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Organizational Alienation and Minority Students

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ORGANIZATIONAL ALIENATION AND MINORITY STUDENTS

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McAnulty College and Graduate School of Liberal Arts

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In partial fulfillment of the requirements for

the degree of Master of Arts

By

Danielle Beth Kilchenstein

August 2008

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ABSTRACT

ORGANIZATIONAL ALIENATION AND MINORITY STUDENTS

By

Danielle Beth Kilchenstein

August 2008

Thesis Supervised by Matthew Schneirov Ph.D., and Patricia Dunham Ph.D.

This study investigated levels of alienation between minority and non minority college students. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected through a survey instrument and interviews in two different academic contexts, a public state university and a private, Catholic university in Pennsylvania.

A total of 255 surveys and two interviews from each institution indicated that minority students belonging to the private university experienced higher levels of alienation compared to non minority students. However, the minority students from the public university did not report high levels of alienation. The powerlessness component of alienation is the most salient in this study, along with the independent variables race, school location, year in school, activity participation, and student status. Overall, 30% minority students sampled experienced alienation. The consequences of alienation are measurable.

DEDICATION

For my angel, Jaya Kilchenstein

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A special thank you for the intellectual guidance and stimulation provided by Dr. Charles Babbitt of Edinboro University of Pennsylvania is essential. His modified survey inspired my interest in alienation and is the basis of my research. Additionally, I am grateful for the continued help and support from Dr. Frank Taylor and Dr. Ivan Chompolov, my mentors and friends, both of Edinboro University of Pennsylvania. Undoubtedly, I have benefited from their invaluable knowledge and expertise. Furthermore, I would like to thank my readers, Dr. Matthew Schneirov and Dr. Patricia Dunham of Duquesne University. Their guidance and willingness to provide continued encouragement and administrative support has aided in the success and completion of this research.

Importantly I would like to thank my family, to whom this study is dedicated. I am filled with love and gratitude for a lifetime of constructive affection, encouragement and companionship. Specifically, I thank my parents Cathie and Jim Kilchenstein, and the love of my life Victor Pancerev and our daughter, Jaya. Additionally, my late brothers' spirit is a continual guide. Thank you Jay, I love you! Finally, I would like to thank Chris Fitzmartin of Rand Organization for his valued input. Thank you all!

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I. Introduction

For many people, the prospect of graduating from college is an ideal achieved status. It is well-known that the level of an individual's education is associated with their level of income and ultimately their social class. In fact, groups of people who consider themselves controlled by others view education as their primary means to overcome their disadvantages and to control their own lives (McBride-Stetson 2004). The last few decades have seen an increase of students, particularly minority students, enrolled in American colleges and universities. Even though these students have entered academic institutions of higher education with great expectations, many suffer from experiences of alienation that can affect their overall performance. Many writings suggest (Babbitt, Charles, Harold Burbach, and Myron Thompson 1975; Kerry 2006; Sidorkin 2006) that minority students especially, *both* experience alienation from their academic institutions *and* drop out in larger numbers as compared to white students. Feeling that the university setting is unconnected to students' needs and interests, while possibly suffering from other social, personal, and academic problems, can greatly affect a student's academic performance (Babbitt et. al.1975). Alienation is a barrier in the path of academic achievement. In this study, academic organizational alienation is examined through interviews and a survey that compares minority and non minority college students.

It is of great concern that students experience alienation from the various structures that make up the institutions of higher education. It is essential to question the factors related to this detriment. Our society's promise of the equality of opportunity for upward mobility demands that more people become educated at higher levels. Assuming

that educational trends will continue, Babbitt et. al. (1975) notes that we are facing a situation where the years of schooling will increase, the number of students attending school will grow, and the expectation of graduates' competency will rise. University rates of graduation, transfers and withdrawals may be important indicators of alienation within a college or university. The problem of organizational alienation in education will continue to grow and become a severe detriment or obstacle facing students, unless colleges and universities enact policies and procedures that will reduce students' experiences of alienation, and further aid in the retention and successful completion of a college education.

This investigation compared levels of organizational alienation among minority students in two different university settings. One university is a public, state university, and the other is a private, Catholic university. This study specifically questioned whether or not students experience alienation from their college or university, and measured whether alienation is more prevalent among minority students. Additional questions arise concerning alienation's potential effects, as evidenced by withdraw rates, transfer rates, GPA differences, and other educational outcomes. What potential courses of action are important and appropriate for universities to consider when addressing the problem of alienation and its consequences within their academic organization?

II. Literature Review

Evidence that organizational alienation is a problem in academia can be found in numerous studies and writings, especially regarding minority students. For example, Babbitt et. al. (1975) argues that minority students do experience alienation from their college or university, and that their expectations and hopes have turned to disillusionment. Research suggests (Peterson 1973) that minority students suffer from a variety of social and academic problems, find their university experience to be unrelated to their needs and interests (Harper 1969), and leave in greater numbers than non-minority students (Burbach & Thompson 1973). Furthermore, Peterson (1973) studied the development and achievement of equal opportunity program students and found that a portion of disadvantaged students (23% of the sample) had severe difficulty in adjusting to the college environment. The study concluded that self concept and self acceptance variables are predictive of college performance. Taken together, these and other studies have led observers to conclude that minority students experience alienation from the organizational structures in institutions of higher education.

Many other studies have significance for the concept of alienation in relation to minority students in college as well. Spiegel & Keith Spiegel (1971) sought to find combinations of variables that might predict grade point averages in male and female first year college students. The researchers argued that SAT scores and other commonly used performance estimators are not accurate indicators of success, particularly for minority students. Good, Good, and Golden (1973) measured alienation from a motivational standpoint. These researchers constructed a measure of a students' motive to avoid powerlessness. The research was able to identify student experiences of alienation

through a true-false self report. Additionally, Aiken & Hage (1956) studied

organizational alienation in the context of welfare agencies. Their findings suggest that

highly centralized and formalized organizational structures are characterized by greater

experiences of alienation that affect internal and external variables. Alienation was found

to shape the organization.

Additional research identifies alienation in higher education but places focus on

individual responsibility instead of the institution, and suggests that alienation is a

learning task for students to overcome (Brookfield 2002). Other studies, however,

indicate that education itself creates alienation (Sidorkin 2006), and that alienation can

even be associated with mental illness later in life (Kerry 2006). Carnegie Mellon

University's Heinz School of Public Policy and Management released a study (Brosnahan

2001) that recognized alienation and attempted to identify causes of racial achievement

gaps. The research suggests that teachers and principals can have a significant positive

influence on every student.

Attempting to point out variables of interest for future research is essential.

Although meaningful and helpful information exists regarding alienation, there are still

unanswered questions relating this concept to students of higher education. This study

examines potential variables related to organizational alienation among minority students,

and attempts to point out potential feasible solutions in response to this obstacle in

education.

The constructs of alienation have evolved over the past one hundred and sixty

years. However, social scientists have attempted to understand the concept more

specifically since the 1950's. In educational literature during this time, the models of

alienation used most often have been by Seeman (1959) and Dean (1961). Seeman's

work (1959) has led him to conclude that "The meaning of alienation is the degree of

dependence of the given behavior upon future anticipated rewards" (pg 790). Seeman

(1959) drew from the works of Marx and others (including Weber, Durkheim, and

Merton), in order to study alienation empirically. Seeman (1959) identified three

meanings of alienation; "powerlessness, meaninglessness, and social isolation" based on

reward value, behavior, and expectancy elements in the study. Seeman's work

contributed to a more useful understanding of the meanings and concept of alienation by

questioning the social conditions that create it, and both its behavioral consequences and

its social outcomes. Distinguishing definitions of the components of alienation aided in

the future empirical analysis of this concept.

Although attempts have been made to understand some aspects of alienation in

the university context, there are still many unanswered questions, specifically if

alienation is associated with university related variables. The problem of alienation is a

persuasive theme in the social sciences. Burbach and Thompson (1973) believe that

students increasingly experience feelings of alienation within the context of the whole

society, and with respect to a variety of mediating social contexts, for example, the

university. Social theorists (Dean 1961; Burbach & Thompson 1971; Etzioni 1968; and

others) suggest that the root cause for experiences of alienation can be traced to social

structures that serve to manipulate, objectify, and diminish the individual; thereby

creating conditions for his/her alienation from him/her and others. Minority groups in

colleges may be at an even higher risk for experiences of alienation.

In this examination, a minority group is defined as a group that is dominated by another group and lacks economic, political, and cultural power to improve their situation within their organization (Taylor, Frank, Ivan Chompolov, and Lawrence Mencotti 2006). This definition includes objective and subjective criteria: membership of a minority group is objectively ascribed by the organization, based on individuals' physical or behavioral characteristics, and is subjectively applied by its members who may use their status as the basis of group identity or solidarity.

For many years there has been little empirical data on the phenomenon of organizational alienation among students in higher education. This was due, in part, to the fact that alienation was defined as a free-floating human condition unrelated to a specific context (Aiken & Hage 1966). Researchers have assessed experiences of alienation in relation to the whole society, but not within any specified organizational context of education (Babbitt et. al.1975). The development of a contextual measure of alienation (Burbach 1972) has made it possible to study alienation within the organizational settings of colleges and universities. Furthermore, alienation can be studied in the context of any organization, including school, the workplace, etc. The University Alienation Scale (UAS) was designed by Burbach (1972) to measure an individuals' alienation through their experiences of powerlessness, meaninglessness, and social isolation. Furthermore, Babbitt (1975) changed the context of Burbach's alienation scale (1972) to better assess organizational alienation in colleges and universities today. Babbitt's findings (1975) suggest that there are differences in student's perceptions of the alienating effects of institutional structures in higher education, and further raises the question of what other factors contribute to these differences.

The University Alienation Scale (UAS) was designed to assess experiences of alienation within the context of organizations of higher education (Burbach 1972). Babbitt's revised UAS is the primary measure of alienation in this investigation. Burbach (1972) and Babbitt et. al. (1975) recognized the need to study alienation within a specific organizational context, instead of in relation to the whole society as it has been previously examined. The UAS has permitted the interpretation of alienation as a general concept that is comprised of three separate factors (i.e. powerlessness, meaninglessness, social isolation) that contribute to the measurement of alienation.

Significantly, the argument that academic organizations make it difficult for participants to understand, control, and relate meaningfully to each other, raises the question of whether or not there is a problem of students experiencing alienation in their universities, and what possible solutions exist. Of interest is the association between alienation and college students, and the damaging consequences it creates. There are two types of measured alienation: 1. emotion or feeling based, and 2. the subjective rational estimate of the individual's situation, e.g. powerlessness. In this investigation, alienation is measured subjectively and is defined as feelings of powerlessness, meaninglessness, and social isolation. Powerlessness is defined as experiences of being used and manipulated by others for purposes other than one's own. Meaninglessness is defined as the inability to understand the social system of which the student is part (Babbitt et. al. 1975). Finally, social isolation is defined as experiences of rejection, desertion, and loneliness.

As noted, there are significant studies regarding the concept of academic organizational alienation. However, there are certain gaps in the literature that this study

attempts to address. For example, the question of what specific university related

variables are associated with alienation is essential. Additionally, asking what factors

contribute to the difference of student perception of alienation in college is also

significant. This investigation specifically focused on whether or not experiences of

organizational alienation are more prevalent among minority students compared to their

white counterparts in two different academic institutions of higher education.

Furthermore, this study investigated specific independent variables associated with

alienation, and goes on to suggest potential solutions to this problem.

III. Methodology

A. Instrument and Analysis

The University Alienation Scale (UAS) is designed to assess experiences of

alienation within the context of the university (Burbach 1972). Babbitt et. al. (1972)

further revised the UAS and is the quantitative measurement in this study indicating

students' experiences of alienation. The response set for the scale items consists of a five

choice, Likert type continuum on which the respondent is asked to indicate his or her

agreement or disagreement with each statement. Each item is scored one to five, with

one being assigned to the least alienated response and five the most alienated response.

Five questions were reverse scored to prevent a response set, and there are eight

questions regarding each component of alienation, i.e. powerlessness, meaninglessness,

and social isolation for a total of twenty four items. For example, the statement "The

faculty has too much control over the lives of students at this university" measures the

powerlessness component of alienation. The total alienation score for each individual is obtained by summing the items, and ranges from a low 24 to a high 120.

Evidence for the scales' reliability and validity for a college age sample can be found in Burbach's (1972) methodological article detailing the development of the UAS. The split-half technique was used to provide a measure of reliability, while construct and criterion-related validity was examined in which it was concluded that each scale item measured the same alienation property (Burbach 1972). Also presented in this report is a factor analytic study of the scale's empirical structure, in which support was found for both uni- and multi-dimensional interpretations of the scale data (Babbitt et. al. 1975). This finding suggests the plausibility of interpreting alienation as a general concept comprised of three separate factors which contribute to the measurement of the subjective experience of alienation. However, as there is room for different interpretations of the concept, this study analyzed the scale data to determine that the most appropriate model for the sample is a one-dimensional interpretation. Thus, this analysis treated alienation as a general concept, excluding factors not related to academics, e.g. family and work alienation.

The analysis is aimed at determining whether there are differences in levels of alienation among minority and non minority students in two different educational settings selected for examination. Specifically, it is hypothesized that minority students experience more alienation from their academic institution compared to their white counterparts. For this research, a minority student is defined as any student belonging to a group that is dominated by another group, and lacks political, cultural and economic power to improve their situation within their organization. Scores were obtained for the

total sample, and a corresponding mean and standard deviation were computed for each sub-sample of the large state and private university.

The qualitative aspect of this analysis consists of interviews with two minority students from each university. The researcher conducted each face to face interview. Each interviewee was matched with their survey by a number (one or two) to further ensure the survey's validity. The students were randomly selected from a sample of volunteers for the interview, as indicated on the student survey. Each student signed their consent to participate in this research study and answered two questions, regarding their overall experiences so far at their university, and whether or not they liked the university to which they belonged. Students were offered the opportunity to discuss any other significant experience or information that they wanted to share for purposes of this research.

B. Subjects and Data Collection

Two universities in Pennsylvania were sampled and are located in a metropolitan area in which one sits in the Northwestern region and the other sits in the Southwestern region of the state. Each University is a large, predominately white institution, and provided the researcher with access to each academic community. The university located in the Northwest region is a state school and the university located in the Southwest region is a private, Catholic school. Each university has excellent academic reputations. According to each university's website, the total 2006 enrollment of the state university is approximately 7,579 students, and the private university in 2006 carried 10,184 students. Both universities offer a variety of Bachelor, and Master programs, with the private

university also offering Doctoral programs and a law school. Comparing alienation scores of minority students between a public state university, and a private, Catholic university is the methodological logic behind choosing these institutions.

One or two large classes were selected by two separate professors at each institution for voluntary completion of the UAS survey. In an effort to maximize the return rate, professors from the respective universities personally administered the research instrument to each subject in class while guaranteeing them their anonymity. Data was gathered in the spring of 2007 after each student had finished at least one full semester of contact with their academic institution. Specifically in the private university, a *learning community* class was sampled in which the same cohort of students traveled together through their program. This is significant because these students take the same classes together, live in the same living/learning center together, and participate in some extracurricular activities together. The number of instruments completed by the private university was 71 (30% minority) and the public university completed 184 (11% minority), for a total of 255 completed survey instruments. Table 1 reports the characteristics of students who completed the survey instruments. Due to the limited number of surveys completed, and the method of sampling, this is not a true representative sample. There was not any practical way either logistically or financially to introduce randomization into this project. However, 73% of **all** students sampled (30% being minority students) reported experiences of alienation in their institution of higher education.

Table 1   Percentage of Completed Student Surveys by Characteristic

School Location	State University = 72%	Private University = 28%			
Race	Minority Student = 16%	Non Minority Student = 84%			
Age	17-21 = 80%	22-26 = 14%	27-31 = 2%	32-42 = 2%	45-53 = 2%
Sex	Male = 61%	Female = 38%			
Religion	Christian = 73%	Judaism = 2%	Hindu/Buddhist = 1%	Agnostic = 6% Atheist = 16%	Other = 2%
Student Status	Part Time = 7%	Full Time = 93%			
Living Arrangements	On Campus = 56%	Off Campus = 44%			
Activity Participation	Yes = 55%	No = 45%			

The last question on the survey instrument asks if the individual is interested in participating in a voluntary interview. Two interested African American students were contacted, signed a consent form and participated in the interview, which were also conducted during the spring of the 2007 academic year. The volunteers were informed that the research was designed to study their university's overall characteristics. Each interview lasted approximately thirty minutes in which the volunteers were asked to describe their overall experiences at their university, and whether or not they enjoyed their time so far at their university. The interview participants were matched with their survey by the number one or two at each institution in order to substantiate the validity of the UAS research instrument.

IV. Data Analysis and Findings

A. Quantitative

There are a total of 33 questions on the survey instrument. Questions one to 24 are related to the measurement of alienation. All of the questions were coded into SPSS according to what was being asked, a score was recoded[*], and the data analyzed through cross tabulations and bar graphs. Questions 25 to 33 are possible independent variables in this study, and include: *sex, age, school location, religious affiliation, race, student status, year in school, living arrangements, and activity participation*. The last question asked if the students were willing to participate in an interview, in which two students from each university were sampled. Most importantly, the students' total alienation score was computed, in which a score between 24 and 69 is defined as the committed zone, scores between 70 and 100 is defined as the alienated zone, and scores between 101 and 120 is defined as the extreme alienation zone.

In this analysis, the dependent variable *alienation score* is an ordinal level variable, and the possible independent variables are either nominal or ordinal level variables (except age which is ratio). Therefore, this study's analysis includes measures of central tendency, and measures of variability with the focus on cross-tabulations and bar charts. Table 2 reports the group means and standard deviations on organizational alienation and minority students. An examination of this table shows that minority students from the state university experience *less* alienation from their educational setting than the minority students from the private university.

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[*] Please refer to Appendix II for a complete list of coded variables.

Table 2

Mean, Standard Deviation and Median for Minority Students on Organizational

Alienation _____

Minority Student Alienation Score

Environment	N	Mean	SD	Median
State University	20	61	12	61
Private University	21	70	17	63
Combined	41	66	15	63

Although there are not any definitive guidelines to mark levels of alienation on

the basis of raw scores on the UAS, it is instructive to note that the average (mean) score

from the private university is **70**, the hypothetical midpoint of the scale in what is defined

as the alienating zone. The mean produced by the students from the state university is

slightly lower (**61**) and belongs in the committed zone. Thus, not only do these groups

differ on organizational alienation in a relative or comparative sense, their means are

representative of theoretically different areas along a hypothetical alienation continuum,

one pointing towards the committed end and the other pointing toward the alienating end.

Table 3

Mean, Standard Deviation and Median for White Students on Organizational

Alienation_____

<u>White Student Alienation Score</u>

Environment	N	Mean	SD	Median
State University	164	64	13	63
Private University	50	60	12	59
Combined	214	63	13	62

Table 3 reports the mean, median and standard deviation for white students at

each university. This data indicates that white students on average report alienation

scores in the committed zone for each institution. The average scores of white students

are very close together, indicating that white students experience less alienation on

average compared to the minority students at each university.

Furthermore, data analysis between race and the mean alienation score was

examined. Figure 1 reports the mean alienation score of minority students and white

students sampled at each university. An examination of this figure shows that minority

students from the state university (11% of sample) on average experience *less* alienation

compared to white students. The private university on the other hand, shows that minority students (30% of sample) experience *more* alienation on average compared to their white counterparts. Minority students attending the private university have an average alienation score of **70**. Although minority students attending the state university have a lower score compared to white students, both groups are below the alienated zone and belong in the committed zone. This research suggests that minority students belonging to this private university are on average more likely to experience alienation than minority students attending this state university. This is significant especially considering that a portion of the student's sampled from the private university belonged to the *learning community* class, where alienation would be expected to be lower. However, the anomalous finding that white students experience more alienation than minority students in the state university may be attributed to the minority students belonging to a smaller school overall, or that a subculture was created due to a larger number of minority students belonging to the institution.

The fact that these findings show that minority students can differ in their perceptions of the alienating effects of various institutional structures in higher education, exemplifies the primary concern of this investigation. This, of course, raises the question of what factors might be contributing to these differences. Several possible independent variables were investigated, including the students' age, sex, whether or not a student is part time or full time, the students' year in school, if a student lives on or off campus, whether or not the student participates in a university related activity or organization, and which religion the student belongs to and identifies with, if any.

Figure 1

Mean Alienation Score, Race, and School Location
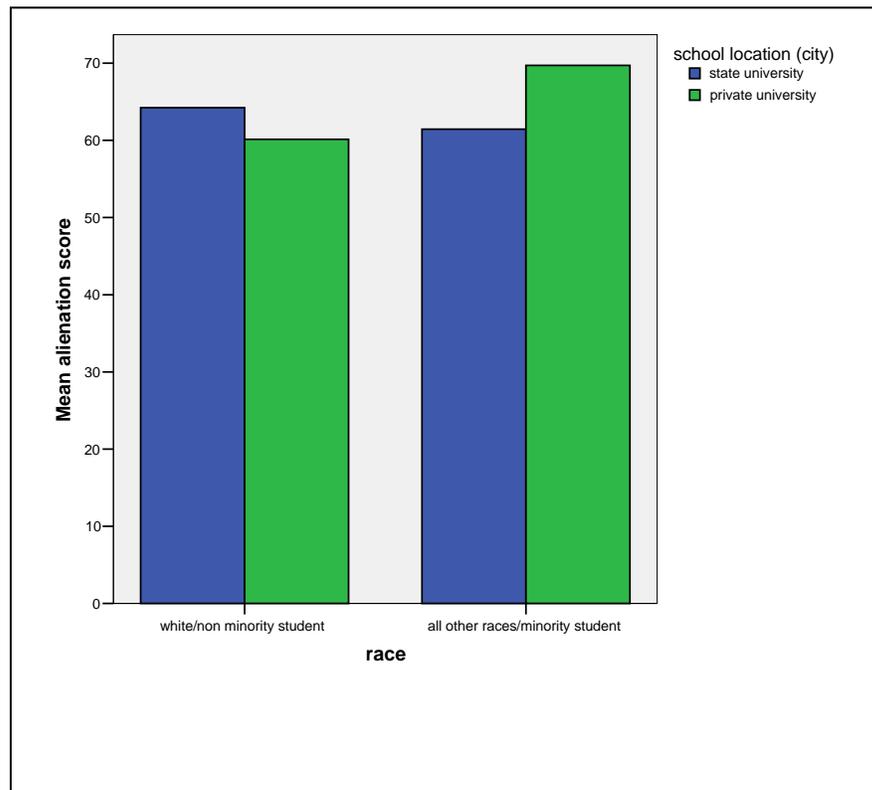

Age is a possible independent variable that was investigated in this research. Figure 2 indicates that older students experience higher levels of alienation compared to younger, more traditional students.   This is especially evident in the private university, where alienation scores are highest among students over the age of 26 years old and belong in the alienated zone of the continuum.

Figure 2

Alienation and Age
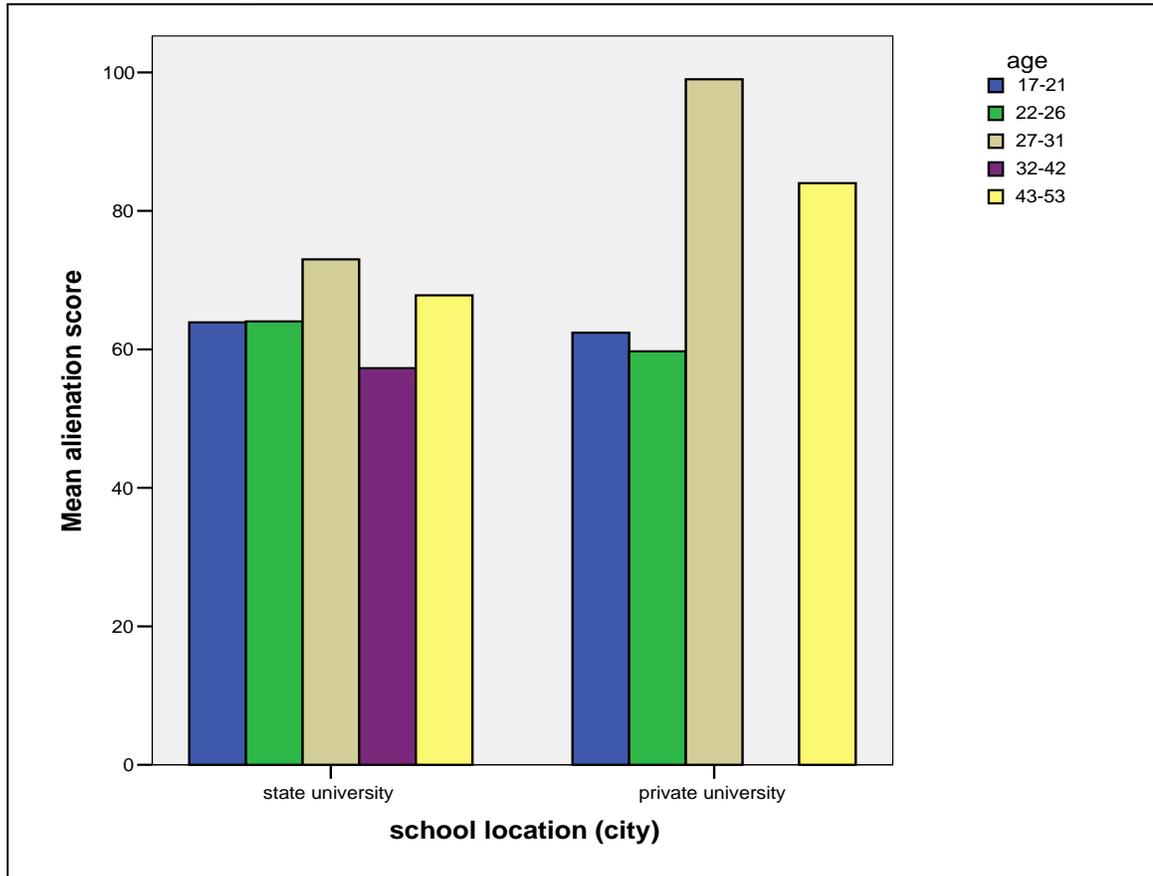
Age may be a significant independent variable in the study of alienation. However, the small sample of older adult students (6%) in this study indicates that further research is needed to determine if this variable is indeed a significant factor contributing to the different student perceptions of alienation. Older adult students are entering academic institutions in greater numbers due to the demand for continuing education and the necessity for dual earning families today. It is unfortunate to note that they may be more likely to experience alienation compared to younger students on campus.

The examination of alienation and sex are displayed in figure 3. Even though overall white students experience more alienation than minority students in the state university, when examining sex the results indicate that male and female minority students on average experience more alienation compared to male and female white students in both universities. Also significantly, male students experience more alienation than female students in both universities overall. The female students (38% of sample) have an alienation score around **60.** This is considered in the committed zone. Male students (61% of sample) have an alienation score closer to **70**, the point considered alienated. However, they are still considered to be in the committed zone although their scores are higher than female students.

Figure 3

Alienation, Race, and Sex
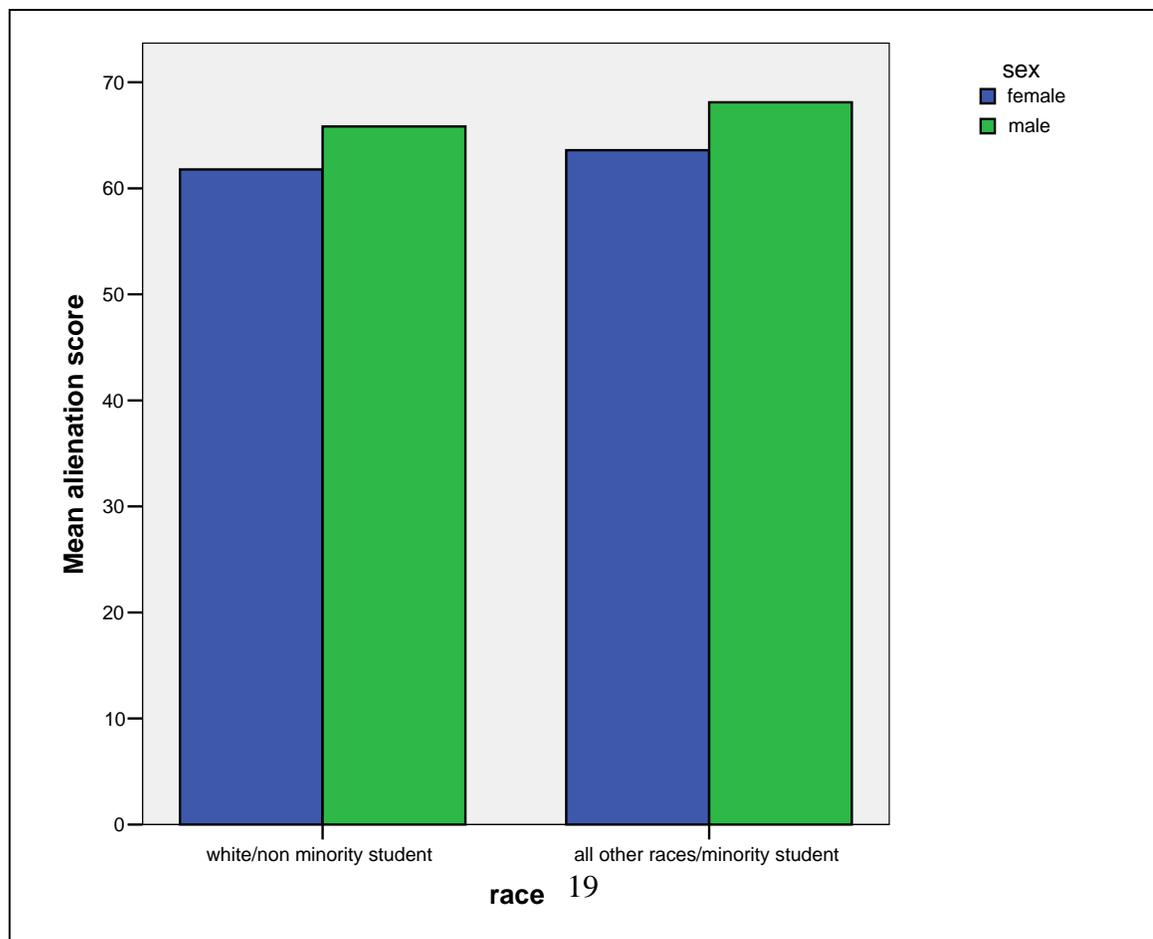
Furthermore, when examining the results of alienation and whether or not a student is part time or full time, the data indicates that part time students (7% of sample) experience more alienation on average compared to full time students (93% of sample). As Figure 4 shows, part time white students experience more alienation compared to full time white students. However, both groups belong in the committed zone. For minority students however, part time students are significantly more alienated on average compared to full time students.

Figure 4

Alienation, Race, and Student Status
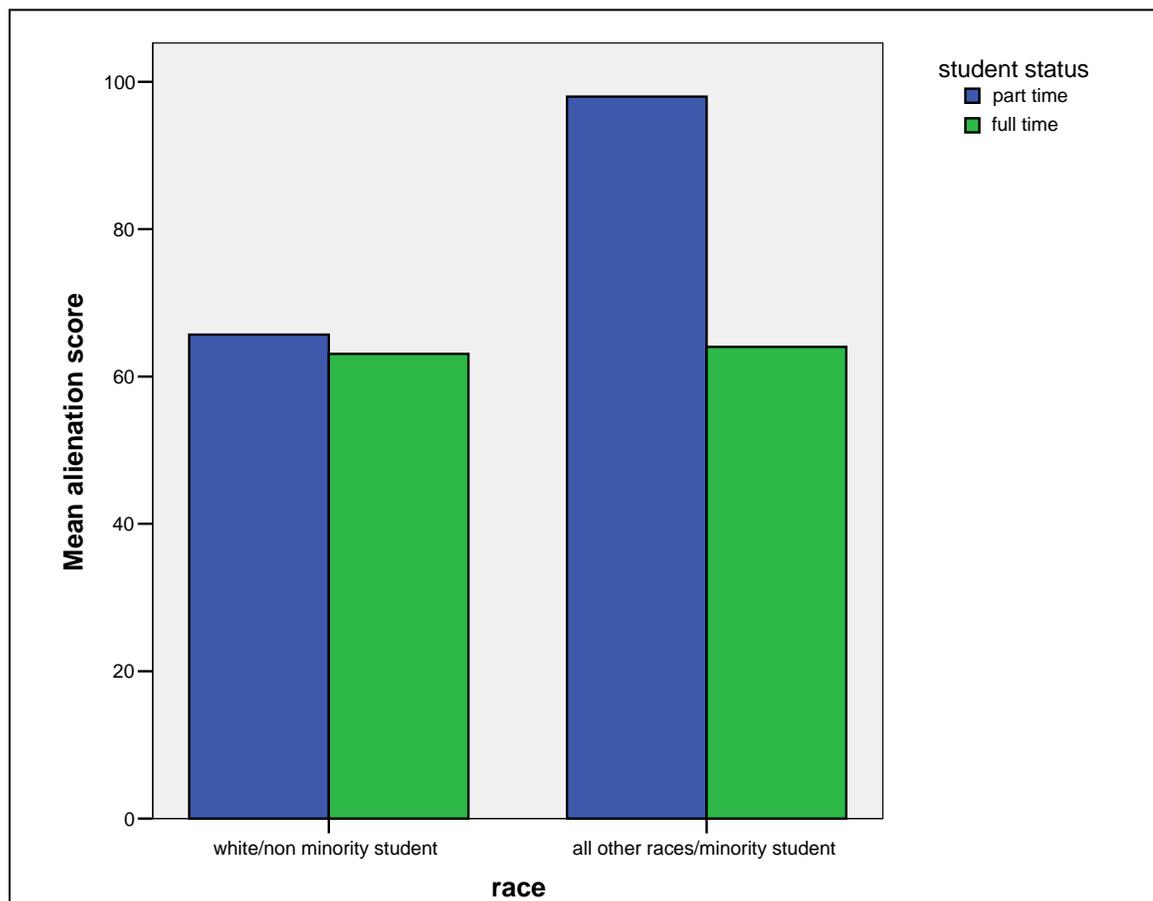
Full time minority students have alienation scores, on average, in the committed zone. Part time minority students however, belong in the alienated zone of the scale.

When examining a student's year in school and their alienation score, it is shown that overall there is not a pattern. Figure 5 shows that for white students, their alienation scores vary slightly and belong in the committed zone throughout their academic standing. Minority students have alienation scores in the committed zone only until their senior year and above, where the average score then belongs in the alienated zone. This is interesting as it suggests that minority students experience more alienation as they get deeper into their academic career, unlike their white counterparts. This is a significant finding which highlights the point that minority students experience more alienation over time, but white students do not.

Additionally, the variable of whether or not a student lives on or off campus was examined in this analysis. Figure 6 shows that overall, minority students that live on and off campus experience more alienation compared to white students living on and off campus. White students that live on campus experience less alienation compared to white students living off campus. However, white students living on and off campus are both in the committed zone. Minority students living on campus experience less alienation than minority students living off campus. Importantly however, minority students that live on campus indicate a score in the committed zone, and minority students that live off campus have a score in the alienated zone. This research indicates that minority students will experience more alienation if they live off campus.

Figure 5

Alienation, Race, and Year in School
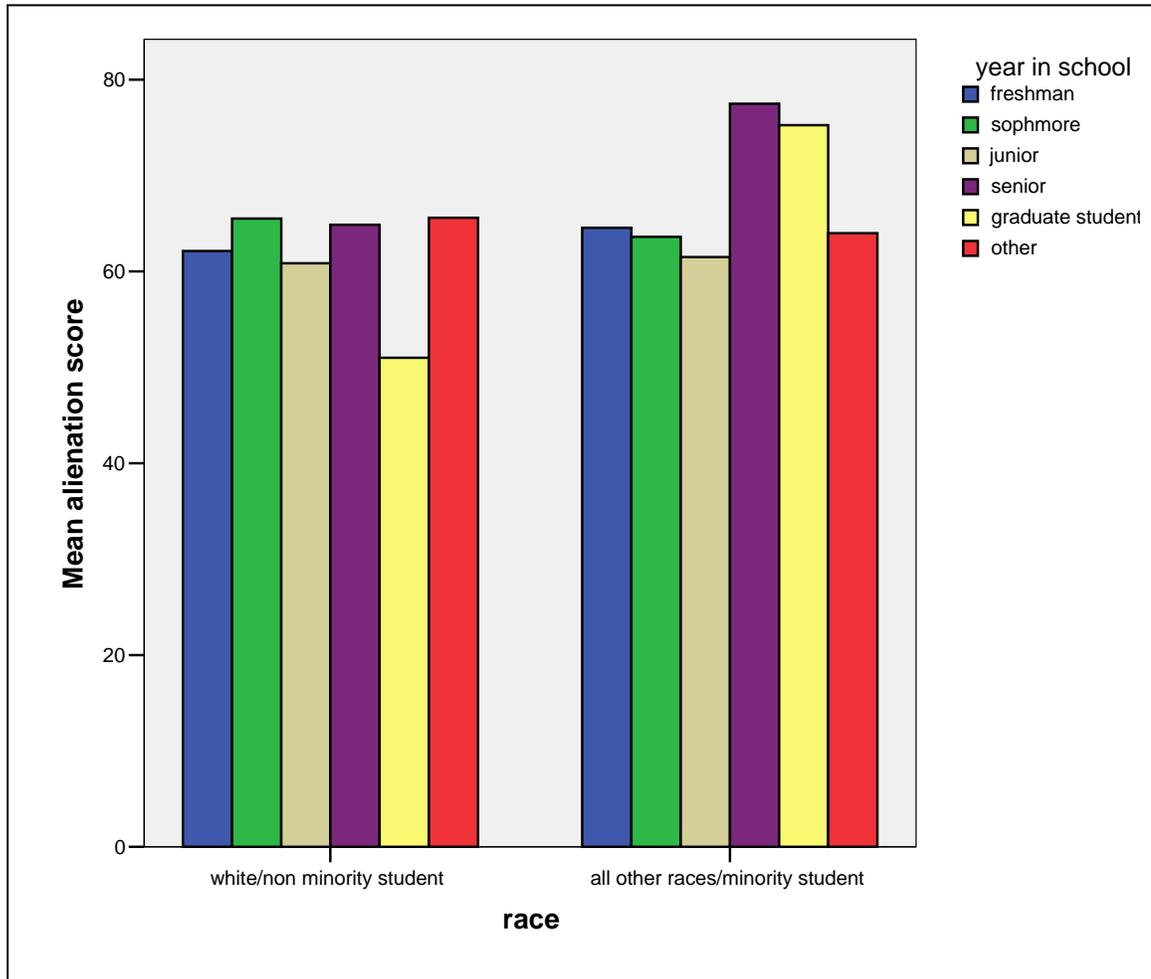
Whether or not a student participates in an organization or activity on campus was investigated as a potential independent variable for alienation as well. Figure 7 shows that the alienation score for white students did not differ in regards to whether or not they are involved with a university activity or organization. White students have an average alienation score in the committed zone. Minority students that indicated involvement in a university organization or activity have an average alienation score in the committed zone

as well. Significantly however, minority students that have *not* participated in university events or organizations have an average score belonging in the alienated zone. This research indicates that minority students will experience more alienation if they are not involved in university organizations and activities.

Figure 6

Alienation, Race, and Living Arrangements
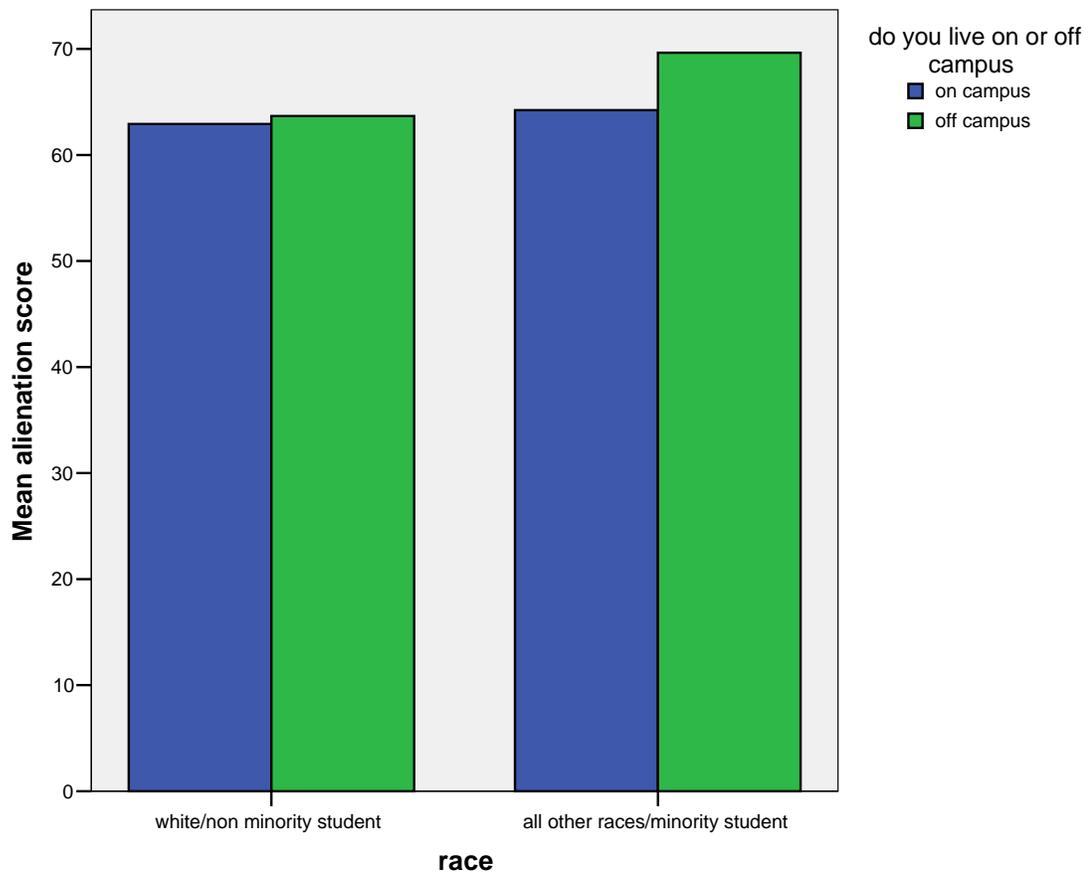
Figure 7

Alienation, Race and Participation in Activity
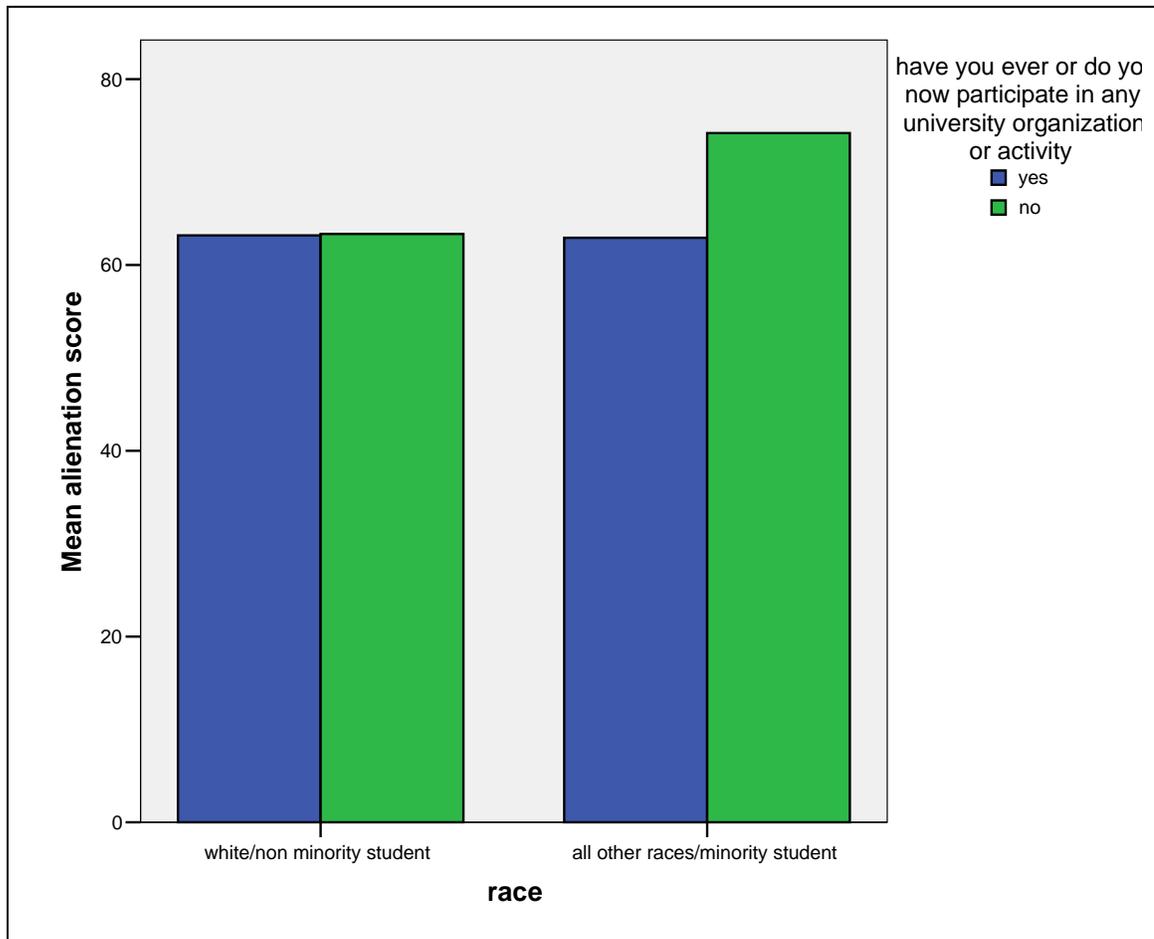
Lastly, religious affiliation was examined as a potential independent variable that

affects student experiences of alienation in academic organizations. As you can see in

Figure 8, the alienation scores of students that were the highest and belong in the

alienated zone of the scale are people that are atheists, who do not practice any religion,

and those in the *other* category (Mormon, Wiccan, non denominational, undecided, and

Utilitarianism). On the other hand, students that have the lowest alienation scores and

belong in the committed zone are those students who practice Judaism, Buddhism and

Hindu faiths. However, when examining alienation scores and religion between the state and private school, the research indicates that all of the scores are higher in the categories of atheist, other, and those students who listed none as their religion in the private university compared to the state university. This indicates that students experience more alienation in the private university compared to the state university. This is significant since the private university is a Catholic institution. Christians had a slightly lower alienation score in the private university compared to the state university, however. This could be due to the fact that the private university is a Catholic institution attracting more Catholic students.

Figure 8

Alienation, Race, and Religion
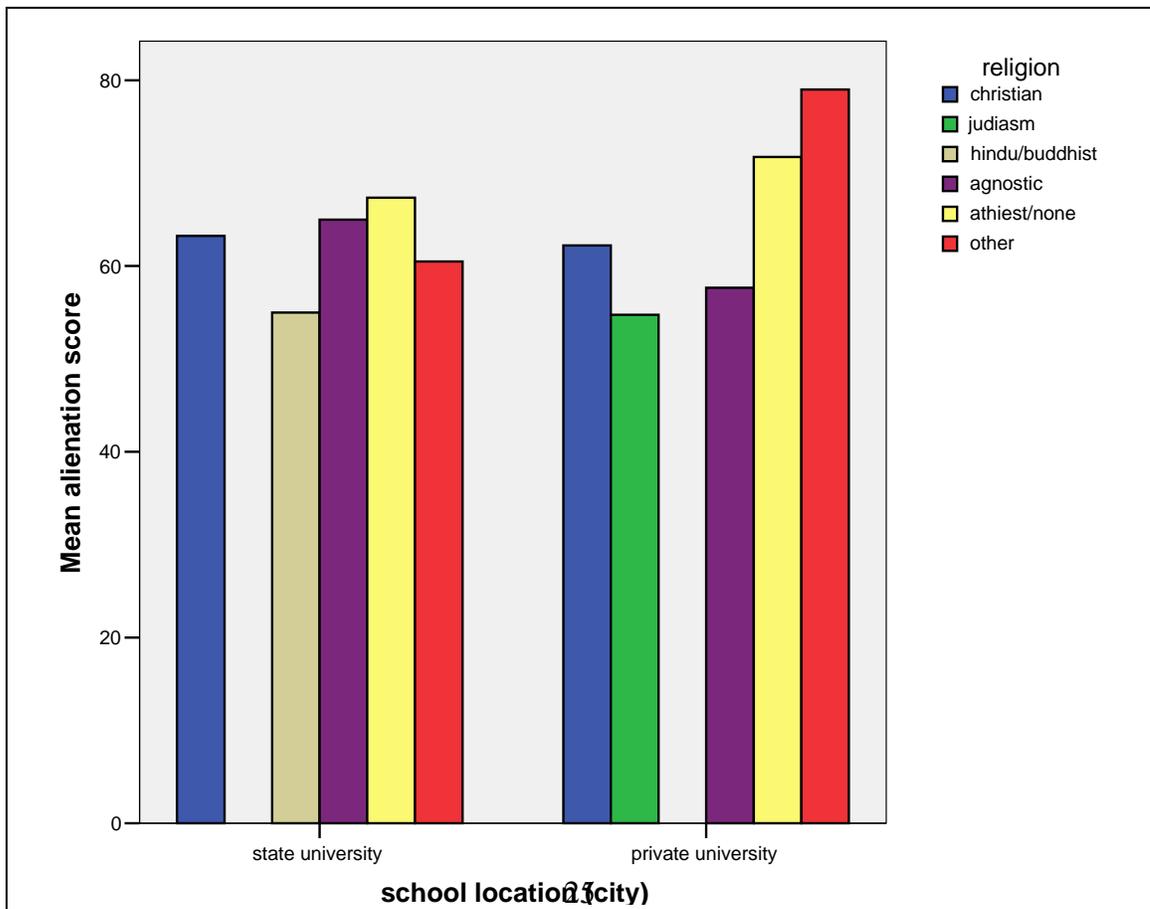
An examination of this investigation's data analysis of each independent variable indicates that overall, minority students experience more organizational alienation compared to white students. A total of 255 instruments were completed, with 41 (16%) from minority students and 214 (84%) from white students. The overall average alienation score for minority students is **66**, and for white students it is **63**. Although both scores belong in the committed zone of the scale, it is higher for minority students. There is not a large difference between the two groups, but I would expect the mean alienation score to be more significant and much higher with a larger, more representative sample (See Limitations). Further examination of alienation and the independent variables in this study however, prove to be more interesting. For example, minority students from the state university have a lower alienation score (**61**) compared to minority students from the private university (**70**). Minority students from the state university are considered to be in the committed zone while minority students from the private university are considered alienated. Interestingly, when examining the overall average alienation score of the state university as a whole, it is **64** and the private university has a score of **64.** This data suggests that overall students are considered to be in the committed zone within each university, although they are on the borderline between committed and alienated zones. This could be due to the fact that minority students make up 16% of the total sample. However, minority students as a group experience more alienation compared to white students, and experience more alienation within a private university compared to a state university.

Furthermore, examining each component of alienation indicates that minority students suffer from powerlessness and social isolation within their academic institutions, particularly compared to their white counterparts. Table 4 shows the percentage of minority and non minority students who indicate that they experience powerlessness, meaninglessness, and social isolation.

Table 4

Percentage of Total Reported Minority and Non Minority Student Powerlessness, Meaninglessness, and Social Isolation_____

Powerlessness

Question	Minority Total Responses	Disagree/StrongD	Non-minority Total Responses	Disagree/Strong D	Minority %
2	41	21	214	86	51.21951
4	41	11	214	43	26.82926
11	41	15	214	61	36.58536
14	41	14	214	56	34.14634
15	41	10	214	29	24.39024
18	41	14	214	46	34.14634
19	41	15	214	79	36.58536
20	41	20	214	80	48.78048
Total	328	120	1712	480	
Percentage		36.58536		28.03738	36.58536

Meaninglessness

Question	Minority Total Responses	Disagree/StrongD	Non-minority Total Responses	Disagree/Strong D
3	41	5	214	15
5	41	14	214	48
6	41	15	214	82
7	41	8	214	50
9	41	15	214	69
16	41	9	214	33
17	41	8	214	35
22	41	9	214	36
Total	328	83	1712	368
Percentage		25.30487		21.49532

Table 4
continued
**Social
Isolation**

Question	Minority		Non-minority	
	Total Responses	Disagree/StrongD	Total Responses	Disagree/Strong D
1	41	28	214	20
8	41	23	214	103
10	41	16	214	87
12	41	12	214	32
13	41	15	214	46
21	41	17	214	54
23	41	10	214	50
24	41	7	214	22
Total	328	128	1712	414
Percentage		39.02439		24.18224

An examination of table 4 indicates that a larger percentage of minority students reported more experiences of powerlessness, meaninglessness, and social isolation compared to white students. There were 37% of minority students that reported experiences of powerlessness, compared to 28% of white students. Additionally, 25% of minority students sampled reported experiences of meaninglessness, compared to 22% of white students. Lastly, 39% of minority students at each institution report experiences of social isolation, compared to 24% white students. The social isolation and powerlessness components indicate the largest difference between the two groups of students. Figure 9 also displays the data of minority and non minority students' reported experiences of powerlessness, meaninglessness, and social isolation within their academic institution. Examining this figure indicates that minority students experience each component of alienation more than their white counterparts.

Figure 9

Minority and Non Minority Experiences of Powerlessness, Meaninglessness, and Social Isolation_____
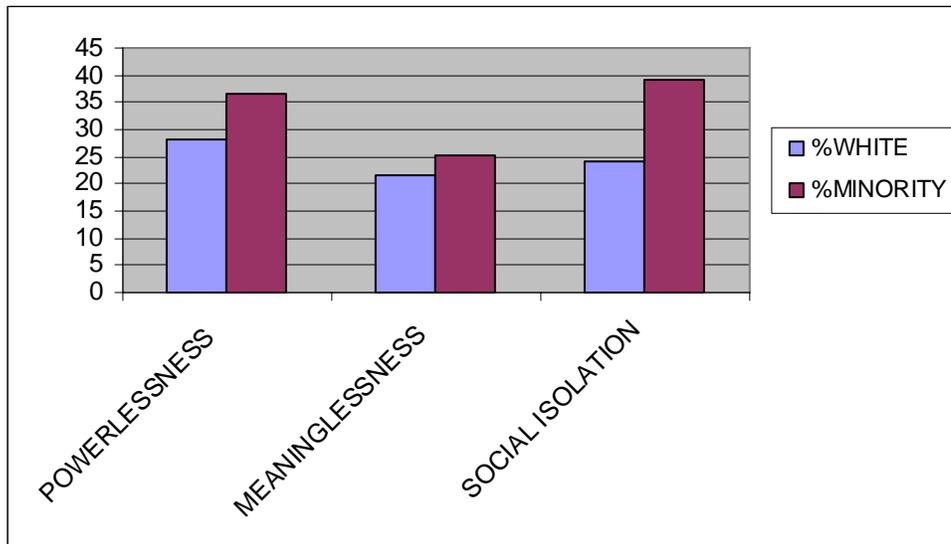
This study's data analysis of student alienation and each possible independent variable suggests several possibilities. First, investigating gender and student alienation suggests that male students experience more alienation than female students. However, both male and female students have an average alienation score in the committed zone. Second, students that are part time have a higher alienation score compared to students who are full time. Part time and full time students have an alienation score in the committed zone, except for part time minority students who belong in the alienated zone. Third, alienation score and a student's year in school vary. Interestingly, minority students have a higher alienation score (alienated) as they reach their junior year and

beyond, unlike their white counterparts (committed). Fourth, whether a student lives on or off campus is important. Students that live off campus have a higher alienation score than students who live on campus. Overall however, students living on and off campus have an alienation score in the committed zone. Participation in a university activity or organization was significant as well. Minority students that do not participate are in the alienated zone, everyone else belongs in the committed zone of the alienation scale. Furthermore, age is a significant variable in this study, which indicates that older students experience more alienation compared to younger students. Additionally, religious affiliation is a significant variable in this study of alienation, particularly within the private, religious university. Students who are atheist and considered "other" had higher alienation scores, particularly in the private university. Moreover, minority students experience more powerlessness, meaninglessness, and social isolation within their academic institution compared to their white counterparts.

Other considerations are involved when examining factors contributing to the differences in the student perceptions of alienation. One would have to consider, for example, the difference in size and complexity of each university examined in this study. Although both universities are considered large, there is a significant difference in student numbers of nearly 3,000. This is consistent with the alienation theory which suggests that smaller, less complex organizations tend to be less alienating than larger, more complex ones (Babbitt et.al. 1975). Of interest is the possibility that this argument holds specifically for this research in each institution of higher education and their minority student participants. According to national data (National Center for Education Statistics 2002) the percentage of undergraduate minority students in 4 year colleges is

10%. Additionally, this data indicates that the percentage of college graduation rates for minority students is 18%, and for white students it is 29%. Students at the smaller, state university have a lower alienation score compared to the larger, private university. Additionally, minority students at the larger, private university experience more alienation than minority students belonging to the private university. Minority students attending the private university have an alienation score that belongs in the mildly alienated zone. Minority students at the state school have a score in the committed zone. Smaller academic organizations may be a better fit for minority students. And, considering the small percentage of minority students in colleges today, it is essential to consider student experiences of alienation in college for minority students.

Still another possible explanation of the findings lies in the differences in the social and economic characteristics of each institution. Whereas the state university is populated mainly by lower-middle class students with average academic records, the private university is predominately middle-upper class students also with average academic credentials. The students in these two situations can be distinguished differently on experiences of organizational alienation, which suggests that the social and economic characteristics of the student bodies may significantly affect the ways in which these students have oriented themselves to the overall structure of their university. Essentially, the way a school operates can create barriers for one group of students and not another. The mechanism of alienation has to do with school operations, practices, social norms, professor expectations, inadvertent racism and alienation, etc. that adds up to create a different environment for African American and other minority students. Alienation is an attribute of an individual or group that is created by the social structure,

norms, conventions, habits, interaction, etc. that biases the distribution of outcomes (school performance) based on arbitrary characteristics like skin color.

This quantitative research, in summary, indicates that minority students, regardless of gender, experience more alienation while attending a private institution compared to a state university and compared to other non minority students. Also, evidence from this research suggests that minority students are more alienated if they are part time compared to full time students. Additionally, minority students are shown to experience more alienation the further they get into their academic career, compared to their white counterparts. Furthermore, this research suggests that students experience more alienation if they live off campus and commute, if they are older students, and if they do not possess a religious background, particularly within a private, religious institution. Babbitt et. al. (1975) researched alienation in colleges using the UAS and found that African American students were more alienated compared to white students in larger colleges than compared to smaller colleges. The study did not examine potential independent variables associated with organizational alienation like this study however. The findings indicate that more research is essential.

B. Qualitative

In addition to the quantitative analysis in this research, I also interviewed two minority students in the state and two in the private universities. Interviews were utilized for UAS validity, and to gain deeper insight into possible independent variables of organizational alienation. The interviews included two open-ended questions concerning the students' perceptions of their alienation within the university, and lasted

approximately 30 minutes. Of the four interview participants, all are African American

and have a score in the mildly alienated zone of the scale. This data suggests that

minority students experience alienation from the university organization of which they

are a part.

The male student from the state university, when asked if he liked his school,

responded with great certainty:

No! This school is not specialized and up-to-date for my major. I

am here for the cost, pretty much. I don't hang out on campus

much either.

Interviewer: What would make it better?

Respondent: Maybe, have more programs related to all students

besides just groups of students, like for science majors only.

Interviewer: Anything else?

Respondent: Improve the majors. There are too many electives

that you have to take. Also, somehow increase student

participation in extracurricular activities.

This student is considered alienated with a UAS score of 81. He is a full time junior who

lives on campus, has listed his religion as none, and has not participated in any activity or

organization on campus. The interview suggests that the student does indeed experience

alienation because he does not feel included within his major or the university as a whole.

Although it does not seem to be affecting his overall academic performance, with his

graduation in sight, concerns about his total university experience indicate the need to improve students' social experiences within the university setting.

The female student interviewed at the state university also expressed a dislike of her school. When asked to describe her overall experiences at the university, she responded:

Overall, I don't like it. I have small pockets of friends that I hardly

get to see, and the teachers won't help even if you follow them

around. I have had a bunch of different advisors already, and I

have no idea what I am doing; let alone what I need to do to

graduate in a couple of years.

Interviewer: Is there anything that you do like about this school?

Respondent: Well, I do have friends here, and I know that some

schools are worse. I do like the campus atmosphere, but I just

don't feel included sometimes. I am a nontraditional student.

This part time sophomore has a UAS score of 83, belonging in the alienated zone. She is a Christian who lives off campus and does not participate in any school related activity or organization. The interview was an indicator that the student was not satisfied with her experiences at her university. This further asserts the validity of the UAS.

The interviews conducted at the private university provided some detailed accounts of the students' experiences of alienation as well. For example the female minority student, when asked to describe her university experiences, stated:

I have seen a lot of terrible things happen here on campus.

Although I have an alright time here, I have seen minority

students being discriminated against. A few semesters ago, a

group of students urinated on another students' dorm room becausethey are from

a different country. Also, I have heard white

students use racial terms when referring to minority students.

It is a shame. I am happy to be graduating soon.

Interviewer: What changes do you think need to happen?

Respondent: I really do not know what could make it better.

This student is a part time senior who lives off campus and participates in university

organizations and activities. She is a Christian, and has an alienation score of 83 in the

alienated zone of the scale. The interview suggests that the student experiences

alienation from her academic institution because of racism and feelings of not belonging

to the university. It further strengthens my argument that minority students experience

more alienation from their academic institution compared to their white counterparts.

This research suggests that minority students do experience more alienation compared to

other students in the private university.

The final interview at the private university was completed by a male student with

an alienation score of 97. When asked to describe his overall experiences at his

university, he responded:

I do not like it here. I feel that if you are not part of the basketball

team or another big university sport, then the school doesn't care

about you at all. Another thing is that this school does not take the

Black Student Union seriously. I am a minority here in every

sense of the word.

Interviewer: What is your opinion about the academics here?

Respondent: This school has a good name attached to it, but if

you are not in the top percent of your class, you are left behind.

This student is a full time sophomore without a religion, and does not participate in any university related activities. He does not live on campus.

The qualitative (interview) component of this analysis indicates student experiences of alienation within each academic context. Each student interviewed has an alienation score in the alienated zone of the scale. The interviewed students do not possess similar characteristics. For example, they do not all live off campus, they are not all part time, their academic standings differ, and only some participate in university activities. What remains to be addressed is the question of how the interpretation of organizational alienation influences and affects a students' overall academic performance, which can strengthen and determine minority marginality within colleges and universities.

Furthermore, the minority student interviews proved to be useful indicators of organizational alienation. Each interview participant is coded in the mildly alienated zone and provided specific examples as to how they experience alienation within their university. Indications of existing racism on campus resulted in the minority student's experiencing alienation. The interviews helped this research by establishing UAS validity and adding deeper insight behind potential independent variables associated with organizational alienation in academia. Furthermore, experiences of powerlessness and social isolation were also significant indictors of alienation in this qualitative data as well. This further indicates that minority students experience alienation through feelings of

meaninglessness and social isolation in their academic institutions. Additionally, this

research may guide in future analysis of other potential characteristics related to student

alienation not examined here.

V. Limitations

Although this research indicates that there is a problem of academic

organizational alienation, there are a variety of limitations to this study. The attitudes of

students are constantly changing and difficult to determine. The results are not

generalizable to future or past attitudes about alienation. Furthermore, the lack of a true

random and representative sample, while including only 255 students (16% minority

students), prevents this research from being generalized to the larger university

population. In relation to the survey instrument, it is possible that some students may not

have understood some statements, may have not been honest, or may have preferred to

answer each statement differently; e.g., somewhat disagree/somewhat agree. Also, the

survey instrument did not include all possible independent variables associated with

academic organization. For example, the survey did not ask the student to list their grade

point average. This would have allowed for a more advanced statistical analysis with

ANOVA and t-test procedures.

Other limitations in this study include the difficulty the researcher had with

acquiring a higher response rate, especially for minority students. The diversity

department and Black Student Union, particularly of the private university, refused to

provide information or help with this research. I was informed that elections and

changing positions would prevent access to their organization for the completion of the survey instrument. Therefore, only instruments collected from professors at each university were analyzed, which contributed to this study's small sample size. The researcher faced time, economic, and other access restraints. Also, statistics for each university regarding withdrawal and transfer rates were unobtainable for analysis. Finally, this study is limited due to asking students about their experiences of alienation within their university. There are other individuals involved with the functions of the university, like teachers and other administration. Alienation may be prevalent within other aspects of university structures that were not examined in this analysis, such as faculty and administration alienation that would also affect student's academic performance and success.

VI. Discussion

A. Policy Recommendations

Although this study includes a variety of limitations, it does suggest that academic organizational alienation exists and is a problem for minority students. Although I expected higher alienation scores between groups of students, it is clear that the successful involvement of diverse populations of minorities in higher education has significant implications for education in general. Given what we know about teaching and learning, it is involvement in the educational process, not alienation from it, that is central to success. Moreover, the experience of involvement or alienation can directly or indirectly affect the performance and success of students, and the administration.

Historically, institutions evaluate students based on characteristics of the students and not the organization, defining success in terms of the individual. It is time to question the academic organizations' characteristics that are alienating and affecting student performance and success.

This research points to recommendations that may help prevent student alienation, and is based on the independent variables that were investigated in this study. Based on this research, minority students do experience more alienation compared to their white counterparts. However, I suggest that minority students would experience less alienation in their academic organization if: 1. students attend a state university instead of a private university; 2. students attend a smaller university compared to a large university; 3. students attend the academic organization full time compared to part time; 4. students live on campus compared to living off campus; 5. students participate in any university organization or activity compared to not participating in university related social activities; 6. students establish and maintain a close relationship with a faculty member early compared to the inability or prevention of the academic enrichment of a lasting mentor; 7. students attend college directly after high school compared to waiting until they are older; and 8. students be religiously affiliated compared to a lack of religious participation. The least alienated minority student would attend a small, state university directly out of high school, attend full time, live on campus, and participate in organizations while being religiously affiliated.

Additionally, implementing policies to help reduce every students experiences of alienation on a national scale may prevent the alienation of older adult students, or people who choose to live off campus, or go to school part time. For example, organizations

should require students to participate in at least one university sponsored event or activity each semester. As well as suggesting that students attend college directly out of high school, live on campus, or attend college full time, we can add new ways to help older, commuter, and part time students feel accepted and belong as part of the community. What our education policies are doing is essential, but not enough. More effort needs to be made to accommodate the diversity of all students.

Despite a host of socioeconomic and cultural problems facing schools today, alienation is a unique problem in education. Alienation cannot be dismissed as a temporary, easily treatable defect. Rather, it is part of education that defines its essential tension. Alienation can threaten organizational stability and effectiveness. A great school is like organization building, it requires attention to culture, in which the participants must take responsibility for the whole to ensure survival and effectiveness of the organization.

B. Future Research

This research investigated variables of interest regarding the problem of organizational alienation in academic settings related to minority students. Evidence suggests in general that minority students would experience less alienation attending a state university compared to a private university. The limitations and the lack of a true random and representative sample may have contributed to the small gap between the alienation scores of minority students and their white counterparts. Future research would benefit from a larger representative sample yielding larger results that can be generalized to the larger population of college students.

Furthermore, examining more variables potentially associated with academic alienation would benefit research on this subject. For example, investigation of students' grade point averages, average class absences, and documented social participation may be variables associated with the complexities of organizational alienation that were not examined here. Also, examining institutional withdrawal and transfer rates would strengthen research on this issue. This would allow a deeper analysis of other potential educational consequences of alienation in academic institutions. Additionally, a large scale UAS survey could be administered optimally to a large number of students, as well as the faculty and staff of random institutions. Alienation is a detriment that exists in academic organizations and affects every participant. Scholars continue to strive towards the hope that scientific research will produce a theory that is capable of identifying the key determinates of organizational behavior and specify the relationships between them, expecting that can it be used to predict organizational behaviors and improve performance. The development of an all encompassing theory is unlikely. Tompkins (2005) argues that our ability to predict or control organizational behavior is constrained by the large number of variables contained in any organizational system and the high level of interdependence among them. However, it is obvious that alienation is a problem within academic organizations, and that large scale attention and research is essential for the future of our academic institutions and its participants.

VII. Conclusion

There are recommendations accruing from this research that are significant. However, there are also expanded recommendations that I would like to suggest. Our society needs to shift the conceptual framework from assisting and accommodating those who are different so they can survive in an alien world, to a broadened focus on the university and what it does or does not do to promote successful academic performance and education. If we change our frame of reference, we will see that we have a great deal to gain.

Furthermore, institutions and policy makers can take steps to facilitate the process of adequately responding to minority student alienation with a deeper promotion of diversity. For example, a comprehensive institutional assessment can provide important data in which problems can be identified and priorities made in academic institutions. Also, cross-institutional research can identify ways in which student, teacher, and community involvement can be promoted. Coordination among educational sectors can improve articulation and movement between different levels and types of institutions. Although research suggests (Selby 1973) that minority student persistence in college is small even with financial aid, further increasing local, state, and national financial aid would allow college access to be more possible for all groups of people, particularly minority students. Moreover, additional efforts to retain and develop minority staff are important factors of diversity for any college campus as well.

Along with a focus on student and staff diversity in college, curriculum changes and better relationships with educators are recommended to combat alienation. For example, academic classes that are offered should be incorporated into the overall

knowledge and diversity of the discipline, rather than some being offered as an interdisciplinary elective, like African American and women's studies for example. A truly diverse academic organization incorporates all perspectives into its mainstream curricula, not just that of the dominate group. Additionally, improving student-teacher relationships would further reduce the barrier of alienation. It is recommended that academic organizations should also consider educators and their possible experiences of alienation, by spreading out their responsibilities and student loads. Smaller class sizes could allow an educator the opportunity to have more time to build a relationship with the students and would lessen everyone's overall experiences of alienation. Personally, I have worked harder and ultimately earned better grades in the classes that were smaller and have felt more comfortable talking with the professor. Having an educator with whom a student is close may be beneficial and help prevent students from experiencing alienation. Furthermore, conflict can be identified and used as a vehicle for learning. Established areas for mediation and arbitration efforts among students, faculty, and the university could be a feasible solution for reducing experiences of alienation. Collaborating efforts among divergent perspectives is essential. We all have an important role to play, collectively and individually, in responding to the problem of organizational alienation, particularly among minority students. Racism and alienation should be an obsolete term and practice within institutions of education. Continued effort is essential!

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Appendix 1

BELOW ARE SOME STATEMENTS REGARDING UNIVERSITY ISSUES WITH WHICH SOME PEOPLE AGREE AND OTHERS DISAGREE. PLEASE GIVE US YOUR OPINION ON THESE ISSUES, I.E. WHETHER YOU STRONGLY AGREE (SA), AGREE (A), UNCERTAIN (U), DISAGREE (D), STRONGLY DISAGREE (SD), WITH THE ITEMS AS THEY STAND.

1.   The size and complexity of this university makes it very difficult for a student to know where to turn.
      SA____   A____   U____   D____   SD____

2.   It is only wishful thinking to believe that one can really influence what happens within this university.
SA____   A____   U____   D____   SD____

3.   I find that individual classes provide for the personal needs and interests.
SA____   A____   U____   D____   SD____

4.   The faculty has too much control over the lives of students at this university.
SA____   A____   U____   D____   SD____

5.   The bureaucracy of this university has me confused and bewildered.
SA____   A____   U____   D____   SD____

6.   I feel that I am an integral part of this university community.
SA____   A____   U____   D____   SD____

7.   Things have become so complicated within this university that I really do not understand just what is going on.
SA____   A____   U____   D____   SD____

8.   I seldom feel "lost" or "alone" within the social system of this university.
SA____   A____   U____   D____   SD____

9.   Students are just so many cogs in the machinery of this university.
SA____   A____   U____   D____   SD____

10.   I do not have as many friends as I would like at this university.
SA____   A____   U____   D____   SD____

11.   Most of the time I feel I have an effective voice in the decision regarding my destiny at this university.
SA_____   A_____   U_____   D_____   SD_____

12.   Life within the social system of this university is so chaotic that the student really does not know where to turn.
SA_____   A_____   U_____   D_____   SD_____

13.   Many students within this university are lonely and unrelated to their fellow human beings.
SA_____   A_____   U_____   D_____   SD_____

14.   More and more, I feel helpless in the face of what is happening within this university today.
SA_____   A_____   U_____   D_____   SD_____

15.   The forces affecting me within this university are so complex and confusing that I find it difficult to effectively make decisions.
SA_____   A_____   U_____   D_____   SD_____

16.   I cannot seem to make much sense out of my university experience.
SA_____   A_____   U_____   D_____   SD_____

17.   My experience at this university has been devoid of any meaningful relationships.
SA_____   A_____   U_____   D_____   SD_____

18.   The administration has too much control over my life at this university.
SA_____   A_____   U_____   D_____   SD_____

19.   This university is run by few people in power and there is not much the student can do about it.
SA_____   A_____   U_____   D_____   SD_____

20.   The student has little chance of protecting his personal interests when they conflict with those of this university.
SA_____   A_____   U_____   D_____   SD_____

21.   In spite of the fast pace of this university, it is easy to make many close friends that you can really count on.
SA_____   A_____   U_____   D_____   SD_____

22.   My life is so confusing at this university that I hardly know what to expect from from day to day.
SA_____   A_____   U_____   D_____   SD_____

23.   In this fast changing university with so much different information available, it is difficult to think clearly about many issues.
SA_____   A_____   U_____   D_____   SD_____

24.   This university is just too big and impersonal to provide for the individual student.
SA_____   A_____   U_____   D_____   SD_____

25.   Sex: _____female   _____male

26.   Age: _____

27.   School location (city) _____

28.   Religion: _____

29.   Race: _____

30.   Status: _____part time   _____full time

31.   Year: _____freshman   _____sophomore   _____junior   _____senior

        _____graduate student   _____other

32.   Do you live: _____on campus   _____ off campus

33.   Have you ever, or do you now participate in any university organization or activity?   _____yes   _____no

34.   Would you be willing to participate in an interview? If yes, please provide your e-mail address or telephone number where you can be reached.

_____

Comments?

Appendix II

Survey Code

Statements one through 24 asks the individual the degree to which they agree or disagree with each statement. Each item is coded: one equals strongly agree; two equals agree; three equals undecided; four equals disagree; five equals strongly disagree. This is true for all items except numbers 3, 6, 8, 11, and 23 where they are reverse scored to prevent a response set.

Statement numbers 25 through 33 are possible independent variables and are coded as:

Sex: Female = 1   Male = 2

Age: 17-21 =1   22-26 = 2   27-31 = 3   32-42 = 4   43-53 = 5

Demographic area: State University = 1   Private University = 2

Religion: Christian = 1 includes Catholic, Protestant, Baptist, Lutheran,

Methodist, Greek Orthodox, Episcopalian

Judaism = 2   Hindu/Buddhist = 3   Agnostic =4   Atheist = 5

Other = 6 includes Mormon, Wiccan, non denominational,

Undecided, and Utilitarianism.

Race: Non minority student = 1   Minority student = 2 includes African

American, European, Middle Eastern,

Chinese, Asian and Latin students

Status: Part time = 1   Full time = 2

Year: Freshman = 1   Sophomore = 2   Junior = 3   Senior = 4

Graduate student = 5   other = 6

Living arrangements: On campus = 1   Off campus =2

Activity participation: Yes =1   No = 2