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STUDENT INVOLVEMENT, SPIRITUALITY, AND EQUANIMITY

AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-LA CROSSE

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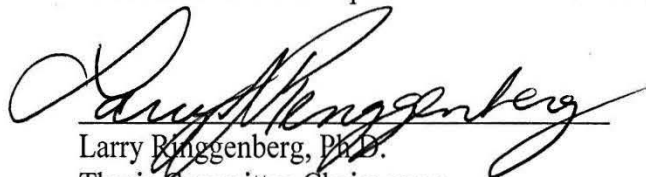
STUDENT INVOLVEMENT, SPIRITUALITY, AND EQUANIMITY

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By Kara L. Good

We recommend acceptance of this thesis in partial fulfillment of the candidate's requirements for the degree of Master of Science in Education, Student Affairs Administration in Higher Education

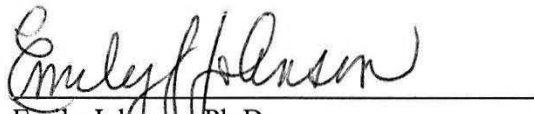
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ABSTRACT

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This quantitative study examined student involvement and its relation to spirituality and equanimity at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse. Two research questions that guided this study were, (1) “Do students who are actively involved in an on-campus student club or organization have higher levels of spirituality than uninvolved students?” and (2) “Do students who are actively involved in an on-campus student club or organization have higher levels of equanimity than uninvolved students?” This study utilized a Qualtrics survey consisting of twenty-one questions. Participants were asked to answer questions related to their demographics, activities and traits associated with spirituality as well as equanimity. Questions contained in the survey were self-reported and frequency-based. Results of this study demonstrated that there exists a statistically significant difference in spirituality between students who are actively involved in an on-campus student club or organization and uninvolved students. Results regarding differences in levels of equanimity between students who are actively involved in an on-campus student club or organization and uninvolved students did not produce any statistically significant differences. Recommendations were suggested, one of which was that student affairs professionals utilize on-campus student clubs or organization as a resource for students to develop and explore their spiritual identities.

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Lastly, to those of you who read this thesis I hope that it helps you as much as it has helped me to see the importance of the work that we do and will do as student affairs professionals. I hope that if this thesis raises any questions that you will not hesitate to reach out to me or any others who assisted me in this research. Enjoy your two years. A lesson that I have learned this year is to live life to its fullest because no one is guaranteed tomorrow.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

College is a time where students grow and develop, continually wonder where life will take them and ask themselves the question, “What is my purpose?” For some college students this question can take many twists and turns leading them down many paths and back again. In addition, for some this question begins the evaluation of what they believe in and where they find themselves spiritually. Student affairs professionals are charged with the responsibility to assist students in navigating the waters of this part of their identity. In order to be truly committed to the holistic development of students it is important that student affair professionals do not skip over or omit this component of identity development. Spirituality is an area that is neglected not only by student affair professionals but by faculty and students as well.

The hesitation to talk about spirituality by faculty and student affairs professionals as well as students may lie in the mistake of equating spirituality with religiousness. In fact, being religious and being spiritual are two separate entities. One can be spiritual without being religious, however, being religious usually means that one is also spiritual. The definitions of religiousness and spirituality will be clarified later in the chapter in addition to a description of the problem, significance of the problem, assumptions and implications of the study, limitations of the study, and definitions of other terms used in this study.

Description of the Problem

Spirituality is an integral piece of the identity development of students. Figuring out where one is situated spiritually is the gateway towards finding what ones purpose is and helps define an individual's meaning of life. Unfortunately, spirituality is an area of student development that has fallen by wayside. The focus of many colleges and universities today is to prepare students to pass tests, to meet the requirements to graduate, to equip them with the skills necessary to obtain employment and to succeed at being able to accomplish the tasks that will be imposed on them by their career. The goal for universities and colleges is to boast about their matriculation percentages, placement rates, as well as their enrollments, funding, publication records of faculty, and rankings in popularity polls (Astin, 2004). Thomas Buford (1995) echoes Astin when he states that, "colleges' help students build dossiers but do not help them build morally satisfying lives. We [college faculty and staff] prepare young people for professional life, but we do not face them with the crucial questions of who they are, what they are to be, what they are to do" (pp. 10-11).

Students themselves, by placing a higher importance on the material exterior have demonstrated how unimportant it is for them to have a spiritual interior (Astin, 2004). However, with the growing unease about our institutions and our society this has led some of us to start talking about the "S-word" (Astin, 2004). In fact, as student affairs professionals we play an important role in the creation of social and cultural environments that enable students to find a spiritual home, a sense of belonging, and being at home within themselves (Chickering et al., 2006). It is the responsibility of

student affairs professionals to lead the charge and to advocate and support our students' spiritual development and search for meaning and purpose.

There is a multitude of methods in which student affairs professionals can aid students in their spiritual development. Sharon Daloz Parks (2000) mentions the need for creating mentoring communities. Parks (2000) states, "it [mentoring community] offers a network of belonging in which young adults feel recognized as who they really are and as who they are becoming." Park further adds, "At its best, higher education is distinctive in its capacity to serve as a mentoring community" (p.159).

Another way to aid students in their spiritual development is by encouraging them to become actively involved in a student club or organization. Astin (2010) found being an active member of a student organization plays a critical role in how spiritual qualities such as equanimity, ethic of caring, and ecumenical world view develop. In addition, Astin found that reflective writing and journaling as well as the use of contemplation and meditation in the classroom appear to enhance students' spiritual growth (p. 6).

Astin (2011) mentions equanimity as an inherent quality of people who are spiritual. In fact Astin states, "equanimity [is] something that highly spiritual people [are] likely to exhibit and students' sense of equanimity is most likely to strengthen during college if they engage in "inner work" (i.e. meditation, prayer, or self-reflection)" (pp. 49 & 54). Due to what Astin has mentioned I posit that if students can first find equanimity that in turn this will lead them to find their spirituality. In addition, I feel it is easier for us to talk to students about equanimity rather than spirituality due to the unfortunate misconception that some students may make with equating spirituality with religion.

Therefore the purpose and my research questions for this study are 1) do students who are actively involved in student organizations at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse have higher levels of spirituality than those who are not actively involved, and 2) do students who are actively involved in student organizations at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse have higher levels of equanimity than those who are not actively involved?

Significance of the Problem

Colleges today are focusing more of their time and energies on preparing students for life after college and ensuring that they are nationally ranked and attractive. More attention needs to be given to aiding students in their spiritual development and search for purpose and meaning or as some would call it a spiritual quest or as Thomas Buford (1995) calls it “a calling.” This search for a calling is the search for answers to the deepest questions persons ask about themselves: Who am I? What am I to do? What am I to be? (p. 141).

For student affairs professionals aiding students in finding their calling can impose some fears and hesitation. I posit that we engage students first in finding equanimity which in turn will lead them to finding themselves spiritually. One way of accomplishing this is as Dr. Alexander W. Astin suggests in his book *Cultivating the Spirit* is to encourage students to become actively involved in a student club or organization, as Astin (2011) states, “equanimity is also strengthened by...leadership training, *student clubs and groups*, and group class projects” (p.59).

Assumptions

1. Since the University of Wisconsin – La Crosse is such an involved campus one assumption is that I will have a larger sample of actively involved students versus uninvolved students. The smaller sample of uninvolved students will make it hard to make comparisons and determine whether or not being actively involved in a student organization does indeed contribute to the development of a student's spirituality and equanimity.
2. The University of Wisconsin – La Crosse has a large female population therefore the assumption is that more females than males will take the survey.

Implications of Study

One implication of this study is to demonstrate how spiritual students are at the University of Wisconsin La-Crosse. Another implication is to show how students who are actively involved in student organizations report higher levels of spirituality and equanimity compared to their uninvolved peers. In addition, this study will also attempt to demonstrate how students who are actively involved in student organizations have higher levels of equanimity compared to their uninvolved peers, a term that will be defined later in this paper. Lastly, one will learn that encouraging students to get involved in either a student club or organization is one way of assisting them with developing their spirituality, finding their meaning and purpose, as well as creating or enhancing their equanimity.

Limitations of Study

Limitations of this study include the following:

1. This study will only be conducted on the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse campus; a mid-size comprehensive institution that contains a student population of about 10,000 students (for this study it is important to note that juniors compose of about 1,800 and seniors compose of about 2,400 of the total population). UWL's campus is also composed of 60% percent females and 40% males; is 87% White/Caucasian with a student body average age of 21 (UWL Fact Book, 2010).
2. The student body at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse is a very involved population. Therefore, the sample size of students who are not actively involved in a student club or organization will be much smaller than that of students who are actively involved in a student club or organization. This limitation will make the generalizability of the results of this study not applicable to other institutions in the University of Wisconsin System or to any other institution nationwide.
3. The survey utilized for this study is a self-administered and self-reporting survey. Therefore, by using this type of survey there is the limitation that students will either over or under report their spiritual and equanimity behaviors.
4. Lastly, there exists very little literature that discusses equanimity. There is even less literature that relates equanimity to college students. The one piece of literature that was found that connects equanimity and spirituality to college students is a book by Dr. Alexander W. Astin. The information provided in this book is the reason and basis for this study.

Definitions

For the purpose of this study it is important to provide definitions of terms that will be used throughout in order to avoid misinterpretation. In addition, students were asked to define what spirituality means to them in the survey that was administered, therefore it is necessary to provide one example of a definition for comparison purposes. Though there are many definitions of spirituality the definition listed below is the definition that should be referred to whenever spirituality is mentioned in this study. The following are terms that will be used in this study; the definitions provided are ones found in literature:

Calling – is a thematic narrative that is our way of living out the image of God in us, within both the limitations and possibilities of our own individual talents and the social and physical environment in which we live (Buford, 1995).

Equanimity – involves the capacity to frame and reframe meaning under stress while maintaining a sense of composure and centeredness; finding meaning in times of hardship (Astin et al., 2011).

Meaning and Purpose – finding wholeness in life, or discovering who you are and what you are to do and to be (Hindman, 2002).

Religious – typically associated with commitment to a supernatural power that is expressed through ritual and celebration both individually and within the context of a faith community. The term “religion” connotes a common faith community (Bryant, 2007).

Spirituality – is about the values that we hold most dear, our sense of who we are and where we come from, our beliefs about why we are here, and our sense of connectedness to one another and to the world around us (Astin et al., 2011).

Spiritual Quest – searching for meaning/purpose in life, finding answers to the mysteries of life, and developing a meaningful philosophy of life (Astin & Astin, 2010).

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The purpose of this quantitative cross-sectional study was to investigate if being actively involved in a student club or organization affected the spirituality and equanimity levels of students. The two research questions used as the basis for this study were, (1) do students who are actively involved in a student club or organization have higher levels of spirituality than uninvolved students, and (2) do students who are actively involved in a student club or organization have higher levels of equanimity than students who are uninvolved? This chapter provides a review of the literature surrounding the topics of spirituality and equanimity. In addition, the role of religion in the history of higher education, how institutions today address the topic of spirituality, student development theories regarding spirituality and equanimity as well as results of research pertaining to spirituality and equanimity will be discussed.

History of Higher Education

“The concept of education is...to include attention to the student’s well-rounded development – physically, socially, emotionally, and spiritually, - as well as intellectually” (Williamson et al., 1949).

The above quotation is just a small excerpt from the 1949 version of The Student Personnel Point of View. This document clarifies the ways in which student affairs professionals do their work, how the work they do fits into the bigger picture of higher education, and how best to continue to further advance the realm of student affairs work.

The Student Personnel Point of View is an appropriate place to begin to see the changes that have occurred since its inception as well as what role higher education played in the development of students prior to its existence.

In 1636 the birth of the American system of higher education began with the founding of Harvard University in Boston, Massachusetts. From this point forward colleges would spring up all around the New England area with the charge of transforming little boys into men (Thelin, 2010). In order to fully understand the importance of this imposed responsibility a close examination must first take place on the reasons for the founding of the first institutions of higher education.

Fleeing the religious intolerant and strict reigns of the crown Protestant Puritans settled in the new found continent of America bringing with them their values, religious beliefs, practices as well as ideals. Eager to establish a collegial system to educate their young men that would in part emulate that of England's Cambridge and Oxford, the Puritans set out to build and establish colleges. These colleges would serve as vessels to disseminate their values, beliefs, practices, and ideals. Thelin (2010) mentions, "religion occupied a central but confined place in the colonial colleges" (p.13) and the Puritans had definite ideas about collegiate education as part of a large, important social, religious, and political vision (p.23). Due to their intolerance in matters of religion the Puritans were always at odds with the crown and therefore making their sons ineligible to receive an education at any royal university. The Puritans as college-founders established many of the most prestigious colleges that still exist today. Colleges such as Harvard, Yale, and Princeton, were committed to the Puritan's rigorous and demanding education of young men who would become Christian gentlemen (Thelin, 2010). Some institutions, Harvard

and the College of William and Mary in particular, provided the stepping stones and education for these Christian men to enter the clergy or divinity school, though these institutions did not defer degrees.

As the colonial era progressed and newer colleges sprang up a divide began to form between the older rigidly, religiously affiliated Puritan colonial colleges and those newer, more diverse and religiously tolerant institutions. Due to their own disputes and disagreements with the crown, the religiously Puritan founded colonial colleges had such intolerance for diversity and therefore did not accept anyone who did not believe their beliefs, practice their traditions or adhere to their principles. In fact, a recurring pattern in the progression of college-founding is that disputes over religious beliefs were a driving force for groups either to be expelled from an established college or leave it because they felt that it had fallen from religious grace (Thelin, p.29). Divisions would continue and reach the ranks of college constituencies, which up to the end of the colonial era were comprised of mostly clergy. It was at this point in the colonial era that the influence the clergy had on the college constituencies began to be overruled and diminished by that of the educated secular leadership (Thelin, p. 28).

This turning of the tide for governing structures was dealt another blow when colleges who primarily sought to educate and bring the Natives to Christianity had to do a bit of restructuring. The reason for this turn of events for these colleges was due to the number of Native students who, during the course of their stay at the college, either succumbed to measles, consumption, or alcoholism (Thelin, 2010, p. 30). High attrition rates of the Natives called into question funding that was being supplied to the colleges to Christianize the Natives. Given this circumstance the colleges had to construct a strategy

for holding on to the missionary endowments while shifting attention away from educating heathens and back toward instilling knowledge and responsibility into young gentlemen. In addition, the tribes that had agreed to send their young warriors to these colleges pulled their funding and posited that perhaps it is the colonial young men that could actually learn a thing or two from the tribes regarding leadership.

The Revolutionary War would also take its toll on the religious missions of the founding colonial colleges. Thelin (2010) mentions, it was at this time that the collegiate mission would undergo a discernible shift away from the religious orthodoxy towards a more secular learning and leadership (p.28). In addition, the hard fought battles and final victory that would come from the Revolutionary War for American patriots would impact higher education as a whole as it created a need to rebuild that which was lost during the war. This rebuilding began to permeate every layer of higher education, including the curriculum that was offered at each institution. Innovation and consumerism began to take hold and created a competitive situation for colleges. Tossed aside were the antiquated lessons of religion and Christianity; this was the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. A time which Thelin (2010) states was commonly referred to as the “new national period” was also a time when liberal arts, medicine, agriculture, military science as well as engineering surfaced and became of high importance (pp. 41-42).

Colleges began to spring up all over the country. Thelin (2010) states, in 1800 there were twenty-five degree-granting colleges in the United States. By 1820 the number had increased to fifty-two (p.41). This profound development of colleges continued and by the middle of the nineteenth century the number of colleges in existence had more than quadrupled that of the 1820's.

The governing structures and funding for these new colleges was also a major departure from that of the colonial times. Funding for colonial colleges came from a myriad of sources one being the local colony. Another source for certain colleges came from the churches affiliated with that college. Colleges founded in the 1800 and 1900's, however, did not have such luxuries. Relying heavily on the attractiveness of the courses they offered, colleges of the 1800 and 1900's depended on their students for funding. However, the key to their existence was held by their local state or municipal government because it was this local state or municipality that would grant these institutions their charters (Thelin, 2010).

With the depletion of available resources and numerous wars the resurgence of religiously affiliated colleges would occur in the middle of the nineteenth century. The reason for this resurgence was because as Thelin (2010) states, churches were among the few available agencies to enter into the educational arena...since neither state nor federal governments were providing dependable, ample financial support for higher education (pp. 60-61). This time around, however, the "old-time colleges", as they were referred to comprised of evangelical as well as Methodist and Baptist denominations ((p. 61).

The rise of these new religiously affiliated colleges brought with them a revival of a practice highlighted by the colonial colleges. That practice was to provide education for a new generation of clergy. Gone, however, were the selective and intolerant attitudes that the Puritan colonial colleges had exercised. Instead, these new religiously affiliated colleges exercised an attitude of inclusion because these colleges were small in enrollments as well as revenues. Therefore, many became "local" colleges, serving students from a variety of denominations, Protestants included (Thelin, 2010, p. 61).

During the course of the nineteenth century religion's role in higher education would experience even more support. The rise of industry would provide the most noticeable support as prominent business men such as John D. Rockefeller and the Vanderbilt's looked to establish universities that would stand as symbols of their legacies. With strong religious ties, these universities would not only honor their founders but also their religion of choice. It was also towards the end of this century that the Catholic University of America would be established by a number of wealthy businessmen and heiresses in order to guarantee that the Catholic perspective in higher education was represented (Thelin, 2010). Needless to say by the end of the nineteenth century religion was shaping higher education (Thelin, 2010, p.113).

With the start of a new century it is no wonder that the focus religion or a spiritual education lost its importance. With more of a focus on industry and success, college going became a must as well as a way for a father to ensure his sons would have better lives. Therefore, as Thelin (2010) explains, college-going became a means of socioeconomic mobility. A bachelor's degree was perceived as a way for a nouveau riche family to gain social standing as well as a way for their young men to associate with young men from established, educated families (p.155). In addition, as Buford (1995) points out, by the end of the century the emphasis [had] shifted from finding a place, one's "God-ordained place" in the world, to creating and pursuing a career (p.22).

If we examine today the role of spirituality and religion in higher education, the picture is no different than that of the beginning of the 21st Century. Though written in 1949 *The Student Personnel Point of View* draws attention to the important aspect of developing the student as a whole and as the quote at the beginning of this chapter

implies, spirituality is part of that holistic development. Hoppe and Speck (2005) state that, “spiritual development is an integral part of overall student development and learning” (p. 31). So why don’t professional staff and faculty at secular institutions in particular, talk more about it or encourage discussions on spirituality?

The answer to this question could be due to preferences however, the real reason is simple. By fearing that they would be violating the establishment clause of the First Amendment professional staff and faculty alike avoid talking or even mentioning spirituality in their classrooms or in interactions with their students. The establishment clause of the First Amendment requires that public institutions maintain a neutral stance regarding religious beliefs and activities. In addition, public institutions cannot favor or support one religion over another, and they cannot favor or support religion over non-religion (Kaplin & Lee, 2009).

Astin, Astin, and Lindholm (2011) point out, secular institutions are the ideal places for students to explore their spiritual sides because, unlike many sectarian institutions, there is no official perspective or dogma when it comes to spiritual values or beliefs (p. 6). In fact, as noted by Bartlett (2005), students crave the opportunities to talk about spirituality. Moreover, as they begin their college experience, freshmen (in particular)...place great value on their college enhancing their self-understanding, helping them develop personal values, and encouraging their expression of spirituality (Astin & Astin, 2007).

Thankfully with the growing unease that is occurring at our institutions and in our society this has led some of us to start talking about the “S-word” (Astin, 2004). In addition, recent studies and literature written about spirituality has helped to add fuel to

the spirituality fire. Therefore, with all this commotion and light being cast onto spirituality is it not about time that student affairs professionals make it a vital concern of theirs?

Astin, Astin, and Lindholm (2011) state that, when they enter college as new freshmen students express high expectations for their own spiritual development (p. 3). In fact as Dalton, Eberhardt, Bracken, and Echols (2006) note, many students report that they expect their colleges to provide opportunities for them to pursue their spiritual interests (p.3). Whether one calls it a spiritual quest, a spiritual journey, a calling, or search for meaning and purpose the simple fact is, college students are jumping at the chance to figure out who they are. Or as stated by Chickering, Dalton, and Stamm (2006), today's college students are spiritual seekers (p.86).

Components of Spirituality Seeking

Meaning and Purpose

Human beings seem unable to survive or thrive, unless we can make meaning. We need to be able to make sense out of things. Human beings, make meaning. We search for a sense of connection, pattern, order, and significance (Parks, 2000). For most young adults today, college is perhaps the most significant time and place when the challenge of clarifying and reaffirming meaning and purpose in one's life is a central concern (Dalton & Crosby, 2010). In fact, three-fourths of students say that they are "searching for meaning/purpose in life (Astin & Astin, 2010). This statistic, derived from a study conducted by a team lead by Dr. Alexander Astin over the course of four years at various higher education institutions across the country, draws attention to the fact that

today's students are yearning to understand where they fit in this world. What is interesting about this finding is that Astin is not the only researcher to encounter it.

In a book by Dr. Arthur Chickering (2006), he found that students are thinking more about religion and spirituality. So much in fact that, their attraction to spirituality stems from their struggle to answer the big questions of their identity, career, relationships, and purpose (p. 153). Dalton et al. (2006) explains there are at least five important developmental factors that contribute to the spiritual [search for meaning and purpose] search process. He lists those five developmental factors as, (1) Identity: Who am I? (2) Destiny or Calling: Where am I going? (3) Personal Faith: What can I believe in? (4) Wholeness: How can I be happy?, and (5) Mattering: Will my life make a difference? (pp. 4-5).

A Calling

Written in 1995, the book *In Search of a Calling: The College's Role in Shaping Identity* by Thomas O. Buford highlights the desire students have to find their place in this world or as Buford describe it finding their "calling." Buford criticizes higher education's focus of placing more of an importance on preparing students for a career rather than assisting them with finding their calling. He states, colleges help students build dossiers but do not help them build morally satisfying lives (p.10). They [colleges] seek to prepare students to pass the test and meet the requirements that will be imposed on them by a career or profession (p. 36). Moreover, colleges have abandoned the mission of aiding students to gain self-knowledge, to creatively find a calling and to do anything other than take a professional path (p.165). Lindholm (2007) in her article adds many of today's institutions mirror the strong societal emphasis on individual

achievement, competitiveness, materialism, and objective knowing rather than providing a developmental context (p. 14). Lastly, Buford notes, today, colleges do not attempt to meet the need of the student to critically reflect on who she is, what she is to do, or what she is to be (p.32).

So what is a “calling?” Buford describes a calling as, “a calling in the life of a person is the theme of their narrative, where *theme* is understood as the characteristic or mark that distinguishes and identifies the particular narrative and is that around which and for the sake of which narratives are crafted” (p. 140). Put in other words, a calling is discovering one’s personhood. It is the search for answers to the deepest questions persons ask about themselves: Who am I? What am I to do? What am I to be? (p. 141).

Spiritual Quest/Journey

Spiritual quest reflects the interest in the meaning/purpose of life, finding answers to the mysteries of life, and developing a meaningful philosophy (Astin & Astin, 2010). Or as college students describe it, [spiritual quest] is an inward search for meaning, purpose, fulfillment, depth, wholeness, and authenticity (Dalton et al., 2006). And according to Dr. Alexander Astin and colleagues (2011) spiritual quest is the core of spiritual development (p. 29). In addition, findings from the Spirituality Project at UCLA found that almost 50% of the students who took their survey suggested that they believed themselves to be on a spiritual quest (Dalton et al., 2006).

To aid students in their spiritual quest it is imperative that institutions provide ways for them to enhance their self-understanding and encourage personal expression of spirituality (pp. 30-31). In addition, professors who encourage their students to explore questions of meaning and purpose or who incorporate course-based community service

into their curriculum will allow their students' to make substantial gains in their spiritual quest or greatly increase their students' likelihood of pursuing a spiritual quest (pp. 37 & 40). Other ways that institutions can assist students with their spiritual quest is to hold workshops or programs on different spiritual or religious groups, have speakers whose backgrounds are of a certain spiritual or religion sector, incorporate spirituality into art, music, film, and drama events on campus, and more importantly, designate a space on campus that can be used for meditation, yoga, stress reduction, or reflection.

Spirituality

Spirituality is about the values that we hold most dear, our sense of who we are and where we come from, our beliefs about why we are here, and our sense of connectedness to one another and to the world around us (Astin et al., 2011). This is just one definition of spirituality. Spirituality has multiple definitions because it means different things to different people.

For some spirituality is their source of joy (Astin & Astin, 2010). For others they view spirituality as biologically integral component of being human (Astin et al., 2011). Astin (2004), points out spirituality points to our interiors, involved our qualitative or affective experiences, and has to do with the values that we hold most dear, our sense of who we are and where we come from, our beliefs about why we are here. Spirituality can also have to do with aspects of our experience that are not easy to define our talk about (p. 1).

Bryant (2007) defines spirituality as, the process of seeking personal authenticity, genuineness, and wholeness; transcending one's current locus of centrality. She further adds that spirituality is developing a great connectedness so self and others through

relationships and community, deriving meaning, purpose, and direction in life (p. 835).

Later in the same article she states that spirituality can be altogether separate from religious belief and practice (p. 836).

Chickering et al. (2006) echoes Bryant when he states that being spiritual suggest a personal commitment to a process of inner development that engages us in our totality. He continues by saying that being religious connotes belonging to and practicing a religious tradition. Being religious is one way many people are spiritual (p. 7). Therefore, one can be spiritual without being religious however; if one is religious they are more than likely to also be spiritual.

Lastly, Astin et al. (2011) summarize the definition of spirituality best when he writes, spirituality is a multi-faceted quality. It involves an active quest for answers to life's "big questions"; a global worldview that transcends ethnocentrism and egocentrism; a sense of caring and compassion for others coupled with a lifestyle that includes service to others; and a capacity to maintain one's sense of calm and centeredness (p. 137).

Equanimity

Equanimity is relatively new term for some. Associated best with Buddhism equanimity is one of the most sublime emotions of Buddhist practice. It is the ground for wisdom and freedom and the protector of compassion and love. While some may think of equanimity as dry neutrality or cool aloofness, mature equanimity produces a radiance and warmth of being. The Buddha described a mind filled with equanimity as "abundant, exalted, immeasurable, without hostility and without ill-will (Fronsdal, 2004).

Equanimity is one of the positive consequences of the search for purpose and meaning; it is a habit of mind that is particularly useful in controlling emotions and

providing steadiness under strain (Dalton & Crosby, 2010). Equanimity involves the capacity to frame and reframe meaning under stress while maintaining a sense of composure and centeredness (Astin et al., 2011). Put another way, equanimity is being able to find meaning in times of hardship. For students this can be an important quality to have as hard times can occur rather frequently during the course of their college years. As student affairs professionals and faculty we can aid students in developing and or strengthening their sense of equanimity with little effort. By encouraging students to engage in “inner work”, what Astin et al. (2011) describes as meditation, prayer or self-reflection students’ sense of equanimity is most likely to be strengthened or developed (pp. 49-50). In addition, students who participate in leadership training, student clubs and groups and in group class projects will also see their levels of equanimity grow stronger (p. 59). Growth in equanimity by participating in these types of activities is due to how these activities foster collaboration, working with diverse people, and develop abilities and skills to lead others. Therefore, your connections to others grow and are strengthened by these activities; a strong connection to all of humanity is another component of equanimity.

In addition, by having high levels of equanimity students tend to get better grades and report higher levels of psychological well-being. Students with high levels of equanimity are overall more satisfied with their college experience, they want to improve the human condition and reduce pain and suffering in the world. In addition, students who experience growth in their equanimity levels benefit from having greater than average development of leadership skills as well as intellectual self-esteem (Astin et. al, 2011).

Lastly, a connection can be made between spirituality and equanimity. Dalton & Crosby (2010) state equanimity is a crucial benefit that is associated with spiritual exploration and growth (p. 2). Astin et al. and colleagues (2011) write in their book *Cultivating the Spirit*, equanimity is something that highly spiritual people were likely to exhibit (p. 49). In fact, equanimity may well be the prototypic defining quality of a spiritual person (p. 142).

Student Development Theories Related to Spirituality

Because spiritual development is a part of a student's holistic development it is necessary to point out different theories that pertain to or relate to spiritual development. Those student development theories that best fit and pertain to spiritual development are theories by Arthur Chickering, Linda Reisser, and Alexander Astin.

Chickering and Reisser Identity Development Theory

Arthur Chickering and Linda Reisser's identity development theory fits well with spiritual development because they both share the commonality of developing or finding purpose. According to Chickering and Reisser a student who is in the midst of identity development will experience and move through a series of seven vectors (developing competence, managing emotions, moving through autonomy toward independence, developing mature interpersonal relationships, establishing identity, developing purpose, and developing integrity). These vectors serve as maps to help us determine where students are and which way they are heading (p. 34). The vectors describe major highways for journeying toward individuation – the discovery and refinement of one's unique way of being – and also toward communion with other individuals and groups (p.35). Chickering and Reisser add that students move through these vectors at different

rates, may deal with issues from more than one vector at the same time that vectors can interact with each other, and that students often find themselves reexamining issues associated with vectors they had previously worked through in a process of recycling (Evans, Forney, Guido, Patton & Renn, 2010). Each step from “lower” to “higher” brings more awareness, skill, confidence, complexity, stability, and integration but does not rule out an accidental or intentional return to ground already traversed (p. 34). Therefore, Chickering and Reisser posit that movement through the seven vectors is not so much a linear transgression but more of a spiral or stepwise pattern.

Developing purpose, vector number six, is the vector that best fits with spiritual development. Mentioned in their book, *Education and Identity* (1993) Chickering and Reisser explain that developing purpose entails an increasing ability to be intentional, to assess interests and options, to clarify goals, to make plans, and to persist despite obstacles (p. 209). In addition, Chickering and Reisser found that for some students they find their guiding purpose for their personal lives through religious or spiritual development (p.228). Therefore it is easy to see how spiritual development fits within this vector of identity development; both create the desire to answer the question, what is my purpose? In addition, as a student searches for purpose they begin to ask themselves some of those same big questions of life that occur during spiritual development. Questions such as who am I, what am I to do, who am I to be, what kind of impact will I have?

One component of the developing purpose vector is developing clear vocational plans and aspirations. In an essence this component is equivalent to trying to figure out where one fits within the world and leads one to attempt to answer the same spiritually

related questions mentioned above. Chickering and Reisser (1993) state finding our vocation is more than just securing a job. We discover our vocation by discovering what we love to do, what energizes and fulfills us (p.212). For some students a way to discover their future vocation is by getting involved in a student club or organization. In fact Chickering and Reisser state that a hallmark of development [in this vector] is increasing engagement with coursework and cocurricular activities (p.224).

One last commonality that can be found in both spiritual development and developing purpose is being and staying committed to those values and beliefs that one holds dear. Astin et al. (2011) state in their definition of spirituality, “spirituality has to do with the values that we hold most dear, our sense of who we are and where we come from, our beliefs about why we are here, and our sense of connectedness to one another and to the world around us (p. 4). Chickering and Reisser (1993) add to this by saying, a strong commitment to a value or belief can determine purpose. By developing or embodying that value or belief, that then becomes one’s purpose. In clarifying purpose, we must therefore...find an anchoring set of assumptions about what is true, principles that define what is good, and beliefs that provide meaning and give us a sense of our place in the larger whole (p. 234).

Astin’s Theory of Involvement

Alexander Astin’s theory of involvement is simple. Astin basis is that a student who is involved will gain more from their educational experience and be more vested in their educational experience than a student who is not involved. This theory describes involvement as the amount of physical and psychological energy that the student devotes to the academic experience (Astin, 1984). Astin (1984) posits that a highly involved

student is one who devotes considerable energy to studying, spends much time on campus, participates actively in student organizations, and interacts frequently with faculty members and other students (p. 297).

Astin (1984) links involvement to a behavioral component and not an aspect of motivation. For his theory he describes five postulates. The first, involvement refers to the investment of physical and psychological energy in various objects. The objects may be highly generalized or highly specific. Second, regardless of object, involvement occurs along a continuum. Third, involvement has both quantitative and qualitative features. Fourth, 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. Lastly, the effectiveness of any educational policy or practice is directly related to the capacity of that policy or practice to increase student involvement (p. 298).

How this theory relates to spiritual development can be found in a study Astin and colleagues would conduct years later in 2003 with support from the Higher Education Research Institute at the University of California – Los Angeles. This longitudinal study would span a length of four years and include a student population of over 112,000 from 236 colleges and universities located across the nation. The focus of the study was to examine the spiritual development of undergraduate students (Astin & Astin, 2007). Specifically the design of the study as explained by Astin (2007) is to enhance our understanding of how college students conceive spirituality, the role it plays in their lives, and how colleges and universities can be more effective in facilitating students' spiritual development (p. 2).

What Astin and his colleagues (2007) found was that today's entering college students report high levels of spiritual interest and involvement. Nearly half reported that they consider it "essential" or "very important" to seek opportunities to help them grow spiritually (p. 4). In addition, today's entering college freshmen have high expectations that college will help them develop emotionally and spiritually (p. 6). More importantly, however, Astin and his colleagues (2011) found that being involved in a student club or organization can be viewed as a way to facilitate students' spiritual development (p. 142). In fact, they found that highly spiritual people were likely to exhibit equanimity (p. 49), and that equanimity is strengthened by leadership training, student clubs and organizations, and group class projects (p. 59). Therefore, when students enter college with the expectation that their institution will aid them in their spiritual development, student affair professionals can suggest that they get involved in a student club or organization or seek out a leadership role on campus all without ever having to really discuss spirituality.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this quantitative cross-sectional study was to compare the spirituality and equanimity levels of University of Wisconsin-La Crosse students actively involved in a student club or organization against the spirituality and equanimity levels of uninvolved students at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse. The University of Wisconsin-La Crosse is a mid-size comprehensive institution located in the Midwest with a population of approximately 9,000 undergraduate and graduate students. The two research questions for this study are 1) do students who are actively involved in student clubs or organizations at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse have higher levels of spirituality than those who are uninvolved, and 2) do students who are actively involved in student clubs or organizations at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse have higher levels of equanimity than those who are uninvolved? This chapter describes the research design, description of the sample, the research instrument, the data collections methods, the data analysis procedures, and the provisions taken to maintain confidentiality.

Research Design

The design of this cross-sectional study was influenced by a previous study completed by Dr. Alexander W. Astin and his colleagues through the University of California Los Angeles' Higher Education Research Institute. In Dr. Astin's study he utilized the College Students' Beliefs and Values Survey (see Appendix C), a quantitative

survey consisting of thirty-four continuous scale based questions. The survey was administered to the same sample of over 112,000 students at 236 colleges and universities during their freshmen and junior years. For this study modified questions of that survey that specifically pertained to spirituality and equanimity were used. Other survey questions utilized for this study were developed based on review of the literature surrounding these two topics.

Description of Sample

A sample of 500 students who were enrolled with junior and senior standing in the spring 2012 was randomly selected in a single-stage sampling procedure to participate in this study. In order to possess junior or senior standing at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse students must have completed at least 60 credit hours for junior status and at least 90 credit hours for senior status; transfer credit hours included. Email addresses of students who met the aforementioned criteria were identified by the Office of Institutional Research. The Office of Institutional Research utilized a random number generator in order to obtain a sample of 500 student emails. With assistance from the Information Technology department students who met the above mentioned criteria were emailed a message containing confidentiality and informed consent statements as well as the link to the Qualtrics survey. No identifying information of those who participated in this study was made known to the researcher beyond the provided email addresses.

Research Instrument and Data Collection

The instrument used for this study was a self-administered and self-reported Qualtrics questionnaire consisting of twenty-one questions that were a mix of both open-ended and continuous scale based questions. Once approval was given by the Institution

Review Board, an email containing the link to the Qualtrics survey as well as confidentiality and informed consent statements (Appendix A) was emailed to 500 randomly selected currently enrolled junior and senior students at the University of Wisconsin – La Crosse. In order to be in junior or senior standing at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse a student must have completed at least 60 credit hours to acquire junior status and at least 90 credit hours to acquire senior status. By clicking on the link to the survey students were confirming their voluntary consent to participate in the study. Students were given the opportunity to opt out of the survey at any time without penalty.

Survey questions were derived from a combination of survey questions inquired on the College Students' Beliefs and Values Survey (see Appendix C) as well as those the researcher found as suggested by the literature. Students were asked to answer the questions based on how frequently they took part in a specific activity. Frequencies for some of the questions were daily, several times a week, once a week, monthly, less than once a month, or not at all; for others frequencies were very easy, easy, somewhat easy, neutral or not at all (Appendix B). In addition, questions were a balance of those pertaining to spirituality and those pertaining to equanimity. Two questions in particular were intentionally left open-ended. The first open-ended question allowed students to supply their religious or non-religious preference. This was done in order to avoid excluding any one particular religion or belief system. The other open-ended question allowed the students to provide their definition of spirituality. This was done due to the varying number and degree of definitions of spirituality. In addition, this was done as not to confuse or put limits on how students view spirituality.

Demographic information collected by this survey was limited due to the fact that the focus of this study centered on spirituality and equanimity. In addition, little demographic information was requested due to time allowed to conduct this study as well as the nature of this study. Demographic information that was requested pertained to gender and year in school as these two areas were found to be highlighted in the literature.

Before the survey was distributed it was piloted on a small sample of students to eliminate any confusing questions or wording. The results indicated a need to change the wording for a couple of the continuous scale based questions. Once changes were made to those questions an email containing the link to the Qualtrics survey as well as confidentiality and informed consent statements was distributed to the sample. By clicking on the link to the survey students were agreeing to consent. In addition, students were given the option to opt out of the survey at any time without penalty. The students were given two-weeks to finish the survey and after one week an email was sent out to all 500 students with a reminder regarding the deadline. After two weeks the survey was closed and data was gathered, presented, and coded in the form of an Xcel spreadsheet to be analyzed.

Data Analysis

Initial analysis of the data was done manually for the two open-ended questions contained in the survey. The researcher created a table of responses and coded them accordingly. The first open-ended question contained in the survey regarding religious or non-religious preference produced a list of sixteen possible responses. The second open-

ended question contained in the survey regarding one's personal definition of spirituality produced a list of fourteen possible responses.

Once coded all data collected for this study was analyzed via SPSS, a statistical program designed for the social sciences. Through using SPSS data was again coded and formatted into a spreadsheet from which crosstabs, frequencies, standard deviations, means and medians as well as correlations and T-tests were derived. For the open-ended questions regarding religion or non-religious preference and one's personal definition of spirituality, Chi-squared (X^2) was used to determine strength and significance. For the frequency questions Pearson's R was used to determine significance and strength.

Once all statistical information was obtained, questions were then divided into two separate categories for further analysis. The categories used to divide questions were based upon the research questions for this study. Those research questions were 1) do students who are actively involved in student clubs or organizations at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse have higher levels of spirituality than those who are uninvolved, and 2) do students who are actively involved in student clubs or organizations at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse have higher levels of equanimity than those who are uninvolved? Questions that did not pertain to the research questions mentioned above were put into a general category and reported on for their basic information.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Introduction

The results of the Qualtrics survey will be discussed here. Of the 101 respondents to the survey all but one individual did not complete the survey consisting of twenty-one questions. Results of the first four survey questions will be reported individually by question. The remaining results of the other 17 survey questions will be discussed and divided between those questions pertaining to spirituality and those questions pertaining to equanimity.

Demographic Information

All 100 respondents completed the demographic questions which consisted of year in school and gender (see Table 1). Of the 100 respondents a little less than half considered themselves to be in junior standing and a little over half considered themselves to be in senior standing. Of the 100 respondents a little over two-thirds self-identified as female and a little over one-third self-identified as male; no respondents self-identified as transgendered nor preferred not to answer.

Religious/Nonreligious Preference

Of the 100 viable surveys the list of religious/nonreligious preferences are seen charted below (see Table 1). Of the 100 respondents the majority reported their religious preference as Catholic, followed by Christian/Christianity. Seventeen percent were unsure, did not have a religious/nonreligious preference or were nonreligious. Thirteen

percent of the respondents reported Lutheran as their religious preference, 9% reported they were Atheists, 8% of the respondents were Agnostic, 3% responded that they believed in and followed Jesus Christ. A small percentage of respondents reported being Protestant, said they were religious but did not attend church or reported they were spiritual but not religious. There was one response for each of the following religious/nonreligious preferences: Evangelical, Latter-day Saint, Methodist, Non-practicing Christian, Orthodox, and Pentecostal.

Table 1. Demographics and Religious/Nonreligious Preferences

| Gender | Number of Participants | Religious/Nonreligious Preference | Number of Participants |
|----------------|------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|
| Female | 67 | Catholic | 21 |
| Male | 33 | Christian/Christianity | 17 |
| | | Unsure/nonreligious/none | 17 |
| Year in School | | Lutheran | 13 |
| Junior | 48 | Atheist | 9 |
| Senior | 52 | Agnostic | 8 |
| | | Follower of Jesus Christ | 3 |
| | | Protestant | 2 |
| | | Religious | 2 |
| | | Spiritual | 2 |
| | | Evangelical | 1 |
| | | Latter-Day Saint | 1 |
| | | Methodist | 1 |
| | | Non-practicing Christian | 1 |
| | | Orthodox | 1 |
| | | Pentecostal | 1 |

Involvement

The University of Wisconsin-La Crosse is a very active campus, therefore one of the assumptions regarding this study was that a higher percentage of the sample would be involved in an on-campus student club or organization. This assumption was confirmed by the results of the question which asked respondents to rate their level of involvement in an on-campus student club or organization from very high to not at all. Actively

involved was defined on the survey as regularly volunteering with an organization, regularly attending meetings or holding a leadership position within an organization. The results of this survey question shows that of the 100 respondents who completed the survey 24 (24%) reported that they thought they were very highly involved, 19 (19%) reported that their level of involvement was high, six (6%) respondents reported a somewhat high level of involvement while 26 (26%) reported a moderate level of involvement. Twenty-five (25%) respondents reported that they are not at all involved in an on-campus student club or organization. Of the 100 total responses to this question almost half (49%) felt that they were at least somewhat highly involved in an on-campus student club or organization. ($M = 4$ (moderate), $\bar{x} = 3.09$, $s = 1.558$).

Definition of Spirituality

On the survey the question regarding spirituality was intentionally left open-ended due to the numerous and abundant definitions that spirituality possess. In addition, this question was intentionally left open-ended in order to allow respondents to provide their own definitions as well as to avoid limiting or minimizing the ways that people define what spirituality means to them. The list of responses was coded and produced a range of fifteen different possible responses. Responses are listed below along with the percentage of individuals whose responses fit into that category.

Spirituality is:

1. Belief in a higher power/being/bigger than yourself/God 37%
2. Connection/relationship with universe/surroundings/people..... 10%
3. Personal beliefs and values 10%
4. Awareness of self and purpose/meaning of life 8%
5. Personal connection/relationship with God/Christ 7%
6. Unable to define/unsure 5%
7. Religious Values 4%
8. Active involvement with/in your faith 1%
9. Personal quest 1%
10. Belief there is something more to life 1%
11. Unseen but felt 1%
12. Engagement of the spirit 1%
13. Peace 1%
14. Less and less every year (Diminishing definition) 1%
15. No response..... 11%

Figure 1. Survey Participants Definitions of Spirituality

Spirituality

Spirituality takes on copious definitions which are personal in nature. One of the reaserch questions for this study was examining the relationship between levels of spirituality and active involvement in an on-campus student club or organization. The hypothesis was that students who were actively involved in an on-campus student club or organization would have higher levels of spirituality. In this section we will examine if

indeed that hypothesis is true by exploring those questions that were directly related to spirituality.

On the Qualtrics survey there were six questions that directly related to spirituality. The first of those questions was an open-ended question where participants were given the opportunity to provide their personal definition of spirituality; those responses are listed in Figure 1. The first of the five remaining questions regarding spirituality asked participants to rate their level of spirituality (see Table 2). Of the 100 respondents 13% (13) felt their level of spirituality was very high, 33% (33) respondents said they felt they were highly spiritual, 41% (41) felt they were somewhat spiritual, 12% (12) said they were not at all spiritual and only 1% (1) individual did not answer this question. In addition, 42% students who are at least somewhat highly involved in an on-campus student club or organization considered themselves to be at least somewhat spiritual compared to 21% of students who are uninvolved.

Table 2. Level of spirituality versus involvement

| | Total ($n = 100$) | Involved | Uninvolved | Percentage |
|-------------|---------------------|----------|------------|------------|
| Very high | 13 | 6 | 5 | 13% |
| High | 33 | 22 | 5 | 33% |
| Somewhat | 41 | 14 | 11 | 41% |
| Not at all | 12 | 7 | 3 | 12% |
| No response | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1% |
| Total | 100 | 49 | 25 | 100% |

$M = 3$ (somewhat spiritual), $\bar{x} = 2.5$, $s = .905$

Of the remaining four questions regarding spirituality, three were frequency-based and the last was a yes/no question. The frequency-based questions asked participants to rate how often they participated in a specific activity or event that related to spirituality on a scale that ranged from daily to not at all. The first of the frequency-based questions asked participants how often, if ever, they attended or participated in a gathering that was

related to their current religious or nonreligious preference (see Table 3). For 3% (3) of the respondents they attended or participated daily, 9% (9) attended or participated several times a week, 12% (12) attended or participated once a week, 16% (16) attended or participated monthly, 22% (22) attended or participated less than once a month, and the most common response with 38% (38) did not attend or participate at all in a gathering related to their religious or nonreligious preference. In addition, 26% of students who are at least somewhat highly involved in an on-campus student club or organization attended or participated in a gathering related to their religious or nonreligious preference at least monthly compared to 4% of their uninvolved peers.

Table 3. Frequency of attending or participating in a religious or nonreligious gathering

| | Total (<i>n</i> = 100) | Involved | Uninvolved | Percentage |
|------------------------|-------------------------|----------|------------|------------|
| Daily | 3 | 3 | 0 | 3% |
| Several times a week | 9 | 7 | 0 | 9% |
| Once a week | 12 | 8 | 2 | 12% |
| Monthly | 16 | 8 | 2 | 16% |
| Less than once a month | 22 | 9 | 5 | 22% |
| Not at all | 38 | 14 | 16 | 38% |
| Total | 100 | 49 | 25 | 100% |

$M = 5$ (less than once a month), $\bar{x} = 4.59$, $s = 1.471$, $\chi^2 = 35.855$

The next question pertaining to spirituality was, “How often, if ever, do you read sacred texts” (see Table 4); 8% (8) respondents said daily, 6% (6) said several times a week, 3% (3) once a week read sacred texts, 12% (12) read sacred texts monthly, 20% (20) less than once a month, and the majority 51% (51) did not read sacred texts at all. Lastly, 20% of students who are at least somewhat highly involved in an on-campus student club or organization read sacred texts at least monthly compared to just 4% of students who are not involved.

The last activity that pertained to spirituality that participants were asked to rate their frequency on was how often, if ever, they prayed (see Table 4). Twenty-eight percent (28) responded they prayed daily, 7% (7) prayed several times a week, 18% (18) prayed once a week, 9% (9) prayed monthly, 11% (11) prayed less than once a month, and 26% (26) did not pray at all; only one individual did not answer this question. Lastly, 34% of students who are at least somewhat highly involved in an on-campus student club or organization prayed at least monthly compared to 14% of students who are uninvolved.

Table 4. Sacred texts and prayer

| | Prayer | Sacred Texts | Involved Prayer | Uninvolved Prayer | Involved S Texts | Uninvolved S Texts |
|---------------------------|--------|-----------------|--------------------|----------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Daily | 28 | 8 | 16 | 6 | 6 | 0 |
| Several times week | 7 | 6 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 1 |
| Once week | 18 | 3 | 9 | 4 | 3 | 0 |
| Monthly | 9 | 12 | 6 | 0 | 7 | 3 |
| Lessthan once month | 11 | 20 | 5 | 2 | 12 | 3 |
| Not at all | 26 | 51 | 10 | 9 | 17 | 18 |
| NA | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 49 | 25 | 49 | 25 |

Sacred Texts: $M = 6$ (not at all), $\bar{x} = 4.83$, $s = 1.602$, $x^2 = 44.389$

Prayer: $M = 3$ (once a week), $\bar{x} = 3.43$, $s = 2.001$, $x^2 = 24.810$

The very last question regarding spirituality asked participants if they believed in a higher power (see Table 5). The majority of the respondents answered yes they did (81%) and only 19% (19) respondents said they did not believe in a higher power. Of students who are at least somewhat highly involved in an on-campus student club or organization only 6% said they did not believe in a higher power.

Table 5. Do you believe in a higher power?

| | Total | Involved | Uninvolved | Percentage |
|-------|-------|----------|------------|------------|
| Yes | 81 | 43 | 16 | 81% |
| No | 19 | 6 | 9 | 19% |
| Total | 100 | 49 | 25 | 100% |

$\bar{x} = 1.19, s = .394, x^2 = 12.766$

Equanimity

Equanimity is a habit of mind that is particularly useful in controlling emotions and providing steadiness under strain (Dalton & Crosby, 2010). Equanimity involves the capacity to frame and reframe meaning under stress while maintaining a sense of composure and centeredness (Astin et al., 2011). Lastly, equanimity is being able to find meaning in times of hardship.

The other major research question that this study sought to answer was, “Do students who are actively involved in an on-campus student club or organization have higher levels of equanimity than students who are not involved?” To be able to answer this question eleven of the twenty-one questions asked on the survey pertained to certain characteristics, traits or activities that individuals with equanimity might participate in or possess.

The first of the eleven questions regarding equanimity (see Table 6) asked participants how often, if ever, they meditated? As stated by Astin, Astin, and Lindholm (2011), students’ sense of equanimity is most likely to strengthen during college if they engage in “inner work” – meditation, prayer, or self-reflection. Of the responses to this

question over half (57%) said they do not meditate, 5% said they meditate daily, 8% meditate several times a week, 11% meditate once a week, 8% meditate monthly, and 11% meditate less than once a month. Results also show that 17% of students who are at least somewhat highly involved in an on-campus club or organization meditated at least monthly compared to 6% of uninvolved students.

The second question regarding equanimity focused on self-reflection or soul searching as stated on the survey (see Table 7). Self-reflection is another trait of those who have equanimity. For this question only 8% said they do not self-reflect. Of the remaining 92% who do, 17% self-reflect daily, 20% self-reflect several times a week, 24% self-reflect once a week, 17% self-reflect monthly, and 14% self-reflect less than once a month. Results also demonstrate that 42% of students who are at least somewhat highly involved in an on-campus student club or organization self-reflect at least monthly compared to 17% of students who are not involved.

Table 6. Meditate

| | Total (<i>n</i> = 100) | Involved | Uninvolved | Percentage |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|----------|------------|------------|
| Daily | 5 | 4 | 0 | 5% |
| Several times a week | 8 | 4 | 2 | 8% |
| Once a week | 11 | 5 | 2 | 11% |
| Monthly | 8 | 4 | 2 | 8% |
| Less than once a month | 11 | 8 | 0 | 11% |
| Not at all | 57 | 24 | 19 | 57% |
| Total (<i>n</i> = 100) | 100 | 49 | 25 | 100% |

$M = 6$ (not at all), $\bar{x} = 4.83$, $s = 1.615$, $\chi^2 = 17.530$

Table 7. Self-reflect

| | Total (<i>n</i> = 100) | Involved | Uninvolved | Percentage |
|----------------------|----------------------------|----------|------------|------------|
| Daily | 17 | 7 | 4 | 17% |
| Several times a week | 20 | 12 | 4 | 20% |
| Once a week | 24 | 12 | 8 | 24% |

| | | | | |
|------------------------|-----|----|----|------|
| Monthly | 17 | 11 | 1 | 17% |
| Less than once a month | 14 | 3 | 6 | 14% |
| Not at all | 8 | 4 | 2 | 8% |
| Total ($n = 100$) | 100 | 49 | 25 | 100% |

$M = 3$ (once a week), $\bar{x} = 3.15$, $s = 1.527$, $x^2 = 28.947$

Question twelve pertains to equanimity however it also coincides with the above question. Two activities and prevalent topics of equanimity are Yoga or Tai Chi. These activities are considered to be reflective in nature as well as possess a certain meditative quality. For this question the majority of participants (57%) said they do not practice Tai Chi, Yoga or any related activities. The remaining 43% who do, 2% practice daily, 5% several times a week or once a week, 12% monthly and 19% practice Tai Chi, Yoga or related activities less than once a month; $M = 6$ (not at all), $\bar{x} = 5.12$, $s = 1.289$, $x^2 = 18.300$.

Question thirteen (see Table 8), “How easy is it for you to see the positives that can come from experiencing stressful or difficult times?” relates to the ability to frame and reframe meaning under stress which is a component of equanimity. For this question 6% responded it was not easy for them to see the positives. Ten percent said it was very easy, 39% said it was easy, 28% said it was somewhat easy, 15% were neutral/had no opinion, and 2% did not answer the question. Results also demonstrated that 35% of students who are at least somewhat highly involved in an on-campus student club or organization find it somewhat easy to see the positives that can come from experiencing a stressful or difficult time compared to 19% of students who are not involved.

Table 8. Seeing the positives that can come from experiencing stressful or difficult times

| | Total ($n = 100$) | Involved | Uninvolved | Percentage |
|-----------|------------------------|----------|------------|------------|
| Very easy | 10 | 5 | 2 | 10% |
| Easy | 39 | 17 | 8 | 39% |

| | | | | |
|---------------------|-----|----|----|------|
| Somewhat easy | 28 | 13 | 9 | 28% |
| Neutral | 15 | 10 | 4 | 15% |
| Not at all | 6 | 3 | 2 | 6% |
| NA | 2 | 1 | 0 | 2% |
| Total ($n = 100$) | 100 | 49 | 25 | 100% |

$M = 2$ (easy), $\bar{x} = 2.62$, $s = 1.108$, $x^2 = 16.196$

For the last five frequency-based questions (see Table 9) pertaining to equanimity, the underlying basis behind the questions relates to the general ability to remain calm, centered, and positive in life or during difficult times, when someone wrongs or hurts you or attempts to pull you off course. For question fourteen, “How easy is it for you to remain positive during negative times or in negative situations?” 9% said very easy, 32% said easy, 39% said somewhat easy, 13% were neutral/ had no opinion, 6% said not at all and 1% did not answer the question; $M = 3$ (somewhat easy), $\bar{x} = 2.72$, $s = 1.036$, $x^2 = 12.280$. Results also show that students who are somewhat highly involved in an on-campus student club or organization that 38% of them find it at least somewhat easy to remain positive during negative times or in negative situations compared to 21% of uninvolved students.

For the question, “How easy is it for you to “turn the other cheek” when someone wrongs you?” the majority said it was easy (29%). Nine percent said it was very easy, 25% said it was somewhat easy or were neutral/had no opinion, and 12% said it was not at all easy; $M = 3$ (easy), $\bar{x} = 3.02$, $s = 1.180$, $x^2 = 13.272$. Results also demonstrate that 34% of students who are somewhat highly involved in an on-campus club or organization said that it was at least somewhat easy for them to turn the other check compared to 17% of students who are not involved.

For question sixteen, “How easy is it to to stay on course when others are advising you to do otherwise?” the majority of participants said it was easy (41%). Ten percent

Table 9. Characteristics of equanimity

| | Remain positive involved | Remain positive uninvolved | Cheek involved | Cheek uninvolved | Course involved | Course uninvolved | Stand up involved | Stand up uninvolved | Day gift involved | Day gift uninvolved |
|------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|--------------------|----------------------|----------------------|------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| Very easy | 5 | 3 | 5 | 3 | 5 | 2 | 11 | 10 | 11 | 4 |
| Easy | 15 | 8 | 15 | 8 | 26 | 9 | 18 | 6 | 16 | 11 |
| Somewhat easy | 18 | 10 | 14 | 6 | 12 | 12 | 11 | 4 | 8 | 5 |
| Neutral | 7 | 3 | 8 | 8 | 3 | 1 | 6 | 4 | 12 | 4 |
| Not at all | 4 | 1 | 7 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| NA | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total ($n = 100$) | 49 | 25 | 49 | 25 | 49 | 25 | 49 | 25 | 49 | 25 |

said it was very easy, 35% said it was somewhat easy, 9% were neutral/had no opinion, and 5% said it was not at all easy; $M = 2$ (easy), $\bar{x} = 2.58$, $s = .966$, $x^2 = 29.970$. Results also show that of students who are at least somewhat highly involved in an on-campus student club or organization that 43% of them find it at least somewhat easy to stay on course as compared to 23% of uninvolved students.

Next participants were asked to answer the question, “How easy is it for you to stand up for what you believe in when others are trying to bring you down?” For this question, the majority of the responses were that it was easy (35%). Twenty-eight percent thought it was very easy, 17% said it was somewhat easy, 15% were neutral/had no opinion, 4% said it was not at all easy, and only 1% did not answer the question; $M = 2$ (easy), $\bar{x} = 2.29$, $s = 1.175$, $x^2 = 22.924$. In addition, results revealed that 40% of students who are at least somewhat highly involved in an on-campus student club or organization find it at least somewhat easy to stand up for what they believe in compared to 20% of uninvolved students.

Being able to see each day, good or bad, as a gift was the last frequency-based question that pertained to equanimity. For this question the majority of those who responded 35% said that it is easy for them to see each day, bad or good, as a gift. Twenty-two said it was somewhat easy, 21% said it was easy, 19% were neutral/had no opinion, and 3% said it was not at all easy; $M = 2$, $\bar{x} = 2.48$, $s = 1.114$, $x^2 = 17.620$. In addition, results revealed that 35% of students who are at least somewhat highly involved in an on-campus student club or organization find it at least somewhat easy to see each day as a gift compared to 20% of uninvolved students.

The last two questions that pertained to equanimity asked respondents to reply either with a “yes” or “no.” The questions were, (1) “So far in life are you thankful for all that has happened to you and as it stands today?” (2) “Do you feel your life has meaning and purpose?” Of those who responded to the first question, 93% said yes, they were thankful for all that has happened to them, 6% said no and 1% did not answer the question; $\bar{x} = 1.05$, $s = .261$, $x^2 = 11.495$. Lastly, 98% of participants felt that their life has meaning and purpose while the remaining 2% said they did not feel their life, as it stood today, had meaning or purpose; $\bar{x} = 1.02$, $s = .141$, $x^2 = 2.126$.

Correlations

Based upon the research questions for this study correlational analyses were completed to determine if a relationship existed between students who were actively involved in a student club or organization and levels of spirituality and equanimity. Students’ self-reported levels of involvement were correlated to the responses they gave to questions pertaining to spirituality and questions regarding equanimity; the following correlations were found in the data sets. Positive and somewhat significant correlations were found in three of the questions regarding level of involvement and spirituality. Other correlations between level of involvement and the questions related to spirituality or equanimity produced negative correlations or no significant correlations.

For questions related to spirituality significant correlations were found between involvement levels and three of the spirituality questions (see Table 10). The first significant correlation was found between level of involvement and attending or participating in a gathering related to your religious or nonreligious preference. Another significant correlation was found between level of involvement and reading of sacred

texts. Lastly, a significant correlation was found between level of involvement and believing` in a higher power ($p < .05$).

Table 10. Correlations between level of involvement and traits of spirituality

| | Gathering | Sacred Texts | Higher Power |
|-----------------|-----------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Involvement | .404** | .342** | .251* |
| Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | .000 | .012 |
| N | 100 | 100 | 100 |

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

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

When running correlations on all other survey data there were some unexpected findings that surfaced. It should come as no surprise that a strong correlation was found between reading sacred texts and attending or participating in a religious or nonreligious gathering ($r = .802, p = .000$). In addition, a strong correlation existed between how easy it is to remain positive during negative situations and how easy it is to see the positives that can come from experiencing stressful or difficult times ($r = .725, p = .000$). Other significant correlations worth noting were between reading of sacred texts and praying ($r = .577, p = .000$), participating or attending a religious/nonreligious gathering and how easy it is to turn the other cheek ($r = .319, p = .001$), how often sacred texts are read and how easy it is to turn the other cheek ($r = .317, p = .001$), reading sacred texts and meditating ($r = .399, p = .000$), praying and meditating ($r = .351, p = .000$), meditating and soul-searching ($r = .404, p = .000$), and lastly, reading sacred texts and soul-searching ($r = .382, p = .000$).

T-Tests

In order to provide statistical strength a “Total spirituality score” and a “Total equanimity score” were created for the individual questions regarding spirituality and equanimity in order to test whether there was a significant difference in spirituality and equanimity between involved students and uninvolved students. In addition, two groups were created based on level of involvement. Group one, those considered to be highly involved, contained students who reported they were very highly, highly, and somewhat highly involved. The second group, those considered to be uninvolved, contained students who reported that they were not at all involved. Moderately involved students ($n = 26$) were intentionally left out due to the average response for involvement being that of somewhat highly involved. The results of the t-test for spirituality (see Table 11) indicated there were statistically significant differences in spirituality between students who were involved and those self-described as uninvolved. There was statistical significance and differences in all but one of the spirituality traits (prayer) for involved versus uninvolved students. When computed, the spirituality sum score for involved ($M = 12.8163$) versus uninvolved ($M = 15.8400$) indicated there is a statistically significant difference in levels of spirituality between the two groups. The involved students have a lower score than uninvolved where equal variances are assumed ($p = .009$), where equal variances are not assumed ($p = .004$) showing statistical strength and significance between the two groups. The results of t-tests for equanimity (see Table 12.1 & 12.2) proved there were no statistically significant differences where equal variances were assumed ($p = .847$) or where equal variances were not assumed ($p = .858$) in any of the equanimity traits between involved versus uninvolved students. In addition, the sum

scores between the two groups did not produce a significant degree of variance ($M = 28.5510$ vs. $M = 27.6800$) and therefore it cannot be stated that the lower the score the higher the equanimity.

Table 11. Spirituality t-test for involved vs. uninvolved students

| Variable | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | Std. Error Mean | Variable | <i>t</i> | <i>df</i> | Sig (2- tailed) |
|------------|----------|-----------|-----------------------|-----------------|----------|-----------|-----------------------|
| Gathering | | | | Gathering | | | |
| Involved | 4.12 | 1.628 | .233 | Equal variances | -3.610 | 72 | .001 |
| | 5.40 | .957 | .191 | assumed | | | |
| Uninvolved | | | | Equal | -4.240 | 70.421 | .000 |
| | | | | variances not | | | |
| | | | | assumed | | | |
| Sacred | | | | Sacred Text | | | |
| Texts | 4.35 | 1.751 | .250 | Equal variances | -2.988 | 72 | .004 |
| Involved | 5.48 | 1.005 | .201 | assumed | | | |
| | | | | Equal | -3.531 | 70.885 | .001 |
| Uninvolved | | | | variances not | | | |
| | | | | assumed | | | |
| Pray | | | | Pray | | | |
| Involved | 3.22 | 1.939 | .277 | Equal variances | -.763 | 72 | .448 |
| | 3.60 | 2.121 | .424 | assumed | | | |
| Uninvolved | | | | Equal | -.741 | 44.763 | .463 |
| | | | | variances | | | |
| | | | | not | | | |
| | | | | assumed | | | |
| Higher | | | | Higher Power | | | |
| Power | 1.12 | .331 | .047 | Equal variances | -2.470 | 72 | .016 |
| Involved | 1.36 | .490 | .098 | assumed | | | |
| | | | | Equal | -2.183 | 35.532 | .036 |
| Uninvolved | | | | variances not | | | |
| | | | | assumed | | | |

Table 12.1. Equanimity t-test for involved vs. uninvolved students

| Variable | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | Std. Error Mean |
|---------------------|----------|-----------|--------------------|
| Meditate – | 4.63 | 1.716 | .245 |
| Involved | 5.28 | 1.370 | .274 |
| Uninvolved | | | |
| Reflect – | 3.06 | 1.435 | .205 |
| Involved | 3.28 | 1.595 | .319 |
| Uninvolved | | | |
| Tai Chi/Yoga – | 4.90 | 1.461 | .209 |
| Involved | 5.52 | .918 | .184 |
| Uninvolved | | | |
| See Pos. – | .69 | 1.155 | .165 |
| Involved | 2.84 | 1.068 | .214 |
| Uninvolved | | | |
| Remain Positive – | 2.80 | 1.080 | .154 |
| Involved | 2.64 | .995 | .199 |
| Uninvolved | | | |
| Turn cheek – | 2.94 | 1.215 | .174 |
| Involved | 2.76 | 1.052 | .210 |
| Uninvolved | | | |
| Stay course – | 2.45 | .980 | .140 |
| Involved | 2.60 | .866 | .173 |
| Uninvolved | | | |
| Stand up – Involved | 2.43 | 1.155 | .165 |
| | 2.20 | 1.258 | .252 |
| Uninvolved | | | |
| Day gift – Involved | 2.55 | 1.209 | .173 |
| | 2.48 | 1.085 | .217 |
| Uninvolved | | | |
| Thankful – | 1.08 | .277 | .040 |
| Involved | -2.96 | .289 | .058 |
| Uninvolved | | | |

| | | | |
|--------------------|------|------|------|
| Purpose – Involved | 1.02 | .143 | .020 |
| | 1.04 | .200 | .040 |
| Uninvolved | | | |

Table 12.2. Equanimity t-test for involved vs. uninvolved students

| Variable | <i>t</i> | <i>df</i> | Sig (2-tailed) | Variable | <i>tT</i> | <i>df</i> | Sig (2-tailed) |
|------------------------------------|------------|-----------|-------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-------------------|
| Meditate Equal variances | - 1.637 | 72 | .106 | Stay on course Equal variances | -.651 | 72 | .517 |
| assumed Equal variances | - 1.761 | 58.933 | .083 | assumed Equal variances | -.678 | 54.077 | .501 |
| not assumed Reflect | | | | not assumed Stand Up | | | |
| Equal variances | -.597 | 72 | .552 | Equal variances | .781 | 72 | .437 |
| assumed Equal variances | -.577 | 44.151 | .567 | assumed Equal variances | .760 | 44.908 | .451 |
| not assumed Tai Chi/Yoga | | | | not assumed Each day as gift | | | |
| Equal variances | - 1.938 | 72 | .056 | Equal variances | .247 | 72 | .805 |
| assumed Equal variances | - 2.237 | 68.719 | .029 | assumed Equal variances | .256 | 53.335 | .799 |
| not assumed Seeing positives | | | | not assumed Thankful | | | |
| Equal variances | -.733 | 72 | .466 | Equal variances | 1.423 | 72 | .159 |
| assumed Equal variances | - 1.025 | 49.004 | .310 | assumed Equal variances | 1.010 | 24.005 | .323 |
| not assumed | | | | not assumed | | | |

| | | | | | | | |
|-----------------|------|--------|------|-------------|-------|--------|------|
| Remain positive | | | | Meaning and | | | |
| Equal | | | | purpose | | | |
| variances | .603 | 72 | .548 | Equal | -.486 | 72 | .629 |
| | | | | variances | | | |
| assumed | .619 | 52.099 | .538 | | -.436 | 36.872 | .665 |
| Equal | | | | assumed | | | |
| variances | | | | Equal | | | |
| not | | | | variances | | | |
| assumed | | | | not | | | |
| | | | | assumed | | | |
| Turn cheek | | | | | | | |
| Equal | | | | | | | |
| variances | .625 | 72 | .534 | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| assumed | .656 | 55.024 | .515 | | | | |
| Equal | | | | | | | |
| variances | | | | | | | |
| not | | | | | | | |
| assumed | | | | | | | |

Crosstabs

Crosstabs were run on the data in order to determine the statistical strength of level of involvement as it related to the questions that focused on spirituality and equanimity. The end result of running the crosstabs on level of involvement as it compared to questions regarding spirituality and equanimity produced unreliable data; this was due to a myriad reasons. First reason, Chi-squared (χ^2) tests produced tables for each set of compared questions had numerous cells with expected frequencies below five. Secondly, the number of possible responses contained in the two variables (questions) being compared were too narrow. Lastly, the number of the categories of the two variables (questions) being compared had a product of more than 16 which is the maximum allotted product according to SPSS.

Conclusion

The results of this study demonstrated that the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse students who participated in this study attend or participate in gatherings related to their religious or nonreligious preference. In addition, the students who participated in this study pray, self-reflect or soul search, they are able to see the positives that come from experiencing stressful or difficult times, they can remain positive during negative times or situations, can turn the other cheek when someone wrongs them, stay on course when others are telling them to do otherwise, stand up for what they believe in, see each day, bad or good, as a gift, feel their lives have meaning and purpose, are thankful for all that has happened to them, and believe in a higher power.

Results of this study indicate there is a correlation and a statistically significant difference in spirituality between students who are at least somewhat highly involved in an on-campus student club or organization and those that are not at all involved. In addition, there exists some significant correlations that demonstrate that students who are at least somewhat highly involved in an on-campus student club or organization will attend or participate in religious or nonreligious gatherings, read sacred texts and believe in a higher power compared to their uninvolved peers. All the aforementioned activities or traits are spiritual and found in people who consider themselves to be spiritual according to Astin, Astin, and Lindholm (2011).

Secondly, results of this study concluded there are no statistically significant differences in equanimity between involved and uninvolved students. Crosstabs run on the data produced too many cells with frequencies higher than five thus rendering the

results unreliable. When correlations were run on the same data, again no statistically significant differences were found and correlations were negative, small, or null.

In the next chapter the findings of this reaserch will be discussed at length. In addition to discussing those findings that were expected or anticipated, discussions on findings that were unexpected and unanticipated will be included. Lastly, recommendations for future reasearch, limitations, as well as implications this research has on student affairs professionals will be covered.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

This chapter summarizes the conclusions from this study, the recommendations for practice, limitations, and recommendations for future research based on the findings from this study. From the beginning this study sought to replicate a portion of a study previously conducted through the University of Los Angeles' Institute of Higher Education. That study was conducted by Dr. Alexander Astin and his colleagues at over 200 colleges and universities nationwide. In that study Dr. Astin and his colleagues found that students' equanimity was strengthened by their involvement in student clubs or organizations. Since equanimity is a component of spirituality the hypothesis was that if equanimity was strengthened by involvement in a student club or organization, spirituality must therefore, also be strengthened.

The purpose of this study was to twofold, to explore the possibility of students' spirituality as well as their equanimity growing as a result of their involvement in a student club or organization. The two research questions guiding this study were 1) do students who are actively involved in an on-campus student club or organization have higher levels of spirituality than students who are not involved; and 2) do students who are actively involved in an on-campus student club or organization have higher levels of equanimity than students who are not involved? By exploring these two questions the researcher was able to examine the possibility that being actively involved in a student

club or organization assisted students in their spiritual development or search for meaning and purpose.

Conclusions

Student Involvement

Both research questions guiding this study focused on student involvement and its relationship to students' development of equanimity and spirituality. An assumption of this study was that there would be a greater percentage of students who took the survey that would be actively involved in an on-campus student club or organization. The definition given on the survey for being actively involved was regularly volunteering with an organization, regularly attending meetings or holding a leadership position within an organization. Per the results of the survey, there was indeed a higher percentage (49%) of students who were at least somewhat highly involved compared to those moderately involved (26%) or not at all involved (25%). The average response of level of involvement was somewhat highly involved. Therefore, the assumption that there would be a greater percentage of students who took the survey was upheld with at least 49% of the respondents reporting that they are somewhat highly to very highly involved.

The basis of comparison that was used for this study was somewhat highly involved versus not at all involved for the questions contained in the survey. The questions in this survey regarded how frequently one participated in or performed a specific activity that related to spirituality or equanimity. The scale that was utilized consisted of the frequencies of daily, several times a week, once a week, monthly, less than once a month, and not at all. In the following sections those activities will be

discussed as they relate to students' levels of self-perceived and self-reported levels of involvement.

Spirituality

The first research question for this study inquired if students who are actively involved in an on-campus student club or organization would have higher levels of spirituality than students who are not involved. In order to answer this question it was important for participants to provide their own definitions of spirituality and then rank themselves on where they felt their level of spirituality fell on a scale ranging from highly spiritual to not at all spiritual.

For the majority of students who took this survey at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse spirituality is defined as believing in a higher power or higher being, believing in God, or believing in something bigger than you (37%). In fact, 81% of students said that they believed in a higher power. Sixty-five percent of those students who said they believed in a higher power are students who feel they are at least somewhat highly involved in an on-campus student club or organization. Furthermore, other definitions that students who took the survey reported regarding spirituality is that spirituality is about those connections or relationships that one has with the universe, their surroundings, or people whether living or deceased. In addition, students who took the survey also defined spirituality as the personal beliefs or values that one reveres or deems as important to them as they live their life.

For those students who took the survey the majority (87%) considered themselves to be at least somewhat spiritual. Of that 87% who reported that they felt they were spiritual, 42% of them considered themselves to be at least somewhat highly involved in

an on-campus student club or organization. In order to confirm whether or not students who reported that they were at least somewhat highly involved indeed did have higher levels of spirituality than uninvolved students variables regarding spirituality those questions pertaining to attending or participating in a gathering related to one's religious/nonreligious preference, reading of sacred texts, praying and belief in a higher power were recoded and t-tests were run. The results showed statistically significant results that proved that students who were at least somewhat highly involved had higher scores on activities related to spirituality than uninvolved students with the exception of one, praying.

Next, correlations were run on all the data which produced some curious themes. Correlations and themes emerged between students who considered themselves to be at least somewhat spiritual and activities or traits related to spirituality. Among these activities such as attending or participating in a gathering related to their religious or nonreligious preference produced a medium strength correlation ($r = .404, p = .000$). In addition, students who considered themselves at least somewhat spiritual read sacred texts ($r = .533, p = .000$) and prayed ($r = .617, p = .000$), and were able to see each day, bad or good, as a gift ($r = .451, p = .000$). There were other medium strength correlations between praying and reading of sacred texts ($r = .577, p = .000$) and attending or participating in a gathering related to one's religious or nonreligious preference with reading of sacred texts ($r = .802, p = .000$) and reading of sacred texts and praying ($r = .616, p = .000$). Lastly, a medium strength correlation was found when comparing how often one prayed to their belief in a higher power ($r = .523, p = .000$).

In conclusion, taking the t-tests into consideration I posit that students who are actively involved in a University of Wisconsin-La Crosse on-campus student club or organization do have higher levels of spirituality than students who are not involved. Lastly, I think it can also be stated that students who took the survey at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse consider themselves to be highly spiritual individuals who put great importance and emphasis on those actives and practices associated with their spirituality.

Equanimity

The second research question for this study questioned if students who are actively involved in an on-campus student club or organization would have higher levels of equanimity compared to students who are not involved. When run on traits related to equanimity and student involvement, t-tests, correlations, and crosstabs produced few notable or statistically significant results. In fact, there was found to be no differences in equanimity levels in students who are involved compared to uninvolved students. Therefore, based on these findings it cannot be confirmed that students who are actively involved in an on-campus student club or organization have higher levels of equanimity than students who are not at all involved. Hence, my second research question has neither been confirmed nor denied by the findings of this study and remains unanswered.

Recommendations for Practice

One of the recommendations that came out of this study for student affairs professionals is that student clubs or organizations may aid in the spiritual identity development or search for meaning and purpose of college students. As Chickering, Dalton, and Stamm (2006) mention, students are attracted to spirituality in college because of their struggle with the big questions of identity, career, relationships, and

purpose. Therefore, as student affairs professionals we should use student clubs and organizations as resources to help nurture, strengthen, grow, or to discover a student's spiritual identity, search for meaning and purpose, and to aid in answering some of those big questions of identity. Finding meaning and purpose is a part of one's spiritual identity and as Chickering and Reisser point out, finding meaning and purpose is a vector of developing identity. In addition, Astin, Astin, and Lindholm (2011) make a strong case that being involved helps to strengthen spirituality through the spiritual quest and it is the spiritual quest, or search for meaning and purpose, that is at the core of spiritual development.

Student affairs professionals should not shy away from what Astin (2004) calls the "S-word." Students are going to be coming to the university searching for meaning and purpose and if recent studies (Barlett, 2005; Craft & Hochella, 2010; Dalton, Eberhardt, Bracken & Echols, 2006) are indeed true they are coming with high expectations that through their experiences and education at college they will find their meaning and purpose. Student affair professionals can encourage them to get involved, to seek out opportunities on or off campus; to take courses where service-learning is a component, to take on a leadership role or leadership training. All this can be done by student affairs professionals by using words that emphasize the search for meaning and purpose or self-discovery. Therefore, student affairs professionals would not necessarily be shying away from the "S-word" just creatively circumventing the actual use of it.

Lastly, the other recommendation for student affairs professionals is that though this study did not conclusively state that equanimity is indeed a direct product of being involved the results of the study by Astin, Astin, and Lindholm (2011) demonstrate that

being involved somehow impacts equanimity. Therefore, I would recommend that if student affairs professionals encounter students who are seeking to find peace or center in life that encouraging them to get involved is a way for that to occur. Other recommendations for helping students find or develop equanimity could be taking a Yoga class, participating in self-reflecting, or finding a quiet place to be still (meditating). As student affairs professionals I feel we could all benefit from any of the above mentioned and that these recommendations are not just for the students that we currently work with or one day may work with.

Limitations

Limitations of this study include the following:

1. This study was conducted at a mid-size, comprehensive institution with a student population of just over 9,000. The student population at this institution is primarily undergraduate students with a small population of graduate and doctoral students. The student population at this institution is also highly involved; therefore, the findings of this study are confined to this specific institution and cannot be applied to other institutions
2. The sample of this study consisted of those students who had achieved junior or senior standing at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse. The findings of this study therefore, cannot be applied to any other class standing at the University.
3. The sample of students who completed the survey is too small to make any generalizable findings or statements.
4. The sample of students who completed the survey was comprised of more females than males. The findings of this study therefore are not applicable or generalizable

to the student population at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse or another other institution.

5. To really answer the questions asked in this study, a longitudinal study would be necessary. Given the time constraints, the researcher was only able to assess students' involvement, spirituality and equanimity at one point in time, thus limiting the ability to look for change over time.
6. Another limitation of this study was in regards to the instrument used. The instrument, a survey, consisted of questions that were mostly constructed by the researcher. Only a few of the questions contained in the survey had previously been asked or used in other studies. In addition, the wording of the questions contained in the instrument may have caused confusion and the reason why some questions were unanswered and skipped by some of the participants. Though the instrument itself was pilot tested prior to it being dispersed, the number contained in that pilot test was small.
7. Lastly, there is very little research or literature that focuses on spirituality, equanimity, and college students. In addition, there is also very little research that pertains to student involvement and how that relates to spirituality and equanimity. Due to the lack of information available it is difficult to make any strong arguments or correlations between the findings of this study and those found in other studies concerning spirituality, equanimity, college students, and student involvement.

Recommendations for Future Research

For future research it is recommended that this study be conducted on a larger sample. In addition, it is recommended that a well-known, reliable, and valid research instrument be used in order to solidify the generalizability of the findings. Other recommendations are that the time period of other studies be longer than a semester, and that in-person interviews be done in order to avoid any confusion that may have arisen from questions being unanswered and thus skipped. In addition, if a pilot test is conducted that it included a larger sample to avoid any bias or assumptions. Lastly, making answers required instead of optional may allow for higher levels of completed surveys which in turn would lead to the reliability of those questions.

Concluding Summary

The purpose of this quantitative study was to explore the two areas of spirituality and equanimity and their relationships to student involvement. Two research questions were addressed in this study, (1) do students who are actively involved in an on-campus student club or organization have higher levels of spirituality than students who are not involved and (2) do students who are actively involved in an on-campus students club or organization have higher levels of equanimity than students who are not involved? The literature reviewed for this study explored and discussed the role that religion and spirituality have had in higher education in the past and currently. Student identity development theories as well as a student involvement theory were found to play key roles in not only a student's development of identity but also their spiritual development, also referred to as the search for meaning and purpose as well as their development of equanimity. This study utilized a frequency based survey that included questions that

pertained to characteristics, traits, and activities commonly associated with spirituality and equanimity. Questions for the survey were adapted from a pre-existing instrument as well as developed by the researcher based on themes found in the literature. From analyzing the data it was found that students who were at least somewhat highly involved in an on-campus student club or organization reported that they participated in or practiced more frequently those activities associated with spirituality compared to students who are uninvolved. When t-tests, correlations, and crosstabs were run on the same data it was found that there were statistically significant differences in spirituality scores between involved students and uninvolved students with the exception of prayer.

In addition, results showed that though involved students reported higher scores on those questions associated with equanimity compared to their uninvolved peers, when t-tests, correlations, and crosstabs were drawn the results were weak, not statistically significant, or inconclusive. Although some of the results of this study possessed weak, not statistically significant, or inconclusive t-test, correlations, and crosstabs neither this study nor the data should be dismissed altogether as insignificant. Further research should be given to the role that involvement plays in the spirituality and equanimity levels of students actively involved in an on-campus student club or organization. As student affairs professionals we can utilize the results of this study to encourage students who are seeking to find meaning and purpose, develop or explore their spirituality or develop or explore their identity to get involved as a resource to aid them in their exploration. As student affairs professionals we must hold true to developing the whole student mind, body, and soul if we are to abide by the statement first declared by E.G. Williamson in the inaugural meeting of the American Council on Education.

Williamson et al. (1949) said the following:

The concept of education is...to include attention to the student's well-rounded development – physically, socially, emotionally, and spiritually, - as well as intellectually. The realization of this objective-the full maturing of each student-cannot be attained without interest in and integrated efforts toward the development of each and every facet of his personality and potentialities. His maturing sense of values, social and spiritual, is not sacrificed to his understanding of the world of man and nature. His need for developing sound philosophy of life to serve as the norm for his actions now and in adult life is not neglected in the college's emphasis on his need for intellectual and professional competence. Rather are all known aspects of the personality of each student viewed by the educator and personnel worker as an integrated whole -- as a human personality living, working, and growing in a democratic society of other human personalities. (p. 2)

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APPENDIX A

PARTICIPANT EMAIL OF REQUEST

Dear UW-La Crosse Student:

My name is Kara Good, I am a graduate student in the Student Affairs Administration program, and I am studying the levels of spirituality and equanimity among students involved in student organizations. This research will add to our capabilities of assisting students to find meaning and purpose in their lives.

I am writing to ask you to complete a survey to assist me in gathering information for this research. You will find the link to the survey at the end of this email. The survey will take you no longer than 15 minutes to complete. By clicking on the link you are voluntarily consenting to take the survey.

You are free to withdraw your participation from this study at any time without penalty. If you do not wish to continue, you can simply leave this website. If you do not click on the “submit” button at the end of the survey, your answers and participation will not be recorded. You may also choose to skip any question you do not wish to answer.

Your anonymity will be maintained throughout the entire length of this study as no identifiable information will be made available to the researcher.

Any questions please contact me at good.kara@uwlax.edu or Dr. Larry Ringgenberg at lringgenberg@uwlax.edu

You have until Friday, February 17th to complete the survey. Thank you for your time.

Please click

https://uwlax.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_1AZulptXOzNj2II&Preview=Survey&BrandID=uwlax to take the survey.

Sincerely,

Kara L Good

APPENDIX B
QUALTRICS SURVEY

1. Year in school.

☐ Junior ☐ Senior

2. Gender

☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Transgender ☐ Prefer not to answer

3. What is your current religious or non-religious preference?

4. How would you rate your level of active involvement in an on-campus student club or organization? (Actively involved implied here means regularly volunteering with a club or organization, regularly attending meetings, or holding a leadership position within a club or organization.)

☐ Very high ☐ High ☐ Somewhat high ☐ Moderate ☐ Not at all

5. How do you define spirituality?

6. Based upon your definition above, how spiritual would you say you are?

☐ Very highly spiritual ☐ Highly spiritual ☐ Somewhat spiritual ☐ Not at all

7. How often, if ever, do you attend or participate in a gathering related to your current religious or non-religious preference?

☐ Daily

☐ Several times a week

☐ Once a Week

☐ Monthly

☐ Less than once a month

☐ Not at all

8. How often, if ever, do you read sacred texts?

- ☐ Daily
- ☐ Several times a week
- ☐ Once a week
- ☐ Monthly
- ☐ Less than once a month
- ☐ Not at all

9. How often, if ever, do you pray?

- ☐ Daily
- ☐ Several times a week
- ☐ Once a week
- ☐ Monthly
- ☐ Less than once a month
- ☐ Not at all

10. How often, if ever, do you meditate?

- ☐ Daily
- ☐ Several times a week
- ☐ Once a week
- ☐ Monthly

- ☐ Less than once a month
- ☐ Not at all

11. How often, if ever, do you take time to reflect upon yourself? (i.e. soul searching)

- ☐ Daily
- ☐ Several times a week
- ☐ Once a week
- ☐ Monthly
- ☐ Less than once a month
- ☐ Not at all

12. How often, if ever, do you participate in or practice Tai Chi, Yoga, or similar activities?

- ☐ Daily
- ☐ Several times a week
- ☐ Once a week
- ☐ Monthly
- ☐ Less than once a month
- ☐ Not at all

13. How easy is it for you to see the positives that can come from experiencing stressful or difficult times?

- ☐ Very easy
- ☐ Easy
- ☐ Somewhat Easy
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Not at all

14. How easy is it for you to remain positive during negative times or in negative situations?

- ☐ Very easy
- ☐ Easy
- ☐ Somewhat Easy
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Not at all

15. How easy is it for you to "turn the other cheek" when someone wrongs you?

- ☐ Very easy
- ☐ Easy
- ☐ Somewhat Easy
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Not at all

16. How easy is it for you to "stay on course" when others are advising you to do otherwise?

- ☐ Very easy
- ☐ Easy
- ☐ Somewhat Easy
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Not at all

17. How easy is it for you to stand up for what you believe in when others are trying to bring you down?

- ☐ Very easy
- ☐ Easy
- ☐ Somewhat Easy
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Not at all

18. How easy is it for you to see each day, good or bad, as a gift?

- ☐ Very easy
- ☐ Easy
- ☐ Somewhat Easy
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Not at all

19. So far in life are you thankful for all that has happened to you?

☐ Yes ☐ No

20. As it stands today, do you feel your life has meaning and purpose?

☐ Yes ☐ No

21. Do you believe in a higher power?

☐ Yes ☐ No

APPENDIX C

COLLEGE STUDENTS' BELIEFS AND VALUES SURVEY

Dear Student

You may remember when you entered college in Fall 2000 that you filled out a questionnaire that asked for information about your high school activities and expectations about college. We are now following up a selected sample of students who completed that questionnaire. This information is being collected as part of a project funded by the John Templeton Foundation. The survey is designed to help us gain a better understanding of your personal beliefs and values. We recognize that not all questions may seem equally relevant to your personal experience. However, we appreciate diverse viewpoints and value all responses. Detailed information on this research is available from the Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA. Your responses are held in the strictest professional confidence.

Sincerely,

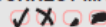
Alexander W. Austin

Alexander W. Astin, Director
Higher Education Research Institute

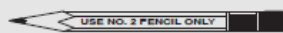
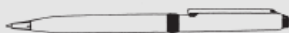
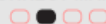
MARKING INSTRUCTIONS

- Please use a black or blue ink pen or a pencil.
- Fill in the oval completely.
- Make no stray marks of any kind.
- Do not fold, tear, or mutilate this survey.

INCORRECT MARKS



CORRECT MARKS



1. How many years of undergraduate education have you completed so far?

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 or more

2. Please specify your undergraduate major:

Please specify your probable career/occupation:

4. Mark the one oval that best describes your undergraduate grade average so far.

- ☐ A (3.75 – 4.0)
- ☐ A-, B+ (3.25 – 3.74)
- ☐ B (2.75 – 3.24)
- ☐ B-, C+ (2.25 – 2.74)
- ☐ C (1.75 – 2.24)
- ☐ C- or less (below 1.75)

5. Please indicate the highest degree you plan to complete eventually at any institution. (Mark one)

- ☐ None
- ☐ Vocational certificate
- ☐ Associate (A.A. or equivalent)
- ☐ Bachelor's degree (B.A., B.S., etc.)
- ☐ Master's degree (M.A., M.S., etc.)
- ☐ Ph.D. or Ed.D.
- ☐ M.D., D.O., D.D.S., or D.V.M.
- ☐ LL.B. or J.D. (Law)
- ☐ B.D. or M. Div. (Divinity)
- ☐ Other

6. Since entering college have you:
(Mark all that apply)

- ☐ Joined a social fraternity or sorority
- ☐ Had a part-time job on campus
- ☐ Had a part-time job off campus
- ☐ Worked full-time while attending school
- ☐ Participated in student government
- ☐ Discussed religion/spirituality with friends
- ☐ Attended a racial/cultural awareness workshop
- Participated in:
 - ☐ intercollegiate football or basketball
 - ☐ other intercollegiate sport
- ☐ Participated in leadership training
- ☐ Discussed religion/spirituality in class
- ☐ Joined a religious organization on campus
- ☐ Converted to another religion

7. During the past year, how much time did you spend during a typical week doing the following activities? (Mark one for each item)

Hours Per Week:

| | None | Less than 1 hour | 1 - 2 | 3 - 5 | 6 - 10 | 11 - 15 | 16 - 20 | 21 - 30 | Over 30 |
|---------------------------------------|------|------------------|-------|-------|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Studying/homework | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| Socializing with friends | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| Talking with faculty outside of class | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| Exercising/sports | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| Partying | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| Student clubs/groups | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| Watching TV | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| Reading for pleasure | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| Using a personal computer | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| Commuting | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |

8. For the activities listed below, please indicate how often you engaged in each since entering college.
(Mark one for each item)

| | Not At All | Occasionally | Frequently |
|--|------------|--------------|------------|
| Socialized with someone of another racial/ethnic group | F | O | N |
| Felt depressed | F | O | N |
| Felt overwhelmed by all I had to do | F | O | N |
| Attended a religious service | F | O | N |
| Drank beer | F | O | N |
| Drank wine or liquor | F | O | N |
| Discussed politics | F | O | N |
| Sought personal counseling | F | O | N |
| Took interdisciplinary courses | F | O | N |
| Tutored another college student | F | O | N |



DO NOT WRITE IN THIS AREA

9. Compared with when you first started college, how would you now describe your:
(Mark one for each item)

| | Much Stronger | Stronger | No Change | Weaker | Much Weaker |
|---|---------------|----------|-----------|--------|-------------|
| Ability to think critically | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Knowledge of people from different races/cultures | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Religious beliefs and convictions | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Leadership abilities | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Interpersonal skills | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Ability to get along with people of different races/cultures | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Understanding of the problems facing your community | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Understanding of social problems facing our nation | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Understanding of global issues | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Acceptance of people with different religious/spiritual views | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Spirituality | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Religiousness | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

10. How often have professors at your current college provided you with:
(Mark one for each item)

| | Frequently | Occasionally | Not At All |
|--|------------|--------------|------------|
| Advice and guidance about your educational program | F | O | N |
| Respect (treated you like a colleague/peer) | F | O | N |
| Emotional support and encouragement | F | O | N |
| Opportunities to discuss the purpose/meaning of life | F | O | N |
| Negative feedback about your academic work | F | O | N |
| Intellectual challenge or stimulation | F | O | N |
| Opportunities to discuss coursework outside of class | F | O | N |
| Help in achieving your professional goals | F | O | N |
| Encouragement to discuss religious/spiritual matters | F | O | N |

11. Your current religious preference: (Mark one)

- ☐ Baptist ☐ Lutheran
☐ Buddhist ☐ Methodist
☐ Eastern Orthodox ☐ Presbyterian
☐ Episcopalian ☐ Quaker
☐ Hindu ☐ Roman Catholic
☐ Islamic ☐ Seventh Day Adventist
☐ Jewish ☐ Unitarian/Universalist
☐ LDS (Mormon) ☐ United Church of Christ
☐ Other Christian religion (specify below)

☐ Other religion (specify below)

☐ None

12. Do you consider yourself a Born-Again Christian?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

13. Please indicate the importance to you personally of each of the following:
(Mark one for each item)

| | Essential | Very Important | Somewhat Important | Not Important |
|---|-----------|----------------|--------------------|---------------|
| Becoming accomplished in one of the performing arts (acting, dancing, etc.) | E | V | S | N |
| Becoming an authority in my field | E | V | S | N |
| Influencing the political structure | E | V | S | N |
| Influencing social values | E | V | S | N |
| Raising a family | E | V | S | N |
| Being very well off financially | E | V | S | N |
| Helping others who are in difficulty | E | V | S | N |
| Making a theoretical contribution to science | E | V | S | N |
| Writing original works (poems, novels, short stories, etc.) | E | V | S | N |
| Creating artistic works (painting, sculpture, decorating, etc.) | E | V | S | N |
| Becoming successful in a business of my own | E | V | S | N |
| Becoming involved in programs to clean up the environment | E | V | S | N |
| Developing a meaningful philosophy of life | E | V | S | N |
| Participating in a community action program | E | V | S | N |
| Helping to promote racial understanding | E | V | S | N |
| Becoming a community leader | E | V | S | N |
| Integrating spirituality into my life | E | V | S | N |

14. Please indicate your agreement with each of the following statements:
(Mark one for each item)

| | Disagree Strongly | Disagree Somewhat | Agree Somewhat | Agree Strongly |
|---|-------------------|-------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Love is at the root of all the great religions | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| All life is interconnected | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Believing in supernatural phenomena is foolish | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| We are all spiritual beings | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| It is futile to try to discover the purpose of existence | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| People can reach a higher spiritual plane of consciousness through meditation or prayer | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| The evil in this world seems to outweigh the good | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Some religious traditions convey more truth than others | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Most people can grow spiritually without being religious | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| People who don't believe in God will be punished | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Non-religious people can lead lives that are just as moral as those of religious believers | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| The universe arose by chance | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| In the future, science will be able to explain everything | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| While science can provide important information about the physical world, only religion can truly explain existence | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

15. The relationship between science and religion is one of:
(Mark one)

- ☐ Conflict; I consider myself to be on the side of religion.
☐ Conflict; I consider myself to be on the side of science.
☐ Independence; they refer to different aspects of reality.
☐ Collaboration; each can be used to help validate the other.

16. Do you pray?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No (Skip to #18)

17. If yes, why do you pray?
(Mark one for each item)

| | | | |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| | Not At All | Occasionally | Frequently |
| For help in solving problems | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| To be in communion with God | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| To express gratitude | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| For emotional strength | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| For forgiveness | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| To relieve the suffering of others | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Other | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

18. How often do you engage in the following activities?
(Mark one for each item)

| | | | | | | |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| | Daily | Several Times/week | Once/week | Monthly | Less Than Monthly | Not At All |
| Self-reflection | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Prayer | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Meditation | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Yoga, Tai Chi, or similar practice | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Religious singing/chanting | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Reading sacred texts | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Other reading on religion/spirituality | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

19. Please indicate the extent to which each of the following describes you.
(Mark one for each item)

| | | | |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| | To A Great Extent | To Some Extent | Not At All |
| Having an interest in spirituality | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Believing in the sacredness of life | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Feeling unsettled about spiritual and religious matters | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Believing only what I can see or can be explained | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Feeling good about the direction in which my life is headed | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Feeling a sense of connection with God/Higher Power that transcends my personal self | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Feeling a strong connection to all humanity | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Feeling disillusioned with my religious upbringing | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Having an interest in different religious traditions | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Being committed to introducing people to my faith | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Believing in the goodness of all people | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Being thankful for all that has happened to me | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Seeing each day, good or bad, as a gift | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Seeking to follow religious teachings in my everyday life | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Believing in life after death | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

20. Which of the following best characterizes your conception of or experience with God?
(Mark one)

| | |
|---|---|
| <input type="radio"/> Universal spirit | <input type="radio"/> Divine mystery |
| <input type="radio"/> Higher Power | <input type="radio"/> Supreme Being |
| <input type="radio"/> Love | <input type="radio"/> None of the above |
| <input type="radio"/> Source of all existence | <input type="radio"/> Other |

21. How do you view God or other Higher Power in relation to yourself?
(Mark all that apply)

| | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Father-figure | <input type="checkbox"/> Beloved |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mother-figure | <input type="checkbox"/> Master |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Friend | <input type="checkbox"/> Protector |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher | <input type="checkbox"/> None of the above |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Part of me | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |

22. Please indicate the importance to you personally of each of the following:
(Mark one for each item)

| | | | | |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| | Not Important | Somewhat Important | Very Important | Essential |
| Seeking out opportunities to help me grow spiritually | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Reducing pain and suffering in the world | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Attaining inner harmony | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Attaining wisdom | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Seeking beauty in my life | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Finding answers to the mysteries of life | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Becoming a more loving person | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Following faithfully the Laws and Rules taught by my religion | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Improving the human condition | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

23. Have you ever had a "spiritual" experience while:
(Mark one for each item)

| | | | | |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| | Not Applicable | Not At All | Occasionally | Frequently |
| In a house of worship | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Listening to beautiful music | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Viewing a great work of art | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Participating in a musical or artistic performance | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Engaging in athletics | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Witnessing the beauty and harmony of nature | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Making love | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Meditating | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Other | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

24. Since entering college, please indicate how often you have:
(Mark one for each item)

| | | | |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| | Not At All | Occasionally | Frequently |
| Participated in community food or clothing drives | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Helped at local houses of worship | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Performed other volunteer work | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Helped friends with personal problems | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Donated money to charity | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Felt angry with God | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Felt loved by God | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Struggled to understand evil, suffering, and death | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Questioned your religious/spiritual beliefs | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Spent time with people who share your religious views | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Felt that your life is filled with stress and anxiety | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Been able to find meaning in times of hardship | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Expressed gratitude to others | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Felt at peace/centered | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Explored religion online | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Found new meaning in the rituals and practices of my religion | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Attended a class/workshop or retreat on matters related to religion/spirituality | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

25. The ultimate spiritual quest for me is:
(Mark one)

| |
|---|
| <input type="radio"/> To discover who I really am |
| <input type="radio"/> To know what God requires of me |
| <input type="radio"/> To become a better person |
| <input type="radio"/> To know my purpose in life |
| <input type="radio"/> To make the world a better place |
| <input type="radio"/> Other |
| <input type="radio"/> I do not consider myself to be on a spiritual quest |

26. In what ways have the following experiences changed your religious/spiritual beliefs?
(Mark one for each item)

| | Not Applicable | No Change | Strengthened | Weakened |
|--|-----------------|-----------|--------------|----------|
| New ideas encountered in classes | (W) (S) (N) () | | | |
| Romantic relationship | (W) (S) (N) () | | | |
| Financial difficulties | (W) (S) (N) () | | | |
| Personal injury or illness | (W) (S) (N) () | | | |
| "Break up" with romantic partner | (W) (S) (N) () | | | |
| Parents' divorce or separation | (W) (S) (N) () | | | |
| Death of a close friend or family member | (W) (S) (N) () | | | |
| Other crisis involving a friend or family member | (W) (S) (N) () | | | |
| Epiphany/Conversion/Mystical event | (W) (S) (N) () | | | |
| Natural disaster | (W) (S) (N) () | | | |
| Campus tragedy | (W) (S) (N) () | | | |
| The events of September 11 th , 2001 | (W) (S) (N) () | | | |
| Other | (W) (S) (N) () | | | |

27. How many of your close friends:
(Mark one for each item)

| | None | Some | Most | All |
|--|-----------------|------|------|-----|
| Share your religious/spiritual views? | (A) (M) (S) (N) | | | |
| Belong to a campus religious organization? | (A) (M) (S) (N) | | | |
| Are searching for meaning/purpose in life? | (A) (M) (S) (N) | | | |
| Go to church/temple/or other house of worship? | (A) (M) (S) (N) | | | |

28. Please indicate the extent to which you engage in the following activities:
(Mark one for each item)

| | Not At All | To Some Extent | To A Great Extent |
|--|-------------|----------------|-------------------|
| Searching for meaning/purpose in life | (S) (2) (1) | | |
| Trying to change things that are unfair in the world | (S) (2) (1) | | |
| Accepting others as they are | (S) (2) (1) | | |
| Having discussions about the meaning of life with my friends | (S) (2) (1) | | |

29. Please indicate your agreement with each of the following statements:
(Mark one for each item)

| | Disagree Strongly | Disagree Somewhat | Agree Somewhat | Agree Strongly |
|---|-------------------|-------------------|----------------|----------------|
| What happens in my life is determined by forces larger than myself | (4) (3) (2) (1) | | | |
| Whether or not there is a Supreme Being is a matter of indifference to me | (4) (3) (2) (1) | | | |
| It doesn't matter what I believe as long as I lead a moral life | (4) (3) (2) (1) | | | |
| I have never felt a sense of sacredness | (4) (3) (2) (1) | | | |
| I gain spiritual strength by trusting in a Higher Power | (4) (3) (2) (1) | | | |
| I find religion to be personally helpful | (4) (3) (2) (1) | | | |
| I know someone I can turn to for spiritual guidance | (4) (3) (2) (1) | | | |
| Abortion should be legal | (4) (3) (2) (1) | | | |
| The death penalty should be abolished | (4) (3) (2) (1) | | | |
| If two people really like each other, it's all right for them to have sex even if they've known each other for only a very short time | (4) (3) (2) (1) | | | |
| The activities of married women are best confined to the home and family | (4) (3) (2) (1) | | | |
| Marijuana should be legalized | (4) (3) (2) (1) | | | |
| It is important to have laws prohibiting homosexual relationships | (4) (3) (2) (1) | | | |
| Realistically, an individual can do little to bring about changes in our society | (4) (3) (2) (1) | | | |

30. My spiritual/religious beliefs:
(Mark one for each item)

| | Disagree Strongly | Disagree Somewhat | Agree Somewhat | Agree Strongly |
|---|-------------------|-------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Have helped me develop my identity | (4) (3) (2) (1) | | | |
| Are one of the most important things in my life | (4) (3) (2) (1) | | | |
| Give meaning/purpose to my life | (4) (3) (2) (1) | | | |
| Help define the goals I set for myself | (4) (3) (2) (1) | | | |
| Provide me with strength, support, and guidance | (4) (3) (2) (1) | | | |
| Lie behind my whole approach to life | (4) (3) (2) (1) | | | |

31. Rate yourself on each of the following traits as compared with the average person your age. We want the most accurate estimate of how you see yourself.
(Mark one for each item)

| | Lowest 10% | Below Average | Average | Above Average | Highest 10% |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------|---------|---------------|-------------|
| Altruism | (S) (4) (3) (2) (1) | | | | |
| Compassion | (S) (4) (3) (2) (1) | | | | |
| Cooperativeness | (S) (4) (3) (2) (1) | | | | |
| Courage | (S) (4) (3) (2) (1) | | | | |
| Creativity | (S) (4) (3) (2) (1) | | | | |
| Dependability | (S) (4) (3) (2) (1) | | | | |
| Drive to achieve | (S) (4) (3) (2) (1) | | | | |
| Emotional health | (S) (4) (3) (2) (1) | | | | |
| Empathy | (S) (4) (3) (2) (1) | | | | |
| Forgiveness | (S) (4) (3) (2) (1) | | | | |
| Generosity | (S) (4) (3) (2) (1) | | | | |
| Gratefulness | (S) (4) (3) (2) (1) | | | | |
| Helpfulness | (S) (4) (3) (2) (1) | | | | |
| Humility | (S) (4) (3) (2) (1) | | | | |
| Kindness | (S) (4) (3) (2) (1) | | | | |
| Leadership ability | (S) (4) (3) (2) (1) | | | | |
| Loyalty | (S) (4) (3) (2) (1) | | | | |
| Open-mindedness | (S) (4) (3) (2) (1) | | | | |
| Patience | (S) (4) (3) (2) (1) | | | | |
| Physical health | (S) (4) (3) (2) (1) | | | | |
| Religiousness/religiosity | (S) (4) (3) (2) (1) | | | | |
| Respectfulness | (S) (4) (3) (2) (1) | | | | |
| Self-awareness | (S) (4) (3) (2) (1) | | | | |
| Self-confidence (intellectual) | (S) (4) (3) (2) (1) | | | | |
| Self-confidence (social) | (S) (4) (3) (2) (1) | | | | |
| Self-understanding | (S) (4) (3) (2) (1) | | | | |
| Spirituality | (S) (4) (3) (2) (1) | | | | |
| Understanding of others | (S) (4) (3) (2) (1) | | | | |

32. Please rate your satisfaction with your current college on each of the aspects of campus life listed below.
(Mark one for each item)

| | No Experience/Can't Rate | Dissatisfied | Neutral | Satisfied | Very Satisfied |
|--|--------------------------|--------------|---------|-----------|----------------|
| Relevance of coursework to everyday life | (V) (S) (N) (D) () | | | | |
| Sense of community on campus | (V) (S) (N) (D) () | | | | |
| Opportunities for religious/spiritual reflection | (V) (S) (N) (D) () | | | | |
| Career counseling and advising | (V) (S) (N) (D) () | | | | |
| Amount of contact with faculty | (V) (S) (N) (D) () | | | | |
| Interaction with other students | (V) (S) (N) (D) () | | | | |
| Respect for diverse spiritual/religious beliefs | (V) (S) (N) (D) () | | | | |
| Overall college experience | (V) (S) (N) (D) () | | | | |

THANK YOU!