who participated in a recreational organization on campus were found to have a higher quality of residential experience at their college or university (Elkins et al., 2011). This study demonstrates that being a part of campus life in the way of clubs, organizations or attending campus programs enables students to feel a part of their community, which leads to a more integrated college community. The sense of community that comes from being involved in campus is seen as contributing to student development as well as persistence (Roberts & McNeese, 2008).

Involvement Theory

Alexander Astin began his research on involvement in the 1970s; he focused, developed, and defined his theory of student involvement in the article “Student Involvement: A Developmental Theory for Higher Education” published in 1984. To understand involvement theory, Astin’s definition is helpful, “student involvement refers to the amount of physical and psychological energy that the student devotes to the academic experience” (Astin, 1984, p. 518). Astin (1984) highlights the difference between an involved student, a student that spends considerable time doing homework, being active in campus events, and interacting with faculty and their peers, and an uninvolved student who rarely associates with peers or faculty outside of the classroom,

does not spend much time on campus, and is not involved in campus activities. The involved versus the uninvolved student demonstrates an aspect of involvement theory that focuses on the behavior patterns of students (Astin, 1984). It is the process or action of actually being somewhere or doing something that facilitates involvement; not just thinking or feeling that they are interested in doing something, but putting time and/or effort into an activity.

Astin (1984) states that involvement theory has five postulates:

- 1.) Involvement refers to the investment of physical and psychological energy in various objects.
- 2.) Regardless of the object, involvement occurs along a continuum; there are degrees or level of involvement a student can put into different objects.
- 3.) Involvement has both qualitative and quantitative features; the numbers of hours a student puts into a task or object and the amount of thought or comprehension a student puts into or gets out of a task or object.
- 4.) The amount of student learning and personal development associated with any educational program is directly proportional to the quality and quantity of student involvement in that program.
- 5.) The effectiveness of any educational policy or practice is directly related to the capacity of that policy or practice to increase student involvement. (p. 519)

All of these factors Astin (1984) describes play a role in involvement theory. In knowing those aspects it is not surprising that research using this theory determined that the student's time is one of the most valuable resources to an institution. The way a

student allocates his/her time to the different aspects of campus life plays a large role in how a student develops and prospers during their college years. Student involvement theory highlights the need for administrators and faculty to devote effort into making sure these activities produce developmental gains for the students involved.

Involvement can include academic work, participation in an organization, or interaction with faculty and peers; no matter what the specific area a student involves him/herself with, involvement theory demonstrates that the greater the student's involvement in college the greater the student's learning and personal development. A later study by Astin, "What Matters in College?" (1993) was conducted based on involvement theory. The study used a longitudinal design conducted on a class entering an institution in 1985 through their graduation in 1989. Astin found continued support that any involvement during a student's time spent at college benefited learning and student development.

Peer groups play a significant role in the attitudes and behaviors developed by students during college, and they also heavily influence where a student allocates personal time and energy (Astin, 1984). The peer group and area of campus that a student chooses to spend personal time, or be involved with has shown a strong connection to a college student's learning and development process (Astin, 1984). Astin's 1993 study demonstrated that peer influence had the most powerful effect on learning and development of students, in all areas of student learning. Astin's study (1993) noted peer influence or "student-to-student interaction" as including interactions such as discussing course content, being a member of a fraternity or sorority, an elected student officer

position, hours per week spent socializing or in an organization, club or at a campus program. Astin's Student Involvement Theory (1984) and his research conducted on college students (1993) determined that it is necessary for faculty and administration to understand the idea of "general education." In order for students to best develop during their college years the institution must make a conscious effort to collaborate across departments in pursuit of creating a holistic and well rounded education environment that encompasses both in-class and out-of- class experiences.

Student Involvement Theory's Effects on Out-of-Class Experience and Persistence

Involvement theory is a part of several different areas of study in higher education. There have been connections made to involvement theory in studies relating to out-of-class experience, mattering, persistence, and retention among others. A major contributor to higher education research and theory is George D. Kuh. Kuh's study on out-of-class experience (1995) was highly connected to involvement theory. His research focused on identifying out-of-class experiences that seniors attributed most to their learning and personal development. He found a leading contributor to the benefits of out-of-class room experience was peer influence. As presented in Astin's involvement theory, peers in Kuh's (1995) study were frequently mentioned as attributing to development of interpersonal competence (self-awareness+ autonomy+ confidence+ social competence+ sense of purpose), humanitarianism (altruism+ aesthetics), and cognitive complexity (reflective judgment+ application of knowledge). Kuh's research also showed that out-of-class experiences were reported to offer opportunities for students to apply knowledge attained in class and encouraged them to develop more complex views on academic

matters along with opportunities for synthesizing and integrating materials from the formal class setting to a real world experience.

Milem and Berger (1997) found that perception of the institution, involvement (in all capacities described by Astin (1984) and persistence are all intertwined. A student having a good perception of his/her institution is connected to personal level of involvement. Also, involvement influences the level of students' institutional commitment, which in turn contributes to how they integrate into the college community, which is linked to persistence (Milem & Berger, 1997). The study did have an unusual finding, social integration had more influence on persistence than academic integration (Milem & Berger, 1997), which means if a student did not integrate well into campus on a social level that affected them staying versus leaving the institution more than their academic performance. This may be due to the fact the institution studied had high academic levels for acceptance, the students needed a very high GPA from high school and high test scores to get accepted. Astin, Kuh, and the study by Milem and Berger (1997) demonstrate in several different ways that the more a student gets involved in campus activities or programs the more likely those students feel included in the campus community and as if they matter.

Mattering Theory

The initial concept of mattering was brought to light by sociologists Rosenberg and McCullough. A person's want to feel important and be involved in aspects of society is a psychological concept called "mattering." "Mattering is a motive: the feeling that others depend on us, are interested in us, are concerned with our fate, or experience us as

an ego-extension exercises a powerful influence over us” (Rosenberg & McCullough, 1981, p. 165). The researchers present mattering as a person’s need to feel important to others, which is not directly connected to self confidence or internal process where mattering is more of an external process. In order for a person to feel he/she matters they must have a person or a group of people that they look to be connected or significant to. Thus, there is a direct relation between mattering and a sense of belonging. Rosenberg and McCullough identified four areas that mattering impacts; attention, importance, ego-extension, and dependence.

Nancy Schlossberg made the connection between Rosenberg and McCullough’s large sociological/psychological idea of mattering and the college student. Schlossberg specifically determined a connection between a students’ involvement, as depicted by Astin (1984), and the concept of mattering. Schlossberg’s study (1989) specifically looked non-traditional students and their feelings of mattering versus marginality. Her study highlights that students’ involvement, where they spend their time, and who they spend it with, is directly related to a sense of community within the college campus. She points out that what students choose to be involved in is what connects them to one another, and what allows students to feel not only a part of the campus community but to also feel that they are important (Schlossberg, 1989). Mattering is the belief that students are important to someone and that belief acts as a motivator leading to involvement (Schlossberg, 1989). Schlossberg focused on Rosenberg and McCullough’s (1981) four areas of mattering; attention, importance, ego-extension, and dependence and added a fifth after conducting her research, appreciation;

Attention: feeling as if someone notices if we are there or are not there.

Importance: believing that others care about what we want, think, and do.

Ego-Extension: feeling that other people will be proud of our accomplishments.

Dependence: feeling that people need you.

Appreciation: feeling that their efforts were appreciated. (Schlossberg, 1989, p. 10)

When a student suffers from feeling as if he/she does not matter within a college community, feelings of marginality can take shape. Marginality is the consequence of feeling a lack of mattering. Marginality occurs often to non-traditional students and minority students falling outside of the dominant culture within an institution.

Marginality deals with psychological feelings of being invisible or invalid (Schlossberg, 1989). Thus, if students feel marginal in a community, they feel as if they do not matter. Student affairs professionals have the ability to alter this feeling of marginality that new students tend to go through when entering college by creating environments for students to become involved that are open and inclusive. Students get involved with a group or program that makes them feel as if they matter.

College mattering inventory. Several different survey instruments have been created to measure the concept of mattering. A few were created around Rosenberg and McCullough's (1981) and Schlossberg's (1989) connected theories on mattering. One was created by Schlossberg in 1990 called the *Mattering Scales for Postsecondary Adult Students*. Her research specifically targeted non-traditional adult students. Her survey instrument was created to specifically focus on measuring adult students' sense of

matter. Schlossberg's survey has been used with populations falling outside of the non-traditional student, though the instrument lacks the ability to properly assess a diverse population. There was a need for a survey instrument that looked at diverse college student populations' sense of mattering. In 2009, Tovar, Simon, and Lee created an instrument for diverse use with college student populations. It also is more progressive in the way it collects information about relationships students have within their campus communities, and connecting that information with general college mattering aspects.

The *College Mattering Inventory* (CMI) was originally a 52 item survey reduced to a more concise 29 item survey combining general sense of belonging elements with other interpersonal relationship elements. The creation of the current version of the CMI was tested, analyzed, and validated through its use at both a community college and state university in California. This survey was created in order to look at mattering for a more diverse population of students at universities and colleges, as opposed to Schlossberg's survey, *Mattering Scales for Postsecondary Adult Students*, which focused on adults and non-traditional students. The six section survey focuses on factors including general college mattering, mattering versus marginality, mattering to counselors or advisors, mattering to instructors, mattering to students, and perception of value. Tovar, Simon, and Lee (2009) recommend their survey be used by student affairs professionals to assess students' perception of mattering and whether they are creating supportive welcoming environments that promote student involvement.

Relevant Mattering Studies

A study on mattering, using the *CMI*, was conducted at Rowan University in 2012 by Samantha McGuire. McGuire (2012) looked to determine if undergraduate students felt they mattered versus if they felt marginalized in several areas including general college mattering. She also aimed to see the differences in mattering and marginality between different elements and relationships students interact with on campus. A total of 67% of the Rowan University undergraduate sample said they agreed with the statement “there are people at the university who are concerned about my future” (McGuire, 2012, p. 26). When focused on mattering in regards to involvement in student activities, over 75% of her sample said they did not feel isolated while involved in student activities at Rowan. A statement within the survey focused on evaluating if the subjects’ felt people at the university appreciated their involvement, 58% did agree while 42% disagreed. While over half agreed, the areas of out-of-class involvement being surveyed were not specified. This leaves a gap in the knowledge-base on where students choose to get involved and what programs make them feel as if they matter.

Durham (2008) specifically looked at a group of minority students (African American) and their sense of mattering and marginality at Rowan University. The study looked to determine links between mattering, involvement, and student satisfaction as it pertained to African American students. Durham aimed to see if the institution was developing a campus climate that promoted mattering. The study was based on the assumption developed from previous research showing that “students who perceived that they matter to their institution will be more involved and engaged than those who feel

marginalized” (Durham, 2008, p. 3). This assumption is supported by prior research on mattering and marginality. A research problem was presented that looked to determine the relationship between students’ perception of mattering or marginality and six dimensions of institutional environment including interactions with peers and diversity of the campus. Another research question in the study focused on African American students’ perception of mattering and marginality in connection with their level of involvement in student organizations (Durham, 2008).

The population of African American students studied was made up of a convenience sample and contained 90% Black/African American students, and students who identified with other ethnic/racial backgrounds, 4.3% Hispanic/Latino, 2.1% Asian American and Pacific Islander, 1.4% multiracial, and 1% American Indian (Durham, 2008). Durham used the *Perception on Community/Environment* (PCE) survey that looked at the six dimensions of environment, and was formatted to reflect the five mattering components highlighted by Schlossberg (1989).

The results of the survey demonstrated a significant finding, 86%, interacted with their classmates of a different race outside of the classroom (Durham, 2008). She concluded that interactions can assist in decreasing African American students’ sense of marginality. The programs in which these interactions tend to take place were not specified.

Rowan University’s Rowan After Hours Program

RAH is a late night programming initiative designed to assist in areas of both student involvement and healthy decision-making, taken from a late night program

structure developed by SUNY-Binghamton (Millstead, 2010). After RAH had its first successful semester in Fall 2008 running every Thursday evening, in Spring semester 2009 the program moved to every Thursday, Friday, and Saturday night, as it still continues today. The events over the past five years have become increasingly diverse and consist of programs such as comedians, open mic nights, novelty nights (make it and take it items), cultural festivals as well as others.

Rowan After Hours is funded solely by student fees. The programs are developed around creating experiences that cater to the population of Rowan University as a whole. All students that attend the university and pay the RAH fee should feel included and as if they matter to the RAH program. The mission of RAH is

Rowan After Hours (RAH), Rowan After Hours (RAH) provides late-night/weekend opportunities for Rowan University students to become active in campus life by executing diverse, quality programs in a safe and welcoming environment. (About, n.a, para. 1)

As stated within the mission, the Rowan After Hours program aims to create a safe and welcoming environment that caters to the diverse needs of the campus community. A study by Millstead (2010) assessed the attitudes of selected students of Rowan University towards RAH in areas such as advertising, operational efficiency, activities offered, and sense of community. Millstead (2010) determined the attitudes towards areas and functions of RAH, interest in the different types of programming offered, as well as if RAH encouraged involvement. His study produced relevant information in the areas of both involvement and sense of community that assist with

examining RAH's effects on students' sense of mattering and their feelings of inclusion. Students at a high rate of 75.1% found the professional staff created an open and safe environment (Millstead, 2010). In regards to involvement, 65.8% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "I feel RAH supports and promotes involvement on campus" (Millstead, 2010, p. 67).

In the 2009-2010 academic year at Rowan University the minority population was only 20.2%, and of the population studied by Millstead (2010) 31.8% of the participants were minority students, White non-Hispanic. This highlights RAH's ability to statistically cater to the diverse needs of student population. A total of 83.0% of students attending RAH agreed that Rowan University community supports and encourages their success, and 75.6% of RAH attendees felt a connection to the Rowan community (Millstead, 2010). These data support the concept that involvement in student affairs programming promotes a connection to a student's sense of community. What this study failed to determine is if students that participated in the RAH program felt a sense of mattering, community, and or belonging. There is a lack of research connecting students' sense of mattering and connection to campus to their involvement in campus programming.

Summary of the Literature Review

Studies have been reviewed showing information stating that mattering is needed in order for students to feel a part of the college's campus communities. Even with this body of knowledge available there are still questions that arise about the connection between the concepts of involvement, mattering, and student programs.

The field of higher education, in particular student affairs, needs to understand the impact that they have on students sense of mattering and what aspects of their various student affairs departments assist with a student's sense of mattering. Knowing the effects mattering have on students in regards to involvement, campus community, departure, and retention, more research is needed on how different programs, activities, and events facilitated by departments within student affairs relate to a student's sense of mattering. With the *CMI* survey available, it is possible to use the instrument to gain information on different aspects of campus involvement as it relates to a student's sense of mattering and connection to campus. A connection needs to be drawn between involvement with student affairs programs and mattering in order to determine if programs which set out to create welcoming environments and facilitate activities that cater to the campus population are truly making all students feel included and that they matter. This study sought to illustrate how Rowan University's Student Affairs events and activities are fostering mattering for student participants. That was accomplished by assessing if Rowan After Hours (RAH), as a Rowan University Student Affairs program, promoted a sense of mattering and belonging for participants. The study also looked to determine if RAH made participants feel included and welcomed both at the program and the institution, as well if attendees of RAH felt a significant connection to the campus community.

Chapter III

Methodology

Context of the Study

The study took place at Rowan University which is ranked 18th by *US News and World Report* on the Northern Regional Universities list in the 2012, 3rd among the publics in the category. There are 10 colleges and schools at Rowan University and 19 types of degrees offered. Rowan University has 85 bachelor's programs, 65 master's programs, 32 graduate certificates, 21 certifications 2 professional programs, and 2 doctoral programs. The school enrolls 13,349 students and granted degrees to 2,665 students in the year 2011-2012. Rowan offers eight men's and 10 women's athletic varsity sports programs, 45 intramural sports activities, and sponsors 141 clubs and organizations. Rowan houses 3,3663 students on campus (Rowan Fast Facts, 2013).

Rowan University is a predominately White institution consisting of 77.2% White non-Hispanic students. The university has a 8.5% African American population, 8% Hispanic, and there are low percentages of Asian/Pacific Islander, American Indian/Native American, and non-American residents (Rowan University, 2013). Women make up 53.7% and men 46.3% of the student enrollment.

The mission of Rowan University is:

A leading public institution, Rowan University combines liberal education with professional preparation from the baccalaureate through the doctorate. Rowan provides a collaborative, learning-centered environment in which highly qualified and diverse faculty, staff, and students integrate teaching, research, scholarship,

creative activity, and community service. Through intellectual, social and cultural contributions, the University enriches the lives of those in the campus community and surrounding region. (About Us, Mission, n.a.)

Student affairs at Rowan University. Rowan University's Division of Student Life is overseen by the Dean/Vice President of Students and has 19 service areas. These areas include: Academic Success Center, Career Management Center, Community Standards/Commuter Services, Counseling and Psychological Services, Dining Services, Educational Opportunity Fund, Greek Affairs, Healthy Campus Initiatives, Office of Multicultural Affairs, Orientation and Student Leadership, Rec Center, Residential Learning and Housing, Student Center, Student Enrichment and Family Connections, Service Learning and Volunteerism, Student Activities, Harley Flack Mentoring Program, and Veteran Affairs (Departments and Programs, n.a.). Each area sponsors programs, events and/or activities for students specific to their organizational mission, as well as the mission of the Division of Student Life. Rowan University's student life mission focuses on elements of both involvement and mattering theory discussed previously, and is presented as follows:

Student Life provides and supports a collaborative learning environment that promotes the education of the whole person within a global society. Student Life is dedicated to actively engaging students by encouraging healthy life choices, multicultural competency, personal and professional growth, campus and community involvement, civic responsibility and leadership development... (About Us, 2012, para. 1)

This mission projects the current focus within student affairs to assist with creating a more culturally inclusive campus. Rowan University's Division of Student Life has created numerous organizations and programs around the concepts of involvement and mattering in order fulfill its mission.

Rowan After Hours (RAH). RAH is a late night programming initiative designed to assist in areas of both student involvement and healthy decision making, taken from a late night program structure developed by SUNY-Binghamton (Millstead, 2010). The events over the past five years have become increasingly diverse and consist of programs such as comedians, open mic nights, novelty nights (make it and take it items), cultural festivals as well as others. The program runs every Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights from 9:00 p.m. to 1:00 a.m. throughout the academic year.

Rowan After Hours is funded solely by student fees. Its programs are developed around creating experiences that cater to the population of Rowan University as a whole. The mission of RAH is:

Rowan After Hours (RAH) provides late-night/weekend opportunities for Rowan University students to become active in campus life by executing diverse, quality programs in a safe and welcoming environment. (About, n.a, para. 1).

Population and Sample Selection

The target population for this study was students of Rowan University who attend and or participate in the Rowan After Hours program. Rowan After Hours is open to all students on campus who have a Rowan University ID, in order to prove they are Rowan University students. This is important to the RAH program specifically because it is one

of the Rowan University programs that is run solely by student fees. Surveys that were completed by non-Rowan students were discarded.

The study acquired a sample of the RAH population by using random sampling. A total of 624 RAH participating Rowan University students needed to be surveyed in order for the sample to be reflective of the general RAH population. The sample population for this study, 624 participants, was produced through conducting research on participation statistics from RAH during spring 2013. The number of attendees during each Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights were calculated during the last weekend in January to the last weekend in February, 2014. Thursday nights over this time span averaged 273 on Thursday night, Fridays 188, and Saturdays 164. The study was conducted over four different weekends of RAH, from the last weekend in January and to the last full weekend in February. There were 400 students who participated in the study providing, a 64.% response rate, giving a generally accurate depiction of the general RAH population.

Data Collection Instrument

The survey used in this study was based on the *College Mattering Inventory* created by Tovar, Simon and Lee (2009) as a means of measuring a diverse population of students' sense of mattering during college. The *College Mattering Inventory (CMI)* is comprised of a 29 Likert-scale items (see Appendix B for information on access).

The *CMI* survey looks at six different factors effecting a students' mattering at college. The sections include general mattering (containing eight items), mattering versus marginality (containing six items), mattering to counselors or advisors (containing five items), mattering to instructors (containing four items), mattering to students (containing

three items), and perception of value (containing three items). A revised version of the *CMI* used in this study added seven additional items to assess subjects' sense of mattering as it related to the Rowan After Hours program. Statements were arranged on the seven different factor areas or subscales, each item used a five point Likert-scale, based on the students agreement with the statements, 1= not at all, 2= slightly, 3= somewhat, 4= moderately, and 5= very much.

An introductory section was added to gather demographic information as well as background on the participants' involvement with the Rowan After Hours program (see Appendix A). The questions in this section related to age, gender, ethnicity, class status, residency, GPA, and involvement in campus organizations/clubs. Questions on the participants' level of participation in the RAH program included, how frequently they attended RAH a month, what nights they primarily attended, and what program types they were most interested in attending.

The validity and reliability of the scales used in the *CMI* was determined through Tovar, Simon, and Lee's (2009) study and analysis of their instrument. Using Cronbach's alpha coefficient of internal consistency, reliability for the *CMI* scale was determined for each of the sections and the overall scale; total mattering scale is $\alpha = .91$, general college mattering is $\alpha = .89$, mattering versus marginality is $\alpha = .83$, mattering to counselors or advisors is $\alpha = .84$, mattering to instructors is $\alpha = .76$, mattering to students is $\alpha = .77$, and perception of mattering is $\alpha = .72$. Additionally, the Cronbach Alpha was calculated using SPSS computer software for the Likert scale items used in this survey. These calculations resulted in; mattering scale is $\alpha = .86$, general college mattering is $\alpha = .86$,

matterings versus marginality is $\alpha = .84$, mattering to counselors or advisors is $\alpha = .82$, mattering to instructors is $\alpha = .73$, mattering to students is $\alpha = .74$, perception of mattering is $\alpha = .75$ and mattering to RAH is $\alpha = .84$. These reliability coefficients indicate that overall, and for all seven subscales, there is a high level of reliability and are internally consistency for the Likert scale statements.

A pilot test was conducted with five different students, 3 undergraduate and 2 graduate students, to test for validity. The reaction and questions relating to the survey were taken into account and adjustments were made accordingly. There were only a small number of adjustments needed, most were related to the wording of background questions; changes were made and the updated version of the survey was distributed for the study.

Data Gathering Procedure

In order to utilize the *CMI* survey, permission was received by Dr. Tovar via email allowing for me to utilize the Tovar, Simon, and Lee (2009) survey instrument (see Appendix C). The version of the *CMI* survey used in this study was reviewed and approved by the Rowan University Institutional Review Board (IRB) prior to distribution. The study and the instrument were approved by the IRB on December 17, 2013 (see Appendix E). The survey was distributed by hand at the RAH program. It was left at the welcome desk, the table where students check in to the RAH program, participants were asked by RAH student staff members if they were interested in filling the survey out. Surveys that were returned to the welcome desk were then collected and given to me each night.

Permission from Rhiannon Napoli, Assistant Director of Special Events and Late Night and Weekend Programming (see Appendix D), was gained in order to guarantee that conducting this study during the RAH program was allowed. The surveys were available for four weekends or 12 nights of RAH, from the last weekend in January, January 30, 2014 to February 1, 2014, until the last weekend full weekend in February, February 20, 2014 to February 22, 2014. The surveys were administered by leaving them at the RAH “Welcome Desk” to be distributed and collected in an envelope by the RAH staff, and then collected by myself. There was an alternate consent statement at the top of the survey along with a statement informing the subjects that participation was voluntary. There were no incentives given for completing the surveys, other than a disclaimer given by the RAH staff survey distributor that this survey would assist in helping better the RAH program and make better use of the student fee for the RAH program.

Data Analysis

Responses were collected and inputted into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software program for computer analysis. Data were then analyzed for using descriptive statistic such as frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation as well Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients. Tables were created to demonstrate participant personal background information, background information on university involvement, and involvement in the RAH program. Tables were also created to demonstrate the participant responses to the six mattering subscales as well as the seventh RAH subscale added for this study. The data were analyzed for possible correlations and connections between the background information on frequency of

attending RAH and several areas related to connection to campus. The results were also analyzed based on the results from the Rowan University study on undergraduate mattering and involvement, McGuire (2012), and Tovar, Simon, and Lee (2009) in order to determine possible connections and implications for RAH, student affairs at Rowan University, and student affairs within the higher education field.

Chapter IV

Findings

Profile of the Sample

The subjects of this study were undergraduate Rowan University students who participated in the Rowan After Hours program during the Spring 2014 semester. The survey was distributed by hand to participants of RAH for one month or 4 weekends, every Thursday, Friday, and Saturday night, from January 30, 2014 to February 22, 2014. The participants of RAH were asked by the staff at the welcome table to complete the survey and then upon completion return it to the welcome table. The target population for the survey was 624 students, 400 students completed and returned the survey, for a response rate of 64%.

The background demographics of participating subjects for this study is shown in Table 4.1. The majority of the subjects were 18 years old (23.6%) and 19 years old (26.1%), subjects age 20 made up 17.3% of the population. Only a little over 30% of the population were 21 and above. Female subjects made up just over half of the subjects at 54.0%, males just under half, 45.7%, and 2% of subjects reported being transgender and only .3% reported as other. Over half of the students who participated were White/Caucasian (58.9%), 16.1% were Black/African American, 9.1% Hispanic/Latino(a), 6.5% were Bi/Multiracial; the Middle Eastern, Native American, and “Other” categories had 10 subjects or less. The majority of the subjects were Freshman at 36.2%, Sophomores, Juniors, and Seniors 18.3%, 23.4% and 15.8% respectively. Fifth year and over students made up 3.8% of the sample and graduate students 2.5%. A total

of 95.4% of the population were U.S. citizens and both non-citizens and international student made up 2.3% of the respondents. The majority of the subjects had between a 2.8-4.0 GPA, students with a 2.8-3.0 GPA made up 19.6% of the sample, 3.0-3.3, 20.4%, 3.4-3.7, 27.4% of the sample, and 3.8-4.0, 18.1%.

Table 4.1

Subject Background Demographics (N=400)

Variable	<i>f</i>	%
Age		
18	94	23.6
19	104	26.1
20	69	17.3
21	55	13.8
22	40	10.0
23	10	2.5
24+	27	6.8
Total	399	100.0
Gender		
Female	205	52.0
Male	180	45.7
Transgender	8	2.0
Other	1	.3
Total	394	100.0
Ethnicity		
Asian/Pacific Islander	18	4.5
Black/African American	64	16.1
Hispanic/ Latino(a)	36	9.1
Middle Eastern	6	1.5
Native American	5	1.3
White/Caucasian	234	58.9
Bi-/Multicultural	26	6.5
Other	8	2.0
Total	397	100.0
Class		
Freshman	144	36.2
Sophomore	73	18.3
Junior	93	23.4
Senior	63	15.8

Table 4.1 (continued)

Variable	<i>f</i>	%
Fifth Year Plus Student	15	3.8
Graduate Student	10	2.5
Total	398	100.0
Citizenship		
Citizen	375	95.4
Non-Citizen	9	2.3
International-Student	9	2.3
Total	393	100.0
Grade Point Average		
1.3- or below	7	1.8
1.7-1.4	5	1.3
2.0-1.8	9	2.3
2.3-2.1	7	1.8
2.7-2.4	28	7.2
3.0-2.8	76	19.6
3.3-3.1	79	20.4
3.7-3.4	106	27.4
4.0-3.8	70	18.1
Total	387	100.0

Table 4.2 presents the involvement demographics of the study respondents. Over half of the students studied, 60.2%, were involved in 1-3 club and/or organizations at Rowan University, 29.7% reported not being involved in clubs and/or organizations and 10.1% reported being involved in 3 or more clubs and/or organizations on campus. In regards to involvement with the Rowan After Hours program, nearly half of the respondents came to RAH 2-4 nights a month, 27.1% came 1 night a month, 17.0% came 5-8 nights a month, and 7.2% came 9-12 nights a month. The majority of participants came to RAH on Thursday night, 48.3%, 36.4% came on Friday, and Saturday 15.3%. The RAH event types that students reported being interested in most were Bingo Nights

(23.9%), Novelty Nights (22.4%), Musical Performances (20.8%), and Co-Sponsored (20.1%) events such as Asian Cultural Festival, Rowan’s Got Talent, and Black History Month Opening Ceremony. Game Show Nights only had a 12.6% interest rate from subjects.

Table 4.2

Subject Involvement Demographics (N=400)

Variable	<i>f</i>	%
Participations in Clubs and or Organizations		
Involved in 1-3	233	60.2
Involved 3 or more	39	10.1
Not involved	115	29.7
Total	387	100.0
Frequency of Attending RAH		
1 night a month	102	27.1
2-4 nights a month	184	48.8
5-8 nights a month	64	17.0
9-12 nights a month	27	7.2
Total	377	100.0
Most Frequented Night of RAH		
Thursday	183	48.3
Friday	138	36.4
Saturday	58	15.3
Total	379	100.0
RAH Event Type that is Most Interesting		
Bingo Nights	93	23.9
Musical Performances	81	20.8
Novelty Nights	87	22.4
Game Show Nights	49	12.6
Co-Sponsored Events	78	20.1
Total	389	100.0

Analysis of the Data

Research Question 1: Do students who attended RAH report having attitudes of mattering in the following areas; general college mattering, mattering versus marginality, mattering to counselors or advisors, mattering to instructors, mattering to students, and perceptions of value?

Data from the first subscale, General College Mattering, are presented in Table 4.3. This subscale measures students' attitudes of mattering to the university as a whole. General College Mattering items deal with concerns of others toward the individual student. Three statements had over 50% of subjects "Moderately" and "Very Much" agreeing: "There are people at the university who are genuinely interested in me as a person," 32.0% moderately agreed and 28.1% very much agreed; "There are people at the university who are concerned about my future," 34.6% moderately agreed and 26.7% very much agreed; "There are people at the university that care about my future," 34.6% moderately agreed and 26.7% very much agreed. Three statements had over 50% of the subjects falling in the "Somewhat," "Slightly," or "Not at All" categories: "There are people on campus who are sad for me when I fail in something I set out to do," 30.2% somewhat agreed, 14.7% slightly agreed, and 10.7% did not agree at all; "I sometimes feel pressured to do better because people at the university would be disappointed if I did not," 28.4% somewhat agreed, 19.4% only slightly agreed, and 17.6% did not agree at all; "Some people on campus are disappointed in me when I do not accomplish all I should," 31.9% somewhat agreed, 22.8% slightly agreed, and 11.4% did not agree at all.

Table 4.3

General College Mattering (N=400)

(1= Not at All, 2= Slightly, 3= Somewhat, 4= Moderately, and 5= Very much)

Statement	Not at all		Slightly		Somewhat		Moderately		Very Much	
	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
There are people at the university who are genuinely interested in me as a person. <i>n=388, M=3.7, SD=1.089</i> Missing=12	11	2.8	47	12.1	97	25.0	124	32.0	109	28.1
There are people at the university who are concerned about my future. <i>n= 390, M=3.69, SD=1.093</i> Missing=10	14	3.6	45	11.5	92	23.6	135	34.6	104	26.7
Other students are happy when I do well in exams or projects. <i>n=393, M= 3.55, SD=1.115</i> Missing=7	21	5.3	44	11.2	112	28.5	128	32.6	88	22.4
People on campus are generally supportive of my individual needs. <i>n=390, M=3.50, SD=1.053</i> Missing=10	17	4.4	46	11.8	121	31.0	136	34.9	70	17.9
People on campus seem happy about my accomplishments. <i>n=392, M=3.38, SD=1.128</i> Missing=8	26	6.6	56	14.3	124	31.6	117	29.8	69	17.6
There are people on campus who are sad for me when I fail in something I set out to do. <i>n=391, M=3.25, SD=1.202</i> Missing=9	42	10.7	56	14.3	118	30.2	112	28.6	63	16.1

Table 4.3 (continued)

Statement	Not at all		Slightly		Somewhat		Moderately		Very Much	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Some people on campus are disappointed in me when I do not accomplish all I should. <i>n</i> =386, <i>M</i> =2.99, <i>SD</i> = 1.160 Missing=14	44	11.4	88	22.8	123	31.9	90	23.3	41	10.6
I sometimes feel pressured to do better because people at the university would be disappointed if I did not. <i>n</i> =391, <i>M</i> =2.96, <i>SD</i> =1.313 Missing=9	69	17.6	76	19.4	111	28.4	73	18.7	62	15.9

Data for the second subscale, *Mattering versus Marginality*, are presented in Table 4.4. *Mattering versus Marginality* measure if students feel a greater sense of *mattering* and belonging to the institution or a greater sense of *marginality* and not belonging, the two are opposites of one another. Scores in this section indicate generally lower levels of *marginality* and higher levels of *mattering*. This section is inversely scored, meaning the statements were negative and thus “Not at All Agreeing” is equivalent to “Very Much” agreeing and so forth. The majority of the statements in this subscale had over half of the participants “Not at All” agreeing or only “Slightly” agreeing with the marginal statements. Only one statement had 50% of the subjects agreeing “Somewhat,” “Moderately,” or “Very Much;” “Sometime I get so wrapped up in my personal problems that I isolate myself from others at the university,” 24% somewhat agreed with this statement, 16.9% moderately agreed, and 14.6% strongly

agreed. The statement that had the most positive response in this section was, “I often feel isolated when involved in student activities (clubs and or organizations),” almost half (42.6%) did not at all agree.

Table 4.4

Mattering Versus Marginality (N=400)

(1= Not at All, 2= Slightly, 3= Somewhat, 4= Moderately, and 5= Very much)

Statement	Not at all		Slightly		Somewhat		Moderately		Very Much	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
I often feel isolated when involved in student activities. <i>n=392, M=2.16, SD=1.244</i> Missing=8	167	42.6	85	21.7	74	18.9	44	11.2	22	5.6
Sometimes I feel that no one at the university notices me. <i>n=392, M=2.32, SD=1.266</i> Missing=8	135	34.4	104	26.5	77	19.6	46	11.7	30	7.7
Sometimes I feel alone at the university. <i>n=390, M=2.37, SD=1.271</i> Missing=10	130	33.3	96	24.6	85	21.8	49	12.6	30	7.7
Sometimes I feel that I am not interesting to anyone at the university. <i>n=392, M=2.38, SD=1.261</i> Missing=8	124	31.6	107	27.3	80	20.4	51	13.0	30	7.7
I often feel socially inadequate at school. <i>n=389, M=2.41, SD= 1.301</i> Missing=11	133	34.2	78	20.1	94	24.2	52	13.4	32	8.2

Table 4.4 (continued)

Statement	Not at all		Slightly		Somewhat		Moderately		Very Much	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Sometimes I get so wrapped up in my personal problems that I isolate myself from others at the university. <i>n</i> =391, <i>M</i> =2.82, <i>SD</i> =1.326										
Missing=9	77	19.7	97	24.8	94	24.0	66	16.9	57	14.6

Data for the Mattering to Counselors or Advisors subscale, are presented in Table 4.5, which measure how students felt about mattering to a counselor or advisor. This subscale has many statements that are open for interpretation due to the varying definitions of “counselor” and “advisor.” Several of the statements in this subscale had mixed/neutral or majority “Somewhat” responses. Two statements had over or almost over 50% respondents indicating “Not at All” and only “Slightly” agreeing; “I believe that my counselors/advisors would miss me if I suddenly stopped attending university,” nearly 40% (37.9%) did not at all agree with that statement, and 17.3% only slightly agreed; “If I stopped attending the university my counselor(s)/advisor(s) would be disappointed,” 22.1% did not at all agree with this statement, and 18.3% only slightly agreed.

Table 4.5

*Mattering to Counselors or Advisors (N=400)**(1= Not at All, 2= Slightly, 3= Somewhat, 4= Moderately, and 5= Very much)*

Statement	Not at all		Slightly		Somewhat		Moderately		Very Much	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
If I had a personal problem, I believe that counselors/advisors would be willing to discuss it with me. <i>n=393, M=3.42, SD= 1.251</i> Missing=7	37	9.4	53	13.5	106	27.0	102	26.0	95	24.2
Counselors/advisors at the university generally show their concern for students' well being. <i>n=388, M=3.35, SD=1.186</i> Missing=12	32	8.2	60	15.5	109	28.1	115	29.6	72	18.6
My counselor(s)/advisor(s) is generally receptive to what I say. <i>n=392, M=3.19, SD=1.216</i> Missing=8	46	11.7	62	15.8	115	29.3	110	28.1	59	15.1
If I stopped attending the university my counselor(s) /advisor(s) would be disappointed. <i>n=393, M=2.91, SD=1.390</i> Missing=7	87	22.1	72	18.3	91	23.2	77	19.6	66	16.8
I believe that my counselors /advisors would miss me if I suddenly stopped attending the university. <i>n=393, M=2.39, SD=1.361</i> Missing=7	149	37.9	68	17.3	89	22.6	47	12.0	40	10.2

Data for the Mattering to Instructors subscale, are presented in Table 4.6, and measures if students feel they matter to their instructors/professors. This section is inversely scored, meaning the statements were negative and thus “Not at All” agreeing is equivalent to “Very Much” agreeing and so forth. All the responses to the statements in this subscale were generally natural. The statement with the highest percentage of “Not at All” agreeing with the negative statement was, “My instructor sometimes ignores my comments or questions,” nearly 50% (48.6%) did not at all agree with that statement. Another statement that had a positive response rating was, “I sometimes feel my instructors want me to hurry up and finish speaking,” 39.4% did not at all agree with that statement and 21.6% only slightly agreed. No statement had even 25% “Very Much” and/or “Moderately” agreeing.

Table 4.6

Mattering to Instructors (N=400)

(1= Not at All, 2= Slightly, 3= Somewhat, 4= Moderately, and 5= Very much)

Statement	Not at all		Slightly		Somewhat		Moderately		Very Much	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
My instructor sometimes ignores my comments or questions. <i>n=395, M=1.92, SD=1.137</i> Missing=5	192	48.6	102	25.8	58	14.5	25	6.3	18	4.5
I sometimes feel my instructors want me to hurry up and finish speaking. <i>n=388, M=2.23, SD=1.253</i> Missing=12	153	39.4	84	21.6	83	21.4	44	11.3	21	6.2

Table 4.6 (continued)

Statement	Not at all		Slightly		Somewhat		Moderately		Very Much	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Sometimes my instructors simply do not listen to what I have to say. <i>n</i> =390, <i>M</i> =2.24, <i>SD</i> =1.192 Missing=10	138	35.4	101	25.9	94	24.1	34	8.7	23	5.9
I often feel my instructors care about things more than me as a student. <i>n</i> =397, <i>M</i> =2.54, <i>SD</i> =1.181 Missing=3	102	25.7	84	21.2	124	31.2	68	17.1	19	4.8

In Mattering to Students subscale, data are presented in Table 4.7, which measure students' attitudes toward mattering to peers at the institution. All of the statements in this subscale had the majority of the respondent responses falling in the "Somewhat" category. The statement with the highest mean score of 3.43 was, "Other students rely on me for support," and the statement with the lowest mean score of 3.06 was, "Some students are dependent on my guidance or assistance to help them succeed."

Table 4.7

Mattering to Students (N=400)

(1= Not at All, 2= Slightly, 3= Somewhat, 4= Moderately, and 5= Very much)

Statement	Not at all		Slightly		Somewhat		Moderately		Very Much	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Other students rely on me for support. <i>n</i> =391, <i>M</i> =3.43, <i>SD</i> =1.074 Missing=9	21	5.3	48	12.3	129	33.0	127	32.5	66	16.9

Table 4.7 (continued)

Statement	Not at all		Slightly		Somewhat		Moderately		Very Much	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
When in groups, other students tend to rely on my contributions. <i>n</i> =398, <i>M</i> =3.19, <i>SD</i> =1.064 Missing=11	28	7.2	63	16.2	149	38.3	106	27.2	43	10.8
Some students are dependent on my guidance or assistance to help them succeed. <i>n</i> =390, <i>M</i> =3.06, <i>SD</i> =1.173 Missing=10	44	11.3	79	20.3	123	31.5	98	25.1	46	11.8

In the Perception of Value subscale, data are presented in Table 4.8, which measure students' sense of mattering to peers at the institution. All three statements in this subscale had over 50% of subjects agreeing, either "Moderately" or "Very Much." The statements with the highest percent of participants very much agreeing (35.9%) was, "Knowing that other people at the university care for me motivates me to do better."

Table 4.8

Perception of Value (N=400)

(1= Not at All, 2= Slightly, 3= Somewhat, 4= Moderately, and 5= Very much)

Statement	Not at all		Slightly		Somewhat		Moderately		Very Much	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Knowing that other people at the university care for me motivates me to do better. <i>n=395, M=3.88, SD=1.112</i> Missing=5	18	4.6	26	6.5	85	21.5	124	31.4	142	35.9
There are people at the university that sincerely appreciate my involvement as a student. <i>n=393, M=3.80, SD=1.013</i> Missing= 7	10	2.5	32	8.1	92	23.4	151	38.4	108	27.5
It is comforting to know that my contributions are valued by my instructors. <i>n=393, M=3.76, SD=1.027</i> Missing=7	14	3.5	24	6.0	109	27.3	141	35.3	105	26.7

Research Question 2: Do RAH subjects report having attitudes that they matter to/at the Rowan After Hours program?

A new subscale was added to the original Tovar, Simon, and Lee (2009) survey instrument that set out to measure the attitudes of students on mattering to the Rowan After Hours program. This subscale included statements based on the mission of the RAH program and other statements based off of the original mattering statements for the

six original subscales. Data from all seven statements in this subscale are presented in Table 4.9.

Every statement within this subscale elicited a mean score of 3.4 or higher. The statement with the highest mean score was, “I feel RAH is a safe environment,” with a mean score of 4.28 and 52.8% very much agreeing. The statement, “I feel RAH is a welcoming environment,” also had a high mean score of 4.13 and a very much agree rating of 43.9%. The statement with the lowest mean score of 3.40 was “I feel RAH caters to my interests” had 22.3% somewhat agree, 27.4% moderately agree, and 32.2% very much agree. The statement with the lowest amount of strongly agree was, “I do not feel isolated at RAH,” with only 18.8% agreeing, 27.8% moderately agreeing, and 33.7% somewhat agreeing.

Table 4.9

Mattering to Rowan After Hours Program (N=400)

(1= Not at All, 2= Slightly, 3= Somewhat, 4= Moderately, and 5= Very much)

Statement	Not at all		Slightly		Somewhat		Moderately		Very Much	
	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
I feel RAH is a safe environment. <i>n=392, M=4.28, SD=.935</i> Missing=8	7	1.8	14	3.5	47	12.0	117	29.8	207	52.8
I feel RAH is a welcoming environment. <i>n=394, M=4.13, SD=.981</i> Missing=6	8	2.0	22	5.6	52	13.2	139	35.3	173	43.9
RAH makes me feel welcome at Rowan University. <i>n=394, M=3.92, SD=1.033</i> Missing=6	10	2.5	28	7.1	82	20.8	136	34.5	138	35.0

Table 4.9 (continued)

Statement	Not at all		Slightly		Somewhat		Moderately		Very Much	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
RAH allows me to feel more involved at Rowan University. <i>n</i> =389, <i>M</i> =3.72, <i>SD</i> =1.182 Missing=11	20	5.1	39	10.0	103	26.5	94	24.2	133	34.2
I do not feel isolated at RAH. <i>n</i> =391, <i>M</i> =3.64, <i>SD</i> =1.277 Missing=9	23	5.9	54	13.9	131	33.7	108	27.8	73	18.8
I feel RAH is a place in which I feel included. <i>n</i> =391, <i>M</i> =3.53, <i>SD</i> =1.125 Missing=9	22	5.6	44	11.3	119	30.4	118	22.5	88	22.5
I feel RAH caters to my interests. <i>n</i> =389, <i>M</i> =3.40, <i>SD</i> =1.118 Missing=11	38	9.7	33	8.4	87	22.3	107	27.4	126	32.2

Research Question 3: How do the mean scores of the six subscales in the study of students attending Rowan After Hours compare to previous research?

Presented in Table 4.10 are the mean scores for this study, the 2012 Rowan University undergraduate mattering study, and the original data, normative sample, from the Tovar, Simon, and Lee (2009) study. Comparatively, the current study produced several higher subscale mean scores than both Rowan University as whole and the normative sample, in other subscales this study had higher levels of negative mean scores than Rowan University and the normative sample. In two of the six subscales this study

had a higher negative mean score, in Mattering versus Marginality, with a mean score of 2.41, which was .11 higher than the normative sample and .26 higher than Rowan University; in the Mattering to Instructors subscale this study had a mean of 2.23, .20 higher than Rowan University and .36 higher than the normative sample; both of these subscales were inversely scored. In the areas of General College Mattering, Mattering to Counselors/Advisors, and Perception of Value, this study had higher positive mean scores. For the General College Mattering subscale this study had a mean of 3.38 and both Rowan University (M=3.32) and the normative sample (M=2.98) were lower. For the Mattering to Counselors/Advisors subscale this study had a mean of 3.05 compared to Rowan University (M=2.90) and the normative sample (M=2.96). In the subscale, Perception of Value, the present study had a mean score of 3.81, Rowan University, 3.79, and the normative sample, 3.70.

Table 4.10

Descriptive Statistics for Six Subscales for Research and Normative Sample (N=400)

	Rowan After Hours (N=400)		Rowan University Undergraduate Study (N=386)		Normative Sample Statement (N=1,755)	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Perception of Value	3.81	1.05	3.79	1.11	3.70	1.14
General College Mattering	3.38	1.14	3.32	1.16	2.98	1.15
Mattering to Students	3.23	1.10	3.33	1.07	2.97	1.13
Mattering to Counselors/Advisors	3.05	1.28	2.90	1.28	2.96	1.28
Mattering to Instructors	2.23	1.19	2.03	1.08	1.87	1.00

Table 4.10

Descriptive Statistics for Six Subscales for Research and Normative Sample (N=400)

	Rowan After Hours (N=400)		Rowan University Undergraduate Study (N=386)		Normative Sample Statement (N=1,755)	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Mattering v. Marginality	2.41	1.28	2.15	1.21	2.30	1.25

Research Question 4: Is there a significant relationship between frequency of attendance to RAH and a feeling of connection to the campus community?

Significant correlations between frequency of attending the Rowan After Hours program and statements that connect to campus are displayed in Table 4.11. A Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated for the relationship between subjects' frequency of attending RAH and statements that connect to campus. A weak positive correlation was found between frequency of attending RAH and the statements, "RAH makes me feel welcome at Rowan University," ($r = 1.39, p = .007$), and "RAH allows me to feel more involved at Rowan University," ($r = .240, p = .000$) at a 0.01 level. At a 0.05 level, a correlation was found between frequency and the statement, "Some people on campus are disappointed in me when I don't accomplish all I should," ($r = .123, p = .019$).

Table 4.11

Significant Correlations between RAH & Connection to Campus

Scale	Statements	<i>r</i> coefficient	<i>p</i> level
Frequency	RAH makes me feel welcome at Rowan University	.139**	.007
Frequency	RAH allows me to feel more involved at Rowan University	.240**	.000
Frequency	Some people on campus are disappointed in me when I don't accomplish all I should	.123*	.019

** : correlation is significant at a level of .01 or less

* : correlation is significant at a level of .05 or less

Chapter V

Summary, Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Summary of the Study

This study was grounded in the Mattering Versus Marginality theory derived from the work of Scholssberg (1989). Her theory claims that the more students feel they matter the less they will feel marginalized. This study aimed to assess students' feelings of mattering as it related to their involvement in a campus activity program. This was facilitated through the use of the mattering scale designed by Tovar, Simon, and Lee (2009). The scale measures students' feelings of mattering in six different subscales including general college mattering, mattering versus marginality, mattering to counselors and advisors, mattering to instructors, mattering to students, and perception of value. The survey was distributed to students in the Rowan After Hours program, one of the sponsored programs at Rowan University. Survey data were analyzed to determine students' sense of mattering as participants of the Rowan After Hours program. The results were then compared to data from previous research on mattering.

Purpose of the Study

This study was intended to assess students participating in an activities program at Rowan University in regards to their sense of mattering in the six subscales of the *College Mattering Inventory (CMI)* (general college mattering, mattering versus marginality, mattering to counselors or advisors, mattering to instructors, mattering to students, and perception of value) and their sense of mattering to the Rowan After Hours program. The attitudes of students' sense of mattering in these seven areas, including

Rowan After Hours, were analyzed and discussed. An analysis of the data were done by determining the mean, standard deviation, frequency, and percentage for all of the subscales. The findings of this study were compared to the results from McGuire (2012) and Tovar, Simon, and Lee (2009). Correlations were calculated relating to connection to campus and frequency of attending RAH.

The results of this study can be used to evaluate the impact Rowan After Hours, has on students' sense of mattering and their connection to campus. Student affairs departments both at Rowan University and within higher education as whole can use the information to determine if programs such as RAH help promote a campus that is connected and where students feel they matter.

Methodology

This study was designed to determine the attitudes of selected students attending RAH to see if they felt a heightened sense of mattering. The Rowan After Hours program was specifically looked at due to its consistent nature and because students pay a fee as a part of their Rowan University tuition for the program. The target number for this study was 624 participants of RAH, this number determined by averages on nightly attendance through the month of February for the previous 2012-2013 academic year. The survey looked at the six subscales of mattering developed by Tovar, Simon and Lee (2009) as well as a seventh subscale added to address mattering to the Rowan After Hours program.

The survey instrument was an adapted version of the CMI (Tovar, Simon & Lee, 2009) with a seventh subscale added. There were 36 statements presented from the seven subscales: general college mattering, mattering versus marginality, mattering to

counselor(s) or advisor(s), mattering to instructors, mattering to students, perception of value, and mattering to the Rowan After Hours program. There were also background questions that were added to gain information on the subjects in relation to their participation in RAH.

An Institutional Review Board (IRB) application was submitted for review prior to the distribution of the survey. The IRB application was approved on December 17, 2013. The survey was then pilot tested with five undergraduate students and one graduate student. After the pilot tests were conducted several adjustments were made in the background questions on the survey. This survey was distributed by hand at 12 RAH events over the course of four weekends, from January 30, 2014 to February 22, 2014. A collection of the surveys were done by the staff of RAH. A total of 400 surveys were collected, providing a 64% response rate.

Data Analysis

The data collected were entered directly into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software by me. Descriptive statistics were used to describe the background of the RAH participants. To answer research question 1 (RQ1), the data for each of the six original mattering subscales were analyzed for frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation. To answer research question 2 (RQ2), the subscale data relating to mattering to the Rowan After Hours program were analyzed for frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation. To answer research question 3 (RQ3), the mean and standard deviation for the six subscales compared to mean and standard deviation data from both the McGuire (2012) study and the Tovar, Simon and Lee (2009)

study. To answer research question 4 (RQ4), Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients were determined to compare frequency of attending RAH with items associated with connections to campus; three items had a correlation to frequency of attending RAH.

Discussion of the Findings

Research Question 1: Do students who attended RAH reported having attitudes of mattering in the following areas; general college mattering, mattering versus marginality, mattering to counselors or advisors, mattering to instructors, mattering to students, and perceptions of value?

An analysis of the six subscales was conducted giving the mean, standard deviation, frequency, and percentage for each of the statements from the subscales. Generally the subjects had a positive attitude towards all six of the subscales, four of the six subscales had particularly positive responses. The subscale with the highest mean score was Perception of Value, with an overall mean score of 3.81 out of 5. All three statements within this subscale produced over a 50% “Moderately” or “Very Much” response from subjects. A large percentage of subjects very much agreed with the statement “Knowing that other people at the university care for me makes me motivated to do better,” with a mean score of 3.88. The strong Perception of Value demonstrated by the subjects indicates that participants in the RAH program do feel generally valued at the university.

The subscale with the second highest mean score was General College Mattering with a mean score of 3.37 out of 5. Half of the statements for this subscale had a mean

score of 3.5 or higher. The statement with the highest score was “There are people at the university who are genuinely interested in me as a person.” This indicates that students feel as though they matter to the university as a whole, and feel connected to others at Rowan.

Mattering to Students was the third highest subscale with a mean score of 3.2 out of 5. All three statements within this subscale had the majority of respondents falling into the “Somewhat” agree category. The statement with the highest mean score was “Other students rely on me for support,” with a mean score of 3.43, indicating that respondents felt they were a support system to students at the university. This response rate indicates that generally students participating in RAH do not have strong attitudes about mattering to other students.

The subscale with the lowest mean score was Mattering Versus Marginality with a mean score of 2.41 out of 5, though this subscale is also inversely scored, the adjusted mean score comparably is 2.59 out of 5. The responses to the statements within this section were varied. The statement that had the most positive responses from subjects was “Sometimes I get so wrapped up in my personal problems that I isolate myself from others at the university,” with a mean score of 2.82 which indicates that students participating in RAH do at times separate themselves from others at the university due to personal issues. The statement with the highest number disagreeing, which is positive for this subscale, is “I often feel isolated when involved in student activities,” with a mean score of 2.16. This indicates that students participating in RAH do not feel uncomfortable or out of place when participating in programs or events facilitated by the campus. Thus,

it can be inferred that events and activities programming conducted by the university are assisting in lowering a sense of marginality among selected students at Rowan University.

Research Question 2: Do RAH subjects report having attitudes that they matter to/at the Rowan After Hours program?

The added subscale measuring the attitudes of RAH participants toward Rowan After Hours had a mean of 3.8 out of 5. In the subscale all statements had over a 3.4 mean score. The two statements with the highest mean score were “I feel RAH is a safe environment” and “I feel RAH is a welcoming environment.”

With this information it can be inferred that the mission of RAH, Rowan After Hours (RAH) provides late-night/weekend opportunities for Rowan University students to become active in campus life by executing diverse, quality programs in a safe and welcoming environment. (About, n.a, para. 1) is being fulfilled. One of the statements falling on the lower end of the spectrum with a mean score of 3.40 was “I feel RAH caters to my interests.” Respondents selected either “Slightly” or “Moderately” agree with that statement which may indicate a need for RAH to re-access the types of programs offered. The statement with the third highest mean score was “RAH makes me feel welcome at Rowan University” with a mean score of 3.92. The majority of subjects indicated “Very Much” to this statement which shows that the Rowan After Hours program is assisting students in feeling more apart of the Rowan University community.

Research Question 3: How do the mean scores of the six subscales in the study of students attending Rowan After Hours compare to previous research?

When comparing the data of the current study to previous research, specifically McGuire's (2012) study on Rowan University Undergraduates using the *CMI* and Tovar, Simon, and Lee's (2009) original *CMI* research, the results were comparable in four of the six subscales. The current study had more positive attitudes than the Rowan University Undergraduate sample and the normative sample in Mattering to Counselors/Advisors (RAH 3.05, normative sample 2.96, and RUU 2.90), General College Mattering (RAH 3.38, RUU 3.32, and normative sample 2.98), and Perception of Value (RAH 3.81, RUU 3.79, and normative sample 3.70) subscales. This subscale's data indicate that those who attend RAH tend to be more involved and/or on better terms with their counselors/advisors. The results of the General College Mattering subscale suggest that both RAH subjects and Rowan University Undergraduate students, continue to feel they matter to the university, more than those surveyed in the normative sample. Students participating in RAH felt cared for at Rowan, they feel valued as a person and appreciated. Compared to the general Rowan University Undergraduate sample RAH's participants felt more valued, which indicates that their interactions with RAH assist them in feeling valued at Rowan.

In the subscale Mattering to Instructors, which inversely scored, the normative study had the lowest mean score ($M= 1.87$, inverse $M= 3.17$), the Rowan University Undergraduate study was second ($M=2.03$, inverse $M= 2.97$), and the current study had the highest mean score ($M=2.23$, inverse $M= 2.77$). All mean scores were generally

average, though it can be inferred that Rowan University's instructors are not having as positive an interaction with students, and these negative interactions have increased over the past two years, and they do not make students feel as though they matter in the classroom. This could be due to the increase in enrollment at Rowan University over the past two years which results in the use of larger number of adjuncts and larger class sizes.

Research Question 4: Is there a significant relationship between frequency of attendance to RAH and a feeling of connection to the campus community?

The data show that there are connections that can be made between how frequently a student attends RAH and their feelings of being connected to the Rowan University campus community specifically, two statements were correlated to frequency of attending RAH but these relationships were weak; "RAH allows me to feel more involved at Rowan University," and "RAH makes me feel welcome at Rowan University." The more a student attends RAH the more likely he/she feels welcome and a part of the Rowan University community; the result is a stronger feeling of involvement as a member of the campus community. Also, a third statement, "Some people on campus are disappointed in me when I don't accomplish all I should," had a low weak positive correlation suggesting that by attending RAH more frequently students felt more connected to others on campus but when they do not accomplish a goal, they felt someone on campus would hold them accountable. Since all correlations had weak coefficients it is reasonable to express caution when interpreting the strength of connections to RAH

Based on the findings from the current study it can be inferred that as Astin's Involvement Theory (1984 & 1993) discusses students who are getting involved in campus programming, such as RAH, have a greater connection to and engagement in the institution. Schlossberg's Mattering Versus Marginality Theory (1989) was influenced by Astin's Theory of Involvement (1984 & 1993), the involvement that students are having with RAH is facilitating a high level of mattering for students. Mattering to RAH had the highest mean score of all seven subscales surveyed, and the students participating in RAH had a mean score of over 3.0 in four of the seven subscales. The study data demonstrate that this involvement on campus has created a closer connection to Counselors/Advisors. In the Mattering to Counselors and Advisors subscale the current study had a mean score of 3.05 while the Rowan University Undergraduate study (McGuire, 2012) had mean score of 2.90. This highlights one of several effects that involvement in the RAH program has had on Rowan University students' sense of mattering. These data show that the students involved with RAH do feel they matter overall as well as specifically in relation to feeling valued, mattering to the institution, mattering to their counselors and advisors, and to the RAH program at Rowan University.

Conclusions

The data collected in this study illustrate that students who attended RAH had positive attitudes toward mattering in four of the six *CMI* subscales. In five of the seven subscales surveyed, total mean scores were over 3.0. In the subscale dealing with RAH After Hours, all of the participants responded with at least slightly, though most responded moderately or very much to the statements about feeling welcomed, involved,

and connected to campus through RAH. The Mattering to RAH subscale was one of the highest subscales out of the seven surveyed. This demonstrates that Rowan After Hours is contributing to students' sense of mattering as members of the Rowan University community. Low positive correlations were found between frequency of attending RAH and connection to campus and feeling welcome at Rowan University. It appears that RAH has allowed students to feel a part of something on campus and with students' involvement in the program activities leads to a greater sense of belonging and feeling of mattering.

Survey data from the general student population completed in 2012 and data from the Rowan After Hours program, demonstrates a higher sense of mattering for students than in the normative study in the following areas; General College Mattering, Mattering to Counselors/ Advisors, Mattering to Student, and Perception of Value. This suggests that Rowan University continues to have a positive impact on students' sense of mattering. Through involvement in student affairs programs, interactions with counselors and advisors, and interaction with other students at Rowan University, students feel they are in an environment in which they are supported, feel valued, and are in the company of others. Consistent with the findings from the 2012 Rowan University Undergraduate study (McGuire), this study shows that Rowan University students' lowest subscale was Mattering Versus Marginality; (RAH, $M= 2.41$ & RUU, $M= 2.15$). This study's results showed a particularly positive attitudes towards feeling marginalized (students are feeling marginalized) at the Rowan After Hours program. The RAH staff must seek to determine

which groups are feeling out-of-place at RAH and then create programming that can help those students feel they matter at RAH.

Perception of Value and General College Mattering were high in this study. Perception of Value had the highest mean score of 3.81 and General College Mattering had a mean score of 3.38. These data suggest that students who attended RAH are feeling more of a connection to others at the university and to the campus community due to their involvement in the Rowan After Hours program. By being involved in RAH, students reported higher feelings that they matter to the institution, spending extra time outside of class with peers and other members of the institution, and gain a greater connection to campus. Students also felt a higher sense of value by being involved in RAH where they reported feeling welcomed to campus.

Recommendations for Practice

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

- 1.) The Rowan After Hours program should look further into the types of populations they are serving in order to determine which groups are feeling marginalized and how to tailor more programs towards them.
- 2.) Rowan University faculty need to make stronger connections with their students and facilitate relationships that will assist students in feeling that they are important to their instructors.

- 3.) Academic advisors as well as counselors within all areas of the campus should spend more one-on-one time with students, in order to insure students feel accountable to them and noticed by them.
- 4.) More attention should be paid to getting students involved in student affairs activities and events due to the assistance provided in connecting students to Rowan University, which assists with retention, graduation rates, and alumni involvement.

Recommendations for Further Research

Based upon the findings and conclusions of the study, the following suggestions are offered:

- 1.) A version of the *College Mattering Survey* needs to be created in which looks specifically at campus initiatives and programs, in order to determine the validity of campus programming throughout student affairs.
- 2.) This study as well as the study of Rowan University undergraduates using the *CMI* should be conducted longitudinally every two to four years in order to continue to gauge where Rowan's students are in regards to their perceptions of mattering.
- 3.) Other programs and initiatives on campus should utilize the *CMI* and its results in order to assess, evaluate, and better their programs.
- 4.) Rowan University needs to determine the reasoning for the decline in students' attitudes of mattering towards instructors over the last two years.

5.) Conducting a quantitative mattering study on programs such as Rowan After Hours would allow the staff and institution to better understand students' attitudes on mattering at the university.

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Appendix A
Survey Instrument

College Mattering Inventory; Survey of Students' Sense of Mattering at Rowan After Hours

This is an optional and confidential survey, I will not be asking for your name or ID number. If you choose to participate, your time is greatly appreciated. Please do not complete this survey if you are not a Rowan University student and/or you are not over the age of 18, thank you. This Survey will take approximately 10 minutes to complete. Please consider each question carefully and provide thoughtful and honest responses to the best of your ability. Thank you for your participation. If you have any questions or want a copy or summary of the study results please feel free to contact the researcher or advisor using the following information listed below:

Researcher:
Sarah Olsen
Higher Education Administration
Masters Candidate, Rowan University
Olsens@rowan.edu
856-383-9015

Advisor:
Burton Sisco
Professor
Educational Services, Administration
and Higher Education
Sisco@rowan.edu
856-256-4500x 3717

Please answer the questions below by selecting the appropriate responses and filling in information when needed.

- 1.) Age:
 - 17
 - 18
 - 19
 - 20
 - 21
 - 22
 - 23
 - 24+
- 2.) Gender:
 - Female
 - Male
 - Transgender
 - Other
- 3.) Ethnic Background:
 - Asian/Pacific Islander
 - Black/African American
 - Hispanic/Latino(a)
 - Middle Easter
 - Native American/Alaskan Native
 - White/Caucasian
- 5.) I am currently
 - A Citizen of the United States
 - A Non-Citizen
 - A International Student
- 6.) My current GPA:
 - 4.0-3.8 (A)
 - 3.7-3.4 (A-)
 - 3.3-3.1 (B+)
 - 3.0-2.8 (B)
 - 2.4-2.5 (B-)
 - 2.3-2.1 (C+)
 - 2.0-1.8 (C)
 - 1.7-1.4 (C-)
 - 1.3- or below (D+ to F)
- 7.) Are you involved in extracurricular clubs, or organizations at Rowan University?
 - Yes
If Yes how many ____
 - No

- Multiracial
 Other
- 4.) My current class status is:
- Freshman
 - Sophomore
 - Junior
 - Senior
 - Fifth Year students and over
 - Graduate Level
- 8.) How frequently do you attend RAH in a month?
- 1 Night a Month
 - 2-4 Nights a Month
 - 5-8 Nights a Month
 - 9-12 Nights a Month
- 9.) On what night do you typically frequent RAH? (select the night you most frequent RAH)
- Thursday
 - Friday
 - Saturday
- 1.) What are the types of RAH performances that most interest you? (Please rank from 1-3, 1 being least & 3 being most)
- Bingo Nights
 - Novelty Nights
 - Co-Sponsored events such as, Asian Cultural Festival,
 - Musical Performances
 - Game Show Nights
 - Rowan's Got Talent, GSA Drag show and such

College Mattering Inventory
Tovar, Simon & Lee (2009)

CMI Survey Instrument was removed at the request of Dr. Merrill Simon, please contact the author (merril.simon@csun.edu) for more information or to reference or receive a copy of the instrument.

Appendix B
***CMI* Survey Instrument**

CMI Survey Instrument was removed at the request of Dr. Merrill Simon, please contact the author (merril.simon@csun.edu) for more information or to reference or receive a copy of the instrument.

CMI Survey Instrument was removed at the request of Dr. Merrill Simon, please contact the author (merril.simon@csun.edu) for more information or to reference or receive a copy of the instrument.

Appendix C

Letter of Permission from Dr. Tovar

RE: Permission to use CMI instrument
TOVAR_ESAU [TOVAR_ESAU@smc.edu]

Dear Sarah. Thank you for your interest in the CMI. You have my permission to utilize it in your research. I only request that you cite the 2009 article you note below. Thanks.

Esau

~~~~~  
Esau Tovar, Ph.D.  
Professor, Counseling & Assessment Center Faculty Leader  
Counselor, Student Judicial Affairs  
Santa Monica College  
1900 Pico Blvd.  
Santa Monica, CA 90405  
Office: 310-434-4012 Fax: 310-434-8019  
tovar\_esau@smc.edu [http://homepage.smc.edu/tovar\\_esau](http://homepage.smc.edu/tovar_esau)

**From:** Olsen, Sarah Marie [mailto:olsens@rowan.edu]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 20, 2013 6:37 AM  
**To:** TOVAR\_ESAU  
**Subject:** Permission to use CMI instrument

Hello Dr. Tovar,

I am reaching out to you from Rowan University in Glassboro New Jersey, where I am a graduate student in the Higher Education and Administration MA program. I was hoping to get your permission to use the *CMI* instrument you developed in "Development and Validation of the College Mattering Inventory With Diverse Urban College Students". The *CMI* would be a helpful tool for me to use in my thesis "Student Affairs Programs at Rowan University; Effects on Students' Sense of Mattering". If you could please, at your convenience, inform me if you will allow me to use your survey instrument I would greatly appreciate it.

All the best,  
Sarah Olsen, Graduate Coordinator  
Rowan University, Office of Student Activities  
Tel: 856-256-4388  
Fax: 856-256-5635

## **Appendix D**

### **Letter of Permission from Rhiannon Napoli**

**Re: Permission to Survey RAH attendees**

[Napoli, Rhiannon](#)

**Sent:**

Tuesday, November 19, 2013 8:49 AM

**To:**

[Olsen, Sarah Marie](#)

Hello Sarah,

This would be fine as long as we are able to receive a copy of the results. I look forward to working with you.

Best,

Rhiannon

--

Rhiannon (Rio) Napoli

Assistant Director, Programming and Special Events-Rowan After Hours

Rowan University | 201 Mullica Hill Rd., Chamberlin Student Center-

Room 218 | Glassboro, NJ 08028-1701

T: 856-256-4879 | F: 856-256-5649

| [www.rowan.edu/afterhours](http://www.rowan.edu/afterhours)

"If you can dream it, you can do it." - Walt Disney

On 11/18/13 9:39 PM, "Olsen, Sarah Marie"

<olsens@rowan.edu> wrote:

>Hello Ms. Napoli,

> I am writing to you as a Rowan University graduate student from

the Higher Education and Administrations program. I would like to

conduct a mattering survey at Rowan After Hours to study attendees

of RAH's feeling of mattering to Rowan University and the program.

I was looking to conduct my study starting the Thursday night of RAH

on January 30, 2014 through February 15, 2014, including all nights

of RAH in between. Please let me know if this is something you would

allow at your program. I look forward to hearing from you.

> Thank you,

> Sarah M. Olsen

**Appendix E**

**Institutional Review Board Approval Letter**



December 17, 2013

Sarah Olsen  
76 Hanger Road  
Hammonton, NJ 08037

Dear Sarah Olsen:

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 exempted your project, category 2 through its expedited review process.

IRB application number: 2014-115

Project Title: Student Affairs Programs at Rowan University and their Impact on Students' Sense of Mattering

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.

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](mailto:hartman@rowan.edu) or call 856-256-4500, ext. 3787) or contact Dr. Shreekanth Mandayam, Associate Provost for Research ([shreek@rowan.edu](mailto:shreek@rowan.edu) or call 856-256-5150).

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

Sincerely,

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

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

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

Office of Research  
Bole Hall  
201 Mullica Hill Road  
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