

ANONYMOUS ANOMALY: NONRESIDENT UNDERGRADUATES
ON A 21st CENTURY LAND GRANT CAMPUS

by

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DEDICATION

To my wife Sarah, daughter Hannah & son James...thank you for your unwavering support. You sacrificed so many evenings and weekends to help make this dissertation possible. I look forward to the shared time together that awaits!

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ABSTRACT

The experiences of nonresident undergraduates enrolled in US public universities have remained understudied. Accordingly, the purpose of this qualitative intrinsic case study was to explore the nonresident undergraduate's experience, persistence and sense of belonging on a land grant university campus. Combined, findings were intended to expand the literature base, methodological approaches and practitioner programming regarding nonresident persistence. Existing transition and institutional logics theory formed the basis of the study's theoretical framework. Nine first-time, full-time third year undergraduates from states across three time zones were interviewed twice during their sixth semester of college enrollment. Additionally, data was collected through photovoice and document analysis methods. Findings for each research question were reported through a thematic analysis. Themes related to experience included: adapting from home to university life, motivating from enrollment to degree, and recreating as a lifestyle. Themes related to persistence included: accessing campus resources, familying from afar, and socializing to stay. Themes related to sense of belonging included: transforming through personal growth, identifying across groups and areas, and supporting across communities. Lived experience findings supported existing literature on socioeconomic and enrollment management while extending the literature on financial challenges. Persistence findings supported past literature on third year priorities and extended the literature on nonresident peer groups and family support. Sense of belonging findings supported literature on the theoretical construct of interdependence while extending the literature on the influence of community characteristics and campus climate. Policy implications for nonresident retention centered on leveraging outdoor curriculum, addressing nonresident insurance, revising nonresident tuition models and expanding nonresident mentoring programs. Practice implications for nonresident retention focused on innovations to summer orientation programming, expanding transportation options, expanding family weekend opportunities, and offering more resources on the surrounding community. Future recommendations focused on expanding research both in methodological scope and duration to better understand the nonresident experience.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

While enrollment of nonresident undergraduates on public research university campuses increased 67% between fall 2002 to spring 2015 (Curs & Jaquette, 2017), this subgroup is two times more likely to depart the institution prior to graduation than their resident peers (DesJardins, Kim & Rzonca, 2003; Yu et al., 2010). Prior research in this area has focused primarily on the initial recruitment and enrollment of nonresident undergraduates considering the valuable tuition dollars this group brings to college campuses. Such an enrollment trend generates important pragmatic and symbolic questions for university officials across the country. At a pragmatic level, how can the recruitment and retention of nonresidents be more sustainable? Whereas at a symbolic level, how is an increased presence of nonresidents on public university campuses perceived by the general public? A greater understanding of the nonresident undergraduate will contribute to transforming this enrollment ‘anonymous anomaly’ into an ‘explained entity’ leading to improved outcomes for the individual student, subgroup, university, and host community alike.

Extant retention literature establishes nonresident undergraduates as a subgroup prone to persistence issues. Even with a similar level of academic readiness for college as their resident peers, nonresident status serves as a statistically significant variable in retention studies (Herzog, 2005; Whalen, Saunders & Shelley, 2010; Wohlgemuth et al., 2007; Yu et al., 2010). Furthermore, while nonresident departure is most likely within the first two semesters of

enrollment (Herzog, 2005; Murtaugh, Burns & Schuster, 1999), this subgroup remains prone to departure throughout their entire academic career (Singell & Waddell, 2010). More specifically, nonresidents are only 59.1% as likely to graduate as their resident peers (Whalen, Saunders & Shelley, 2010). Such enrollment trends have tremendous implications for the vitality of today's public university campus. With an increasing reliance on nonresident enrollment for human and financial capital (Zhang, 2007), improved persistence of nonresidents equates to improved stability of the host campus. Subsequently, retention of nonresident undergraduates is an established challenge needed to be addressed based on prior research findings.

The potential causes of nonresident attrition are varied and often speculative in nature. Nonresidents departure is typically associated with five areas of consideration: financial support (DesJardins, Kim & Rzonca, 2003; Hoyt & Winn, 2004; Johnson & Muse, 2012; Yu et al., 2010), gender (Campbell & Mislevy, 2013; Leppel 2002), friend/social support (Palmer & Gasman, 2008; Whalen et al., 2009; Wohlgemuth et al., 2010; Yu et al., 2010), distance from home/family (Dotzel, 2017; Sabharwal, 2005; Yu et al., 2010) and campus amenities/resources (Jacob et al., 2013; Sabharwal, 2005; Whalen et al., 2009; Wohlgemuth, 2007; Yu et al., 2010). How these factors are associated with a particular institution are an important point of consideration. An emerging body of work has examined the relationship between a student's sense of belonging and retention for the overall student population (Freeman et al., 2007; Hoffman et al., 2002; Morrow & Ackerman, 2012). Similarly, another line of research has investigated how institutional and peer cohort characteristics impact retention across multiple institution types (Oseguera & Rhee, 2009; Pike & Graunke, 2015; Titus, 2004). While focused on the general undergraduate population, the findings from these studies offer potentially useful points of

comparison for the nonresident population as well. Further, studies inclusive of public, land grant universities have identified variables that have had a statistically negative impact on nonresident enrollment decisions (Adkisson & Peach, 2008; Winters, 2012). Further investigation into nonresidents and how sense of belonging on public university campuses impacts their persistence holds potential value.

While nonresident retention has consistently been identified as a significant issue, several deficiencies emerge within the existing literature. First, in assessing relevant studies found in the research base, only a limited number of contemporary articles focus research questions specifically on nonresident undergraduates (see for example Adkisson & Peach, 2008; Baryla & Dotterweich, 2006; Canche, 2014; Curs & Jaquette, 2017; Jaquette et al., 2015, 2016). Furthermore, studies addressing nonresident retention are primarily centered on the first to second year transition period. Yu et al. (2010) is an exception by studying retention between an undergraduate's second and third year. Previous studies on retention have established the third year of persistence to be distinctly unique and an area in need of further investigation (Allen et al., 2008; Willcoxson, 2010). Accordingly, third year students who have persisted may offer invaluable insights on how they successfully navigated their initial campus and general education courses to arrive at this point of relative enrollment stability. In addition, previous studies have exclusively used quantitative methodologies with most focusing on the upfront economic impact of initial enrollment of nonresident undergraduates. Prior studies have established a need for a qualitative perspective to better understand how identified predictors interact and influence retention undergraduate retention outcomes (Whalen, Saunders & Shelley, 2010; Willcoxson, 2010). More specifically, scholars have recommended investigating the retention of

undergraduates beyond their first year in relation to the impacts of sense of belonging (Hausmann, Schofield & Woods, 2007) and successful interventions (Morrow & Ackermann, 2012). Based on this global scan of the literature, a qualitative, single site intrinsic case study exploring retention of nonresident undergraduates in their third year from a sense of belonging approach can help inform the audience about factors that promote nonresident student persistence.

Considering the limited research on nonresident persistence, exploring the topic from a single case study site can be instructive in establishing the convergence of student experience with institutional context. Past research largely characterizes nonresident undergraduates based on pre-college enrollment demographic measures such as: socioeconomic status (Adkisson & Peach, 2008), Dotterweich & Baryla, Jr., 2005; Dotzel, 2017), academic preparedness (Jaquette & Curs, 2015; Rizzo & Ehrenberg, 2004; Titus et al., 2015), and amount of financial aid received (Herzog, 2005, Hoyt & Winn, 2004; Johnson & Muse, 2012). Research on nonresident undergraduates post-enrollment largely focuses either on this population's high rates of institutional mobility (i.e. transfer tendencies) or how increased nonresident enrollment may crowd out resident students at public institutions by acquiring scarce institutional aid money.

In terms of institutional context, public land grant institutions arose from the Morrill Acts of 1862, 1890, or 1994 resulting in the designation of at least one college or university in each state, territory, and in the District of Columbia (APLU, 2019). As offered by Vandenberg-Davis (2003), "The act reputedly ushered in a distinctly American approach to higher education, one which emphasized practical learning for 'farmers and mechanics' and equal opportunity for higher learning." (p. 57). With a mission of access, these institutions were originally established

primarily for the citizens of the state. Developing a more in depth understanding of who the nonresident undergraduate is and their interactions with a land grant campus as they increase their presence stands to be instructive.

Montana State University (MSU) serves as the state land grant, co-flagship campus and has encountered significant growth in its nonresident population. According to MSU's Office of Planning and Analysis (2019a), in fall 2005 nonresidents made up 31.3% of the overall domestic student body, whereas by fall 2018 this share had increased to 46.5%. Perhaps the most compelling evidence of growth can be found with the freshman enrollment numbers. More specifically, fall of 2016 served as the enrollment tipping point for Montana State University as this was the first time in the history of the university where first-time, full-time nonresident undergraduate enrollment in the freshman class surpassed enrollment of their resident peers (Schontzler, 2017b). As of Fall 2019, this nonresident enrollment number stood at 54% of the overall MSU freshman student body (MSU, 2019e). In comparison, land grant institutions nationwide average only 30% nonresident enrollment (IPEDS, 2015). Such rapid increases and overall enrollment numbers establish the necessary requirements of a unique case study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Despite investing considerable funds to recruit these nonresident undergraduates and "historic highs" in university retention and graduation rates (Schontzler, 2019a), nonresident retention rates still lag behind their resident counterparts. In charting the fall 2016 cohort, residents persisted to their third year at 69.5%, whereas nonresidents persisted at 62.8% (MSU, 2020d). Consequently, developing a better understanding of this subgroup and what can improve their persistence carries considerable value for the student, institution, and the greater community alike.

Statement of the Problem

Nonresident undergraduate enrollment on public research university campuses increased by 67% from 2002-2003 to 2014-2015 (Curs & Jaquette, 2017). Despite this increase, very little is known about who the nonresident undergraduate is and their overall campus experience. Prior research has almost exclusively used a quantitative lens to study the upfront enrollment demographic data of nonresident undergraduates. Furthermore, subsequent retention studies typically focus on undergraduate persistence, in general, with few studies using nonresident undergraduates as a characteristic in which to compare retention (i.e. residency status). Lastly, even fewer studies explore nonresident retention beyond the first three semesters of enrollment. Collectively, the current understanding of nonresidents and their lived experience on a land grant university campus is limited in methodology and focus. As a result, a qualitative intrinsic case study on the experiences of third year nonresidents will help to expand the literature base, methodological approaches, and practitioner programming regarding nonresident persistence.

First-time full-time nonresident undergraduates persist at a significantly lower rate than their resident counterparts at public land grant institutions (NCES, 2019). As a result, it is critical to explore what contributes to nonresident persistence to their third year of academic study. Moreover, such an exploration offers benefits from both an undergraduate and institutional perspective.

Purpose of the Study

Based on an insufficient knowledge base, the purpose of this intrinsic case study is to explore the lived experience of third year nonresident undergraduates at a land grant institution

in the Rocky Mountain region helping to identify what factors contributed to their ultimate persistence. Previous research studies report nonresidents are two times more likely than residents to depart the institution (DesJardins, Kim & Rzonca, 2003; Yu et al., 2010) with nonresident enrollment at land grant institution campuses negatively impacted when certain institutional and regional characteristics are present (Adkisson & Peach, 2008; Winters, 2012). By gaining a better understanding of what contributes to nonresident persistence, land grant institutions can customize comprehensive retention plans to meet the unique needs of this increasingly significant campus subpopulation.

Research Questions

Since nonresidents persist at a lower rate than their resident peers, it is in the best interest of campus administrators, faculty, and staff to better understand this issue. Accordingly, the aim of this study is to gain insights into the nonresident experience on a land grant university campus that has enrolled an unusually high percentage of this population in recent years from the perspective of the third-year nonresident student. As a result, this study addresses the following questions:

1. What is the lived experience of third-year nonresident undergraduates at a specific land grant university campus?
2. What factors do third-year nonresident undergraduates identify as contributing to their persistence at a specific land grant university campus?
3. How do third-year nonresident undergraduates describe their sense of belonging at a specific land grant campus?

Significance of the Study

Increasing retention rates of nonresident undergraduates is an important priority for land grant university campuses for several reasons. First, nonresident undergraduates enhance the academic profile (Rizzo & Ehrenberg, 2004; Titus, Vamosiu & Gupta, 2015) and bring diversity of perspectives, ideas, and cultures to the general student body (Baryla & Dotterweich, 2006; Titus, Vamosiu & Gupta, 2015; Zhang, 2007). Second, nonresident tuition serves as an increasingly relied upon funding source for campus operating budgets (Jaquette & Curs, 2015; Toutkoushian et al., 2007; Zhang, 2007) and high rates of departure require further acquisition costs to maintain this revenue source (Jamelske, 2009; Johnson & Muse, 2012). Third, nonresidents help to subsidize resident tuition helping to keep the costs down and promote access for their resident peers (Toutkoushian et al., 2007). Finally, high rates of nonresident departure represent a loss of potential human/economic capital for the campus, community, and state (Cooke & Boyle, 2011; Groen & White, 2004). Recently, local media reported that Montana and Bozeman officials identified the necessity to count nonresident undergraduates in the 2020 census to leverage federal funding and possibly increased congressional representation (Schontzler, 2019a). In an era of stagnating enrollment numbers and declining state funding, land grant institutions must invest resources into better understanding and supporting nonresident retention.

Operational Definitions

Throughout this research study, the following operational definitions will be referenced:

1. Undergraduate: A student who has not previously obtained a bachelor's degree; pursuing their first four year degree.
2. Nonresident: First time, full time undergraduate from a US state other than Montana categorized as other than resident per university tuition status.
3. Retention: Enrolled full time at host institution in consecutive semesters.
4. Third Year: Enrolled in sixth consecutive full (non-summer) semester on campus.
5. Lived Experience: "Is a representation and understanding of a researcher or research subject's human experiences, choices, and options and how those factors influence one's perception of knowledge (Given, 2008). For this study, the focus is on participants' lived undergraduate experiences on campus or in the surrounding area.
6. Sense of Belonging:

In terms of college, sense of belonging refers to students' perceived social support on campus, a feeling or sensation of connectedness, and the experience of mattering or feeling cared about, accepted, respected, valued by, and important to the campus community or others on campus such as faculty, staff, and peers (Strayhorn, 2018, p. 4).

For the purposes of this study, community includes both the campus and surrounding community.

7. Institutional Logics:

...the socially constructed, historical patterns of cultural symbols and material practices, including assumptions, values, and beliefs, by which individuals and organizations provide meaning to their daily activity, organize time and space, and reproduce their lives and experiences" (Thornton & Ocasio, 2008).

For this study nonresident institutional logics include: enrollment, tuition, and campus amenities.

8. Institutional Fit: "...fitting in with others that share the role of being a student in a particular institution at a particular moment in time" (Bean, 2005, p. 219). The focus for this study involves third-year nonresident undergraduates enrolled on a land grant institution campus.

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Assumptions

1. Nonresident undergraduates have enough similarities in their overall experience that the researcher can identify representative trends across the group as a whole while also being able to establish nonresidents as a distinct subgroup of the greater university campus.
2. Nonresident status actually impacts the lived on-campus experience on a land grant campus.
3. Study participants will be honest in their responses and can accurately self-reflect on their experiences.

Limitations

1. This study is limited by the researcher's ability to select and implement appropriate procedures and questions. The researcher serves as a human instrument who previously was a nonresident undergraduate at the institution host site.
2. The accessible population may not be representative of the full nonresident population at the study site. Accordingly, data gathered on the nonresident

perspective on their lived experience, persistence, and sense of belonging may not be all encompassing.

3. While perspectives of other stakeholders are considered via document analysis, etc., inclusion of all perspectives from the population of stakeholders is beyond the study's scope.
4. Since the study focuses exclusively on nonresidents who have persisted, there is potential for survivorship bias. The perspective of nonresidents who did not persist is not accounted for, and may be markedly different from those who persisted, but is beyond the study's scope.

Delimitations

1. The researcher elected to focus on first-time, full-time third year nonresident undergraduates. As a result, nonresidents in other enrollment years, part-time, and traditional transfer status were not considered in this study.
2. While international students are "nonresident" by definition, the researcher chose to focus on students whose residence is located in a US state. While international students may share in the nonresident tuition designation at many universities, this student population is uniquely situated in comparison to domestic out-of-state students and thus introduces contextual variables that extend beyond the scope of this study.
3. A single land grant university campus (i.e. Montana State University) was used for this study. While appropriate for a problem of practice study, the subsequent research findings may differ at other land grant and four-year research university campuses.

4. For this study, the perspectives of nonresident undergraduates served as the primary source of data.

Chapter Summary

Land grant universities have expanded their recruitment of nonresident undergraduates in recent years as a way to generate additional revenue and value on campus. Despite this higher rate of enrollment, nonresident undergraduates continue to persist at a far lower rate than their resident peers. Nonresident attrition negatively impacts both the financial and human capital of the institution and surrounding community. While the literature has suggested various potential reasons for nonresident attrition, in general, very few studies have specifically focused on the factors impacting nonresident undergraduate persistence. Further still, no study has utilized a qualitative methodology to better understand the lived experience of third year nonresident undergraduates. This study aims to explore persisting nonresident undergraduates on a land grant campus as a way to develop a comprehensive retention plan for this increasingly valuable member of the campus population.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Nonresident undergraduates represent an increasingly significant portion of the student body on public university campuses across the country. Recent studies suggest nonresidents, on average, make up 25%-30% of the campus population at large public universities nationwide (Jaquette, Curs & Posselt, 2016; Zhang & Ness, 2010). With such a rapidly increasing campus presence, this population of undergraduates bring both benefits and challenges to public land grant institutions of higher education. Such a phenomenon can best be understood by organizing the existing literature through the three phases of Schlossberg's Transition Model: context (moving in), nonresident undergraduate characteristics and integration (moving through), and the ultimate outcomes (moving out). In a complementary fashion, institutional logics theory is interspersed to provide necessary context on how the campus impacts and is impacted by the nonresident undergraduate. The purpose of this literature review is to establish not only the current understanding of this topic, but also to illuminate areas in need of additional study in order for stakeholders to best address this increased percentage of nonresident undergraduates on today's public university campuses.

Theoretical Framework

The experiences of nonresident undergraduates on land grant university campuses can be understood using the following theoretical framework: Schlossberg's Transition Theory (2006)

and the institutional logics meta-theory. Complementary in nature, Schlossberg's Transition Theory (2006) examines the student experience whereas institutional logics captures actions by the campus. Combined, this theoretical basis provides the necessary breadth and depth to adequately explore the nonresident undergraduate retention dynamic. In the following analysis, I incorporated the philosophical assumptions of ontology, epistemology, axiology and methodology to situate this research study of nonresident undergraduate retention on a public, land grant campus within this theoretical framework.

Schlossberg's Transition Theory

Transition theory provides an important lens concerning the individualized perspective of a student during their undergraduate career. Nancy Schlossberg's Transition Theory (1981) is rooted in the field of psychology and related counseling fields. This approach detects the complicated nuances of the individual that a quantitative approach may not account for in the analysis phase. Originally this theory was applied to workplace transitions, counseling, and nursing followed by an integration into the higher education space in more recent years (Evans et al., 2010).

Schlossberg, Lynch & Chickering (1989) first applied the theory to the higher education context offered the first application to higher education when discussing transitions for adult learners. Through subsequent revisions, Nancy Schlossberg's Transition Theory (Goodman, Schlossberg & Anderson, 2006) provided a framework that has been applied to a range of student groups including: veterans, medical students, students with learning disabilities, underrepresented minority students, and the transition to the workforce for recent graduates. Similarly, this theory offers the framework necessary to analyze the transition of nonresident

undergraduates throughout college. According to Goodman et al. (2006), a transition is, "...any event, or non-event, that results in changed relationships, routines, assumptions, and roles" (p. 33) and is defined by type, context, and impact. For this study, the type is an anticipated transition, the context is a land grant institution outside a student's home state, and the impact is how this transition has altered their daily life to date.

Based on Schlossberg's Transition Theory (Goodman et al., 2006), students advance through three phases of a transition: moving in, moving through, and moving out. For this study, the moving through phase proves most germane with a secondary focus on the subsequent moving out phase as it pertains to their enrollment decisions during their third year as an undergraduate. Within the moving through phase, nonresident undergraduates are influenced by four sets of factors: situation, self, support, and strategies. For situation, nonresident undergraduates speak to their own unique journey in relation to the land grant context. With self, personal and demographic characteristics help to better define their pre-entry standing and how that aided/hindered their transition to this point. More specifically, these developmentally instigative characteristics are critical in determining whether nonresidents invite, inhibit or prevent further engagement with the campus environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). In terms of support, nonresident undergraduates identify the types, functions, and measurements of various support structures during this phase. Finally, strategies speak to the approaches and coping modes students used to persist through this transition. For the purposes of this study, the moving out phase will be interpreted as the nonresident's decision to persist or attrit. I made this determination to better align with the participants' experiences instead of the more commonly associated act of graduating—something yet to be realized by this participant group.

In evaluating the nonresident persistence process through Schlossberg's Transition Theory (2006), not only do inherent challenges become apparent, but the adaptive behaviors that ultimately led to a successful transition emerge. Such information could inform higher education programming efforts upon entrance to the university in order to minimize challenges and elevate supports to increase overall retention of this nonresident population.

Schlossberg's Transition Theory (2006) accounts for the individual's subjective experiences of nonresident undergraduates at the bounded case study campus site. Furthermore, the theory's transferability of transition experiences (Evans et al., 2010) is useful in accommodating third year students' perspectives, as the majority of theories in retention research are applied primarily to first year experiences. Also, there are logical channels within the theory to offer clear connections regarding the influence of the environment and context on a student's transition (Goodman et al., 2006)—a key consideration in the qualitative case study design. Finally, Schlossberg's Transition Theory (2006) has the capacity to address various nonresident experience perspectives supporting the holistic view of the pragmatism interpretive framework.

Institutional Logic Meta-Theory

The transition of an undergraduate throughout their college career is not limited to the individual and their individual characteristics alone. Rather, an undergraduate's experience is influenced by the interactions between the individual and the context of their host institution. As offered in Schlossberg's Transition Theory (2006), a major source of meaning for the individual is based on their relationship with the setting of the transition and the presence or absence of support at the institutional level. Institutional logics, an off-shoot of the neo-institutionalism branch of institutional theory, provides insights into how a nonresident undergraduate's

transition is influenced by the mission, motives, and adaptive strategies of an institution within a particular time and place (Friedland & Alford, 1991).

Institutional logics offers a theoretical lens for the decisions made by institutions and individuals alike. Researchers have applied this meta-theory across a range of contexts including: markets, savings and loans, health centers, and government agencies (Thornton & Ocasio, 2008). Friedland & Alford (1991) developed the seminal work that expanded the application of this theory by defining institutional logics as the “Organizing principles when making decisions” (p. 170). More specifically, institutional logics accounts for analysis at the individual, group, and organizational levels (Pahnke, Katila & Eisenhardt, 2015). Such a definition provided immediate application across numerous sectors. Thornton and Ocasio (1999) aimed to further develop the application of institutional logics by defining this meta-theory as,

The socially constructed, historical patterns of cultural symbols and material practices, including assumptions, values, and beliefs, by which individuals and organizations provide meaning to their daily activity, organize time and space, and reproduce their lives and experiences (p. 804).

This revised definition helped set the stage for application across a greater cross-section of organizations including higher education.

Institutional logics has served as the “...the building blocks to sensemaking” of the higher education field (Gumport, 2000, p. 96). Thornton & Ocasio (1999) used institutional logics to better understand the higher education publishing industry and its shift from an editorial to a market approach. Furthermore, Gumport (2000) sought to explain how academic management and consumerism combined to shift the purpose of universities from a social to an industry mission. Finally, Bastedo (2009) studied how the Massachusetts Board of Education’s policy regarding mission differentiation and system development ultimately impacted student

opportunity. Exploring a setting through various dimensions ultimately helps to better understand how it influences and is influenced by a given phenomenon.

Institutional logics serves as both a theory and method of analysis that encompasses four dimensions: collective identities and identification, contests for status and power, classification and categorization, and attention (Thornton & Ocasio, 2008). Considering the inherent interplay between nonresident undergraduates and their land grant university environment, these four dimensions help the researcher to better understand the phenomenon as it relates to time and space. The following discussion provides a brief definition of each dimension followed by relevant application within the context of this research study.

Collective Identities and Identification

First, collective identities and identification encompass the feelings of connection and social status felt by the individual participants of a social group (Poletta & Jasper, 2001). In the present study's application, this dimension can be used to better establish the existence and/or absence of a perceived "nonresident community" beyond just a common tuition designation and how this identity interacts with the land grant culture found at the host university. Further, collective identities and identification coincides with the concepts of institutional fit (Bean, 2005) and sense of belonging (Hurtado & Carter, 1997). Considering past research on this student population has suggested a potential misalignment between student and institution (Singell & Waddell, 2010) and identified sense of belonging serving as the most significant predictor of student commitment to an institution (Hausmann et al., 2007), this dimension can help explain the nonresident student's perceived social existence within a land grant university environment. In turn, the researcher can better understand the distinct institutional logic that has

emerged within this social group on this particular campus context (Jackall, 1998) and subsequent implications for student retention and persistence.

Contests for Status and Power

Second, contests for status and power provide the meaning behind strategic relationships and the ultimate results of an institution's strategic pursuits (Thornton & Ocasio, 1999; Lounsbury & Ventresca, 2003). In application to this study's context, exploring the enrollment management goals of access, academic profile, and revenue proves potentially enlightening (Cheslock & Kroc, 2012). With limitations in state funding sources (McGuinness, Jr., 2011), a broader downward trend in college enrollment nationally (NSCRC, 2019) and pressures from alternative, for-profit competitors (Thelin, 2011), the land grant university had to consider enrollment practices from a sustainability standpoint. Brint et al. (2016) suggest this was exacerbated as a result of the Great Recession (2008-2013) leading to increased enrollment and tuition for nonresident students not only to maintain status and power, but in many cases to capitalize on this critical transition point in the history of higher education. In addition, this potential shift in priorities has also brought into question the idea of mission creep where land grant universities may have deviated from their original focus on access to residents in this post-Great Recession realignment (Jaquette et al., 2016). Accordingly, the status and power dimension assists in achieving a balanced approach regarding consequences of changing institutional logics.

Classification and Categorization

Third, classification and categorization offer insight into the change in meanings of select categories within an institution (Ocasio & Joseph, 2005). In application, there is a long history of

public universities making a distinction between in-state and out-of-state students for tuition purposes. However, the accelerated rise in nonresident tuition levels in recent decades has led to a potentially new ‘privileged status’ for out-of-state students due to their revenue generating capabilities and an ultimate change in meaning for this tuition classification as a whole for universities. Several studies conclude public universities have turned to nonresident enrollment as an increasingly important revenue source (Jaquette & Curs, 2015; Jaquette et al., 2016; Mixon & Hsing, 1994; Rizzo & Ehrenberg, 2004; Perna & Titus, 2004) coupled with evidence of an increased focus on consumption amenities to recruit these prized nonresident students (Jacob et al., 2013). Institutional logics can help to account for how changes to institutional-level logics ultimately alters the symbolic meaning of existing categories (Thornton & Ocasio, 2008). Exploring what nonresident students mean to this land grant case study context is an important intersection between Schlossberg’s “self”, institutional fit and sense of belonging.

Attention

Finally, the attention dimension encompasses how organizational leaders respond to environmental stimuli (Ocasio, 1997). Brint et al. (2016) investigated institutional logics approaches that various universities employed to address one of the most significant environmental stimuli in decades for higher education; the Great Recession (Geiger, 2011; Thelin, 2011). In a similar way, exploring what steps this study’s campus decision makers have taken over time in response to both external and internal events can help to better understand the overall and individual student impact. More specifically, this attention dimension assisted the researcher in determining how these decisions may have influenced the individual nonresident student and their ultimate persistence decisions. The attention dimension of institutional logics

best accounts for the inherent responsiveness necessary amidst an ever-changing higher education landscape.

Collectively, these four dimensions serve as a useful set of theoretical and methodological approaches to better understand the nonresident undergraduate and their interactions with the land grant university context. As recommended by Thornton and Ocasio (2008), “We need more work on the microfoundations of institutional logics. Work on institutional logics is inherently cross-level, highlighting the interplay between individuals, organizations, and institutions” (p. 120). The proposed study intends to use institutional logics to contribute to these suggested scholarly aims and recommendations.

Applying Framework to Study

Such an interplay serves as a useful backdrop for studying institutional logics dimensions in terms of nonresident tuition, enrollment, and amenities present on the MSU campus. First, residency status and the corresponding tuition rate offer insights into the identity, power and status dimensions. Nonresident tuition is set at over three times that of resident tuition (MSU, 2020b) with various differential tuition options (i.e. reciprocity, merit, etc.) to further define and distinguish between recruitment candidates. Next, enrollment can best be understood through the social classification and categorization dimension. Currently, there are no existing caps on nonresident enrollment at MSU which has experienced continual growth in nonresident enrollment for over a decade resulting in significant changes to the make-up of the overall student population. Finally, amenities are best interpreted through the allocation of the attention dimension. Not only have amenities on campus expanded overall in recent years, but the types of projects such as new residence halls and cafeterias have been closely associated with drawing in

nonresidents (Jacob et al.; Stange, 2013; Sabarwal, 2005). This foundation helps set the stage for an entirely new line of research investigating the impact of increased nonresident enrollment on land grant campuses.

Institutional logics meta-theory has relatively new applications in the higher education organization field. Accordingly, it has the practical responsiveness to recent shifts in strategic recruitment efforts of nonresident undergraduates by public, land grant institutions (Jaquette & Curs, 2015). Also, a key tenet of institutional logics, is that neither the individual or organization operate autonomously, rather each perspective impacts the other at multiple levels (Friedland & Alford, 1991; Thornton, 2004). Accordingly, this theory accounts for the various stakeholders involved in the complex higher education system. Lastly, this theory expands the conversation beyond just financial considerations by accounting for symbolic considerations as well (Thornton & Ocasio, 2008). For instance, land grant institutions have long held ‘historical traditions’ of providing practical training, particularly in the agricultural and mechanical sciences relevant to the host state, that have persisted as a symbolic connection to resident interest and access (Brint et al., 2012). Furthermore, land grant institutions have come to represent a broad accessibility and inclusiveness to a state’s people not only through on-campus education (Flanagan et al., 2013; Ross, 1953; Vandenberg-Daves, 2003) but also in terms of community and economic research outreach through agriculturally-based experiment stations (Carstensen, 1962; Fischer, 2009; Ross, 1953; Vandenberg-Daves, 2003). The associated extension system is of particular symbolic importance manifesting itself as the taxpayer voice on the direction of university research (Flanagan et al., 2013). Institutional logics helps to bridge the traditionally quantitative measures with the qualitative design helping to fulfill the methodological beliefs

subscribed to through the pragmatic interpretive framework (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In short, by using institutional logics to better understand institutional decision-making, the student related constructs of persistence and sense of belonging take on another layer of nuance for further exploration as well.

While institutional logics has been discussed in a range of fields, recent application to higher education, as a result of the Great Recession, proves particularly relevant to the nonresident undergraduate. Brint et al. (2012) concluded institutional capacity, mission, financial strength, and reputational standing are the primary influences of change in US four-year universities. The role nonresident undergraduates serve in this change process has been significant in recent years. More specifically, nonresident enrollment has increasingly served as a strategy used by public, land grant universities to address lagging state appropriations, exacerbated during times of fiscal uncertainty (Jaquette & Curs, 2015; Perna & Titus, 2004). Understanding how this administrative strategy translates to a feeling of campus climate for nonresident undergraduates is important. Does an emphasis on increasing the recruitment and subsequent enrollment of nonresident undergraduates ultimately have a negative, neutral or positive impact on nonresident retention? The interplay of institutional logics meta-theory with Schlossberg's Transition Theory (2006) establishes a valuable reference on what the "moving through" phase may feel like for a third-year nonresident undergraduate post-Great Recession.

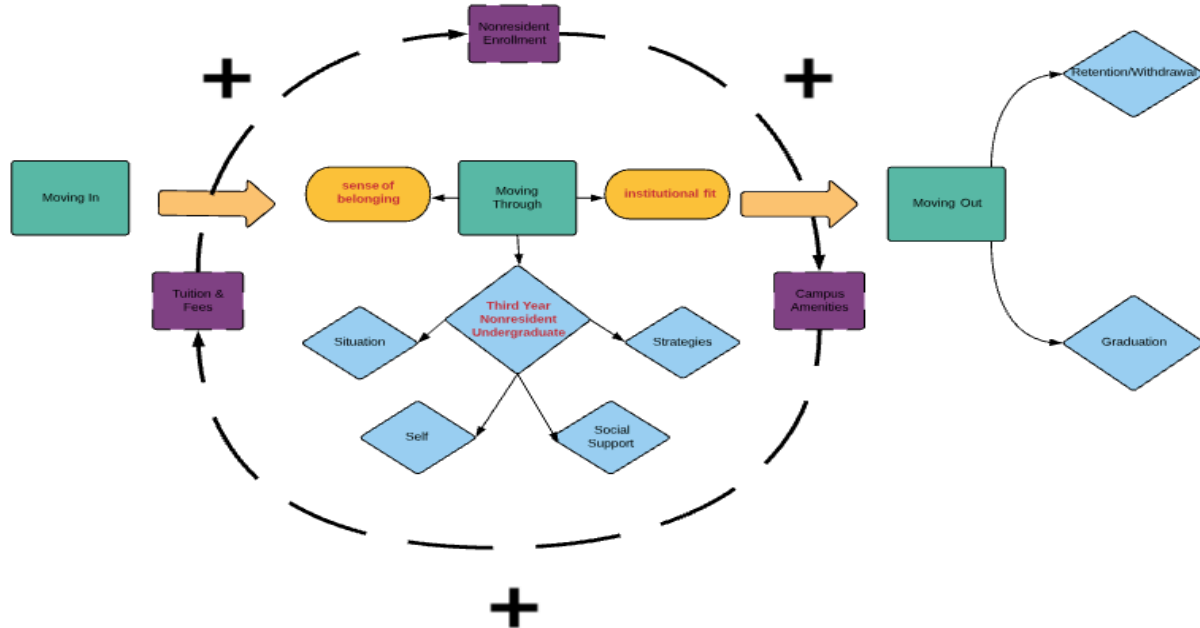
At the heart of a land grant institution's mission is the commitment to serving the citizens of the state. Does a shift in institutional logics towards increased enrollment of nonresident undergraduates fundamentally alter this mission or is this maintained despite an ever-increasing nonresident presence on campus? According to Brint et al. (2016), most land grant institutions

adopted a “complete arsenal” institutional logics approach in response to the Great Recession. Within this strategy, institutions focused on increasing enrollment, tuition, and recruitment of nonresident and international students. As with research on nonresident undergraduates, the primary focus was on the recruitment and enrollment, rather than the retention of international students. An institutional shift of increased tuition, enrollment, and nonresident undergraduate recruitment led to a change. Birnbaum (1988) suggests, “...amplifying loops such as this make it possible for small changes in one part of the system to sometimes have very large effects” (p. 48). While there are a number of potential areas to assess impact of change, the influence on nonresident undergraduates’ decision to persist or depart proves prudent considering the increasing “value” this subgroup has on the 21st century land-grant institution.

Figure 1 provides a graphical synthesis of the theoretical framework for this study. During the ‘Moving In’ phase, nonresident undergraduates are recruited and ultimately decide to enroll in at a land grant university of choice. At the institutional level, greater nonresident enrollment requires increased campus amenities and subsequently more tuition and fees to cover the costs of operation. During the ‘Moving Through’ phase, nonresidents navigate Schlossberg’s four S’s (Situation, Self, Social Support, Strategies) which directly influences their sense of belonging and subsequent feeling of institutional fit. It is this phase that serves as the primary focus of this study. Collectively, these experiences shape the culminating ‘Moving Out’ of this transition. A nonresident undergraduate may be retained, withdraw or ultimately persist to graduation. The ‘Moving Out’ phase can serve as both an incremental (by semester) or longitudinal measure based on the focus of the particular inquiry. By taking this approach, the study’s framework better aligns with the current experience (i.e. sixth semester of enrollment)

for the nonresident undergraduate participants. All combined, this theory helps to evaluate how the interactions between the nonresident undergraduate and their host campus ultimately influence student retention.

Figure 1. Transition of Third Year Nonresident Undergraduate



Transition of a third-year nonresident undergraduate on a land grant university campus.

The figure depicts the intersection of the institutional logics of a land grant university (dashed circle) intersecting with the experiences of a nonresident undergraduate in the moving through phase of Schlossberg's Transition Theory (2006). Adapted from "How Colleges Work: The cybernetics of academic organization and leadership," by Robert Birnbaum, 1988, p. 47; "Counseling Adults in Transition (3rd ed.)" by Goodman, J., Schlossberg, N. K., & Anderson, M. L. (2006); "Surviving and Thriving: The adaptive responses of four-year colleges and universities during the great recession," by Brint, S., Yoshikawa, S., Rotondi, M., Viggiano, T. & Maldonado, J.

Schlossberg's Transition Theory (2006) and the institutional logics meta-theory coincide under a pragmatic lens to provide a theoretical framework for studying nonresident undergraduate retention at a public, land grant institution. Grant and Osanloo (2014) suggest a theoretical framework provides the justification and blue print for a study regardless of the methodology and design. Accordingly, these theories establish the necessary "blueprint" for the development of this qualitative study's subsequent "floor plan" involving nonresident students. Existing research on nonresidents is limited in methodology and focus. First, nonresident undergraduates are studied primarily through a quantitative lens. Willcoxson (2012) calls for qualitative research as a way to "shed greater light" on how student experiences impact attrition (p. 635). Furthermore, only a limited number of recent studies contain research questions specifically focused on nonresident undergraduates (Adkisson & Peach, 2008; Canche, 2014; Singell & Waddell, 2010; Yu et al., 2010). Lastly, fewer still investigate nonresidents beyond their first year of enrollment (Willcoxson, 2010; Yu et al., 2010). As a result, a qualitative intrinsic case study on the experiences of third year nonresidents will help to expand both the literature base and methodological approaches regarding nonresident persistence.

Context (Moving In)

As outlined in Schlossberg's Transition Theory (Goodman et al., 2006), the moving in phase encapsulates those experiences leading up to the start of a student's campus experience. Furthermore, it is at this stage where institutional logics can provide important perspective on campus interactions with nonresident undergraduates. From a university standpoint, such a phase entails recruitment, enrollment, and student orientation. Nonresident undergraduates have always been a part of the US higher education system. However, the overall number and ultimate

destination of this campus population has changed considerably over time. Within the private institution context, nonresidents have had a long-held tradition of representing a significant portion of the student body (Baryla, Jr. & Dotterweich, 2006; Dotterweich & Baryla, Jr., 2005; Canche, 2014). Alternatively, while public universities have always enrolled nonresident undergraduates, a more complicated history with nonresident undergraduates emerges due to the public university's mission of serving the interests of their state residents as a priority and the changing nature of what 'leaving for college' has meant over time. Perceived competition between residents and nonresidents during times of institutional capacity and resource constraints has generated research discussion for over 50 years as offered by Carbon & Jensen (1971), "Non-resident students at the nation's major state universities have become the subject of increased concern in higher education." Such "concern" reflects a pragmatic and symbolic foreshadowing of institutional logics decision-making to the present. Nearly fifty years ago universities were implementing adaptive strategies (Friedland & Alford, 1991) for pragmatic (i.e. tuition) purposes that contributed to symbolically reshaping the 'identity' dimension common to institutional logics (Thornton & Ocasio, 2008). Numerous state higher education governing bodies responded to these limited campus resources by directing their public institutions to implement various measures ranging from enrollment caps to cost-prohibitive tuition levels in order to discourage nonresident enrollment (Winters, 2012). Despite these efforts, nonresident enrollment has not only persisted, but increased at US public universities over the decades.

In recent years, numerous contextual factors have shifted the institutional narrative from discouraging to encouraging nonresident undergraduate enrollment at public universities. Such policies generate many intended and unintended consequences. In particular, the compatibility

between nonresidents and their host campus environment and subsequent outcomes is brought into sharp relief. Despite a call for more research regarding the role of institutional context on college persistence over 15 years ago (Titus, 2004), a comprehensive understanding of nonresident undergraduate persistence has yet to be fully realized. The following section provides an overview of the various contextual factors found during the moving in phase that have impacted nonresident undergraduates in the 21st century.

Levels of Abstraction (National, Regional, State, Local)

National. The recruitment and enrollment of nonresident undergraduates is no longer a localized phenomenon, but instead serves as an important part of a much larger trend in higher education. In short, the nonresident market in higher education has become increasingly nationalized (Titus, Vamosiu & Gupta, 2015). While various factors have contributed to this development over time, changes in national economic conditions have served as a significant catalyst.

Though very recent in US history, the Great Recession was a critical event in shaping priorities in higher education. For the purposes of this study, the Great Recession is defined as taking place between October 1, 2008 to June 30, 2012 (Brint et al., 2016). Geiger (2011) suggests the economic events of this time period served as a transition point into a distinctly “new generation” for higher education. Generating the worst economic conditions for the US since the Great Depression (Brint, Yoshikawa, Rotondi, Viggiano & Maldonado, 2016), the Great Recession influenced significant change within higher education. First, the relationship between institutions and their traditional funding sources became strained. Public universities

questioned their respective state's commitment to higher education (McGuinness, Jr., 2011), whereas private institutions experienced a significant drop in endowments and donor contributions (Johnstone, 2011). Second, despite historically high tuition rates and subsequent debt (Long, 2014), institutions experienced increased enrollments (Thelin, 2011) leading to accelerated financial hardships for students and their families (Goldrick-Rab & Cook, 2011). Finally, such circumstances established an opportunity for a resurgence in the growth of the for-profit institution industry (Thelin, 2011). Combined, the Great Recession forced necessary institutional adaptations that fundamentally altered the direction of the US higher education system.

As a result of the Great Recession, an institutional identity crisis emerged. Institutions of the same type did not respond to the conditions in the same way and large public universities responded by increasing tuition and expanding overall enrollment with an emphasis on nonresidents and international students (Brint et al., 2016). Subsequently, questions about institutional mission and student constituencies came into conflict (Jaquette et al., 2016). In addition, for-profit institutions established themselves as a viable alternative to more traditional types of institutions. With the increasing demand generated by the Great Recession, private for-profit institutions asserted their presence (Altbach, 2011). However, within this diverse institutional type, some troubling patterns arose during this time. With an increased share of student loan allotments, the for-profit sector was accused of overselling the marketability of their graduates and generating the highest student loan default rate of any institutional type (Thelin, 2011). Subsequently, the public university's ability to recruit from a finite supply of nonresident undergraduates (Canche, 2014) had to overcome significant financial, competitive, and

reputational challenges found within the collective higher education community. While recruitment of nonresident undergraduates started well before the Great Recession, this event helped to accelerate and prioritize this practice in public university admissions offices nationwide.

Regional. At a regional level, the positioning of a university in geo-spatial terms is an important piece to understanding the tendencies of the nonresident undergraduate. Studies have investigated comparisons at this level both between (Adkisson & Peach, 2008; Baryla, Jr. & Dotterweich, 2001; Yu, DiGangi, Jannasch-Pennell & Kaprolet, 2010) and within regions (Baryla, Jr. & Dotterweich, 2006; Canche, 2014; McMillen, Singell, Jr. & Waddell, 2007; Toutkoushian, Dadashova, Gross & Hossler, 2007). Collectively, these studies illuminate how geographical proximity can offer benefits and challenges in recruiting nonresident undergraduates.

When comparing between regions, several trends appear to impact nonresident enrollment decisions. Some regions are typically at a disadvantage due to spatial isolation and being surrounded by a smaller population base such as western states in the Rocky Mountain region (Cooke & Boyle, 2011), whereas other regions are better positioned to cater to nonresidents. For instance, New England and the Middle Atlantic regions have been deemed more desirable to this campus population than the western regions (Adkisson & Peach, 2008), despite the New England and Northeast regions posting the highest average nonresident tuition rates (Toutkoushian et al., 2007). Ultimately, demand drives higher tuition rates in these circumstances. However, alternative findings provide some advantages to nonresident enrollment in the West region. Baryla, Jr. & Dotterweich (2001) found student-to-faculty ratio and tuition

price to have a significant positive correlation for ultimate nonresident undergraduate enrollment in this region. While the New England region commands a historical advantage in nonresident enrollment, the West region may hold some spatial and pricing advantages that appeal to the nonresident population. Current research is needed to better interpret these trends.

When analyzing the within region influences, the proximity of institutions to one another has direct and immediate impacts on institutional decision-making. For instance, an increase in nonresident enrollment by a doctoral/research institution had a statistically significant negative impact on tuition rates by neighboring open-admissions institutions (Canche, 2014). Thus, institutions leverage tuition rates as a way to siphon off nonresidents already drawn to the region. Institutional logics explains this relationship in illuminating the adaptive behaviors undertaken by campus administrators in a time of heightened competition in higher education. These ‘less prestigious’ universities took a “consumer service” (Brint et al., 2012) approach in cultivating an identity of affordability, while still being able to offer access to many of the same economic and natural amenities common to the local area. Also, less populous states located near more populous states benefit the most from nonresident student migration (Cooke & Boyle, 2011). Subsequently, inherent disadvantages for an institution’s physical location can be transformed into an advantage by capitalizing on the strengths of more successful peer institutions found in the region.

State. Public universities are associated with an institutional history and mission of preserving student access for resident students. This unique relationship between each institution and the state establishes a necessary accountability while also setting the stage for a potential conflict of interest. Enrollment of nonresident undergraduates serves as a useful illustration of

this complex arrangement. While nonresidents serve a vital role in the modern public university fabric, their practical utility is often overshadowed by what they have come to symbolize for the elected officials and general public alike. From Carbone & Jenson (1971) to Curs & Jaquette (2017), concerns over nonresidents impacting resident access have persisted over time.

Of all the levels of consideration, the state and its corresponding governance structure provides the most complicated, and is often the most influential, when discussing nonresident enrollment at public institutions of higher education. McGuinness, Jr. (2011) provides a useful summary in sharing, “states play a dual role of overseer of the public interest and provider of higher education services” (p. 142). In recent decades, state funding has not kept up proportionately with the increasing operating costs of public universities. In turn, public tuition levels have outpaced household income in many states (Hillman, 2013) placing a greater burden on the families than the state governments involving tuition costs (Perna, 2006). Accordingly, increased enrollment of nonresidents by public universities serves as the most visible response to address increasing operating costs while simultaneously keeping resident tuition rates nominally lower. Jaquette & Curs (2015) suggest public research institutions have assumed a “privatization” approach and a change in “character” as they cater to nonresident enrollment in response to declining state appropriations. Without question, there has been a significant amount of nonresident enrollment growth for certain types of public universities. For instance, doctoral, research institutions have increased nonresident enrollment at three times the rate of other institution types (Winters, 2012). In consideration of these developments, interpretation of higher education as a public or private good proves problematic. Projections for state appropriations towards higher education will likely continue to be outpaced by higher education expenses in the

coming years (Doyle & Zumeta, 2014; Mortenson, 2012; Sav, 2016). Therefore, the enrollment of a larger nonresident population is a significant “policy lever” that can either reinforce the value of higher education as a public good or contribute to transitioning higher education into more of a private commodity.

Despite considerable benefits, increasing nonresident enrollments creates a perception issue for public universities. After all, public universities are taxpayer supported, albeit to a lesser extent as a proportion of operating costs, and therefore, are responsible for educating the citizens of the state. Increases in nonresident enrollment generates media headlines that elicit fears that out-of-state students are “taking the seats” of resident students (Rizzo & Ehrenberg, 2004). Particularly in the case of land grant institutions, discussion on “institutional integrity” arises as the actions of increasing nonresident enrollment potentially translates to exhibiting values/goals contrary to the land grant mission for the general public (Braxton, Brier & Steele, 2007). Considering legislators are elected by the citizens, they often side with the resident student over the university even if it is not sound fiscal policy for the state (Groen & White, 2004). As a result, some states have acted to limit the university’s ability to enroll nonresident students. In analyzing statewide policies, Winters (2012) concluded 18 states have adopted some type of enrollment cap mechanism in the past regarding first-time freshman undergraduates. However, this practice has declined in recent years with two states (i.e. California & North Carolina) specifically garnering most of the attention involving more fixed nonresident enrollment caps (Kelchen, 2016). In sum, an increased nonresident undergraduate population can potentially create challenging tensions between the public university and host state.

Local. The local conditions of the host community have consistently played an influential role in nonresident undergraduate enrollment. As previously established, nonresident undergraduates are often associated with enhancing the campus academic profile based on pre-college academic characteristics such as standardized test scores, GPA, etc. (Titus et al., 2015). High ability students, in turn, hold the location of their institution in high regard (Groen & White, 2004). Thus, a nonresident's ultimate enrollment decision is greatly influenced by the perceived benefits offered by the destination community.

Within location, several themes emerge including: economics, amenities, and geography. Regarding economics, most studies indicate nonresident undergraduates avoid high unemployment locations (Baryla, Jr. & Dotterweich, 2001; Dotterweich & Baryla, Jr., 2005) and seek out states with greater wealth (Adkisson & Peach, 2008; Canche, 2017) and future job prospects (Baryla, Jr. & Dotterweich, 2001). In contrast, a recent study on student migration found no evidence of nonresidents considering the wealth of the host community (Dotzel, 2017). With amenities, nonresident undergraduates gravitate to high amenity areas (Cooke & Boyle, 2011) and those specifically with an abundance of natural amenities (Dotzel, 2017). Finally, nonresidents are less inclined to seek out metro locations (Dotterweich & Baryla, Jr., 2005) and instead seek out smaller towns (Adkisson & Peach, 2008) with younger populations (Cooke & Boyle, 2011). While the institution itself remains the primary influence, the surrounding community does have some impact on the nonresident enrollment decision process. Overall, the literature suggests nonresidents gravitate to universities located in communities that provide sufficient resources in the short and long term.

Institution Level Factors

While research at the national, regional, state, and local level establishes some general trends for nonresident migration, studies at the institution level offer factors that are typically more influential in the decision process. Distance, institutional quality/selectivity, tuition, and financial aid/reciprocity serve as the four areas most studied in this area. Based on the existing literature, how successful an institution is at navigating these factors directly contributes to the ultimate enrollment outcomes found on campus from the nonresident undergraduate population.

Distance. The distance between a nonresident's place of residence and their destination institution has been well documented in prior seminal studies under the area of "out-migration" research (Fisher, Murray & Frazer, 1985; Kyung, 1996; Mixon & Hsing, 1994). While this area has traditionally been used to discuss enrollment decisions of nonresident undergraduates and the inherent challenges that result, it is worthwhile to also explore what implications distance has at the institutional level.

During the recruitment and enrollment phase, institutions must determine where to prioritize their efforts. When working with nonresident undergraduates, proximity serves as a key consideration for an institution's recruiting efforts (Dotzel, 2017). However, the findings with respect to the relationship between distance and enrollment of nonresident students are inconclusive. While distance from home is a commonly cited consideration on ultimate enrollment decisions, the degree of influence diminishes after a certain distance threshold is surpassed (Dotzel, 2017) with evidence suggesting that among nonresident students who do not feel a strong institutional fit, those who are from closer by states are more likely to withdraw than those from further away (Jones-White, Radcliffe, Huesman & Kellogg, 2010; Yu et al.,

2010). Additionally, recent literature offers a greater need for institutions to explore the characteristics of the potential nonresident undergraduate's home state to determine compatibility. Nonresident undergraduates from high amenity states (i.e. natural and economic) have a greater likelihood of attending institutions in higher amenity regions (Canche, 2017, Dotzel, 2017). Having this awareness helps admissions offices to calculate potential risk factors of the prospective enrollees. As high tuition universities seek to expand their geographic diversity (Dotzel, 2017), admissions teams cannot take proximity for granted as nonresidents, even within this regional area, are still more likely to graduate from another institution than their resident peers (Jones-White et al., 2010). Gaining additional insights into the characteristics of a nonresident's home state amenities and its proximity to the destination institution serve as important considerations for both initial enrollment and subsequent retention of nonresident undergraduates.

Institutional Quality & Selectivity. Nonresident undergraduates hold quality of the institution as a top priority for attendance. The existing literature establishes a distinct “quality effect” for nonresidents (Baryla, Jr. & Dotterweich, 2001) as they elevate this measure even above price, especially at land grant institutions (Adkisson & Price, 2008). Universities leverage quality in several ways to recruit and retain nonresident undergraduates. First, quality is presented as being synonymous with the academic performance of its students. Universities with a student body profile that exhibits higher standardized test scores (Cooke & Boyle, 2011) and steady academic potential (Adkisson & Peach, 2008) appeal to the nonresident subpopulation. In turn, this elevated student profile is leveraged by universities to justify higher nonresident tuition rates (Toutkoushian et al., 2007). Second, the tuition rate itself can have a symbolic effect as

well. Nonresident students have been found to equate quality with cost of attendance and are thus willing to pay more to attend a school they believe to be of a high quality nature (Dotterweich & Baryla, Jr., 2005; Dotzel, 2017). Such trends can have an impact on other student subpopulations. At the most prestigious public research universities, there is some indication that this increased nonresident enrollment results in a crowding out of resident undergraduates (Curs & Jaquette, 2017). How institutions utilize quality indicators is an important factor in establishing the context for the nonresident undergraduate experience.

The admissions criteria established by universities can have an influential impact on nonresident enrollment. Regardless of region of the country, a positive correlation exists between nonresident student enrollment and institutional selectivity (Baryla, Jr. & Dotterweich, 2001; Baryla, Jr. & Dotterweich, 2006). When disaggregated by institution type, some pronounced trends surface. Overall, the most selective, comprehensive institutions, based on Carnegie classifications, attract more nonresidents regardless of the region of the country (Baryla, Jr. & Dotterweich, 2001). In a related way, these most selective institutions have also been found to charge the highest nonresident tuition rates (Toutkoushian et al., 2007). Clearly, quality and selectivity are related, but offer slightly different insights on the overall influence to nonresident enrollment trends.

Tuition. Most research on nonresident undergraduates either directly or indirectly involves tuition. Accordingly, it is essential to understand how institutions of higher education approach this topic. Tuition and residency status provide a defining characteristic of the enrollment landscape considering the revenue potential. As established, tuition rates are not set in isolation and are impacted by a number of factors including: state higher education structures,

resident tuition, and external market forces (Titus et al., 2015). Across the literature, tuition proves to be a problematic variable to isolate considering its inextricable role in both practical and symbolic decision-making processes. Tuition is a practical necessity for campus operations; yet, how tuition is communicated and applied to different groups offers symbolic insights into university priorities. For instance, a land grant institution may choose to emphasize resident enrollment to the state constituencies even amidst a time of significant growth in nonresident enrollment in order to manage public perception of fulfilling the institution's state-focused mission. Whereas, a higher nonresident tuition may communicate to a student the expectation that there is a greater investment in amenities that are known to benefit nonresident undergraduates. Baryla, Jr. & Dotterweich (2006) found no significant overall correlation between nonresident undergraduate enrollment decisions and tuition costs at public institutions of higher education but did find the coefficient of selectivity to have a significant positive impact on nonresidents choosing to enroll at top tier public institutions. What results is a complicated picture regarding the interaction between nonresidents and tuition.

Comparing resident to nonresident tuition rates establishes several key implications. Nonresident tuition has a small, significant positive relationship with total enrollment (Dotzel, 2017), and a significant, positive relationship with increased 18-year-old resident enrollment at flagship institutions (Winters, 2012). Also, an increase on resident tuition has been found to have a positive relationship with nonresident tuition at public doctoral institutions (Titus, et al., 2015). Regardless of the institution type, maintaining differential tuition based on residency is valued. However, increases in tuition have a significant relation to the variation of the percentage of nonresidents enrolled at a given institution (Canche, 2014) along with nonresidents found to not

return primarily due to high tuition and fees (Johnson & Muse, 2012). Thus, while high tuition levels at initial enrollment may not detour nonresidents, over time, this financial burden may impact nonresident retention for the university.

To complicate matters further, a limited price elasticity exists for certain institutions when working with nonresident undergraduates. For quality, high priced institutions, tuition price is not a prohibitive factor (Adkisson & Peach, 2008) and can be marginally adjusted without a drop in nonresident enrollment as their “big name image” can be leveraged to maintain the nonresident percentage (Dotterweich & Baryla, Jr., 2005). However, this advantage can also be a liability for large institutions as a combination of lower resident tuition rates and higher nonresident tuition rates has been found to result in a drop in nonresident enrollment (Toutkoushian et al., 2007). Universities are tasked with achieving the optimal balance between institutional needs and nonresident undergraduate financial capacity.

Budgeting Flexibility. A large nonresident undergraduate population provides greater budgeting flexibility for a host institution. In response to difficult fiscal conditions over the past 30 years, public, four-year institutions increased tuition and fees by 231% as a revenue source. (Kelchen, 2016). Moreover, since resident tuition rates are typically set by the state legislature or related government entity, nonresident tuition rates are usually discretionary for public universities (Rizzo & Ehrenberg, 2004). Considering nonresident undergraduates are nominally price elastic (Adkisson & Peach, 2008; Baryla & Dotterweich, 2006; Zhang, 2007), public universities have increasingly relied on recruiting from this subgroup to balance institution budgets (Jaquette et al., 2016; Perna & Titus, 2004). Nonresidents serve as a crucial part of institutional sustainability for public universities. State funding typically goes towards

instructional, rather than maintenance, operation, and support costs (Canche, 2014; Lowry, 2001). Accordingly, a large nonresident population generates the needed funds to address a wider range of needs for a campus on any given year. Brint et al. (2016) employed multinomial logistic regression of a 300-university data set after the Great Recession and discovered the most successful “adaptive institutional logic” for large, public universities involved increasing enrollment, increasing tuition, and directed recruitment of nonresident undergraduates. Clearly, a burgeoning nonresident campus population is a critical element for the non-profit public university to sustain itself in the current fiscal climate.

Overreliance on Tuition. With an increase in nonresident enrollment, public institutions face several budgeting challenges. While nonresident tuition serves a vital role for public universities’ budgeting needs, becoming too reliant on this revenue source could potentially set the institution up for fiscal failure. First, while nonresident undergraduates are known to be price elastic, they are still a finite resource (Canche, 2014). Accordingly, the competition between public universities, not to mention the private sector, will conceivably continue to grow all while states continue to explore statewide merit programs to combat “brain drain.” (Orsuwan & Heck, 2009; Zhang & Ness, 2010). In a higher education environment that already has shown enrollment stagnation trends (NSCRC, 2017), public institutions must continually invest in both enrollment acquisition (Jamelske, 2009; Leppel, 2002) as well as retention programming and resources to retain nonresident students. Furthermore, recent research has established a connection between high socioeconomic students and increased consumption amenities (i.e. athletics, social life) (Jacob, McCall and Stange, 2013). Public institutions currently spend less in this area relative to private institutions; however, student preferences were found to influence

educational resource spending. Therefore, an increase in consumption amenities equates to an increase in enrollment of students of a higher socioeconomic status. Also, a lack of quality on-campus living arrangements and student services can negatively impact nonresident retention (Sabarwal, 2005). If these internal efforts fail to improve retention, public universities may need to further increase nonresident tuition rates to achieve equivalent revenue amounts. Such practices could eventually push tuition rates past private institutions leading to a point of diminishing returns (Ehrenberg, Zhang & Levin, 2005). In short, public institutions that have a significant nonresident student representation cannot rely on this group as a reliable budgeting tool.

Affordability Over Time. Furthermore, a pronounced nonresident presence sets a potential conflict of interest in keeping public education affordable for other student groups. While nonresident undergraduates are not currently tuition price averse for initial enrollment, this can change during their initial semesters and over time. High tuition levels without adequate institutional support as a student progresses through semesters has been found to be a significant factor in causing nonresidents to drop out (Hoyt & Winn, 2004; Johnson & Muse, 2012) and transfer out (Herzog, 2005). Yu et al., 2010 incorporated quantitative data mining techniques to establish higher tuition rates for nonresidents negatively impacted nonresident retention. Li, Owusu-Aduemiri & Asrat (2008) found through a quantitative logistic regression study that scholarships served as the only type of financial aid to have a significant impact on student persistence from their first to second year. Accordingly, an institution prioritizing nonresident enrollment may focus on offering increased merit-based aid as a way to increase overall nonresident retention. Even though merit-aid is not mutually exclusive to nonresident students,

the increased energy and efforts in this direction potentially has a disproportionately negative affect on in-state students of a lower socioeconomic status.

Financial Support. Increased nonresident enrollment benefits the university's financial aid profile. With more discretionary tuition revenue, public universities can increase institutional grant aid in order to recruit a more selective student body—an important criterion for many national institutional rankings reports (Ehrenberg, Zhang & Levin, 2005). Furthermore, an influx of nonresident generating revenue could potentially be used by public universities to better serve students of a lower socioeconomic status. Hillman (2013) in applying a quantitative regression model, investigated four-year institutions with a “no loan” program and reported a positive relationship between institutions who off-set student financial packages with scholarships and grants with increased enrollment by students of a lower socioeconomic status. While most of the participating institutions were private, a number of larger public universities also participated in the program. Conceivably, an increasing nonresident undergraduate cohort could generate both the necessary prestige and subsequent revenues to help address the current social stratification issue across public universities. However, this is only to the extent that the cost of the merit scholarships to retain nonresident undergraduates does not outweigh the revenues brought in from the higher tuition to support lower socioeconomic, local students. Accordingly, a larger nonresident cohort has the potential, but is not guaranteed to help public institutions expand their financial support profile to the benefit of the collective student body.

In contrast, a competing body of literature suggests public universities are actually using nonresident and international students to cover the “real costs of education” at the expense of other student populations (Melguizo & Chung 2012). Students from the lowest socioeconomic

backgrounds have the highest percent of their financial aid packages comprised of loans and work study with only 34% receiving full grant financial aid packages. Furthermore, public institutions have shifted to using financial aid as an enrollment-management tool with a greater focus on academic characteristics over need when distributing institutional financial aid (Doyle, 2010; Perna, 2006). Disparities are further amplified at institutions with increasing populations. Ehrenberg, Zhang & Levin (2005) found that for every ten National Merit Scholarship awardees at an institution, four fewer Pell Grant recipients enrolled—a practice that was even more pronounced at universities experiencing increasing overall enrollments. Consequently, a large nonresident population can shift the institutional focus from supporting students with potentially greater financial need to supporting nonresident student persistence. Considering the nature of finite resources on a public university campus, more resources for nonresidents can translate to less time and support for other campus populations.

Reciprocity programs serve as a significant source of nonresident undergraduates at public universities across the country. Under this tuition arrangement, nonresident undergraduates from partner states pay a reduced tuition rate in exchange for maintaining certain academic and enrollment requirements. According to Bell, Carnahan, and L'Orange (2011), such agreements can take shape at the regional, state, district, county or institutional level. Regional compacts are particularly relevant when discussing nonresident undergraduates. Currently, state universities belong to one of four compacts: New England Board of Higher Education (NEBHE), Western Interstate Commission on Higher Education (WICHE), Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) and the Midwest Higher Education Compact (MHEC) (NC-SARA, 2019). Regional reciprocity programs do not offer any direct financial support to participating

universities; however, each program helps to facilitate connections affording each university considerable flexibility in setting their own criteria. For example, WICHE institutions can set caps on the total awarded, the duration of the award, and the criteria used for selecting recipients (WUE, 2018). Ultimately, Hearn, Griswold, and Marine (1996) reported the region a state or university belonged to was the single greatest influence on overall student tuition policy. While reciprocity programs may benefit nonresident students in the form of reduced tuition rates, the benefits to the university are largely situational from one enrollment year to the next. Rizzo and Ehrenberg (2004) found in their quantitative analysis of 91 flagship campuses that these institutions only benefitted from a reciprocity program when they had extra capacity or if additional enrollments would improve prestige. While the largest reciprocity programs operate at a regional level, the degree of influence the program has on nonresident enrollment and retention is primarily defined at the institutional level.

In summary, some important implications concerning sustainability arise. First, the well documented tuition revenue associated with nonresident undergraduates risks being diminished by too much financial support. An excess in scholarships directed towards nonresidents might undermine the “full cost pricing” (Baryla, Jr. & Dotterweich, 2006) and overreliance on reciprocity programs perpetuate enrollment of nonresidents at a reduced tuition rate (Rizzo & Ehrenberg, 2004). Further still, such trends have the potential to negatively impact other populations on campus establishing a necessity to increase need-based financial aid to counter the merit-based financial aid used to recruit nonresident students (Titus et al., 2015). When evaluated at an institutional level, the relationship between nonresidents and financial support

proves complicated as the resources used to recruit nonresidents may deplete the sustainable financial support for other student groups and the overall university structure.

Institution Types

Past research on nonresident undergraduates reveals some important trends based on institution type. As previously established, while nonresident undergraduates have historically been more associated with private institutions, various types of public institutions have also hosted this student population over time. Evaluating how each institutional type has approached nonresident undergraduates over time proves useful. More specifically, such studies illuminate the more recent phenomenon of how nonresident undergraduates have come to form an increasing share of the overall student body population at land grant institutions across the country.

Public vs. Private. In exploring the budgeting challenges faced across institution types, there are some overlapping commonalities when discussing sustainability in times of economic adversity. To begin, both public and private institutions have encountered revenue shortfalls. While public universities have seen state appropriations fall further behind operating expenses (McGuiness, Jr., 2011; Mortenson et al., 2012), private institutions saw endowments drop in upwards of 30% (Brint et al., 2016) and tuition revenues drop an average of 19% across the private sector (Gingerich, 2016) as a result of the Great Recession. Finally, past research has found a limited interaction effect when studying tuition setting for public and private universities in close proximity to one another. Within this spatial competition, a 10% increase in public nonresident tuition translated to a 2.2% higher private tuition level (McMillen et al., 2007).

Through these commonalities, it is apparent neither operates in a vacuum and share inherent dependencies.

Yet, private liberal arts colleges offer a context uniquely different from most public institutions. In general, this institution type is more selective and charges more in tuition than an average public institution. Furthermore, private liberal arts colleges are residential, have a small student enrollment, a teaching focus, and a small student to faculty/staff ratio (Griffin & Hurtado, 2011, p. 31). Through comparing private liberal arts colleges with public institutions, a number of distinct similarities and differences emerge regarding budgeting, enrollment, and the public good.

Institutional Budgeting. Public and private institutions are fundamentally different regarding overall institutional budgeting involving nonresident enrollment. First, private liberal arts colleges have the liberty to set their own tuition rates and offer one rate regardless of residency, whereas setting tuition rates for public institutions is more complicated due to the role of state funding (Canche, 2014). On average, private institutions charge \$8800 more per year in tuition than public institutions (Canche, 2017). Dotterweich & Baryla, Jr. (2005) report a significant positive correlation between tuition and enrollment at private institutions of higher education suggesting nonresidents perceive higher tuition levels at private institutions, especially selective ones, as an indicator of quality. Second, private liberal arts colleges typically have access to more tuition income, private gifts, and endowments to offer merit-based aid to offset student tuition costs (Gingerich, 2016). While private liberal arts colleges also depend on nonresident enrollment to generate tuition revenue (Canche, 2014), a larger nonresident population is not as influential as it is for public institutions.

Accordingly, private and public institutions both share in financial vulnerabilities; however, the nature of and responses to financial challenges set them apart. For instance, Brint et al. (2016) determined that following the Great Recession, these two institution types tended to adopt different institutional logics approaches. While private liberal arts colleges implemented a “growing and greening” (p. 872) approach involving growth aligned to energy efficiency and green initiatives in order to generate positive publicity and seek out federal/state sustainability funding, public universities took a “complete arsenal” (p. 874) approach that included a variety of strategies ranging from cutting costs to increasing nonresident enrollment. In short, the funding structures of these two institutional types, regardless of nonresident enrollment trends make them vastly different with overlap occurring primarily during difficult economic times.

Student Enrollment. Much like public universities, private liberal arts colleges enroll significant nonresident populations leading to a pronounced peer culture, geographic diversity, and academic quality. In general, private institutions attract even more nonresidents than their public counterparts (Baryla, Jr. & Dotterweich, 2006) and actively report how many states and foreign countries are reflected in their student body. However, private liberal arts colleges are under no obligation to educate residents of the host state, thus making no distinction regarding residency (Canche, 2014). Also, patterns of nonresident enrollment are distinctly different from public institutions. Nonresidents enrolling in private institutions are typically drawn to states with higher private enrollment, higher private costs of attendance, and higher private admissions rates (Cooke & Boyle, 2011). In addition, the academic quality is already well established as nonresident students perceive these institutions as a, “uniquely superior high-quality product” and make up the highest percentage of student enrollment (Dotterweich & Baryla, 2005, p. 383).

Furthermore, private liberal arts colleges typically exhibit higher retention and graduation rates across resident and nonresident students. There is some indication high achieving, low socioeconomic students “undermatch” at the enrollment phase with private institutions basing their decision more on their ability to meet expenses (Hillman, 2013); however, this is less of a factor regarding post-enrollment retention comparisons. Overall, a higher nonresident population is not a new phenomenon for private institutions, and thus, does not influence enrollment issues as much as for public universities.

Public Good. From a historical standpoint, the public views these two types of institutions quite differently. Public institutions still receive a significant amount of their annual budget from taxpayer money (Canche, 2014), while private liberal arts colleges are primarily funded by the private individual either as an attending student or donor (Gingerich, 2016). Ultimately, the question of public good is still rooted in this inherent revenue source. Regarding similarities, both public and private liberal arts colleges bring nonresident “human capital” that can, in turn, end up living and working in the state following graduation (Cooke & Boyle, 2011). Yet, this phenomenon appears more likely with public than private institutions (Groen & White, 2004). And, indirectly, the presence of a private liberal arts college in close proximity to a public institution makes it possible for public institutions to charge higher nonresident tuition rates without a diminishing return (Rizzo & Ehrenberg, 2004). Finally, both institutional types become intertwined with the local community serving as a significant employer and contributor to the local economy.

However, the challenges for these two institutional types are very different. Public institutions are answerable to the citizens and legislators, private institutions are more

answerable to their board and clients (Schmidtlein & Berdahl, 2011). Furthermore, public institutions have an expectation of access while private institutions have one degree of separation. “The financing of higher education poses the question of how its costs should be apportioned among four parties: parents, students, taxpayers, and philanthropists” (Johnstone, 2011, p. 327). While both institutions cultivate human capital, their relationship with the state is contrasting. Based on measures of institutional budgeting, enrollment, and the public good, the focus for the remainder of this literature review and study centers on the public university context and its interactions with nonresident undergraduates.

Public Universities (Institutional Mission). A critical aspect of context revolves around the institutional mission of public universities. In recent years, significant changes have emerged regarding the relationship of public institutions of higher education and society. From an institutional logics perspective, evidence suggests public institutions have potentially shifted from serving as social institutions to an industry impacting their overall relationship with the state (Gumport, 2000; Jaquette et al., 2016). Accordingly, how institutional missions impacts nonresident enrollment forms a critical point of analysis.

Public universities have historically been associated with a mission of access to the people of the state. More specifically, Stark (1995) provides insight into this mission in defining the “Wisconsin Ideas”:

the University’s direct contributions to the state: to the government in the forms of serving in office, offering advice about public policy, providing information and exercising technical skill, and to the citizens in the forms of doing research directed at solving problems that are important to the state and conducting outreach activities (p. 2).

Even so, with changing times, an institution's response to circumstances and its own ambitions can potentially lead to "mission creep" (Bastedo, 2009, p. 218). Such a shift in mission has been less pronounced in academic programs where public institutions have generally preserved science, technology, humanities, and social fields (Brint et al., 2012). The biggest change has occurred with the enrollment management aspects of the institution. More specifically, when discussing increases in nonresident enrollment at public universities, scholars have questioned the alignment of this practice with the institution's mission.

As the presence of nonresident undergraduates on campus has become more pronounced, public universities have explored how to maintain their commitment to residents while also meeting the unique needs presented by the nonresident population. Studies suggest nonresidents seek out highly ranked institutions (Baryla, Jr. & Dotterweich, 2006; Jaquette et al., 2016). Furthermore, a positive correlation has been established between this student population and tuition (Baryla, Jr. & Dotterweich, 2006). As nonresidents become inextricably connected to public institutions, direct and indirect pressures emerge regarding how to best address this campus population's needs. Past research on nonresidents suggests there is a possible misalignment between nonresidents and institutional interests to blame for lower retention rates (Singell et al., 2010), though shifting to better meet their needs may compromise the access mission and exacerbate more entrepreneurial-like behaviors on the part of the public university (Jaquette et al., 2016). Achieving the right balance between these two forces serves as a major challenge for public institutions today.

With the public university mission established, it is instructive to investigate subsequent research on nonresident enrollment factors by public institution type. Considering the relatively

limited number of studies involving nonresident undergraduates, a certain degree of overlap exists as public universities often uphold multiple designations, particularly in the less populated states. However, there is enough of a difference in findings between public university types to justify this analysis. As a result, the following highlights the most significant findings regarding nonresident undergraduates across the following designations: four-year, research, flagship, and land grant institutions. Analysis of public institutions from the most general (four-year) to specific (land grant) establishes how institutional context has historically interacted with nonresident undergraduates over time.

Four Year Institutions. Research on four-year public universities provides an informative summary of enrollment factors involving nonresident undergraduates. Historically, public institutions have tended to favor resident undergraduates even at the expense of long-term interests of the states (Groen & White, 2004). Such sentiments are evidenced by having nonresident enrollment contingent upon excess capacity (Rizzo & Ehrenberg, 2004) and, in the case of large public institutions, charging significantly lower tuition rates to residents resulting in a smaller percentage of nonresident undergraduates (Toutkoushian et al., 2007). With studies focused primarily on four-year public, the purpose and economic outcomes of nonresident enrollment are most pronounced. Combined, these areas help to offer valuable insight into the interactions between nonresident undergraduates and the four-year public university context.

Studies involving nonresidents and public, four-year universities generate conflicting findings concerning tuition and nonresident undergraduates. First, the purpose of nonresident recruitment is generally associated with revenue (Brint et al., 2016; Canche, 2017), yet other studies suggest that nonresident enrollment is more for various quality purposes (Rizzo &

Ehrenberg, 2004). This discrepancy is further amplified when study results find public universities who receive more state appropriations actually charge more, not less for tuition for both residents and nonresidents alike (Toutkoushian et al., 2007). Second, while a significant positive relationship was found between variation of nonresident enrollment and tuition (Canche, 2014), prior research has asserted there was no significant correlation between nonresident tuition and enrollment (Dotterweich & Baryla, Jr., 2005). Additional research offering more institutional context is critical as larger, well established public universities (Dotterweich & Baryla, Jr., 2005) and those institutions with higher student academic profiles (Toutkoushian et al., 2007) have the ability to charge higher nonresident tuition without it negatively impacting enrollment.

As with regional and state influences, proximity can be a significant factor with this criterion as well. A public university found in a competitive local market (Rizzo & Ehrenberg, 2004) and neighboring wealthier states (Canche, 2017) has the ability to increase tuition without experiencing declines in nonresident enrollment. However, there are limits to these recruitment strategies. For four-year public universities, there may be a threshold of too high of nonresident tuition that can either crowd out nonresidents (Winters, 2012) or enable these typically higher socioeconomic level students to transfer out to schools with lower tuition rates (Allen et al., 2008). Subsequently, studies focused primarily on four-year institutions offer a conflicting picture of how the context may ultimately impact how nonresident undergraduates are viewed and the influence of tuition on subsequent enrollment tendencies.

Research Institutions. Several studies have focused on enrollment factors involving nonresident undergraduates at research institutions. More specifically, researchers have reported

findings involving enrollment and tuition. With enrollment, research institutions are the most likely institution type to pursue nonresident undergraduates (Jaquette & Curs, 2015) and have the overall highest nonresident enrollment percentage among public universities (Canche, 2014). Yet, the results are not consistent across all research institutions. While some studies have reported highly ranked research institutions enrolling a higher percentage of nonresident undergraduates (Jaquette et al., 2016), others have found top tier research institutions at a disadvantage in recruiting nonresident undergraduates (Adkisson & Peach, 2008). Furthermore, increased enrollment of nonresident undergraduates at research institutions, particularly in high poverty states, may lead to a decrease in underrepresented minority and low socioeconomic students (Jaquette et al., 2016). Such an impact is compounded by the generally recognized fact that research institutions typically charge the highest tuition rates of any public university type. Ultimately, research findings concerning nonresident interactions within the research university context are inconclusive.

One consistent feature across public research institutions has been the increase in nonresident tuition rates. Prior to the Great Recession, Titus et al. (2015) documented a threefold increase in nonresident tuition. This trend continued in the post-recession era in which nonresidents pay an average tuition rate of three times the rate of their resident colleagues (Jaquette et al., 2016). Such a finding seems to be supported by developments with state appropriations as a negative relationship existed between state appropriations and nonresident enrollment with the strongest effect at research institutions (Jaquette & Curs, 2015). In short, while increases in tuition and enrollment for nonresident undergraduates at research institutions

are well documented, the overall impact on nonresidents and other student populations is an area of research still in development.

Flagship Institutions. Flagship institutions typically serve as the anchor for a higher education system in the state. As offered by Bastedo (2009), the flagship institution often has a “halo effect” over the rest of the system. Similarly, flagship institutions have had a pronounced influence on nonresident enrollment policy. To begin, nonresidents have demonstrated a preference in attending larger flagship institutions (Baryla, Jr. & Dotterweich, 2006) resulting in a valued revenue stream for this type of institution (Zhang, 2007). With this established, the literature provides contradictory findings regarding nonresident enrollment factors at flagship universities. More specifically, flagship universities have a long-held association in serving the citizens of the state. Accordingly, when capacity constraints exist, flagships have typically deferred to the resident leading to a positive and significant effect on nonresident tuition rates (Winters, 2012). Some research has suggested this line of thought creates a crowding out of nonresidents (Winters, 2012), whereas other research has found residents and lower income students are at risk for being crowded out by nonresidents at flagship institutions (Curs & Jaquette, 2017). Considering the pivotal role of flagship universities for a state’s higher education system, a crowding out in either direction can have significant implications for higher education access in the present day.

Land Grant Institutions. Land grant institutions arose from the Morrill Acts of 1862, 1890, or 1994 (Elementary and Secondary Education Reauthorization Act) resulting in the designation of at least one college or university in each state, territory, and in the District of Columbia (APLU, 2019). As offered by Vandenberg-Davis (2003), “The act reputedly ushered

in a distinctly American approach to higher education, one which emphasized practical learning for ‘farmers and mechanics’ and equal opportunity for higher learning.” (p. 57). With a mission of access, these institutions were originally developed primarily for the citizens of the state. Subsequently, state appropriations have traditionally served as the main funding source. As state funding sources declined, nonresident tuition served as one potential source of discretionary revenue (Jaquette et al., 2016; Perna & Titus, 2004). As a result, increased enrollment of nonresidents has helped to reshape the face of the modern-day land grant institution.

Nonresident undergraduates and states remain inextricably related throughout the history of higher education. It is a complicated relationship, particularly when discussing land grant institutions. On one side, states have viewed nonresidents as a threat to state resources and their resident students at public and land grant institutions. In some instances, going so far as associating nonresidents as historically a source of “trouble” on campus (Carbon & Jensen, 1971). This defensive posture has manifested itself in enrollment caps and tuition increases. Considering that land grant institutions have a specific mission of serving the residents of their state, both symbolic and practical implications arise. At a symbolic level, increases in nonresident undergraduate enrollment at land grant institutions can cause concern for state level legislators and parents of prospective students who worry resident enrollment opportunities will be displaced (Curs & Jaquette, 2017). For instance, legislators in California recently introduced legislative bill “AB 1674 University of California: nonresident student enrollment” that originally proposed a 10% cap on nonresident enrollment, but was later amended to reinforce resident admissions pool criteria offered in the California Master Plan for Education that, “ensures the academic qualifications for admitted nonresident undergraduate students generally

exceeds, on average, the academic qualifications of resident undergraduate students admitted at each campus,” (AB-1674, 2017). As referenced previously, eighteen states have had limits on nonresident enrollment at some point in their public institutional histories (Winters, 2012). Land grant institutions are at the heart of this public perception battle.

Alternatively, states have welcomed nonresidents as a way to bring in cultural/geographical diversity and human/financial capital to the state (Zhang, 2007). At a practical level, tuition revenue from nonresident undergraduates provides needed flexibility for land grant institutions to address budgeting needs. This situation is evidenced by tuition funds serving as the fastest growing revenue generator over the past decade at these public institutions (Jaquette & Curs, 2015). Accordingly, nonresident undergraduates serve as a valuable, yet controversial solution to addressing land grant institution’s fiscal challenges. Most efforts at the state level have been more passive or even circumstantial, in nature, by simply not having any prohibitive barriers or providing discretion to its public higher education institutions to make decisions in this area, particularly regarding nonresident tuition setting. Such discretion has been vital to land grant institutions, particularly in the 21st century. As state appropriations have failed to keep pace with university operating expenses, land grant institutions have turned to nonresident tuition as a viable revenue source.

The practical and symbolic aspects of land grant institutions and nonresident undergraduates are significant. Land grant universities are distinct from other universities due to their unique origins and structure of federal funding. From an institutional logics perspective, historical traditions and institutional legacy shape their identity. On the surface these factors would suggest a willingness to add in the academic sense, but not change (Brint et al., 2012,

Gumport & Snyderman, 2002). Yet, due to changes in the economic conditions, an era of restructuring has ensued at the academic and student enrollment level. As nonresident enrollment and overall presence on campus increases, a question of how this is received by the general public emerges. A number of studies reporting findings involving nonresident retention taking place on land grant campuses (Caison, 2006; Jones-White et al., 2010; Murtaugh et al., 1999; Whalen et al., 2010; Wohlgemuth et al., 2007). However, only one study (Adkisson & Peach, 2008) specifically focuses on land grant institutions and nonresident undergraduates with a primary emphasis on initial enrollment tendencies. Considering the significant changes since the Great Recession and the established importance of nonresident undergraduates to the land grant campus, additional research is necessary to better understand how the land grant campus and nonresident undergraduates impact one another.

Section Summary

Nonresident undergraduates on public university campuses have formed a complicated relationship over time. No longer an individual institution issue, recent increases in nonresident enrollment have become national in scope. Reductions in state funding coupled with economic events such as the Great Recession have generated both tensions and opportunities for land grant institutions. While nonresidents bring practical benefits to the institutions, what this campus population represents symbolically in relation to resident students brings the land grant mission of access into question. Factors involving distance, quality/selectivity, tuition, and financial support further contribute to how nonresidents interact with the land grant context during the moving in phase. Based on these collective findings, conducting a study on nonresident undergraduates attending a research, flagship, land grant university in the West that has

experienced significant growth in nonresident enrollment post-Great Recession will contribute to an established gap in the existing literature base.

Student Characteristics (Moving Through)

The majority of research involving nonresident undergraduates is from the institutional enrollment perspective. More specifically, studies on nonresident undergraduates are almost exclusively monolithic as they are reported on from an economic/financial viewpoint. With such a short-term focus on recruiting nonresidents to campus, the long-term goal of better understanding this population's needs in order to improve retention and ultimate graduation outcomes is overlooked. Accordingly, the following section is intended to provide a summary of what is known about nonresidents during their undergraduate experience. Such an analysis is structured to align with Schlossberg's Transition Theory (2006) "moving through" phase. During this phase, the benefits, challenges, and degree of transition (sense of belongs and institutional fit) help to inform what is currently known about nonresidents and their interactions with the institutional context.

Benefits of Nonresidents

Based on prior research findings, several distinct benefits emerge from an increased presence of nonresident undergraduates on a university campus. While it is often challenging to disaggregate the context from the nonresident undergraduate, a nonresident presence can impact campus outcomes in the following ways: nonresident community, geographic diversity, enhanced academic quality, and maintaining an affordable resident tuition rate. Combined, these

outcomes offer a unique insight into what benefits emerge from the interaction of nonresidents and the greater campus community.

Nonresident Community. With a critical mass of nonresident undergraduates on most public university campuses, a number of benefits emerge. First, an increasing nonresident population can help foster a community within a community for its members. While the students within this group will likely be from different states and regions of the country, there is nonetheless a shared experience that forms a common bond amongst the group. Peer support is routinely cited as an important factor in the college transition for all students, but especially nonresident students. It is important for nonresidents to have access to a friend (Friedlander, 2007; Swenson et al., 2008) and belong to a supportive peer/social group (Palmer & Gasman, 2008; Whalen et al., 2009; Wohlgemuth et al., 2007) during the initial transition process. An increase in nonresident enrollment alone does not guarantee a sense of belonging for this population. However, such an increase does create the potential for greater programming options if approached in an intentional and purposeful way. Furthermore, nonresidents typically come from greater distances than their resident peers often times leading to reduced family support (Whalen et al., 2009) and feeling homesick and isolated (Caison, 2007). Establishing friendships in the first several weeks is a key predictor in a nonresident's overall adjustment to campus (Friedlander et al., 2007). Finally, nonresidents are more likely to live on campus, particularly during their first year, which provides an enhanced overall student community of potential participants for activities, helping contribute to the vitality of the overall campus environment (Baryla, Jr. & Dotterweich, 2006). Considering many universities require freshmen to live on-

campus, an increased nonresident presence helps to form organic connections before the more formal campus programming efforts take place.

Geographic Diversity. Another benefit of a larger nonresident population on retention involves the geographic diversity this subgroup brings to the campus overall. While nonresidents are generally considered homogeneous from a socioeconomic standpoint (Oseguera & Rhee, 2009; Zhang, 2007), this subgroup brings perspectives, experiences, and cultures from around the country to campus (Barylka & Dotterweich, 2006; Rizzo & Ehrenberg, 2004; Titus, Vamosiu & Gupta, 2015). In a qualitative study on the impact of positive relationships on African American undergraduate retention, Strayhorn (2008c) found exposure to diverse individuals increases the odds of a student realizing a sense of belonging in college. As a result, Strayhorn (2008c) recommends admissions offices consider students with a wide range of interests to expand these opportunities. Nonresidents can infuse a geographically isolated public university with ideas shaped by their national experiences (Barylka & Dotterweich, 2006) and subsequently enhance the overall resident experience (Titus et al., 2015). Such benefits hold true for even students from adjacent states when considering the variation that exists from different community perspectives. A larger nonresident presence increases the odds of the entire student body being introduced to a greater cross-section of cultures from around the country.

Academic Preparedness. Furthermore, a more pronounced nonresident population helps to enhance academic quality and subsequent retention efforts. Nonresidents are generally associated with higher grades and test scores resulting in elevating the overall “academic profile” and perceived quality of the host institution (Jaquette & Curs, 2015; Rizzo & Ehrenberg, 2004; Titus et al., 2015). Accordingly, a quality academic culture is established that aligns with one of

this subgroup's primary enrollment criteria for attending an institution (Cooke & Boyle, 2011). In turn, nonresidents are more likely to stay at a university that receives more national recognition. Also, while seemingly contradictory, a campus culture with more academically prepared peers has been shown to potentially help low SES and other students more prone to stopping out from college (Oseguera & Rhee, 2009). Combined, such results contribute to making the institution more desirable for the current and future student body as a collective.

Affordable Resident Tuition. Finally, a large nonresident population can assist with maintaining a lower, more affordable resident tuition rate. Often times, the actual costs of education far exceed the established resident tuition rate in the state (Melguizo & Chung, 2012). Since nonresidents do not pay state taxes, state taxpayers feel nonresidents should have to pay higher tuition (Rizzo & Ehrenberg, 2004). Accordingly, administrators value the revenue generating potential of this student population (Zhang, 2007). Considering that a state's unique economy and the arrangement of its higher education system proves influential in determining tuition (Doyle, 2012), a significant nonresident population offers the latitude necessary to keep resident tuition costs down even during difficult economic conditions (Perna & Titus, 2004). In addition, nonresidents can fill seats left otherwise vacant by residents allowing for expansion of academic offerings for all enrolled students (Titus et al., 2015). In maintaining more of an open enrollment strategy for residents, this arrangement is sustainable. With such financial flexibility, public institutions can be a stabilizing force for the statewide community.

Challenges of Nonresidents

Transfer Out Culture. While an increased nonresident presence holds potential benefits both within and between student groups, there are also some inherent challenges that exist regarding retention. To begin with, nonresident undergraduates who do not persist at an institution are likely to transfer out, rather than stop out (Campbell & Mislevy, 2013; Herzog, 2005; Hoyt & Winn, 2004; Johnson & Muse, 2012). As a result, a possible transfer out culture can arise with this subgroup. Oseguera & Rhee (2009) found using a quantitative hierarchical generalized linear model that campuses with a high concentration of students who enter college considering transferring can create a peer climate that influences other students to leave who otherwise would have stayed at the institution. Accordingly, a larger nonresident population, if left unmonitored, could amplify the effects of this transfer out influence resulting in a negative impact on retention overall.

Crowd Out Culture. Also, a more pronounced nonresident population could negatively impact retention of other subgroups on campus. As previously established, nonresidents may take resident seats (Baryla, Jr. & Dotterweich, 2006) as with each 80 nonresidents enrolled at prestigious public universities, 46 residents were determined to be crowded out (Jaquette, Curs & Posselt, 2017). More specifically, an elevated nonresident population may create a campus climate detrimental to low socioeconomic and underrepresented minority students (Jaquette & Curs, 2015). The authors suggest this may manifest in admissions offices shifting their recruitment focus from underrepresented students to nonresidents and, in turn, prioritizing merit-based over needs-based aid in order to maximize the overall tuition revenue. In a longitudinal analysis of 105 public research institutions, Jaquette, Curs & Posselt (2017) concluded increased

nonresident enrollment has a statistically significant “crowding out” effect, which can compromise healthy learning environments and campus climate for some students. As a result, the student body may ultimately not reflect the actual demographics of the host state. Low socioeconomic and unrepresented minority populations may find lack of representation of their cultural groups and thus, perceive an unwelcoming institutional environment ultimately impacting their persistence outcomes (Jones, Castellanos & Cole, 2002). Therefore, nonresident population increases can potentially amplify retention problems across other student subgroups.

Context Congruence

Institutional Fit. With potential benefits and challenges established, how the collective interactions determine compatibility for nonresident undergraduates serves as a critical point of analysis. Institutional fit is a useful construct for exploring compatibility between nonresidents and the land grant university campus culture. Bean (2005) define this construct as “...fitting in with others that share the role of being a student in a particular institution at a particular moment in time” (p. 219). Moreover, an important finding within this model centers on how behaviors reflect a student’s attitudes. Tinto’s (1993) Interactionalist Theory helps to inform this construct further in discussing the compatibility between a student’s characteristics and the characteristics of the institution in influencing retention outcomes. Past research on nonresident undergraduates suggests a potential misalignment exists between the mission and interests of public institutions and nonresident students by not treating this student group as its own distinct student subpopulation even when found to be at a greater risk for attrition than their resident peers (Hoyt & Winn, 2004; Singell & Waddell, 2010). Hoyt and Winn (2004) recommend institutions conduct further research that, “disaggregates nonreturning student subpopulations and reveals

their differences” (p. 410) to inform strategic retention decisions as they relate to mission, the strategic plan, and other values. In sum, nonresident undergraduates may possess distinct enough characteristics to warrant a more customized retention plan. In a similar vein, Singell and Waddell (2010) suggest that four year institutions seeking to improve retention outcomes with nonresidents at risk of attrition, focus their intervention efforts specifically on nonresidents predisposed to attending four year institutions. Such findings help concentrate realignment decisions with the greatest potential for return at the institution level. Thomas (2002) explored the construct of “institutional habitus” which encompasses not only the general culture, but the underlying priorities of the institution. This study found that the financial funding structures create considerable pressures for students and that an “institutional habitus” can enhance or hinder student persistence. In short, institutions who facilitate a “habitus” compatible with a greater range of student households at the socioeconomic and cultural level ultimately enhance the overall student persistence outcomes. Finally, a student’s likelihood to persist and graduate does have some connection to whether or not their host institution was their first choice. Students, who enrolled in their first choice, are 1.67 times more likely to graduate from that institution (DesJardins, Kim & Rzonca, 2003). Subsequently, an expanded understanding of the traditional institutional fit construct as it pertains to nonresident undergraduates is appropriate considering recent changes in the land grant landscape.

Sense of Belonging. While institutional fit speaks to compatibility between the student and campus, sense of belonging expands this relationship to social groups as well as offering a useful construct for exploring nonresident adjustment and interactions on campus. Sense of belonging serves as a central construct for this study’s third research question: How do third-year

nonresident undergraduates describe their sense of belonging at a specific land grant campus? Existing literature specifically addressing nonresident undergraduates and sense of belonging is quite limited. Accordingly, this section is intended to achieve the following: establish a foundational overview of this construct, identify potential transferable findings and illuminate potential gaps in the current literature base. Establishing the study participants' perceived sense of belonging will serve as invaluable investment in better meeting the needs of nonresident undergraduates on this land grant host campus.

Defining Sense of Belonging: An Overview

While aspects of sense of belonging have been studied within the field of psychology for over a century, it has only been in recent decades that this construct has been directly applied to the higher education context. As a bridge between these fields, Rosenberg & McCullough (1981), through researching adolescent self-esteem development, advanced the concept of 'mattering' as feelings of connectedness where someone feels important or matters to others. This definition proved influential in subsequent applications to transition research. In particular, Schlossberg (1989) related how a first year college student's transition to college serves as a clear application of this psychological construct of 'mattering.' Schlossberg (1989) concluded, "...mattering refers to the feeling that you matter to another; significance refers to those people who matter to you" (p. 5) and can be analyzed through five key aspects: attention, importance, ego-extension, dependence and appreciation. This scholarly classification helped to better explain what the transition was like for first year undergraduate students in moving from a feeling of being 'marginalized' to ultimately being one within the community. In a related line of inquiry, Bollen & Hoyle (1990) established the construct 'perceived cohesion' to describe a

college student's sense of belonging to a group, which is reciprocally related to their overall morale. Based on their use of a Perceived Cohesion Scale, it was determined that the college study participants had a significantly higher perceived cohesion to their peer group than nearby residents did to their fellow community members. Based on this initial body of literature, sense of belonging related findings primarily focused on an individual and their perceived acceptance and significance within a group.

The definition of sense of belonging can also be expanded upon and applied at a community level such as a college campus to better understand implications for student retention. Hurtado and Carter (1997) applied their Model of Sense of Belonging in studying third year Latino undergraduates and their perceptions of campus racial climate. Amongst the authors' various findings, accounting for a student's subjective experience proved paramount and helped to further define sense of belonging as, "the individual's view of whether he or she feels included in the college community" (p. 327). The researchers went on to categorize sense of belonging at one of three levels: part of the campus community, member of the campus community or sense of belonging to campus community.

Subsequent research on how to measure sense of belonging and its implications for retention on a college campus expanded in the early 2000s (Freeman et al., 2007; Hausmann et al., 2007; Hoffman et al., 2002;). As a way to operationalize this definition, Hoffman et al. (2002) established the "Sense of Belonging Scale" which measures a student's sense of belonging based on five dimensions: perceived peer support, perceived faculty support/comfort, perceived classroom comfort, perceived isolation, and empathetic faculty understanding. Tovar and Simon (2010) would later validate the first three dimensions. Furthermore, Hurtado et al.,

(2007) implemented a Diverse Learning Environments survey to better measure the substance of sense of belonging than just activities associated with this construct. In addition, this survey incorporated two empirical measures of validation: academic and general interpersonal validation. As a result of this study, the researchers discussed the importance of campus agents to empower their students and arrived at the following revised definition of sense of belonging, “Sense of belonging is a feeling of attachment and place within the overall campus community” (p. 74). Freeman et al. (2007) combined several instruments to investigate students’ sense of belonging at a class and campus level. Results indicated a significant association of the participant’s subjective sense of belonging to academic motivation and instructor characteristics at the class level. However, the researchers were unable to establish a similar association for campus-level sense of belonging. Ultimately, a student’s perceived social acceptance proved most strongly related to sense of belonging. In turn, Hausmann et al., (2007) found sense of belonging to be a significant predictor of both institutional commitment and subsequent intentions to persist. Finally, Morrow and Ackermann (2012) investigated how sense of belonging and motivation predicted students’ perceived intention to graduate. While sense of belonging and intentions to persist was not found to be significant, perceived social support was significant for actual retention as was student motivation. In summary, sense of belonging impacted student retention at multiple levels of consideration.

After substantial research on individual, group and campus sense of belonging, another line of research began to explore the interactions of student demographic groups and their campus settings. Notably, Strayhorn (2008a) investigated the relationships between Latino undergraduates’ college experiences and their degree of sense of belonging. As a result of this

work, Strayhorn (2008a) recognized that sense of belonging holds both cognitive and affective elements and operationally defined this construct as the student's perceived sense of college integration. In support of these findings, Tovar & Simon (2010) posited that sense of belonging is, "an individual's sense of identification or positioning in relation to a group or to the college community, which may yield an affective response" (p. 200). As a result of this collective set of studies, sense of belonging assumed a multi-dimensional nature both within the individual as well as with the levels of interaction up to the campus level.

In an effort to best capture this evolution and nuanced complexity of this construct, Strayhorn (2018) ultimately presented the most comprehensive definition of sense of belonging in relating:

In terms of college, sense of belonging refers to students' perceived social support on campus, a feeling or sensation of connectedness, and the experience of mattering or feeling cared about, accepted, respected, valued by, and important to the campus community or others on campus such as faculty, staff, and peers (p. 4).

Such a definition provides both clear indicators and flexibility for exploring sense of belonging in a qualitative intrinsic case study design. In viewing sense of belonging through this lens, it helps to establish a space for individualized preference, while still acknowledging key values held by all college students at a human level. Considering how understudied nonresident undergraduates are, in general, let alone specifically regarding sense of belonging, there stands potential to identify characteristics unique to this group's sense of belonging as well.

Transferable Findings

With a working definition of sense of belonging established, it is important to discuss both the benefits of feeling a sense of belonging and drawbacks when sense of belonging is absent in a student's life. At the individual level, Strayhorn (2018) identified sense of belonging

as a basic need and fundamental motive that leads to positive, prosocial and productive outcomes. Over time, studies have confirmed the benefits of sense of belonging on social self-esteem/perception (Hoyle & Crawford, 1994; Pittman & Richmond, 2008), scholastic competence and reducing the likelihood of internalizing problem behaviors (Pittman & Richmond, 2008). Perhaps most compelling is how students feel who do not have a strong sense of belonging. Studies have shown students are at risk for a feeling of marginalization and isolation (Schlossberg, 1989; Strayhorn, 2018). Strayhorn (2018) further suggests sense of belonging has an “...increased significance in environments or situations that individuals experience as different, unfamiliar or foreign...” (p. 20). Considering nonresident undergraduates by their very definition are required to relocate, often from great geographic distances, there is potential for greater isolation and difficulty establishing a sense of belonging in this new host environment.

While all students experience a college transition, past research indicates the degree of impact varies considerably across groups. Hurtado & Carter’s (1997) seminal study on third year Latino students’ perceptions of campus climate and its impact on their sense of belonging helped to illuminate factors that contributed to the subjective sense of college integration. Subsequent studies have consistently found a significantly lower sense of belonging on college campus for underrepresented minorities (Fan et al., 2021; Gopalan & Brady, 2020; Johnson et al., 2007; Museus et al., 2018; Nunez, 2009). According to Johnson et al. (2007), residence hall climate, the transition to campus and overall campus racial climate are all significant predictors of a student’s sense of belonging. In a recent study, Gopalan & Brady (2020), through analysis of a nationally representative data set, concluded that underrepresented minorities and first generation

college students consistently report a lower sense of belonging than white and multi-generation students. Various studies have since presented potential interventions to enhance sense of belonging including: peer mentoring (Shotten et al., 2007), socially supportive residence hall (Berger, 1997; Fan et al., 2021) and culturally responsive and relevant programming (Fan et al., 2021; Museus et al., 2018; Nunez, 2009). Based on these findings, the factors necessary to realize sense of belonging vary across different cultures.

In a related branch of research, social class has been explored as a contributing factor to the degree of sense of belonging felt by students. Ostrove & Long (2007) in their study of a selective liberal arts college found a student's social class background was strongly related and had a critical influence on sense of belonging predicting: social/academic adjustment, quality of experience and academic performance. Further, Rubin (2012) studied social class and college integration concluding belonging was important in making this determination. Whereas, Vaccaro & Newman (2016) explored how sense of belonging looks differently between privileged and minority students concluding the following as being significant factors in a student's sense of belonging: perceptions of college environment, social relationships and campus involvement. Based on past research findings, nonresidents are generally associated with being at a higher socioeconomic status (Allen et al., 2008; Jacob et al., 2013). Accordingly, this line of research suggests a greater likelihood of nonresidents experiencing a stronger sense of belonging than perhaps other demographic delineated groups. In sum, socioeconomic status is a key contributor to perceived sense of belonging for students at the collegiate level.

Despite critical differences in a student's perceived sense of belonging based on demographic factors, some common ground has also been discovered in the existing literature

base. Vaccaro & Newman (2016) found in a study of privileged and minority respondents that students universally defined sense of belonging simply as ‘being comfortable’ and ‘fitting in’. Strayhorn (2008c) published his seminal study in this area based on a case study exploring the college transition for African American males. Strayhorn found the highest student satisfaction resulted from supportive relationships. This finding has been echoed by numerous studies including: the importance of supportive relationship specifically with faculty (Freeman et al., 2007; Hurtado et al., 2007; Nunez, 2009; Tovar & Simon, 2010) and peers (Astin, 1993; Pittman & Richmond, 2008; Tovar & Simon, 2010). He concludes, “...what works well for others (e.g., White students) can also work well for Black men” (p. 38). Similarly, Museus et al. (2018) found evidence of successful crossover with sense of belonging interventions when a ‘culturally engaging campus environment’ is well established. Also, several studies have reported the importance of and reciprocal benefits of purposeful cross-racial interactions (Locks et al., 2008; Nunez, 2009; Strayhorn, 2008b;) as part of campus programming and curriculum to help foster this type of environment. Finally, Johnson et al. 2007 suggests that successful integration into college serves as a mutual responsibility between student and the host institution. Understanding nonresidents’ perceived sense of belonging may similarly help campus programming efforts and establish purposeful interactions to enhance overall satisfaction.

Gaps in the Literature

Even with this sense of belonging literature base established, a noticeable gap persists regarding the setting and experience of nonresident undergraduates. While a study of national database set (Gopalan & Brady, 2020) reported the majority of undergraduate students indicated feeling a sense of belonging to their campus, this finding was limited to one test item resulting in

presenting an incomplete picture. Calls for studies on a greater range of university climates (Ostrove & Long, 2007; Pittman & Richmond, 2008) persist. Furthermore, most of the studies in this category focus on first or second year transition (Nunez, 2009; Pittman & Richmond, 2008). Finally, Kuh et al. (2005) suggested retention outcomes rely more on, “What students do during college counts more for what they learn and whether they will persist in college than who they are or even where they go to college” (p. 8). Strayhorn (2018) offered a more recent empirical rebuttal citing a narrow focus with many sense of belonging studies on, “what students do and what institutions do to us” and instead should focus on “what students need and feel” (p. 24). Such conclusions align well with a qualitative, case study approach. In addition, Schlossberg’s (1989) original suggestion of broadening the transition to the entirety of the college experience still holds considerable merit today:

Furthermore, by looking throughout the campus at the diverse backgrounds and experiences of students, we can begin to understand what continues and what changes during the college experience. There will be many continuous aspects that enable students to recognize themselves as they move to new living environments, change academic majors, and take on new leadership roles; there will also be many discontinuous aspects of their college lives (p. 6).

In focusing on nonresident undergraduate students during their third year of enrollment on a land grant campus, potential exists for expanding the knowledge base in both a sense of belonging experience and setting across the student undergraduate enrollment cycle.

Institutional Fit and Sense of Belonging

In studying nonresidents during the “moving through” phase of their undergraduate career, the two distinct, yet complementary constructs of institutional fit and sense of belongings prove useful. First, nonresident undergraduates by the very nature of their home origins are physically separated from their friend and family support network. Accordingly, this group

requires extra assistance in transitioning to their new environment (DesJardins et al., 2003) to maximize the significant association between sense of belonging and university belonging espoused by the literature (Freeman et al., 2007). Second, with a significant influx of nonresident undergraduates, there is a lack of empirical research on how the land grant campus climate fosters or hinders a sense of belonging and institutional fit for this campus population. As offered by Tinto (2006), “It is one thing to understand why students leave; it is another to know what institutions can do to help students stay and succeed” (p. 6). Despite considerable speculation on why nonresidents depart, very few studies concentrate on why nonresidents persist. Thus, a central aim of this study is to explore the level of congruence between nonresident students and their campus environment (Tinto, 1993) through sense of belonging and student persistence (Hausmann et al., 2007) to inform problem of practice literature in this area.

Section Summary

Despite forming an increasingly larger share of the overall student populations on land grant campuses nationwide, existing studies on nonresident undergraduates are limited and rely heavily on pre-college characteristics resulting in a largely monolithic narrative. Subsequently, more research is needed to better understand their lived experience and how they impact other populations around them. Past research has established that a prominent nonresident presence on campus can organically foster a peer community, expand geographic diversity, enhance academic quality, and improve resident access by subsidizing their tuition rates. Alternatively, a larger nonresident population may amplify a transfer out culture and can potentially crowd out other student populations. Combined, these factors help to define the level of congruence nonresidents have between institutional fit and sense of belonging. While these findings provide

some context on what influences nonresidents and how nonresidents influence their institution, additional qualitative research in this area is necessary in order to better understand their lived experience during the moving through phase of their undergraduate careers.

Outcomes (Moving Out)

With the study context and nonresident population defined through the research base, it is necessary to establish ultimate outcomes that result from the interactions between these two areas of study. In short, nonresident persistence on a land grant campus is best understood by analyzing trends in retention, graduation, and following graduation outcomes. Combined, these areas help to form the moving out phase of Schlossberg's Transition Theory (2006). Developing a better understanding of what past research has offered in this area, will help guide what information would be most useful from persisting nonresident undergraduates to inform comprehensive retention efforts on the select land grant campus site.

Student Retention

Student retention relies on the institution's ability to ensure continual enrollment of its student body. Historically, resident students have had a significant advantage in persistence and graduation rates compared to their nonresident colleagues (Yu et al., 2010). The majority of research on nonresident retention focuses on persistence between the first and second year. Not only is this the most readily accessible reported information from institutional and national databases, but studies have demonstrated the greatest drop off in retention for this subgroup during this timeframe (DesJardins et al., 2003; Herzog, 2005). However, retention is multi-

faceted in nature and is underutilized when reported as a dichotomous variable particularly when discussing nonresident enrollment decisions. Hoyt & Winn (2004) and Herzog (2005) provided useful operationalized definitions within retention of: drop-out, stop-out, opt-out (departing after accomplishing academic goals, but without a certificate or degree), and transfer-out. Additional literature indicates the potential benefits of a nonresident electing to remain in the institution host state to live and work following graduation helps to contribute to the local economy and tax base. Further, existing research on nonresidents focuses primarily on drop-out and transfer-out tendencies. Therefore, drop-out, transfer-out, graduate, and following graduation will serve as measurements of nonresident enrollment decisions for this literature review.

Drop-out. While a limited number of studies involving nonresidents utilize a longitudinal design to capture decisions beyond the point of departure, the majority of these studies focus on whether or not members of this population persist or drop-out. Past research has established residency as a significant variable for drop-outs on public university campuses (Herzog, 2005; Murtaugh et al., 1999; Sabarwal, 2005; Singell & Waddell, 2010; Whalen et al., 2010; Wohlgemuth et al., 2007; Yu et al., 2010). More specifically, nonresidents are at least two more times likely to drop-out compared to their resident counterparts (Herzog, 2005; Yu et al., 2010) making them even less likely to persist than their international peers on the same campus (Murtaugh et al., 1999). While most nonresidents drop out between their first and second year (DesJardins et al., 2003; Herzog, 2005; Sabarwal, 2005; Singell & Waddell, 2010), there is evidence nonresidents remain at risk throughout their entire collegiate career (Singell & Waddell, 2010). Conversely, in-state residency has been found to be a predictor of likelihood for

retention (Whalen et al., 2010; Wohlgemuth et al., 2007). Clearly, nonresident undergraduates are more prone to departure than their resident counterparts.

Transfer-out. Throughout the retention literature, nonresident undergraduates are frequently associated with transferring from their initial institution of enrollment. Several studies investigating transfer tendencies at single site public university campuses have found residency as a significant variable indicating nonresidents are more likely to transfer (Campbell & Mislevy, 2013; Herzog, 2005; Hoyt & Winn, 2004; Johnson & Muse, 2012; Jones-White et al., 2010). More specifically, Hoyt & Winn (2004) found the majority of nonresidents who transferred out, relocated back to their home state for financial reasons. Considering nonresident undergraduates are generally associated with higher economic means, it is not surprising socioeconomic status has been the variable with the greatest influence on transfer status (Allen et al., 2008). Regardless, a change in residency status is generally a rare event for this group (Johnson & Muse, 2012), therefore nonresidents may elect to transfer out when any number of other factors (i.e. financial, distance, social support) are not being met (Hoyt & Winn, 2004; Sabarwal, 2005). Studies on nonresident transfer tendencies have reported nonresidents are anywhere from two (Jones-White, et al., 2010) to five times (Herzog, 2005) more likely to transfer elsewhere than remain at their initial host institution and are at a statistically significant risk of transferring out compared to remaining continuously enrolled (Johnson & Muse, 2012). Within this population, there have also been several additional findings. Based on reported gender, men are more likely to transfer out than women (Herzog, 2005), whereas nonresident women are at a greater risk of transferring out than resident women (Campbell & Mislevy, 2013). Finally, once nonresidents depart an institution, the likelihood of re-enrolling there is drastically reduced.

Johnson & Muse (2012) reported that after two semesters a resident student is 1.8 times more likely to return whereas 81% of nonresident undergraduates with at least a 2.0 GPA were found to enroll elsewhere. In summary, potential differences exist within this population that suggest even more specialized research is needed to understand how perceptions impact this propensity for transferring out within the nonresident undergraduate population (Campbell & Mislevy, 2013).

Graduation. While studies have found nonresidents to be more likely to drop-out or transfer-out, findings regarding graduation are more empirically complicated. First, nonresidents have a financial incentive to graduate on time considering their higher tuition rates (DesJardins et al., 2003; Wohlgemuth et al., 2007). Accordingly, persistence to graduation reflects potentially more promising results for nonresidents when considering graduating within the traditional four year timespan. Also, DesJardins et al. (2003) found nonresidents are 1.6 times more likely to graduate on time (i.e. four years) than resident peers (DesJardins, 2003), whereas Wohlgemuth et al. (2007) reported no significant difference between residents and nonresidents in time to degree completion. Next, graduation itself may not be the major issue, instead it may matter more what institution nonresidents ultimately graduate from that is a more critical point of focus. Jones-White et al. (2010) determined nonresidents initially enrolled at a land grant institution who were within or beyond a reciprocity area were still more likely to graduate elsewhere than to not graduate at all. Such a finding not only speaks to the importance of institutional fit for undergraduates, in general, but more specifically to nonresident undergraduates. An institution's investment in initial programming to aid a nonresident's transition to campus has the potential to improve retention outcomes not just in the first semesters, but throughout the entirety of their

undergraduate career. Finally, the risk factors relative to the nonresident population plays an influential part in graduation rates. While nonresidents are only 59.1% as likely as their resident peers to graduate from their host institution (Whalen et al., 2010), students possessing the least risk factors are 32.2% more likely to graduate than their fellow nonresident peers within the highest risk decile (Singell & Waddell, 2010). Therefore, while nonresident undergraduates lag behind their resident peers in overall persistence to graduation, this disparity is greatly reduced when considering overall graduation and time to graduate rates.

Following Graduation. A significant nonresident population can ultimately benefit the vitality of the host state by choosing to remain there following graduation. First, nonresidents serve as potential “human capital” to the community beyond their time as an undergraduate (Rizzo & Ehrenberg, 2004). Nonresidents are more likely to attend universities situated in communities with higher incomes and with promising job opportunities (Adkisson & Peach, 2008; Baryla & Dotterweich, 2006) and have the potential to make long-term contributions by starting their careers in the host state (Baryla & Dotterweich, 2006; Cooke & Boyle, 2011; Groen & White, 2003). While less likely than their resident colleagues, a significant number of nonresident undergraduates go on to settle in the host state due to employment opportunities (Winters, 2012; Zhang & Ness, 2010). In having nonresidents remain in the state following graduation, states gain an upper hand in the “brain drain” phenomenon resulting in many tangible and intangible benefits. Retention of these typically high ability students also equates to them paying higher taxes as they progress throughout their careers (Groen & White, 2003) and contributes to enhancing the economic vitality of the region (Baryla & Dotterweich, 2006). Accordingly, publicizing job success rates and aligning majors with student interests have been

suggested as a way to curtail transfer-out tendencies of nonresident undergraduates (Hoyt & Winn, 2004). Increased nonresident populations can generate valuable benefits to the host campus, town, and state alike. Similar to other sections in this literature review, the existing research base on retention tendencies based on residency is increasingly dated. This serves as one more reason to explore what factors have contributed to the persistence of this group of nonresident undergraduates.

Differences in Year of Enrollment

Based on the limited research concerning the influence of retention factors on nonresidents, it is critical to evaluate the existing body of knowledge during subsequent years of enrollment. A number of studies have recognized a gap in research on retention and persistence decisions beyond the first year (Nara et al., 2005; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). More specifically, sense of belonging has been identified as a significant predictor of both institutional commitment and a student's intentions to persist; however, there is limited research on how student progression through each class year influences their sense of a belonging to their host university campus (Freeman et al., 2007; Hausmann et al., 2007). Willcoxson (2010) suggests qualitative research is necessary in order to best understand how student experiences influence student attrition over time.

While many of the same retention factors from the first year carryover throughout the rest of the undergraduate career (Nora & Crisp, 2012), there is evidence students also have distinct priorities and needs for each year of enrollment (Braxton et al., 2007; Willcoxson, 2010). Yet, one of the more recent and comprehensive studies on factors influencing retention beyond the first year (Nora & Crisp, 2012) did not even account for residency in its analysis and only

speculated that the high cost of tuition outweighs the perceived benefits for nonresident undergraduates leading to their departure from the university. Considering the importance of retention programming across the undergraduate career (Willcoxson, 2010) that treats all students as at-risk (Braxton et al., 2007), a qualitative study exploring nonresident undergraduate experiences beyond the first year holds tremendous potential.

Third Year Research

As previously established, the majority of research on retention occurs during the first year and graduation. As a result, a minimal number of studies have studied the ‘between years’ overall, let alone for nonresident undergraduates. Evidence suggests the third year of enrollment may be advantageously situated to study student retention decisions (Allen et al., 2008; Willcoxson, 2010). To begin, a student’s enrollment level has been found to be more influential than institutional factors on retention with the third year being particularly relevant since it is much closer to degree attainment (Allen et al., 2008). In turn, third year undergraduates are typically enrolled in more major-specific coursework and are more well established in navigating campus and the community. Furthermore, third year students have specific needs and their persistence decisions are influenced by distinct factors. Overall, rising third year students are most influenced by pre-college factors of parental education and socioeconomic status (Nora & Crisp, 2012), whereas current third year students are reported to place greater value on self-efficacy, health, and teaching quality (Willcoxson, 2010). Yu et al. (2010) serves as one of only a few studies that investigated nonresident undergraduates beyond their first year concluding high tuition cost, travel time, lack of social support, and insufficient acclimation to campus were important factors in nonresident withdrawal. Considering that nonresident undergraduates have

been found to be at-risk for departure throughout their entire collegiate career (Singell & Waddell, 2010), yet show some stability in their third year of enrollment (Nora & Crisp, 2012), exploring what factors have helped nonresidents persist through their first two years holds considerable scholarly merit.

Research Recommendations

While sparse in relation to the cumulative set of retention-based research, researchers have presented a number of recommendations when working with the nonresident population. In order to make sense of this topic, it is helpful to categorize the recommendations along a recruitment to retention continuum. To begin with, maximizing resources and revenues in relation to nonresidents is discussed at great length. Some studies promote highly strategic approaches from an institutional sustainability approach such as targeted recruitment of nonresident undergraduates from wealthy states (Canche, 2017) and enrolling high ability students regardless of residency (Groen & White, 2003). In a complementary fashion, another line of research concentrates on the principle of investing more in order to generate more returns. Suggestions range from reducing the residency tuition gap (Johnson & Muse, 2012) to expanding state and federal financial aid support (Titus et al., 2015) considering how insufficient state appropriations have potentially influenced the institutions' recruitment/enrollment practices at the expense of student groups (Jaquette & Curs, 2015). Further, a focus on students who are at-risk for dropping out emerges. Such sentiments have been captured in the literature throughout time with Eaton & Bean (1995) cautioning campus personnel that the students most likely to leave are the least visible. Recommendations in this area range from treating all students as 'at

risk' (Braxton et al., 2007) to focusing on only nonresidents at risk who have a demonstrated attachment to four-year institutions (Singell & Waddell, 2010).

Beyond recruitment, a second area of focus involves how to best transition nonresidents to campus following enrollment. Suggestions for catering the orientation process to nonresidents (Murtaugh et al., 1999) to creating a bridge program during the summer preceding enrollment (Sabharwal, 2005) have been presented. Finally, there is a pronounced theme of universities needing to invest more in retention (Tinto, 2006) and customizing efforts for nonresident undergraduates. For example, considering the nonresidents' higher likelihood for transferring out, Allen et al. (2008) suggests targeting recruitment efforts for underachieving, but high SES undergraduates in order to maximize returns. Collectively, much of the research is from an institutional perspective and is speculative in nature. Regardless, a shared sentiment involves a need for greater alignment between actions by campus staff and the subscribed to campus mission (Braxton et al., 2007; Hoyt & Winn, 2004; Singell & Waddell, 2010). Nonresident undergraduates are no longer a statistical footnote, rather this subgroup has a pronounced presence with unique needs in order to find success on public, land grant campuses today.

Future Research (Methodology)

Despite a dearth in research specifically focused on nonresident undergraduates, existing literature does present several pathways for exploration in this area. First, a number of studies have made the case for additional qualitative studies to better understand factors impacting student retention and persistence (Morrow & Ackerman, 2012; Whalen et al., 2010; Willcoxson, 2010) and specifically sense of belonging (Hoffman et al., 2003). In a related manner, Jaquette et al. (2016) establishes a need for a qualitative exploration into the experiences of low SES and

underrepresented minority students, in general, at public, flagship institutions of higher education (Jaquette et al., 2016). Second, a call for more research on student retention beyond the first year of enrollment serves as a consistent voice in the literature base (Nora & Crisp, 2005; Willcoxson, 2010; Yu et al., 2010). Nora and Crisp (2012) goes so far as to make the claim that third year students are actually a more accurate representative of the cohort and additional research on persistence is needed. Third, the impact of institutional context (Titus, 2004) and social/academic integration on student persistence is an established gap in research (Allen et al., 2008). Finally, suggestions for future research related directly to nonresidents offer considerable variation. Such studies have identified a need for greater understanding into the effects of reciprocity programs (Cooke & Boyle, 2011), influence of the home state on choosing an out-of-state university (Sabharwal, 2005), and how natural amenities influence migration decisions (Dotzel, 2017). Combined, there is an established need to conduct a qualitative study exploring third year nonresident undergraduates and the factors that have impacted their persistence while on a public, land grant university campus.

Section Summary

Outcomes from nonresidents enrolled on land grant campuses are best understood by analyzing the enrollment decisions of: drop-out, transfer-out and graduation. A nonresident's decision to remain local and pursue employment in the host state serves as a result of the decision to graduate. Due to the unique relationships between nonresidents and the land grant institutions in the 21st century, each decision carries important benefits and drawbacks for both parties. Such a relationship is inherently complex and involves a number of factors. However, existing research is limited beyond the first year of enrollment, despite evidence that each year

has its own unique influences that impact the resulting outcomes. In particular, the third year of enrollment may be ideally suited to capture what aspects have worked for nonresident undergraduates. Based on past recommendations and suggestions for future research, calls for qualitative studies emerge as a methodological approach best equipped to capture the nuances of the nonresident lived experience.

Summary

Nonresident undergraduates and the land grant university context form an inextricable relationship that has been further complicated with the realities of the 21st century landscape. Schlossberg's Transition Theory (2006) and the institutional logics meta-theory offer a useful theoretical framework to better understand this topic of inquiry. In order to better understand the complex interplay between nonresident undergraduates and land grant universities, it is important to analyze the context, student population, and the ultimate outcomes from this relationship.

First, the land grant context ascribes to a long held relationship with the state and a mission of access to its residents. Considering the state government has been the traditional financier of land grant institutions, insufficient state appropriations in recent decades has set the stage for both practical and symbolic implications regarding recruitment of nonresident undergraduates. This stage aligns with Schlossberg's (2006) "moving in" phase involving the recruitment and subsequent enrollment of nonresident undergraduates. The majority of existing literature on this topic focuses on the financial benefits nonresidents bring to campus as most public universities have discretion to set the tuition levels for nonresidents far beyond that of

resident students. Nonetheless, limited literature exists on the lived experience of nonresident undergraduates once enrolled on campus.

Next, the arrival and subsequent transition on to campus represents Goodman, Schlossberg & Anderson's (2006) "moving through" phase of this experience. Institutional fit and sense of belonging represent key constructs exhibited in this relationship and are further defined by the resulting benefits and challenges. Research suggests nonresidents bring important revenue, geographic diversity, and academic qualities; however, a more pronounced presence on land grant campuses may also contribute to a transfer-out and crowd out culture. While the implications of these phenomena have been well documented for the campus, the voice of the nonresident undergraduate during this transition is empirically nonexistent.

Finally, Goodman, Schlossberg & Anderson's (2006) "moving out" phase accounts for student enrollment decisions and ultimate outcomes. Nonresidents have historically persisted at a much lower rate than their resident peers and have a high propensity for transferring out to other institutions. But among those who persist at the institution, they tend to graduate and on time. Reasons for these outcomes are empirically limited and often speculative in nature. Exploring the lived experience of nonresidents who have persisted to their third year and the factors that have contributed may help to complicate the largely singular narrative of nonresident students not persisting as a significant variable, and instead illuminate why nonresidents persist through their own voice. Finally, additional research in this area might assist campus personnel in improving recruitment and retention programming and outcomes for nonresident undergraduates.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN & METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The primary purpose of this qualitative intrinsic case study was to explore the lived experience of third year nonresident undergraduates and the factors contributing to their persistence while enrolled on a land grant institution in the Rocky Mountain region. More specifically, this study aimed to address the following research questions:

1. What is the lived experience of third-year nonresident undergraduates at a specific land grant university campus?
2. What factors do third-year nonresident undergraduates identify as contributing to their persistence at a specific land grant university campus?
3. How do nonresident undergraduates describe their sense of belonging at a specific land grant campus?

The primary focus of this chapter was to establish methodological congruence (Morse & Richards, 2002) for the study. To aid in this goal, I provided a detailed overview of the following key considerations: qualitative intrinsic case study design, role of the researcher, case study context, data collection and analysis procedures, and validation strategies. Combined, these considerations helped to ensure alignment between the aims and methods of the study.

Interpretive Framework

Studies involving nonresident undergraduates typically use a postpositivist framework, which employs quantitative methodologies to analyze the recruitment of nonresident undergraduates as a revenue generating source for universities. As a result, existing research on factors influencing the persistence of nonresident undergraduates on a land grant university campus is narrowly defined by financial measures (e.g. socioeconomic status, tuition rates, etc.). In contrast to post positivism, pragmatism offers a more closely aligned interpretive framework for studying this nonresident undergraduate problem of practice. Considering my qualitative focus on exploring the lived experience of nonresident undergraduates who have persisted to their third year of study, I chose pragmatism as it leverages the ontological beliefs of a practical and useful reality with a necessary axiological stance of valuing both the researchers' and participants' views in knowledge creation (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Such aspects are not only helpful, but essential when conducting problem of practice research. Considering the limited existing literature base on nonresidents, maximum flexibility was needed to successfully explore this student subgroup's experiences in an in depth way. Furthermore, how the context of their host campus (i.e. land-grant university) impacted and was impacted by their time as an undergraduate offers a variety of important implications for retention policy. In a related way, how nonresident undergraduates perceive and find meaning in their experiences is a hallmark of interpretive constructionism (Rubin & Rubin, 2012) and an area of primary focus for this study. Therefore, in order to fully understand factors impacting persistence of this subgroup, it was necessary to utilize an epistemological view of reality which required both deductive and

inductive evidence (Creswell & Poth, 2017) in order to adequately address the complexities inherent in this research topic.

Methodology Rationale

Qualitative Research

Qualitative methodology aligns well with the pragmatic interpretive framework and serves as the most appropriate approach towards understanding the nonresident experience on the land grant university campus. As a methodology, qualitative research typically includes: a natural setting, an inductive approach, emergent design, multiple sources of data, participants' meaning, the researcher as a key instrument, reflexivity, and a holistic account (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Such factors lend themselves to better understanding a complex situation. Furthermore, Stake (2010) describes qualitative studies as being interpretive, experiential, situational, and personalistic in nature. Combined, such attributes provide an opportunity to establish a participant "voice" in the research. Finally, Creswell and Poth (2017) state, "We use qualitative research to develop theories when partial or inadequate theories exist for certain populations and samples or existing theories do not adequately capture the complexity of the problem we are examining" (p. 46). Considering the limited existing research on nonresident undergraduates, a qualitative approach offered the flexibility in design needed to realize the holistic aims of a pragmatist interpretive framework.

Qualitative Versus Quantitative Research

When comparing methodologies, qualitative and quantitative inquiry differ on several fundamental levels. Such differences center on three areas: purpose of inquiry, the role of the

researcher, and how knowledge is managed (Stake, 1995). Stake (2010) offers, "...the distinction between quantitative and qualitative methods is a matter of emphasis more than a discrete boundary" (p. 19). For this study, qualitative research possesses several key areas of emphasis including: depth of analysis, interpretive perspective and an emergent design. Combined, these considerations best equipped me with the ability to explore and understand the nonresident undergraduate phenomenon in a holistic way.

First, the depth of analysis capabilities in qualitative research aids in defining the case context and related variables. A rich, thick description is not only a defining trait of a qualitative study (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Rubin & Rubin, 2012; Stake, 1995; Stake, 2010), but a key validation strategy for this methodology. Rubin and Rubin (2012) state, "Qualitative researchers focus on depth rather than breadth; they care less about finding averages and more about understanding specific situations, individuals, groups, or moments in time that are important or revealing" (p. 2). In sum, qualitative studies take a holistic approach to understanding the phenomenon (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010; Maxwell, 2013) allowing for the opportunity to unpack nuanced complexities within the study (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Such a holistic approach was essential to understanding the complex interplay of nonresident undergraduates on a land grant university campus context.

Second, the interpretive capabilities of qualitative research (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010) make it possible to fully understand the lived experience of a nonresident undergraduate from both a participant and researcher perspective. This focus on the personal experience is a hallmark of qualitative research allowing for multiple realities (Rubin & Rubin, 2012; Stake, 2010) and space to struggle with meanings (Stake, 2010). In these studies, I possessed an interpretive role

throughout the study (Stake, 1995; Stake, 2010) and served as a research instrument myself (Maxwell, 2013). According to Stake (1995), “Subjectivity is not seen as a failing needed to be eliminated but as an essential element of understanding” (p. 45). Such personalization of the nonresident experience has been inadequately addressed in the research literature to date.

Thirdly, the emergent, evolving design of qualitative makes a clear distinction with quantitative research. Beginning with the research questions, qualitative studies are typically open-ended (Creswell, 2003) and do not necessarily have a fixed starting point or sequential design (Maxwell, 2013) allowing for evolution throughout the entirety of the study (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). Such characteristics create space for the researcher to consider various data inputs over time before, during, and after the investigation. As offered by, Creswell & Poth (2017), “The key idea behind qualitative research is to learn about the problem or issue from participants and to address the research to obtain that information” (p. 182). Without previous studies on this research topic, flexibility of design was a necessity in order for me to achieve an accurate representation of the nonresident undergraduate experience.

Case Study Methods

As previously established, qualitative research encompasses a wide range of potential research approaches. Five primary approaches to inquiry are commonly cited in the literature: narrative, phenomenological, grounded theory, ethnographic and case study research (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Of these options, case study research emerges as the most aligned and appropriate for the focus of this study. Creswell and Poth (2017) define this type of research as, “...a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a real-life, contemporary bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection

involving multiple sources of information and reports a case description and case themes” (pgs. 96-97). In addition, case studies focus on a phenomenon (Miles & Huberman, 1994), participants’ experiences (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018) and relationships between one another (Gay et al., 2012). In comparison to the other approaches, the case study design provided several compelling reasons for its use to investigate this study’s topic of interest.

Reasons for Case Study:
Making the Case

Researchers employ a case study approach for several key reasons. To begin with, case study research is best suited to address an explanatory or descriptive question (Gay et al., 2012; Yin, 2017) as evidenced in this study. Furthermore, according to Yin (2017) “A case study is an empirical method that investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the “case”) in depth and within its real-world context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident” (p. 56). While nonresident enrollment is not a new topic in it of itself, how this topic has evolved on land grant campuses in recent years makes it quite contemporary and intertwined within the campus makeup. Furthermore, case study research provides a means to better understand both the situation and unique meaning for those experiencing the situation (Merriam, 1998). As illustrated in this study’s framework, the nonresident undergraduate or land grant campus could not be studied in isolation, rather it is the interaction between the two that offered the greatest potential for understanding this phenomenon. Finally, a case study has the ability to carefully explore a bounded system that is understudied (Leedy & Omrod, 2010) to uncover “particularity and complexity” (Stake, 1995, p. ix). Currently, there are no known qualitative studies that have explored the lived experience of nonresident undergraduates, in

general, let alone third year nonresidents on a public, land grant campus in the Rocky Mountain region.

Over time, case studies have evolved to contain several key strengths. First, this line of research is particularly adept at developing a heuristic to better understand a given phenomenon (Gay et al., 2012). Also, a case study can help to not only understand the bounded system, but can incorporate subunits of analysis as well (Yin, 1994) leading to a vigorous interpretation (Maxwell, 2013). Lastly, a case study design has the flexibility to accommodate and consider a wide range of evidence (Yin, 2017). As shared by Bloomberg & Volpe (2018), “Indeed, one of the strengths of a case study approach is its methodological eclecticism; that is, a variety of methods can be used...” (p. 100). With the justification and strengths of the case study methodology established, the next area of focus centers on the type of case study best suited for the study’s topic of interest.

Intrinsic Case Study

Several types of case studies exist including: instrumental, collective and intrinsic (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Also, the scale of inquiry varies in terms of single, multiple or a collective case study (Gay et al., 2012). For this study, a single, intrinsic case study has been selected. Intrinsic case studies focus on a unique situation (Creswell & Poth, 2017), extreme case (Yin, 2017), area of concern (Merriam, 1998) or a bounded system with exceptional qualities (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). As offered by Stake (1994),

We are interested in it, not because by studying it we learn about other cases or about some general problem, but because we need to learn about that particular case. We have an intrinsic interest in the case, and we may call our work intrinsic case study (p. 4).

In review, MSU's Fall 2018 first-time full-time freshman class contained 54% nonresident undergraduates (MSU, 2019e). This is exceptionally high for most land grant universities across the country, let alone a spatially isolated state in the Rocky Mountain region. Yet, the persistence rate for nonresidents at MSU to their third year has historically been significantly lower than their resident peers (MSU, 2019e). Investing time not only in getting to better understand the nonresident experience, but what factors have led to nonresident undergraduates to persist to their third year offered important implications at the student, campus, and community level.

Researcher Positionality

Reflexivity is a key aspect of qualitative research. Within this methodology, there is a necessity for the researcher to acknowledge their part in influencing and being influenced by the study environment (Maxwell, 2013). As part of the validation process, a researcher must disclose past experiences and this position could potentially shape their interpretations particularly in the areas of bias, values, and personal background (Creswell & Creswell, 2017; Marshall & Rossman, 2016). For this study, I am employed at the case study site in a faculty capacity. According to Marshall & Rossman (2016), "If studying the backyard is essential, then the researcher is responsible for showing how the data will not be compromised and how such information will not place the participants (or the researchers) at risk" (p. 184) In addition, I was a nonresident undergraduate and recipient of the Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE) reciprocity merit scholarship at the study institution.

Combined, these two experiences inform the resulting interpretation in several ways. First, I have studied the topic of nonresident undergraduates throughout my doctoral coursework and therefore have potential preconceived ideas of the possible outcomes. In prior semesters, I

conducted two qualitative pilot studies involving interviews with nonresident undergraduates and one quantitative pilot study investigating secondary retention data. For this study, I worked with the same participant pool as was accessed with the most recent qualitative pilot study resulting in previously established relationships between myself and the participants. Second, my own personal experiences as a nonresident undergraduate generated a potential bias towards the participant's shared experience and identity. Thirdly, I grew up in an adjacent state within relatively close proximity to the host campus. Such a regional familiarity could potentially obscure or neglect my ability to fully appreciate the differences in experience for nonresidents from different regions of the country. Finally, as an alumnus and an employed professional at the host site, I had an insider awareness of the university procedures and programming efforts in this area. Accordingly, I could have inadvertently rationalized out participant comments and looked for responses that are supportive of the university's efforts. In summary, I acknowledge an awareness of potential influences and biases to fulfill conformability and transparency considerations of this research process. Further explanation of this process is detailed later in the "Validation Strategies" section.

Establishing a better understanding of the nonresident undergraduate and their experiences on a public, land grant university campus served as a cornerstone of my research interests for several reasons. First, I was intrigued by the relative anonymity of this increasingly significant group of students in scholarly research. While nonresidents are represented in a quantitative sense, particularly in reference to enrollment numbers and tuition dollars, the human side of this story was largely left to second hand speculation. Over the years, I had gained more insight into the personal side of nonresidents from the mainstream media than from the scholarly

literature base. To assume all nonresidents are the same based on a limited set of demographic indicators was shortsighted at best as this group was and will likely continue to make up a substantial portion of the student body on public university campuses across the country for the indefinite future. Taking steps to better understand their story contributed to better university awareness in retention and other support efforts. Furthermore, I am an unapologetic optimist, and accordingly, saw an opportunity to take more of a strengths over deficit based approach in helping to illuminate what was working for nonresidents who have persisted to their third year of university enrollment. For being an already underreported subgroup, existing literature often focused on high rates of nonresident attrition without giving a sense of what helps those who actually persist. I was interested in knowing what was working too, rather than solely reporting on what was not working. Such an awareness helped to put forth a roadmap for a university-wide retention plan for building a stronger student community at all levels. I was interested in finally giving a voice to this “anonymous anomaly.”

Ethical Considerations

Considering the intimate nature of qualitative research, a number of ethical considerations must be proactively addressed and followed with fidelity. Maxwell (2013) addresses an overarching ethical maxim in stating, “A primary ethical obligation, therefore, is to try and understand how the participants will perceive your actions and respond to these” (p. 92). Accordingly, I acknowledged and addressed the following ethical considerations during this study: privacy, transparency, and competency. Maintaining participant privacy, during and after the study was of the utmost importance. In order to address privacy matters, I anonymized participant accounts (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018; Creswell & Poth, 2017; Metcalfe & Blanco,

2019; Miles & Huberman, 1994), refrained from soliciting private information not closely related to the research question (Stake, 2010) and ensured the dissemination of the resulting data was within the boundaries of the research intents (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Within this realm, it was also important to understand that the standards of privacy are not determined exclusively by the researcher. Instead, Stake (1995) contends, “Privacy is a matter of avoiding personal exposure to everyone outside intimate circles, circles decided by the individual” (p. 59). All data collected throughout the study was immediately anonymized, often with pseudonyms suggested by the participants themselves. In addition, transparency concerning the purpose of the study and what participants could expect was essential. Accordingly, I implemented informed consent documentation (Appendix I) (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018; Metcalfe & Blanco, 2019; Miles & Huberman, 1994), minimized risk and harm (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018; Metcalfe & Blanco, 2019; Miles & Huberman, 1994) exhibited a familiarity and respect for participant differences (Creswell & Poth, 2017) and incorporated regular member checking/negotiation (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Finally, ensuring professional competency throughout the study aided in ethical attainment. I incorporated multiple perspectives and strategies (Creswell & Poth, 2017) to help form a worthy project design and sought assistance from other professionals when competence boundaries were exceeded (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Collectively, adherence to ethical considerations was not only a professional obligation, but a methodological necessity in upholding trustworthiness.

Site Selection

As established previously, the bounded case system of the Montana State University land grant campus served as a nonresident enrollment anomaly. A hallmark of case study research

includes an extensive narrative of both the case and context from a historical and organizational standpoint (Stake, 1995). Bloomberg & Volpe (2018) offer the importance of addressing the culture and environment, which may include, "...an organization's history, vision, objectives, products or services, operating principles, and business strategy" (p. 187). However, the time-bound nature of case study research necessitates more than just the consistent trends found within the setting. Stake (2010) suggests "situation" is a more appropriate term as it emphasizes the more immediate circumstances involving the phenomenon. Most importantly, an accurate and comprehensive view of the context is warranted in order to fully realize the potential of a case study. As offered by Miles and Huberman (1994),

The emphasis is on a specific case, a focused and bounded phenomenon embedded in its context. The influences of the local context are not stripped away, but are considered. The possibility for understanding latent, underlying, nonobvious issues is strong (p.10).

For this investigation, I presented detailed and current background information on both the community and host campus for this particular case study.

Community. Bozeman, Montana is located in southwest Montana and has an estimated population of 48,532 full time residents amongst an overall county population (Gallatin County) of 111,876 (US Census Bureau, 2018). The community is the fourth largest in the state and is currently experiencing a significant period of growth. As of January 2019, Bozeman was classified as the top Micropolitan area in the country—fastest growing city under 50,000 people (POLICOM, 2019). While situated in a primarily agricultural area, Bozeman's industries also include a growing high-tech sector and tourism with its close proximity to national forests and Yellowstone National Park (Bozeman Chamber of Commerce, 2019). Further, Bozeman is the strongest and fastest growing economy in the State of Montana (Lutey, 2015). In addition, the

largest airport in volume of visitors is located just outside of Bozeman city limits. The community was ranked the 9th best college town by Forbes magazine in 2015 (Dill, 2014) and 4th best small college town in 2016 by schools.com (Hoepfner, 2016). As Bozeman's largest employer, Montana State University serves as integral part of the Bozeman community.

Campus. Montana State University is a mid-size public, land grant doctoral research-intensive university located within Bozeman, Montana. The university promotes a long held tagline of "Mountains and Minds" speaking to the outdoor and academic opportunities found on campus and the surrounding area. For Fall 2019, a total of 16,766 students (14,817 undergraduate and 1,949 graduate students) were enrolled at MSU (MSU, 2019d). The campus had experienced enrollment growth for eleven straight years, reported its highest retention rate for first to second year students (77.2%) in 2018, and reflected increased academic entry scores (i.e. GPA, standardized tests) of the incoming freshman class (Becker, 2018). MSU's current president has served since Fall 2010 contributing to consistent leadership during this period of growth. As part of MSU's recently adopted strategic plan Choosing Promise, "Montana State University will increase retention (from 72% to 85%) and six-year graduation (from 48% to 60%) rates for all incoming Montana State students and will reduce disparities for students who are economically disadvantaged, first generation, veterans, adult learners, individuals with disabilities and from underrepresented races and ethnicities by 2024" (Choosing, 2019). Increased enrollment has resulted in a number of large scale building projects both in the academic and student life sectors that have been or will reach completion by 2021. Some of which include two new residence halls and accompanying cafeterias which can be classified as amenity projects known to attract/retain nonresident undergraduates (Jacob et al., 2013). Another

major initiative by the campus administration has involved Carnegie classification system. In January 2019, MSU reclaimed the designation of “very high research activity” and “very high undergraduate”—a designation shared by only two institutions nationwide (Cantrell, 2019). Finally, while MSU has experienced considerable campus growth, its flagship counterpart, the University of Montana, has found its student enrollment numbers stagnate and declining in recent years (Tompkins, 2016). Collectively, such developments established a potentially attractive environment for recruitment of nonresident undergraduates.

Indicators suggest MSU serves as an appealing destination for nonresident undergraduates. In fall 2018, approximately 54% of the incoming domestic first-time, full-time freshman student class and 45% of the overall undergraduate student body was designated as nonresident (MSU, 2019e). Such high enrollment numbers occurred despite nonresidents having a much higher tuition rate. In 2018-2019 school year, nonresident tuition/fees were \$24,993 and resident tuition/fees were \$7,277 (MSU, 2019b). A contributing factor for such high enrollment despite a high cost of tuition centers on tuition waivers. In 2017, MSU spent \$11 million in tuition waivers alone—the equivalent of 546 nonresident undergraduates (Schontzler, 2017b). It should be noted; resident undergraduates are eligible to receive tuition waivers as well.

Scholarships. According to the MSU Office of Admissions tuition waivers are divided into three different categories: achievement awards, distinction scholarships, and MSU Academic Excellence WUE Awards (MSU, 2019c). Achievement awards are merit-based scholarships based solely on GPA and standardized test scores. Whereas distinction scholarships are designated for students who may not qualify for the merit-based scholarships, but exhibited high levels of leadership/involvement in high school and/or financial need. Finally, the MSU

academic excellence WUE award is based on both merit and out-of-state residency in a Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE) participating state. Collectively, all three tuition waivers are renewable assuming students maintain a minimum of a 3.0 cumulative GPA, 15 credit hours a semester, and remain a nonresident student.

Reciprocity Programs. While advertised as a localized university scholarship, the WUE award is a byproduct of a much larger regional partnership. MSU is a member of the regional Western Interstate Commission on Higher Education (WICHE) state authorization agreement that oversees the WUE program that encompasses sixteen member states & US. territories (WUE, 2019). Furthermore, retention rates for reciprocity scholarships are typically much higher than the general nonresident population. For instance, the 2016 WUE freshman cohort reflected an 82.7% retention rate compared to a 72.8% for the general nonresident cohort (Tableau, 2018) between the first and second year of enrollment. There is enough of a difference in WUE recipients that the MSU Office of Planning and Analysis actually has created three distinct categories: resident, nonresident and WUE for retention data and analysis purposes.

Programming Initiatives. Finally, there is evidence of recent programming initiatives to address retention considerations across the campus. The Sophomore Surge mentoring program serves as one of the newer, yet increasingly visible programs in this area. Through this program, students receive guidance, support, and encouragement to get involved from faculty and peer mentors during their first year of school (MSU, 2019a). Also, MSU requires all undergraduate students to enroll in a core university seminar course during their freshman year to aid in adjusting to campus life (MSU, 2019g). At the university level, the Freshman 15 program

encourages students to take 15 credits per semester to improve graduation outcomes. Evidently, there is programming in place to aid with general student retention needs.

Recruitment efforts of nonresident undergraduates accelerated in 2001 when MSU partnered at a new level with the Virginia-based Royall & Company marketing firm (MSU, 2019f). Under this arrangement, the pool of potential applicants was significantly expanded and strategically targeted. This included a \$1.2 million a year and non-compete clause with University of Montana—the other co-flagship university in the state (Tompkins, 2016). Such an arrangement gives the host institution a significant edge in nonresident recruitment and enrollment when evaluated at a regional level. In reviewing institutional data of first-time, full-time freshman, a significant shift has taken place since the start of this marketing program. In 2001, the first-time, full-time freshman class was composed of 71% resident to 29% nonresident, whereas by 2016 the split was 49% resident to 51% nonresident (MSU, 2019d). While the degree of influence of the marketing campaign is outside the scope of this study, such findings convey a concerted effort by the university and subsequent positive response from the nonresident students regarding recruitment and enrollment at MSU.

Pilot Study

Overview

Discussing the pilot study and how it ultimately influenced my subsequent decisions is considered research best practice (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018). During the Fall 2017, I implemented a pilot of an intrinsic case study of the MSU campus centered on the overarching research question: “What factors impact the transition of nonresident undergraduates to, and resiliency within, the campus and greater community at Montana State University?” Participants

were first-time, full-time nonresident undergraduates and were identified through freshman seminar courses. Out of a total population of 1329 (49% of the overall freshman cohort), fifteen nonresident undergraduates formed the initial study population after indicating an interest in participating in the study. Ultimately, the study sample was composed of seven participants who took part in the actual interview phase. Results indicated tuition, institutional prestige, natural amenities, surrounding community, and peer support as important factors for the nonresident transition process. Contrary to prior research, family support, distance from home, and campus programming served as less influential factors than previously stated in the literature. However, these results were limited to the first semester of enrollment—it is possible such factors could have become more significant later on in their nonresident undergraduate career. At the time, I recommended further research on the role of “nonresident peer culture” serving as an informal support network. As a result, this pilot study helped me develop a better understanding of the phenomenon and, “...the meaning that these things, actions, and events have for the people involved in them, and the perspectives that inform their actions” (Maxwell, 2013, p. 67). While the pilot and current study design differed in inquiry focus and the complexity of methods used, the pilot study helped to inform the feasibility and established a baseline for continued research exploration (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018).

Next Steps

As a result of this pilot study, I expanded the definition of “transition” from the first to the sixth semester to better understand the long term nonresident experience and potential variations in emerging themes. Furthermore, following up with this same pool of participants was ideal not only as a point of comparison, but since existing relationships had already been

established opening up the opportunity for me to obtain more detailed information on the phenomena. Additionally, the pilot study participants had a familiarity with the study and informally indicated a willingness to participate in future studies involving this topic (Bernard, 2002; Maxwell, 2013). Pilot study participants were initially selected through a purposeful maximum variation sampling strategy via freshman seminar courses. Pre-set criteria including gender, geographical origins (i.e. home state) and academic major (declared & undeclared) were considered to ensure the participant pool reflected representation of diverse and multiple perspectives on the case. Finally, I expanded the methodological strategies used in order to gain a more well-rounded understanding of the phenomenon. To begin with, visual research methods served as a way to elicit more personalized participant accounts (Balomenou & Garrod, 2016; Metcalfe & Blanco, 2019) helping to ultimately illuminate what has worked for nonresident student persistence. While document analysis provided much needed content and context from a university perspective. Combined, the pilot study proved influential in shaping the approach towards this research study.

Data Collection Procedures

Sampling

For this study, I initially used purposeful sampling. As offered by Marshall & Rossman (2016), “The idea behind qualitative research is to purposely select participants or sites (or documents or visual material) that will best help the researcher understand the problem and research question” (p. 185). Accordingly, this sampling method involves selecting cases that are information-rich that results in in-depth research aligned with key aims of the study (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Maxwell, 2013). Maxwell (2013) puts forth five goals for purposeful selection of

which I chose three to focus on in my study: heterogeneity in the population, opportunity to illuminate differences, and to select participants most helpful in answering the research questions. Ultimately, I used these goals as a filtering mechanism in selecting study participants.

More specifically, maximum variation sampling was primarily used for this investigation. Maximum variation is a type of purposeful sampling that establishes pre-set criteria to expand the variety of participant perspectives elicited through the study. According to Creswell and Poth (2017), “This approach is often selected because when a researcher maximizes differences at the beginning of the study, it increases the likelihood that the findings will reflect differences or different perspectives—an ideal in qualitative research” (p. 158). Put another way, this strategy encourages the incorporation of outlier cases as a way of testing emerging patterns (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Such an approach was necessary in order to gain diverse perspectives on the lived experience of the phenomenon within this intrinsic case study.

A clear strength with maximum variation sampling is that it aligns well with an intrinsic case study design. Based on the research literature, several factors were identified as potential influences on nonresident persistence including: gender (Campbell & Mislevy, 2013; Leppel, 2002), geographic distance (Dotzel, 2017; Sabharwal, 2005; Yu et al., 2010), and financial support (DesJardins et al., 2003; Hoyt & Winn, 2004; Johnson & Muse, 2012; Yu et al., 2010). As a result, maximum variation sampling was initially used across the existing pilot study population to ensure different perspectives. Furthermore, this approach is well suited for exploring more complex topics. With the interplay between nonresidents and their campus environment, there was a need for “information-rich informants” in order to adequately understand the nuances of the issue (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). In terms of weaknesses, such

a sampling strategy relies on the researcher's ability to be informed enough on the topic to make these preliminary decisions. If the initial criteria used to identify the cases is biased, the integrity of the study findings could be compromised. As a result, I had to be reflexive and explicit at this stage (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). General awareness of the peer institution site and participants is not sufficient in making a sampling determination. Accordingly, I utilized the initial screener question responses and interviews to determine if the existing participant pool provided a maximum range of diversity in relation to the research questions and previously established demographic indicators (i.e. gender, financial support, distance from home, etc.). Following initial participant responses in the affirmative (i.e. 5), I determined maximum range of diversity had not been fulfilled. Accordingly, I initiated a complementary snowball sampling approach that asked participants and other campus professional contacts (i.e. University Studies, New Student Services, Sorority & Fraternity Life, etc.) for recommendations on other nonresident undergraduates who may provide additional insights to this study and topic. This subsequent outreach identified four additional participants that helped to maximize variety across screener criteria. Above all else, due diligence was required in this area to ensure optimal alignment between the study questions and sampling methods.

Participants

In review, I reached out via email to the original fifteen participants who indicated an interest in participating in the pilot study the first semester of their freshman year regardless of whether they were previously interviewed or not (Appendix A). Following an initial and follow up email, a total of five students accepted, one student declined, and nine students did not respond to either request. The five affirmative participants received a follow up email requesting

them to do the following: complete a Qualtrics (survey software) background questionnaire (i.e. screener tool), review the study consent form, and indicate scheduling availability for their initial interview (Appendix B). The screener tool (Appendix D) was utilized in advance of the first interview to assess participant willingness and determine if their current circumstances allowed them to provide the best information possible (Gay et al., 2012). For instance, participants who were no longer enrolled at the host institution or were no longer in full-time status would fall outside of the scope of this particular study. Furthermore, I used this screener data to compile a Demographic Matrix of participant profiles as a way to clearly and concisely compare perceptions and diversity across the participant population (Creswell & Poth, 2017). All five participants fulfilled study screener criteria and received confirmation of their first interview. Finally, in order to achieve research saturation determinations (Marshall & Rossman, 2016) (i.e. gender, geographic origin, program of study, etc.), I incorporated a snowball sampling approach by asking these initial participants and other professional campus contacts for suggestions on other potential study participants that fit the initial study criteria. Ultimately, these sampling efforts identified four additional eligible participants resulting in a total of nine study participants for the overall study. Collectively, this group of participants helped to establish a much needed voice for the nonresident undergraduate.

Select participant pre-college attributes are presented in Table 3.1 to establish both an individual and collective snapshot of this study's nonresident cohort. Based on past literature and my pilot study findings, I selected the following attributes for comparison: (i.e. age, gender, home time zone, current housing type, pilot study participation, department of study)

Table 1. Participant Demographic Profiles

Participant	Age	Gender	Home Time Zone	Current Housing Type	Pilot Study Participant (Freshman Year)	Department of Study
Anna	23	Female	Central	Off-Campus	Yes	Education
John	21	Male	Pacific	Off-Campus	Yes	Engineering
Ruby	21	Female	Mountain	Sorority	Yes	Education
Sarah	20	Female	Pacific	Off-Campus	No	Health & Human Development
Evelyn	20	Female	Pacific	Off-Campus	Yes	Architecture
Ben	21	Male	Mountain	Off-Campus	Yes	Education
Callie	20	Female	Pacific	Sorority	No	Health & Human Development
Riptide	21	Male	Eastern	On-Campus	No	Engineering
Thor	21	Male	Pacific	On-Campus	No	Land Resources & Environmental Sciences

Source: All data reported in this table is derived from an initial Qualtrics questionnaire completed by study participants in advance of their first interview.

Detailed attribute profiles for each participant are presented in Chapter 4.

Data Sources

Data collection for case studies is typified by several methodological standards. Multiple sources of evidence are essential not only for triangulation purposes, but to illuminate a broad range of behavioral, attitudinal and even historical issues throughout the process (Yin, 1994).

This was particularly germane to this study considering the complexity of the interplay between

the nonresident and the university environment. Furthermore, the collective methods must result in a rich, descriptive and accurate set of data on the chosen case (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). “For case and narrative studies, the researcher uses multiple forms of data to build the in-depth case or the storied experiences” (Creswell & Poth, 2017, p. 175). Leedy & Ormrod (2010) emphasis not only the use of multiple methods, but the importance of utilizing the collective set of methods in an interactive way. Accordingly, I deployed a two stage interview (i.e. screener & follow up), participant-generated image methods and a document analysis of institution-related publications on nonresident undergraduates to address the study’s guiding research questions.

Interview Methods. Interviews serve as a defining method for qualitative studies. Gay et al. (2012) define an interview as, “A purposeful interaction in which one person obtains information from another” (p. 386). Various researchers cite this method in their respective data collection sections (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Gay et al., 2012; Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Rubin & Rubin, 2012; Stake, 2010; Yin, 1994). Interviews are typically less structured (Marshall & Rossman, 2016) in order to maximize the potential for rich descriptions (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018; Rubin & Rubin, 2012) and input from the participants on the issue or problem (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

While interviews are widely used for qualitative and mixed methods research, there are inherent strengths and weaknesses with this data collection approach. In terms of strengths, interviews can elicit in-depth data on participants’ perspectives and experiences and offer an opportunity for follow up clarification (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018; Gay et al., 2012). Also, interviews provide researchers with the ability to learn about a phenomenon that may not be revealed through observation alone (Gay et al., 2012; Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). Regarding

weaknesses, interview quality relies on both the interviewer and interviewee skill level (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018) and a trusting relationship between researcher and participant (Gay et al., 2012) Also, interviews by their very nature are not a neutral data gathering tool (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018).

As a result, I took purposeful steps to maximize strengths and minimize potential weaknesses of interview methods. To begin with, I asked nonresident undergraduates not participating in the study for feedback. Also, I solicited input from a peer familiar with the study's general topic area to review the proposed question set for suggested revisions both in content and in sequence. Combined, suggestions from students and the peer reviewer were used to improve the interview question set in the following areas: elimination of question redundancy, improved flow, and replacement of more academic language with more accessible terminologies. Further, for the actual interview portion, I refrained from posing leading questions and utilized reflective language and follow up questions to ensure focus on the participant's authentic perspective, rather than what the participant might think I wanted to hear. Despite potential weaknesses with interviewing, I elected to incorporate interviewing primarily for its ability to provide a detailed description of the participant experiences that may or may not be apparent at the onset of the study.

Interview Protocol. I collected qualitative data through an interview protocol (Appendix C) that included a questionnaire of preliminary screening questions and a two phase interview process. I used the data obtained through this process to answer the three primary research questions. To begin, participants read, signed, and dated a consent form to elicit awareness that this study was voluntary and that their participation or lack of participation would not have any

impact on their course grades or standing. Participant confidentiality was also established by inviting participants to select a pseudonym throughout the data collection and dissemination process. Participants were also asked to complete a questionnaire composed of close-ended preliminary questions to better define their nonresident background and determine study eligibility. For active interview portions, I asked participant permission to use recording devices (i.e. voice recorder, phone, laptop) and accompanying transcription programs (i.e. Otter Voice Meeting Notes, NVivo Transcription). A conference room located in a centralized academic building on campus that was accessible to both the participant and myself and was free of distractions was consistently used for interviews. I took a collaborative interview approach that involved the researcher serving primarily as a listener and refraining from interjecting an undue amount of personal experiences so as to avoid unduly influencing participant responses (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Taking these steps helped to ensure a consistent and ethically sound researcher-to-participant interaction.

During this study, two rounds of interviews took place in February and March of 2020 with approximately two weeks between sessions. I facilitated an initial screening interview intended to primarily gather background information and initial perceptions of the participants and to provide an overview of the participant-generated photo method and procedures. Considering the duration of time and variability of prior interaction, it was important to both, "...gain access to and establish rapport with participants so that they provided good data" (Creswell & Poth, 2017, p. 148). The first interview was semi-structured in nature with both closed and open-ended questions pertaining to the participant's background (Appendix E). Rubin and Rubin (2012) share that a semi-structured interview has a specific topic to learn about,

prepares a limited number of questions in advance, and plans to ask follow up questions. I chose not to incorporate a focus group dimension due to the potential for participants to influence each other's responses through groupthink and the inherent challenges in ensuring contributions from all participants (Queirós et al., 2017). Such factors have the potential to undermine the primary intent of maximum variation sampling—achieving optimal diversity of thought regarding the research questions.

After approximately a two week period of time, participants took part in a second interview that included a photo-elicitation portion. The format of the second interview was semi-structured with open-ended questions to best ascertain the participants' perspective on the research questions (Appendix E). Alignment between the research and interview questions received considerable thought throughout the process (Appendix F). As offered by Maxwell (2013), research questions establish the target understanding, while interview questions are the tool used to ultimately build this understanding. Collectively, the interviews served as the primary method used for data collection during this study.

Image Methods. Visual research methods provide an important alternative to more traditional data collection approaches. Metcalfe and Blanco (2019) establish, “Visual research methods in organizational studies involve the interpretation of visual cues within the organizational environment, or the creation of visual materials in response to the organizational setting” (p. 154). Within this set of methods, Participant-Generated Image (PGI) research holds great potential for illuminating a participant's campus experiences. Most commonly, this method is encapsulated within the broader ‘audiovisual and digital materials’ type of data found in qualitative studies (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). In general, PGI methods possess the following

traits: can be qualitatively analyzed, are used as supplementary prompts during participant interviews, and require multidimensional and laddering techniques during data analysis (Balomenou & Garrod, 2016). Pauwels (2010) defines respondent-generated imagery as, “The respondents or culture under study produce their own cultural data in a visual form” (p. 553). The exact form this process takes varies considerably from one study to the next. Balomenou & Garrod (2016) conducted a meta-analysis of 286 PGI-related studies finding photovoice to be the most popular method. The term ‘photovoice’ originated with Wang & Burris (1997) and is traditionally intended to provide an outlet for members of marginalized groups to tell, “their story over THE story” and promote social change (Sutton-Brown, 2014). Photovoice originated in the context of visual sociology (Metcalf & Blanco, 2019) and generally involves participants being asked to take photos within their respective contexts and then discuss their images with the researcher (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Considering the traditional and symbolic nature of land grant universities, such a method held promise to illuminate potential alignment with nonresident undergraduates’ lived experiences, persistence tendencies and sense of belonging.

While nonresident undergraduates are not considered ‘marginalized’ based on traditional measures, this group lacks a ‘voice’ in the literature with no qualitative studies dedicated to exclusively understanding the nonresident campus experience. Furthermore, recent photovoice studies tend to indicate this method is not limited to just work with vulnerable groups (Fantini, 2017). Thus, photovoice was an appropriate method for this study for several reasons. First, this method allowed me to focus the study in a way that generates in-depth analysis (Glaw et al., 2017; Pauwels, 2010)—an essential trait of case study research. Typically, in photovoice the researcher provides themes for participants to help guide their photographic evidence (Sutton-

Brown, 2014). Furthermore, it empowered the participants by providing an insider perspective on their experiences (Balomenou & Garrod, 2016; Sutton-Brown, 2014). Such insights are essential for this study considering prior research on nonresidents offered secondary retention data with largely speculative commentary on why nonresidents persist or depart. Thirdly, photovoice methods were well aligned for inquiry into inclusion, organizational identities, and the evolution of higher education (Metcalf & Blanco, 2019). These criteria exhibited methodological congruence (Morse & Richards, 2002) given that the research questions focused on nonresident sense of belonging (inclusion), organizational identity (land grant campus), and the interplay between the two (evolution of context). Finally, photovoice served as a complementary method to qualitative interviews allowing for themes and topics to emerge that may not have otherwise been accounted for by the researcher (Creswell & Creswell, 2017; Creswell & Poth, 2017). By its very design, photovoice contributes to the emergent nature of qualitative research. As offered by Metcalf (2015), “Without visual methods, we might overlook institutional phenomena and individual behaviors that, if seen and understood through our scholarship, could inform higher education practice and policy (p. 111). The addition of visual research methods, and photovoice specifically, were contemporary methods to address a contemporary problem.

For this study, I conducted an initial screening meeting with each participant to gather demographic information to help inform maximum variation stratification efforts. For eligible participants, I explained photovoice aspects of the study (Appendix G). Participants were instructed to take photos that answered the following questions:

- What image most accurately reflects your third year nonresident experience?

- What has been the most important source of support in your persistence on this land grant university campus?
- Where do you feel you belong the most and/or represents where you best fit as a nonresident?

After an approximate two week period of time, each participant took part in a follow up interview and presented one photo that best represented their response to each of the three questions. To maintain confidentiality and simplify the process, participants were asked to refrain from taking photos that included recognizable faces of people on campus or in the general community without first obtaining permission (Thompson et al., 2008). Additional topics concerning ethical considerations, responsibility and power/authority were addressed to fulfill photovoice ethical standards (Wang & Redwood-Jones, 2001). Participant photos were collected and stored in a secure campus Box electronic folder accessible only to the researcher through the university server. Also, I verified which image was intended to answer each question and subsequently tagged each accordingly based on each participant's expressed intent. Ultimately, the addition of visual research methods served as an ideal supplement to the more traditional interview process.

Document Methods. Documents offer a potentially valuable contribution to qualitative studies. As offered by Savin-Baden and Howell Major (2013), "These documents can provide a researcher with a rich and often readily accessible source of information of understanding participants and the research context" (p. 403). Documents can come in many forms and can be categorized as such: public and private (Creswell & Creswell, 2018), textual, visual, audio visual, and electronic (Savin-Baden & Howell Major 2013), elicited and extant (Bloomberg &

Volpe, 2019) and printed and electronic (Bowen, 2009). Regardless of how documents are categorized, the process of using documents as a research method (i.e. document analysis) has played an increasingly important role in qualitative research.

Document analysis can be defined as, "...a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents" (Bowen, 2009, p. 27) and is a routinely applied method in pragmatic qualitative research such as case studies (Bowen, 2009; Leedy & Ormrod, 2010; Savin-Baden & Howell Major, 2013; Stake, 1995). Yin (2014) offers, "Except for studies of preliterate societies, documentary information is likely to be relevant to every case study topic" (p. 105). More specifically, documents serve various functions including offering: supplementary context (Bowen, 2009; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Savin-Baden & Howell Major, 2013; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2014) a complementary means of triangulation (Bowen, 2009; Creswell & Creswell, 2018; McMillan & Schumacher, 2006; Yin, 2014) and inform research design decisions (Bowen, 2009). According to Stake (1995), "Almost every study finds some need for examining newspapers, annual reports, correspondence, minutes of meetings, and the like" (p. 68). Document analysis is a commonly used method with demonstrated potential to inform research study development.

Despite the great potential held within document analysis methods, it was important to evaluate both the advantages and disadvantages to determine compatibility with this research study. In terms of advantages, document analysis offered efficiency, availability, cost-effectiveness, lack of reactivity, stability, exactness and coverage (Bowen, 2009). In balance, document analysis contained some inherent limitations including: insufficient detail, low retrievability and biased selectivity (Bowen, 2009). As with other methods, it was incumbent for

me as the researcher to carefully select and review documents in order to mitigate potential weaknesses. Further, as offered by Yin (2014), “The documents are useful even though they are not always accurate and may not be lacking in bias” (p. 107). For the purposes of this study, document analysis provided a critical layer of consideration that may not otherwise be accounted for solely from participant interviews and participant generated imagery methods.

Subsequently, I initially selected three different types of documents were initially selected for study review: institution viewbooks, local newspaper articles and institution press releases. For press releases and newspaper articles, I used keyword searches of “nonresident” or “out-of-state” and “Montana State University” for relevant articles/passages/images found within the date range of 06/01/2017 to 07/29/2020. This time period was selected as it aligned with the first three years of the participant cohort and helped to cull the documents to a manageable amount of data (Savin-Baden & Howell Major, 2013). Further, this established symmetry across study methods. The resulting documents generated the following return during the selection phase:

Institution Viewbook. According to Hartley & Morpew (2008), “...viewbooks are vehicles of communication that employ the use of language, images, and symbols...” (p. 675) to recruit prospective students each year. Considering the amount of time and money invested by the host institution in recruiting nonresident undergraduates annually, the viewbook served as an accessible and practical starting point in analyzing how the university communicates with and about nonresident undergraduates. I contacted the institution’s Office of Admissions & New Student Services via email requesting the four most recent editions of the host institution’s viewbook (2016-2017 through 2019-2020). In obtaining these documents, I was able to make a

direct comparison of how the university marketed towards the nonresident population from their senior year of high school (i.e. 2016-2017 recruitment year) through their third year of enrollment (i.e. 2019-2020). Both text and images were analyzed for relevant themes and codes.

Local Newspaper Articles. The *Bozeman Daily Chronicle* serves as the primary form of print media in the surrounding host community. Yin (2014) recognizes “News clippings and other articles appearing in the mass media or in community newspapers” as a legitimate form of documentation for analysis purposes (p. 106). However, as with any document, establishing the purpose is critical. Accordingly, McMillan & Schumacher (2006) categorize newspaper articles as “Documents used for external communication and are those produced for public consumption...” (p. 357). I accessed the advanced search feature located on the Bozeman Daily Chronicle’s website (<http://www.bozemandailychronicle.com>) and used the previously established study keyword combinations. This initial search generated 219 unique article hits. After a preliminary review by the researcher, sixteen articles were found to satisfy a minimum threshold of content relevant for study analysis purposes. The final articles selected coincided with the predetermined date range with the earliest article published on 07/16/2017 to the latest published 07/29/2020.

Institution Press Releases. I contacted the institution’s news service department via email requesting articles that coincided with the study keyword criteria. This request yielded 22 articles. However, after further analysis, I discovered the articles were almost exclusively limited to graduation announcements of student hometowns and home states. Such findings were deemed insufficient for any meaningful analysis moving forward and were ultimately excluded from further use in the research study.

As with any document type, both the viewbook and newspaper content possessed a certain intent. In other words, the authors for each document had an intended purpose and target audience (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018; Bowen, 2009; Savin-Baden & Howell Major, 2013; Yin, 2014). More specifically, the newspaper articles from the Bozeman Daily Chronicle were almost exclusively written from one journalist's lens and perspective who was assigned to cover education-related issues in the local community, whereas the viewbook was generated by Montana State University's Office of Admissions as a public relations recruitment tool for prospective students. Even though an inherent bias exists in these documents, any potential difficulties this presents to the research process are off-set by the value each brings in providing institutional perspective on the nonresident undergraduate. Furthermore, the data contained within each document had immediate relevance to the study research questions (Savin-Baden & Howell Major, 2013) and conceptual framework (Bowen, 2009). In addition, the quality of the documents was affirmed by verifying authenticity, credibility, representativeness and document meaning (Scott, 1990). Altogether, the newspaper articles and viewbook content provided an important contextual contribution to understanding the nonresident undergraduate experience.

Data Analysis

After concluding the data collection process, I explored the data using a holistic, systematic set of approaches. It is important to disclose that data analysis informally took place throughout the data collection process including memoing to record interesting developments or changes to protocol. Such a strategy is referred to as simultaneous procedures—a key differentiator between qualitative and quantitative analysis (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018; Creswell & Creswell, 2017) and helped to ensure timely and effective results (Marshall & Rossman,

2016). Finally, I regularly referred to Saldaña's (2016) suggested approach towards the data analysis process for its practical and responsive nature—key tenets of the pragmatism framework selected for this study. Combined, my data analysis included the following steps: sorting & preparing the data, reviewing the data, first coding cycle, after first cycle coding, second coding cycle and after second cycle coding.

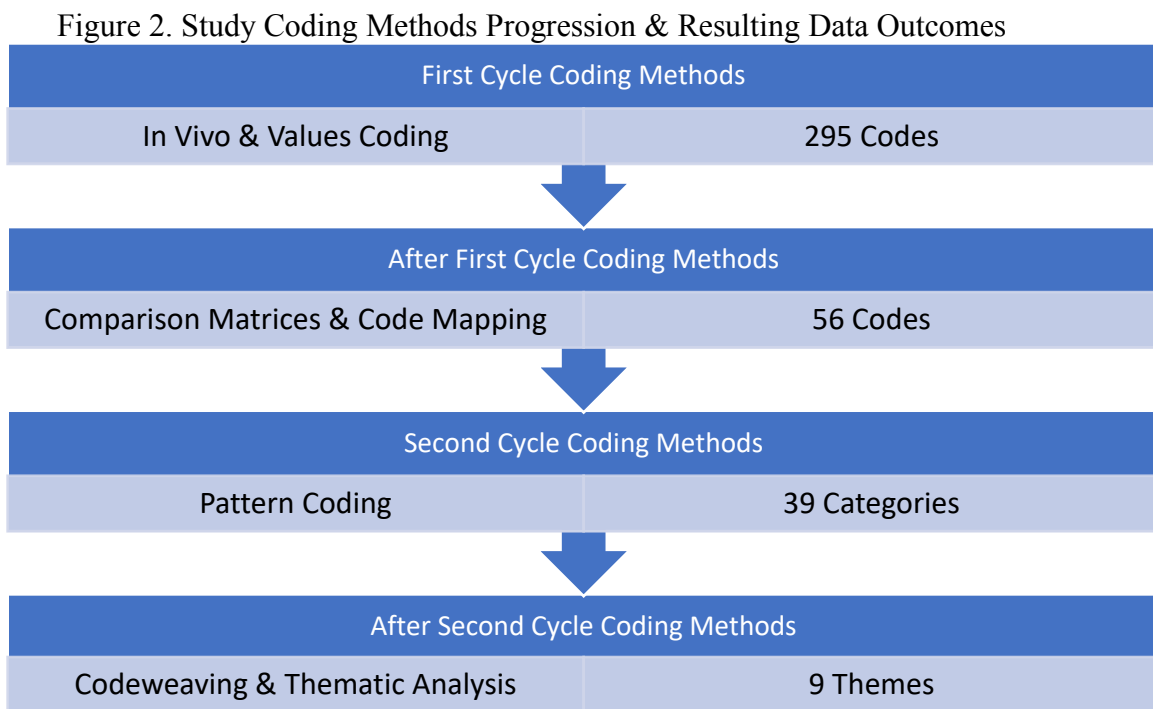
First, I sorted and prepared the data. For this study, the interview audio verbatim recordings were listened to several times and transcribed using the Otter Voice Meeting Notes and NVivo Transcription automated, cloud-based transcription services. Subsequently, I read through these generated transcriptions to detect any remaining inaccuracies and to transfer participant expressions from my original memo notes. Savin-Baden and Major (2013) emphasize the importance of characterizing the data in a way that reflects both the words and nonverbals resulting from the interview. Also, I referenced my table of specifications to color code interview questions based on the research question each was intended to answer. Further, eligible documents (i.e. newspapers & viewbooks) were catalogued and participant images were sorted by research question. Similar to the transcripts, I made note of key ideas derived from these data sources in a corresponding research log (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In total, 117 pages of interview transcripts, 27 digital images, 15 digital newspaper articles and 4 university viewbooks formed the initial, prepared data corpus.

Second, I reviewed the prepared data several times through both analytical memoing and winnowing processes. Bloomberg & Volpe (2018) shares, memoing, "...involves recording and writing notes about certain occurrences or sentences that seem of vital interest" (p. 244). Accordingly, I manually recorded memos within the transcript margins based on ideas that

caught my attention (Yin, 2014) and tentative thoughts on potential data relationships (Maxwell, 2013). During my initial review, I hand wrote various questions, insights, and leads along the left hand column of the transcript. I went back through the transcript to add/modify memos and to compile my thoughts into an analytic memo summary. Memo notes were taken throughout all stages of the data collection and analysis process: during the interview, while listening to recordings, reviewing transcripts, looking at participant images, and when following up with participants through member checking of the transcriptions and preliminary theme lists. For instance, here are two examples that are reflective of this memo process: “Significant change between Interview #1 & Interview #2 regarding awareness of resident/nonresident identity and distinctions” and “Provides an interesting contrast between residence life to sorority experiences. Worth exploring contrast to participants #8 & #9 regarding role of residence life.” While memoing served many pragmatic purposes, this process ultimately helped to inform initial coding, category and eventual theme development. Furthermore, I winnowed the data in order to make the cumulative data more manageable (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018; Creswell & Creswell, 2017). In turn, data not related to the research questions was filtered out to allow more focused attention for subsequent stages of the data analysis process. This was particularly important for this study design considering the number of participants and use of data from three different types of sources (i.e. interviews, images and documents.)

As referenced previously, Saldaña (2016) proved highly influential in helping structure the coding methods used to ultimately arrive at a consolidated meaning. Collectively, this process extended over a period of several months requiring numerous re-reads of the data and memos to keep the analytic process fresh. Considering both the quantity and variety of data

sources found in this study, a pragmatic framework proved essential in the analysis process. According to Saldaña (2011), “I myself take a pragmatic stance toward human inquiry and leave myself open to choosing the right tool for the right job” (p. 178). While this process was not perfectly linear in its progression as presented in the following figure, I did proceed in a general coding-categorizing-theming sequence, which will be discussed in greater detail in the following.



Specific methods used during and after each coding cycle are reflected in the left side column. While resulting data outcomes through the coding, categorizing and theming processes are reflected on the right side column. Adapted from information provided by “The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers,” by J. Saldaña, 2016, SAGE.

Third, I approached the first coding cycle using open coding procedures. Open coding is an inductive approach used to identify and compare the terms and that appeared most important (Maxwell, 2013; Strauss & Corbin, 1990) by using the words directly from the participants (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). More specifically, I chose to manually code the transcripts using

both Values and In Vivo coding methods during this preliminary coding thematic analysis. Value coding is defined as, "...the application of codes to qualitative data that reflect a participant's values, attitudes, and beliefs, representing his or her perspectives or worldview" (Saldaña, 2016). Values coding was notated by using (v. _____) in the right side column of the transcripts. In Vivo coding refers to, "...a word or short phrase from the actual language found in the qualitative data record..." (Saldaña, 2016). In Vivo codes were notated using ("_____") within the transcript language itself. These two methods were selected for this early exploratory stage as both are recommended across case study (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995) and phenomenology studies (Butler-Kisler, 2010; Giorgi & Giorgi, 2003). While this study is a case study design, there are elements of a phenomenology present when exploring the lived experience of the nonresident undergraduates. First cycle coding resulted in 295 unique codes across all transcripts.

Fourth, it was necessary for me to identify strategies to help make the number of codes more manageable to work with. As part of the after first cycle coding process, I incorporated comparison matrices and code mapping into my analysis process. Codes were entered into an Excel file overall and by participant in order to develop a comparison matrices (Savin-Badin & Major, 2013). When displayed in this way, consistent codes arose from this process helping to answer the research questions. For instance, discrete codes such as *hiking*, *mountain biking*, *skiing*, etc. were combined to form a revised code of 'recreating.' Further, the Excel-Consolidate sorting feature helped to pinpoint extraneous codings such as *access* and *accessibility* that originally appeared as separate codes but were more appropriately combined. In addition to identifying commonalities between participants, connecting strategies were incorporated to analyze data within the context of each individual data source. Maxwell (2013) suggests the

importance of this process increases with the more data involved in the study and helps to address potential ‘analytical blinders’ that can arise when a researcher solely categorizes based on similarities between participants. Code mapping strategies were also employed during this step to lay the groundwork for transforming this list of codes into potential categories (Saldaña, 2016). Through this recoding process, a far more manageable set of 56 codes resulted. Finally, I generated a codebook with a clear definition and examples to help organize and clearly delineate between each code.

Fifth, I engaged in a facilitated a second cycle coding phase to further refine the codes and generate categories. As offered by Morse (2008), a category, “Is a collection of similar data sorted into the same place, and this arrangement enables the researchers to identify and describe the characteristics of the category” (p. 1). To aid in this category/subcategory development, I transferred all codes over to corresponding electronic transcripts uploaded to NVivo (Qualitative Data Analysis Software) 12 to assist with aggregate totals and to create preliminary categories. More specifically, the coding, coding stripe and visualization features were utilized during this phase. Related codes were grouped to form “Nodes” as classified in the NVivo software system. As a result of the second coding phase, 39 preliminary categories were established. As offered by Bloomberg & Volpe (2018), “...some categories may contain clusters of coded data that merit further refinement into subcategories” (p. 242). For instance, the category of “Financial Security” was determined to better address the “Challenges” category and was subsequently reassigned as a subcategory.

Additional work was needed with the categories prior to developing themes. More specifically, it was important that the categories possessed the following four traits: exhaustive,

mutually exclusive, sensitizing, and conceptually congruent (Merriam, 1998). Exhaustive refers to only relevant data assigned to a given category while mutually exclusive indicates each data piece typically only fits in one category. Categories are considered sensitizing when the name clearly alludes to the data contained within and conceptually congruent when each category contains the same level of abstraction (Green, 2011). To achieve these aims, pattern coding was selected to facilitate this process and is considered an appropriate follow up to first cycle coding. More specifically, pattern coding aides the researcher in condensing large of amounts of data into a smaller number of analytic units and development of major themes (Miles et al., 2014). Preliminary thoughts were recorded in the analytic memo. Additionally, I incorporated pattern matching at this stage by comparing these preliminary categorical findings with initial predictions made in the literature review (Yin, 2017). For instance, *distance from home* served as a defining feature of nonresidents in the literature also found in this study requiring further thought on how, and in what ways, this finding could be best assigned to address the study's research questions. Combined, these approaches effectively prepared the categories for subsequent thematic development.

Sixth, as part of the After Second Cycle Coding, my goal was to further aggregate the data to arrive at a set of significant patterns or themes that helped to address the study's research questions (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018). I further condensed and streamlined categories by creating a taxonomy outline where there is no hierarchical structure and each category is of equal value (Saldaña, 2016). In a complimentary approach, I engaged in codeweaving methods to begin to consider transcendent themes. This process involved considering possible ways categories were interrelated and could potentially come together in meaningful ways (Saldaña,

2016). Morse (2008) offers that a theme, “Is a meaningful “essence” that runs through the data” (p. 1). Through this process, a preliminary set of ten themes emerged. Upon further review, the theme centered on *adaptation* was determined to be duplicative and eliminated. The resulting nine themes underwent revision to reflect gerund phrasing in order to reflect more nuanced process & action (Rossman & Rallis, 2003; Saldaña, 2016).

Seventh, I analyzed documents to complement the other study methods and existing participant transcript data (i.e. interviews, visuals). Such analysis required skills in categorization, contextualization and criticality (Savin-Baden & Howell Major, 2013). To prepare for this analysis, I consulted the existing methodological literature and ultimately selected Bowen’s (2009) methodological approach for document analysis. Under this approach, “The reviewer takes a closer look at the selected data and performs coding and category construction, based on the data’s characteristics, to uncover themes pertinent to a phenomenon” (p. 32). Considering the supplementary nature of this document analysis, predefined codes and categories established in the other study methods were used to improve alignment and methodological congruence. Any significant content was then integrated into the findings based on corresponding themes (Bowen, 2009). Combined, the document analysis provided supporting evidence for five previously established themes.

Finally, it is important to further identify procedures used that are specific to the case study design. Stake (2010) recommends focusing on the “assertions” common to most or all of the case studies and use thick and rich descriptions. For this study, achieving this level of description required describing the case site and participants in detail through participant attribute profiles, in order to make clear connections with how these findings related back to the

theory and constructs related to this design. Furthermore, direct quotes and images from participants were used to augment emergent themes. This interpretation process is referred to as the “naturalistic generalizations” (Creswell & Poth, 2017) or “categorical aggregation” phase (Stake, 1995). Combined, these procedures were implemented to establish the collective voice of the nonresident undergraduate on this particular public, land grant campus.

Validation Strategies (Ensuring Trustworthiness)

Maxwell (2013) defines validity as, “The correctness or credibility of a description, conclusion, explanation, interpretation, or other sort of account” (p. 122). Validation of findings in qualitative studies may look slightly different from quantitative studies, but this does not make this process any less important or rigorous. Bowen (2009) offers, “...qualitative research requires robust data collection techniques and the documentation of the research process” (p. 29). In implementing these collection and documentation techniques with proficiency, a qualitative researcher generates a sufficient dataset. Even still, in qualitative research, “...the focus is on how well the researcher has provided evidence that her or his descriptions and analysis represent the reality of the situations and persons studied” (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018, p. 202). Considering the depth and breadth of data included in this case study analysis, ensuring the use of valid strategies was paramount to study success.

Achieving validity for a study requires substantial consideration on the part of the researcher. Marshall & Rossman (2016) offer, “We recommend the use of multiple approaches, which should enhance the researcher’s ability to assess the accuracy of findings as well as convince readers of that accuracy” (p. 200). Trustworthiness is a well-accepted approach towards qualitative research validation. Under this approach, four areas are considered including:

credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Gay et al., 2012). In the following section, I will offer how each was addressed throughout this study

Credibility is defined as, “Whether the participants’ perceptions match up with the researcher’s portrayal of them” (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018, p. 202). A researcher’s professional credibility stems from their established and ongoing consults with other informed researchers in the field (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). In practice, credibility relies on the researcher’s ability to invest enough time and gather the quantity and quality of useful data to be able to represent the participants’ experiences in an accurate way. Member checking or respondent validation is routinely suggested as an important validation strategy in the methodological literature (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018; Gay et al., 2012; Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Maxwell, 2013; Stake, 1995). Stake (1995) defines member checking to be where, “The actor is asked to review the material for accuracy and palatability” (p. 115). Whereas Maxwell (2013) describes this process as, “...systematically soliciting feedback about your data and conclusions from the people you are studying” (p. 126). In practice, I provided participants with transcripts and a preliminary themes/code analysis for both interviews and allowed participants to review the contents for accuracy (Appendix H). Any inaccuracies were documented and incorporated into the final document versions. Leedy & Ormrod (2010) suggest member checking helps satisfy an important ethical dimension as well by reducing the chances of the participants being hurt during the research process. Furthermore, I included a detailed positionality to generate awareness of potential points of subjectivity and mitigate the potential negative effects. Maxwell (2013) discusses the concept of reactivity and the strong potential influence the researcher can have on participants during interviews. Accordingly, I leveraged this awareness to report out how

reactivity might impact these formal interactions with the participants and avoided more overt forms of reactivity such as using leading questions. Finally, I reported divergent or discrepant findings throughout the data analysis process (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018). In doing so, I made sure highly differentiated experiences by participants were acknowledged. In sum, credibility was essential to accurately understanding the study phenomenon and related circumstances.

Dependability is defined as, “The researcher must ensure that the research process is clearly documented, logical and traceable; stability and consistency of data over time” (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018, p. 204). Considering the volume of data and sources present in qualitative research, considerable thought was applied to documentation and organization. Accordingly, the strategy of triangulation emerges as a useful validation strategy in this area. A primary purpose for use of triangulation is, “...to increase the confidence that we will have in our evidence” (Stake, 2010, p. 126). Gay et al., (2012) define triangulation as, “The process of using multiple methods, data collection strategies, and data sources to obtain a more complete picture of what is being studied and to cross-check information” (p. 393). For this study, I aimed to fulfill two types of triangulation: data and methods. According to Yin (2014), “By developing convergent evidence, data triangulation helps to strengthen the construct validity of your case study” (p. 121). Data sources included participant responses to questions from a screener survey, an initial and follow up interview, and their interpretation of photos taken from their context setting. Additionally, contextual information gained from campus and community documents were used to supplement the primary data sources. The resulting themes from the document analysis then underwent a peer review (debriefing) with a student enrollment expert on the host institution campus. Such efforts were made to reduce the potential bias of a single researcher’s

interpretations of the documents (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018). Dependability was evidenced throughout the study design and implementation processes.

Confirmability involves, “Establishing that the researcher’s findings and interpretations are clearly derived from the data, requiring the researcher to demonstrate how conclusions have been reached” (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018, p. 204). To satisfy this validation criterion, I maintained an audit trail throughout the research process. “Audit trails document the course of development of the completed analysis” (Carcary, 2009, p. 115). This strategy was well supported across various qualitative methods texts (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018; Gay et al., 2012). As part of the triangulation process, a well maintained audit trail helps to capture, “...the researcher expressing doubt; observations and interpretations made iteratively” (Stake, 2010). Furthermore, it helps to ensure progressive focusing with careful monitoring and a steady, gradual approach (Stake, 2010). I put particular focus on developing and maintaining a physical research audit trail accessible to peer review, as necessary. More specifically, the audit trail was shared with my research advisor through a shared electronic Box folder for review throughout the research process. In sum, confirmability was established through various data-informed techniques.

Transferability is, “How well the study has made it possible for readers to decide whether similar processes will be at work in their own settings and communities by understanding in depth how they occur at the research site” (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018, p. 205). While generalizability is not typically the goal in qualitative studies, it is important to provide enough detail to allow other readers to determine the potential applicability of the study findings to their own unique settings. As offered by Gay et al. (2012), “The power of qualitative research is in the

relevance of the findings to the researcher or the audience of the research, although the findings may have some applicability or transferability to a similar setting” (p. 395). To achieve this validity measure, I ensured thick, rich description (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018; Leedy & Ormrod, 2010; Maxwell, 2013; Stake, 2010). This process involves the use of numerous interconnected details in describing the context and findings (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). In particular, direct quotes and images from participants were included as a way to share their voice and support key themes. Also, it is important to note, “less structured methods trade generalizability and comparability for internal validity and contextual understanding, and particularly useful in revealing the processes that led to specific outcomes...” (Maxwell, 2013, p. 92). By establishing some measure of transferability for this study, it helped to set the stage for future studies not only within this context, but in other contexts involving the nonresident undergraduate and their experiences on a land grant campus.

Summary

I approached this study on nonresident undergraduates by using a pragmatic interpretive framework in an effort to be responsive to, and fully account for, the inherent complexities found within the chosen topic area. Further, a qualitative methodology proved preferable to a quantitative methodology as it offered more potential for depth of analysis, interpretive capabilities and an emergent design. Of the primary qualitative approaches available, a case study was chosen due to its potential for developing a heuristic, subunit analysis capabilities and flexibility. More specifically, I chose an intrinsic case study considering the unusually high nonresident enrollment numbers found at the host university. My positionality was established with an emphasis on being a former nonresident undergraduate and now an employee at the host

institution. In a complementary fashion, various ethical considerations were addressed centering on privacy, transparency and competency. Context for the campus and surrounding Bozeman community was established along with a discussion on my previous pilot studies involving nonresident undergraduates. I chose to incorporate maximum variation and snowball sampling strategies to ultimately select the nine third year nonresident study participants. Data was collected using the following methods: two stage interviews, participant generated images, and document analysis (i.e. newspaper articles and university viewbooks). Analysis was completed through two primary coding cycles ultimately arriving at three themes for each of the three study research questions. Validation strategies were focused on fulfilling four areas: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Ultimately, this process established the foundation for the subsequent presentation of the study's research findings.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the results associated with the study purpose and the following three research questions:

1. What is the lived experience of a third-year nonresident undergraduates on a land grant university campus?
2. What factors do third-year nonresident undergraduates identify as contributing to their persistence at a specific land grant university campus?
3. How do nonresident undergraduates describe their sense of belonging on a land grant campus?

The data collected during this study proved extensive and required a systematic organization structure. The chapter opens with a set of individual participant demographic profiles to establish necessary context. Next, findings are presented based on the study's research questions. In order to make these results more manageable and to improve readability, each theme is divided into categories to address the given research question. Finally, key codes illustrative of the theme are represented throughout. All three data sources (i.e. interviews, photovoice and document analysis) are embedded as a collective, rather than separate entities in order to achieve a rich, thick description of participant accounts necessary in case study research.

Participant Attribute Profiles

For this qualitative intrinsic case study, a total of nine nonresident undergraduates completed all phases of the research process during the spring 2020 semester. This process included a preliminary questionnaire, two rounds of individual interviews, participant-generated photo collection and member checking on initial researcher interpretations of findings. Immediately following are a series of individual participant vignettes in order to establish a better sense of participant personalities using data collected during the interview process. Combined, this preview helps to establish necessary context on the individual participants to help illuminate their stories throughout the collective study findings.

Anna

Consistent with my past interactions, Anna exhibited a soft spoken, matter of fact demeanor throughout the interview sessions. Having grown up in a small Midwest town, her decision to leave home and transfer from a local community college to a university 1000+ miles away was uncharacteristic of her typically more cautious approach characterized in her own words as something that "...isn't like me..." (Interview #1). In comparison to a first-time freshman, Anna regretted not "...being able to have access to all those resources and maybe not even having to ask for them. I just signed up for classes and came to school and hoped I was doing it right" (Interview #1).

Throughout the interview process, Anna struggled with articulating her nonresident identity. However, in her response to the final question of the interview process, she had an epiphany.

Where I feel like I grew up in a very, like, outdoorsy home, but also like we still had the farm, and, you know all that stuff because I feel like I fit both. And maybe that's why it's hard for me to distinguish non versus resident because it seems like everyone here is one or the other (Interview #2).

Her job and family were central to her persistence as she continually balanced a full-time work and class schedule. Being able to maintain this demanding schedule was a point of great pride for Anna demonstrated by her visible emotions in relating a comment made by one of her professors in class "...if you have to work a bunch to pay for school, then you should wait and come back. And to me, that was kind of offensive" (Interview #1). Further, Anna conveyed a strong sense of loyalty to those closest to her. She noticeably lit up when talking about her Border Collie/Kelpie mix dog named Cricket. Cricket offered Anna daily support and has been a trusty travel companion since high school.

Just because I feel like she's the closest thing to like my home and family and whatnot that I've had. Whereas, you know, if I feel like this is, you know, get overwhelmed through because I get overwhelmed because of work or because of school and stuff like that, I feel like just going on a walk with her and seeing how happy she is and just kind of changes my mood and like gives me that, like, push (Interview #2).

Finally, her sense of belonging was firmly established off campus. For Anna, on campus served more of a functional, necessary purpose "I don't honestly travel around campus any more than I have to, to get to class and if I absolutely have to go to the tuition office or something. Otherwise, I'm gone" (Interview #1). Nonetheless, Anna indicated some level of regret in not being more involved in areas of interest on campus such as writing classes, rodeo and the ski team, but these opportunities proved impractical considering her other responsibilities. Even without strong ties to the campus community, Anna's deep seeded sense of personal accountability does not blame the university for this outcome evidenced by her dismissal of the

higher tuition costs for nonresidents in sharing, “I feel like I can’t complain about that because that was my choice to come out here” (Interview #1). Such sentiments were quite fitting as Anna has been a chameleon of college...ever adapting to make her experiences functional and oriented to the ultimate goal of obtaining her lone sought after degree.

John

John conveyed a surprising blend of being major driven, yet seeking balance through various social outlets. It was this seeking balance that originally brought John to the host campus as it offered a strong academic program with undergraduate research opportunities, while still being able to pursue “...other experiences in college, like going to games, joining clubs and intramurals and things like that...” (Interview #1). This balance has come to define his nonresident experience.

In terms of persistence, John’s personal characteristics and family have made even the toughest times manageable. In particular, John’s perseverance shined through.

I was sort of one of those people where some things just don’t naturally come to me. So, I have to spend a little bit extra time like studying and working hard, and I feel like having that good work ethic and those good studies skills that helped me to stay and be successful in classes (Interview #1).

John was highly analytical, yet exhibited tremendous heart when discussing family. When asked what has served as his most important source of support, John responded without hesitation “Yeah, definitely my family” (Interview #2). Such sentiments were visibly conveyed through facial expressions particularly with talking about his twin brother.

After overcoming the initial shock of leaving his close-knit family in his Pacific Northwest home and adjusting to the “harsh” weather climate of the area, John shared a strong sense of belonging both on campus and in the surrounding community. After spending his first

summer in the host community, John “...started to consider like Bozeman more of my second home” (Interview #2). His investment in the campus community was also evident in his recommendations that the university spend more time addressing “...some false assumptions” students may have about the campus, community and the state during orientation. All throughout, John’s quiet, contemplative and conscientious nature has led to a reciprocity-based lived experience as a nonresident undergraduate.

Ruby

Ruby’s continued to identify as a nonresident even after her official tuition classification changed from “nonresident” to “resident” due to her parents’ relocation. In considering her pre-college background, Ruby routinely referenced how the impact of moving to a different state during high school ultimately shaped her perspective on where she lives now. “So initially I only came to MSU because my parents lived here and they encouraged me to tour, but otherwise I probably wouldn’t have ever thought about it” (Interview #1).

Ruby’s nonresident experience was firmly centered on her academics. She was noticeably excited when discussing her current preparations and future career plans going so far as to tear up while discussing the importance of her inspiring instructors and mentors. “So just having these amazing teachers that are so passionate about what they do like really inspires me” (Interview #1). Also, Ruby consistently displayed an optimistic and open-minded tone throughout the interviews, particularly when making recommendations to future nonresident undergraduates. “...if you feel comfortable becoming your own person an out-of-state experience is amazing...And I feel that you make the most out of wherever you go. And that has to be kind

of a personal thing that you decide that you want...” (Interview #1). In short, Ruby viewed being a nonresident as a liberating opportunity to make the most of a fresh start.

Furthermore, Ruby exhibited considerable self-awareness with frequent references to the importance of involvement opportunities and interactions that helped to hold her accountable and ultimately persist. Of these interactions, there was none more important than her sorority. Her sorority was central to her and the relationships this housing arrangement brought. Ruby proved particularly sentimental in discussing a photo of her sorority roommates.

And although I’m thankful that I can call my parents and stuff like the reality is that those two girls and they are my best friends, they are my place to vent and to uplift me, to support me in anything that I do like with school (Interview #2).

For Ruby, relationships make her college persistence manageable.

When discussing sense of belonging, Ruby found comfort in a bigger city environment, but simultaneously lived for the outdoors. When asked about where she envisioned herself in the future, she replied “...I want to teach in a city if I could imagine myself anywhere in like three years with a really good stable job, it would be somewhere in a city but had mountains and outdoorsy things” (Interview #1). At the university level, she recognized that any unutilized or underutilized resources found on campus was her responsibility not that of the host institution. “I haven’t utilized many of them and that’s my own fault” (Interview #1). Despite not even being on her initial university radar, Ruby has come to view the host campus and community as a second home.

Sarah

Sarah conveyed a strong sense of independence with a laser focus on her major and upcoming career. However, this was despite not feeling like she had all of the necessary

academic preparations in high school. She spoke with tremendous candor on how her small town education did not fully prepare her for the demands of higher education and how her approach towards classes in high school was detrimental to her current performance “I didn’t always try my absolutely...my hardest in classes. And I think also not being accountable for those for not trying hard has also put me back” (Interview #1).

When discussing her experiences as a nonresident, Sarah demonstrated a very grounded, straightforward assessment. The interplay of work and school weighs heavily on her mind evidenced by her noticeably stressed expressions when discussing her image of her pay stub and tuition bill. Sarah was constantly seeking out ways to pay for nonresident tuition. Such stress was only compounded by her observations of other nonresident peers with parents who pay for college expenses resulting in the host campus, in her opinion, becoming a “rich person school.”

Sarah remained at the host institution through a combination of scholarships and support found within her academic major. She credited both the university and her college/department in doing “...a pretty good job with scholarships and every little bit helps with that. That really is like a true saying because I mean I don’t get a whole bunch of money in scholarships, but it definitely helps” (Interview #1). As part of a major only found at a few public institutions in this region of the country, Sarah welcomed the opportunity to engage with faculty and peers in major-specific courses during her third year. “My advisor who also taught my freshman level course and who will continue to be teaching me my senior year and she’s also my club advisor. She has all of the answers, it seems like” (Interview #1). Support from on campus at multiple levels converged to assist Sarah in navigating her undergraduate career.

Sarah finds her sense of belonging both on campus and in the surrounding area through active involvement. In talking about the outdoors, and specifically skiing, Sarah conveyed noticeable excitement in her reflections and credited these outlets as key contributors to her persistence. In discussing why skiing at the local mountains represents sense of belonging to her, she responded:

Maybe a freedom or happiness. Like a sense of...of like finally I get to come here like, yay...Feeling of like joy. Maybe not so relief, but like kind of like a yay. It's the weekend. Yeah, I'm up here. Yay! I'm exercising. I'm excited to you know explore the mountain (Interview #2).

She enjoyed engaging with the community and facilitating meaningful work regarding community health through her internship. "I feel I am very much a part of this campus community because of my internship" (Interview #1). Despite a constant battle with finances, Sarah found purpose and fulfillment in her time at the host institution.

Evelyn

Evelyn saw life through a more creative lens finding joy in the abstract. Evelyn moved from a much larger city in the Pacific Northwest after only applying to and being accepted at Montana State University. She valued personal well-being and a balanced lifestyle.

Similar to other participants, Evelyn associated her nonresident identity closely with the challenges related to a higher tuition rate. Tuition weighs heavily on Evelyn prompting her to seriously consider pursuing residency status. "Because I have to get my masters with landscape design and I want to pursue that. But I'm also like, wow, I don't want to pay student loans my whole entire life" (Interview #2). In presenting her recommendation to future nonresident freshman, she equated their success to "...listening to what people (i.e. advisors, RAs) have to

say and deciding for yourself” (Interview #1). She balanced a fierce sense of independence with making sure to utilize the surrounding resources to make the most informed decision possible.

Despite encountering some setbacks during her undergraduate career, Evelyn relied primarily on her personal characteristics to persist. For instance, she evidenced considerable perseverance and was at peace with the major she recently selected. Evelyn recognized this inherent resiliency in crediting “I think it’s just grit. Like just being able to I don’t know like push through...” (Interview #1). In contrast, Evelyn did not feel the host university has done anything directly to support her persistence. “I don’t really know. I don’t think that MSU has specifically provided me anything” (Interview #1). In short, her independence carried the day.

Evelyn’s sense of belonging came from the intersection of learning and the outdoors. She channels her introvert tendencies through the solitude found in nature. Further, Evelyn coined the phrase “outdoor research” in explaining the great value she has found in classes that take the work outdoors. She was very animated in sharing “Like I’m still outside learning and I’m having a great time being outside of. I don’t know. It’s just cool. It’s like going on a nature walk. But you’re still applying yourself” (Interview #2). Evelyn’s belonging was rooted not in the campus itself, but rather where her classes intersect with the surrounding community and area.

Ben

Ben hailed from a state with a contiguous boundary to the host state—the only study participant with this geographic distinction. Such proximity to his family weighed heavily on his decision to attend the host institution as his scholarship gave him the ability to attend a diverse range of universities across the country. “MSU is close enough to home. So, you know, if I

wanted to go, I could you know on the weekend, I could do that” (Interview #1). Ever since, Ben has maintained a balance of involvement both at home and on campus.

Being a nonresident was literally all about perspective for Ben. In comparing his experiences with those of his peers who remained in-state for college, “So I definitely think I’ve got a unique perspective on, you know, trying something new and something that’s scary to a lot of people” (Interview #1). Not only did his nonresident identity impact his own growth in perspective but had the potential to contribute to his classmates too. In referencing the political identity found in his own home state, which potentially differs from his host campus and state, he shared:

...I think that’s a unique thing that’s brought into some of these courses into like discussions and stuff like that, too. Not to say that Montana doesn’t have that, but I think more in the university setting. That’s. It’s just a different opinion I’ve brought in (Interview #1).

For Ben the meaning of being a nonresident was less tangible and more a state of mind.

Ben exhibited considerable focus on crediting both his major and family for his continued persistence. “I think it’s just a passion for what I want to do. I’ve known for a while that I want to be a teacher and I want to be in education and helping students to grow” (Interview #1). Also, family was noticeably an important factor during the interviews. In discussing a photo of his family at his brother’s football state championship, he shared “...but I just kept coming back to my family. I mean, they’re I think just my number one source of support” (Interview #2). With these factors combined, Ben confidently conveyed he had never thought of leaving the host institution during his first three years as a nonresident undergraduate.

Ben evidenced a propensity for big picture, synergistic thinking contributing to his ultimate sense of belonging. This was evidenced in his observation of “...the connection between

the campus and then the rest of the town is really cool. That may or may be different than [hometown] or other college towns” (Interview #2). Community and civic engagement were central to his identity both through his major and at a personal level as he enthusiastically expressed in facial expression and tone a “...Bobcat kind of pride” (Interview #1). In addition, he assumed considerable involvement opportunities, most recently leading efforts to establish a new “campus ministry group” on campus. Ben felt belonging by being actively engaged himself.

Callie

Callie proved to be an eager, inquisitive contributor who shared a worldview that was distinctly unique from the rest of the cohort. Of her many traits, passion and compassion rose to the surface. Despite having encountered some traumatic events in her life, Callie exhibited an unflappable optimism and open mindedness that guided her on a daily basis.

I think it’s definitely made me think about perspectives and how to like empathy rather than just being sympathetic. Like putting yourself into other people’s shoes and realizing like there’s a reason why people kind of always act, how they act...My opinions aren’t necessarily the right opinions. You know and the same thing for other people. Just keep an open mind is probably my strategy (Interview #1).

For Callie, being a nonresident is part discovery and part struggle. Throughout her interviews, she indicated how much she enjoyed getting out and learning about the greater area. In particular, she noticeably lit up when discussing her experiences volunteering in the community. The act of service gave her a sense of purpose evidenced by her statement “I felt like I was doing something. So that helped” (Interview #1). In balance, her nonresident identity also put her in some difficult positions. Accordingly, Callie felt compelled, in a very clear and directed tone, to justify nonresidents being here at the host campus and community. “Maybe like all because all we’re nonresidents doesn’t mean that we don’t experience what people

experience, that lived in Montana and we want to experience that. We think it's really cool. We all came to Montana for a reason" (Interview #2). In short, being a nonresident was complicated for Callie.

When considering what factors contributed to her persistence, Callie equated her continued enrollment to her family. The loss of her father in high school was influential in where she is at today. "I thought about it logically about my issues and it probably sounds stupid, but like my Dad would want me to stay healthy and keep enrolled. So, I think a little bit probably is for him too" (Interview #1). While the memory of her father provided the encouragement to attend and remain enrolled in college, her grandmother was credited with her actually attending the specific host institution.

I applied to Montana just because my like I said, my grandma introduced me to this state...and it means a lot for her. I know she loves. She's the one that's paying my college. So, I'm very thankful for her. And as I was saying. But yes, she is one of the major reasons why I came here as well (Interview #1).

Callie made a point of visiting her grandmother at her ranch in a nearby town either on her own or even sometimes with friends. Family brought everything full circle for her.

Throughout her interviews, she emphasized the importance of "putting yourself out there" in ultimately cultivating your own community and sense of belonging. Concurrently, relationships were important to Callie while in college transforming this self-described introvert into a "social bird" during her undergraduate career. Callie's affiliation with her sorority provided the structure and supportive community that brought everything together for her. "I guess I feel like part of the campus. I have my own little community in [sorority] so it's always something to go back to. And we do things on campus and outside of campus that makes me feel

like we have a campus community almost” (Interview #1). Also, Callie’s sense of belonging was based on finding compatibility between her passions in the short and long term.

And I have a passion for that. I just don’t know how to apply that to the workforce quite yet. But I have a lot of passion. Before I end my life, I can hit all those passions in my life regardless of the money situation (Interview #1).

Overall, it was more the intangibles that contributed to her sense of belonging.

Riptide

Riptide valued lifestyle above all else seeing his work hard, play hard mantra aligning well with the host university’s motto of “mountains and minds.” “The balance between work hard, play hard has definitely been a super good fit for me” (Interview #1). He already knew Engineering would be his focus, he just needed a university that would afford him the outdoors outlet, specifically skiing, that he so desperately desired. “So, skiing was definitely a big thing. So, I knew I wanted to go to an engineering school located next to some mountains” (Interview #1). For Riptide, skiing channeled his inner being and served as a central conduit to realizing persistence and a sense of belonging.

Riptide’s ability to navigate between various social groups defined his overall nonresident experience. He was very willing to share both his successes and challenges in a very candid and open way. His openness to a wide range of interactions greatly aided his transition from his largely urban, Midwest roots into the host area culture. “So, I just say like something that’s helped me is just being able. Being able to witness both sides and say, you know, it’s not just it’s like a one certain atmosphere. You get a bunch of different groups” (Interview #1). In discussing what he felt was different about being a third year nonresident undergraduate, he summed this up to continually learning new things about the area. “I’d say it’s one that was

unique, I'd say for the most part, everything about Montana is still really fresh to me and there's still things I'm discovering which is always an adventure" (Interview #1). Riptide's authenticity and exuberance were consistently evidenced in relating his experiences as a nonresident.

When considering what has contributed to his persistence, he valued the relevancy of his coursework and the support provided by his friends. Most notably, how the professors provided space for his interests and modeled life balance.

We in a few of my classes last semester, we had very open ended projects. So, we were able to do them on like whatever we wanted. I mean, my buddy did one on a mountain bike frame and things like that. So, they're really able to support our interests...But I felt very supported by the faculty here...Like, if they if we work hard, they'll make sure we have time to play hard for sure (Interview #1).

Also, Riptide made a concerted effort to credit his closest friends throughout his interviews and the impact they have and will continue to have on his life.

And those are like those are two guys where if they're if they were to call me like five years from now and they'd say they need my help, I'd be on the next plane flight, you know, to go see go help them out. That's just like the kind of level we're at (Interview #2).

Formal and informal relations were central to Riptide's persistence.

Despite being the participant from furthest away from campus, he may very have been the most at home both at the individual and campus level. When asked where he felt he belonged the most he responded, "So all the factors are important, but as far as best fit and most belonging, it's definitely outdoors with people who love the outdoors as much as I do" (Interview #2).

Similarly, he felt the university has done its part to make him feel welcome too.

It encourages me to stay here for sure. Definitely. I would like . . . I don't [know] about permanently, but I definitely can't really imagine going and having a better opportunity than being able to stay here and work. I would love to stay here (Interview #1).

In balance, Riptide conveyed an impassioned note of caution for the host university to hold on to its core identity and not succumb to the latest trends. “We got to do our own things. We have our own unique experience going on. We don’t really need to be like anyone else because we’ve got the mountains, we’ve got the minds” (Interview #2). Such investment evidenced a nonresident undergraduate’s deep seeded sense of belonging.

Thor

Thor was the most at ease in sharing his story during the interviews and demonstrated a curiosity in the research project itself. He was always up for trying something new whether in work or hobby. His enthusiasm for life was contagious and self-reflection was already part of his daily routine.

In looking back on his first three years as a nonresident, Thor communicated a complete experience. In particular, he conveyed a sincere sense of gratitude for his undergraduate experience and considered within the context of the land grant mission, a higher nonresident tuition rate as just being the cost of doing business. Also, as a natural extrovert, Thor summed up his time on campus in stating “I think like I really thrived, but it doesn’t show for everyone” (Interview #2). With both his personal experiences and time working with residence life, he offered the following encouragement to upcoming nonresident freshmen “The majority are now non-residents just like them. Which is kind of neat. And I think that you just get involved and get stoked on something you fit into the university pretty easily no matter where you’re from” (Interview #2). Thor’s experience as a nonresident was centered on taking control of his own destiny.

Even with an outgoing and confident approach, Thor indicated how important his friends and the campus have been in his persistence. Quality time with people was something he valued. Also, he lived for the moment always seeking out the next adventure many of which have come in his self-described “built out” van. “...just like all the little adventures that me and my buddies have gone on in that thing. And what we’re gonna do with it for spring break, that pretty well sums up like how...how awesome this year has been” (Interview #2). In speaking to his participation in a class associated with a campus retention initiative,

I was in the Sophomore Surge program and I think, I swear I had to be one of the first people that was in that...But so Sophomore Surge was cool because they had the like the mentor person...So I think Sophomore Surge was a cool support because she (mentor) like put on little like dinners and hangout sessions at the dining halls. Like she did a really great job (Interview #1).

When considering sense of belonging, the outdoors and campus residence life provided Thor with the structure and social support network throughout the entirety of his college career. He served in various leadership roles both during the academic year and over the summer. “So that’s definitely sense of belongingness. It’s like at the end of the day you like go home and have people there to hang out with and so I guess that’s like Res Life as a whole” (Interview #2).

While interactions with others were an important part of his drive, time spent outdoors, specifically on the ski hill made everything complete for Thor. As shared by his closest friend, “I know my buddy [Thor] keeps count and I know he is at over 60 days (this year) on skis. And I want to say at least 35 of those are at Bridger Bowl...” (Riptide, Interview #2). Clearly, Thor lives life to the fullest and finds life at the host university quite fulfilling.

Nonresident Lived Experience

The first research question for this study asked, what is the lived experience of a third-year nonresident undergraduate on a land grant university campus? Following data analysis, three related themes emerged: adapting from home to university life, motivating from enrollment to degree, and recreating as a lifestyle. Each theme was subdivided into related categories and codes that were supported by a braided set of interviews, participant generated imagery, and interpretation from a document analysis. Combined, this section helped to establish invaluable context on the lived experience of nonresident undergraduates during their third year of campus enrollment.

Adapting from Home to University Life

Adaptation emerged as a pronounced theme for the lived experience of all nine study participants. Adaptation was a participant's response to one or more environmental factors present in their daily lives as an undergraduate. In total, 172 references arose within this theme presenting a high of thirty mentions by Sarah to a low of six mentions by Ben. Associated adapting categories included: financial, campus change, distance from home, mental health, work obligations and weather. Financial reflected the most variety of participant references (nine participants), whereas campus change encompassed the fewest (one participant).

Financial

Attending college and navigating financial considerations are inextricable companions for college students. Not surprisingly, all nine participants shared insights within this categorical

area. The participant contributions were inclusive of four key, interrelated financial factors: tuition, support, stability and balance.

Table 2. Institutional Historical Tuition and Fees by Residency

Academic Year	Resident	Nonresident
2017-2018	\$7079	\$24,071
2018-2019	\$7278	\$24,993
2019-2020	\$7325	\$25,855

Source: MSU Office of Planning and Analysis “Historical Tuition & Fees”
<https://www.montana.edu/opa/facts/tuition.html>

Tuition. While financial considerations are not unique to nonresident undergraduates, participants reported some key observations pertaining to tuition and their residency status. Considering nonresident tuition is typically three times the rate of residents, finances were elevated as a common talking point for these participants. After conducting some of her own research, Evelyn discovered “...I was like looking into it financially and it still would be cheaper to just be a resident without scholarships than be a nonresident with scholarships” and felt the host institution was not fully transparent in sharing the steps to obtaining residency status for tuition purposes. “It’s like, oh like resident nonresident fees. But they don’t tell you, oh, you can be a resident. It’s just small like process if you want to be. I, that’s kind of shady” (Interview #1). In contrast, while Sarah acknowledged the challenges of nonresident tuition, the prospects of going through the residency process was far less appealing and served as more of a deterrent. “I mean, yes, it is a struggle to pay for out-of-state tuition, but I think it would have been an even bigger slowdown to try and do that, because, I mean, you have to either jump on it right away or

I don't think you really think it's hard to do that" (Interview #1). The difference in tuition by residency status made for a more uniquely situated challenge for nonresidents.

As a result of the document analysis, several contributions to this tuition category and the related topic of student residency status emerged. To begin with, requirements for achieving resident tuition status were expanded by the state's university system in late 2018 (Schontzler, 2018d). Such a development appeared to reinforce some of the participants' frustrations concerning the existing barriers to acquiring resident tuition status. Second, while requirements for achieving residency status expanded, the host state requested the ability to still be able to count out-of-state students in the state's census to generate much needed funding and a potential increase in Congressional representation (Schontzler, 2019a). Such contradictory messaging may offer reinforcement to Evelyn's previous sentiments concerning a perceived "double standard" when it came to the residency process for tuition purposes. Finally, in analyzing the institution's viewbooks, tuition costs were noticeably absent until the final pages of each viewbook. While this could indicate a strategic move by the institution to minimize the potential of tuition prices being a deterrent for nonresident enrollment, the difference in tuition between nonresidents and residents is clearly displayed and is accompanied by accessible scholarship information disaggregated by residency status. In summary, the document analysis process provided evidence to support how nonresidency status is a critical institutional consideration that may incentivize the university to use tuition waivers and scholarship subsidies to maintain this nonresident status throughout the duration of a student's undergraduate career.

Despite nonresident tuition presenting a formidable challenge for many participants, others were able to put their financial circumstances in balance. Several participants compared

tuition rates between their home state to the host institution for financial perspective. Evelyn related “it’s still cheaper in state here than it would be to be in state in [home state]” (Interview #1). Similarly, Ruby, who ultimately qualified for in-state tuition at the host institution shared “...and in-state tuition here is much cheaper than it is in [home state].” While Sarah ruled out an institution in her home state that offered her program of study because “... it was a ridiculous amount of money to go to school there, even in-state” (Interview #1). Even though the tuition bill still remained the same, comparing the host campus rates with participant home states provided perspective in considering the alternative.

Document analysis of relevant newspaper articles reiterated the relatively affordable nonresident tuition rates found at MSU, albeit from an institutional perspective. In total, four references were made by various campus officials on how MSU’s nonresident tuition rates were often cheaper for these undergraduates than the resident tuition rates of institutions found in their home state. Nonresident tuition was characterized with such phrases as “a bargain” (Schontzler, 2017a) and “low by national standards” (Schontzler, 2019b). In addressing the continually increasing nonresident tuition rates, the president of the host institution stated “...but even at this level, our out-of-state tuition is still lower than the resident tuition at many states” (Schontzler, 2019c, p. 2). Accordingly, several participants supported university officials’ claims that while nonresident tuition rates are high in comparison to resident rates, these rates are generally less expensive than in-state tuition for institutions found at home. Thus, the institution appeared to leverage the power of perspective to help justify the ever increasing higher tuition rates incurred by these nonresident undergraduates.

Other participants conducted a cost to benefit calculation on tuition rate versus collective experiences as a nonresident undergraduate.

That's one thing I feel dissimilar about when I was a freshman as okay it'll be paid off and I don't have to worry about it. That's future [participant's name's] problem. But now I'm future [participant's name] almost. But similarly, like I would like the things that are similar is when I was a freshman. Just like this has brought me opportunities that I would not have experienced anywhere else (Thor, Interview #1).

For others, the significant upfront financial investment of being designated as a nonresident actually de-incentivized the thought of actually leaving the institution. Riptide offered "I'm far too financially invested" (Interview #1) while Callie shared "I spent all of this money to come all the way out here and transferring. Yes. But like, again, like it's just like a quick thought that goes in my head. I don't think I would ever actually do it" (Interview #1). Based on responses from the initial interview, tuition served as a persistent, yet manageable challenge for most participants when considered in holistic way.

In general, participants seemed to be aware that higher nonresident tuition rates are not unique to the host institution. When compared to resident rates, Anna related:

Because you know obviously, in-state tuition is much cheaper, which is, you know, normal for every college. But so, I feel like if I compared if I had to work this many hours to pay for out-of-state tuition, how many hours would somebody have to work to pay in-state tuition? (Interview #2).

Even still, regardless of the perceived value or perspective the fact remains, nonresidents still need to find a way to pay their tuition bills each semester.

Through document analysis, nonresident undergraduates and tuition were found to be consistently paired. Of the seventeen newspaper articles reviewed, fourteen referred to nonresidents directly in relation to tuition. Furthermore, these articles reinforced the

understanding that nonresidents pay more than three times the tuition rate of their resident peers (thirteen references). For instance, in addressing 2019 tuition rates, it was reported “Out-of-state students, who pay tuition three times higher than Montana students, paid \$113.7 million in tuition, compared to \$52.5 million paid by Montana students” (Schontzler, 2020b, p. 2).

Additionally, university officials who referred to nonresident tuition rates justified this cost typically in one of two ways—to subsidize resident tuition rates (twelve references) and as a necessary budgetary measure to off-set declining state support (fifteen references). As shared by the host institution’s news director “No Montana taxpayer dollars go to educate out-of-state students...They pay three times higher tuition and so subsidize the cost of educating Montana students” (Schontzler, 2018c, p. 4). And the university president, in presenting to the state’s Board of Regents, shared “With less support from the state, that makes us more dependent on out-of-state tuition, not less” (Schontzler, 2018a, p. 2). Combined, these two statements illustrate how from an institutional vantage point, nonresident enrollment is a budgetary necessity for the host institution. In percentage terms, nonresident tuition is projected to account for 44% of the institution’s entire operating budget in the 2020-2021 academic year (Schontzler, 2020b). In summary, the host institution portrayed nonresident undergraduate recruitment as more of a necessity than a luxury from a budgetary standpoint.

Table 3. Participant Financial Profile

Participant	Tuition Status	Merit Scholarship Recipient	Financial Aid Recipient
#1	Nonresident	No	Yes
#2	Nonresident	No	Yes
#3	Resident	No	No
#4	Nonresident	Yes	No
#5	Nonresident	Yes	Yes
#6	Nonresident	Yes	No
#7	Nonresident	No	Yes
#8	Nonresident	Yes	Yes
#9	Nonresident	Yes	Yes

Source: Source: All data reported in this table is derived from an initial Qualtrics questionnaire completed by study participants in advance of their first interview.

Financial Support

Nonresidents relied on a number of different resources to help address their financial needs each semester. Financial support refers to monetary assistance from sources such as: family, scholarships, and loans. Combined, all participants reported that one or more of these resources served as an important factor in their persistence as nonresidents on the host campus.

Due to the heightened importance of financial resources, the Office of Financial Aid emerged as a frequently cited on campus visit. For Anna, the financial aid staff served as one of her only interactions on campus outside of classes. "...the staff has been helpful, I have gone there a time or two to ask questions...I think that's really the only place I've gone." (Interview

#1). Furthermore, John viewed the Office of Financial Aid staff as a go to resource for managing scholarships.

They've been very helpful because some out-of-state scholarships have been a little bit like some of their requirements and other things, I have to give them an enrollment verification request before they can send the scholarship money. But before I can get that form, I have to pay my bill. I don't want to pay my bill without the scholarships (Interview #1).

In addition, family played an important role in terms of financial support. Evidence from the interviews pointed to two primary ways in which family offered support in this area: full tuition coverage and financial advice. In terms of tuition coverage, there was considerable variance across participants. Ruby shared "I don't have to pay for my tuition or my books or anything. Thankfully, my parents pay for that. But anything else outside of school that I have to pay for" (Interview #1). Likewise, Callie described the degree of investment made to her education by her grandma in stating "She's the one that's paying my college. So, I'm very thankful for her" (Interview #1). In contrast, Evelyn related how her "parents helped me out a little bit" (Interview #1). Even with evidence of financial support from parents, six of the participants still applied for and received financial aid through the Free Application for Financial Aid (FAFSA). Finally, financial support also came in the form of advice. Anna related:

My Dad, his whole job is loans because he is a commercial lender. And so, when it was time to find a student loan I guess it was nice to have him because he could find me a good interest rate and kind of knew all the ins and outs of it to offering financial advice.

Whether in a tangible or intangible form, the role of family was an established influence on financial outcomes for this group of nonresidents.

Nonresident scholarships also generated considerable recognition within this cohort. Based on participant responses from the demographic survey, five participants received a

university merit-based scholarship, whereas another participant held a Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE) state reciprocity tuition waiver. In total, four participants referenced one of these scholarships within the context of their initial interviews. For Riptide & Thor, knowing they were accepted and the recipient of a scholarship in advance of their senior year of high school made a noticeable impact on their ultimate decision to enroll at the host institution. According to Riptide “I did that leadership application and I got, heard back two weeks later that I was in before senior year even started is done right from there” (Interview #1). Whereas for Thor, this scholarship shifted his plans away from initially attending an in-state community college “...they gave me a scholarship and I didn’t look at any of the schools after that. And I was like, sweet, I’m already accepted. I’ve got this scholarship...” (Interview #1). Despite appreciation for these university scholarships, all study participants still utilized some form of loans or outside financial support to cover the costs of attending the host institution from one year to the next.

From an institutional perspective, nonresident merit scholarships and tuition waivers were discussed as key recruitment tools. Through document analysis terms such as “attract” and “lure” were consistently referenced in articles regarding the relationship between MSU’s merit scholarships and nonresident students. In fact, high achieving nonresident undergraduates were found to be the top tuition waiver receiving group at MSU (Schontzler, 2017f). For the 2017-2018 academic year, approximately \$16.7 million in tuition discounts for nonresidents helped to generate \$106.8 million in tuition revenue amongst nonresident undergraduates (Schontzler, 2017d). While several study participants indicated the importance of these merit scholarships for their own academic journeys, such dollar numbers speak to the importance these waivers have at

the university level. MSU's president addressed this financial strategy in sharing "It was a "very creative" response to declining state support...and has created great opportunities, both for out-of-state students to get an education and for Montana students, whose cost of education is subsidized" (Schontzler, 2020b, p. 2). Through document analysis, the theme of financial support was consistently evidenced at both an individual and institutional level.

Combined, the study participants identified federal financial aid, family and/or institutional scholarships as the most important sources of financial support to cover tuition costs. However, there are many other costs associated with attending an out-of-state university requiring many nonresident undergraduates to seek out employment opportunities to achieve a level of financial stability in their lives.

Figure 3. Experience-Sarah

The screenshot shows a Montana State University pay stub for Sarah, an employee. The pay date is Dec 11, 2019, and the pay period is Nov 01, 2019-Nov 30, 2019. The rate is \$8.500000. Below the pay stub is a table titled "Undergraduate Non-Resident Students" showing costs for the semester and academic year.

Category	Semester	Academic Year
Tuition/Fees ¹	\$12,925	\$25,850
Room/Board ²	\$5,150	\$10,300
Books/Supplies ³	\$725	\$1,450
Personal/Transportation ⁴	\$1,869	\$3,738
Total	\$20,669	\$41,338

I decided upon my work and what that kind of like why I work...So I, uh, I work at the. I work on campus, and the minimum wage here in [state] is eight dollars and fifty cents compared to the tuition and all of the other things that go into being a college student. And that is an insane amount of money versus the, uh, the hourly

wage that I get paid at the university that I'm paying all of this tuition to (Sarah, Interview #2).

Financial Stability. When reporting results on cost of attendance, it was valuable to disaggregate attendance from living costs. Financial stability referred to the resources, and subsequent actions necessary (i.e. work), to make living possible. As offered by Sarah in the opening quote and image, achieving financial stability goes beyond the high cost of attendance at the host university and rested in her ability to reconcile an existing disparity in limited local wage potential. The majority of participants held a job position, with most employed on campus. Several participants assumed roles in campus residence life. Within this capacity, the participants were in a unique position to assess their own nonresident identity in relation to many of the out-of-state students living in their residence hall community. In reflecting on nonresidency as a whole, Thor shared:

Yeah, I think the experience is fantastic. I think like I really thrived, but it doesn't show for everyone. Like there's a number of residents that I had. They wonder like, mom, dad, I don't want to actually go to school here. Okay, cool let's pack up the car and leave. Poof they're gone! (Interview #1).

Furthermore, several participants cited the need to maintain at least a part time job just to be able to attend school. Such a responsibility was not always fully understood by other members of the campus community. After noticeably fighting back tears, Anna related a past instance of this misunderstanding:

...whereas I think one teacher in one of my classes had made a comment about you know, if you have to work a bunch to pay for school, then you should wait and come back. And to me, that was kind of offensive. Since I am working really hard to do it. I don't want to wait and come back (Interview #1).

Across the cohort, four participants (Anna, John, Sarah, Evelyn) specifically shared how financial needs extended beyond tuition and textbooks both in the short and long term. Anna

explained how her working nearly 40 hours a week despite being a full-time student was a necessity. “I work a lot but that just pays for me to live here (Interview #1). In contrast, John viewed work as a means to generate some additional spending money. “So, I worked as a desk clerk for my freshman year. Because I just want to make a little bit of money” (Interview #1). While managing finances is not unique to nonresident undergraduates, the much higher tuition rates for this group appeared to have a disproportionate impact on their overall financial stability.

Work-life Balance. Developing a system to balance the many responsibilities as an undergraduate was a commonly agreed upon ingredient for success. For the purposes of this study, work-life balance encompassed both formal and informal participant obligations occurring at the same time. Examples of this category were evidenced for the majority of participants. Nonresident undergraduates continually sought out ways to efficiently address their many responsibilities. Callie spoke about how fortunate she felt to have been able to reach this mark compared to some of her other peers. “...going to college, having a job and being distracted it’s, I think of myself, I have my head on correctly compared to some other of my peers that I know how they handle situations” (Interview #1). In contrast, Ruby related how just managing the volume of courses was a task in itself. “So, I had to learn how to balance several different classes with the course loads of homework” (Interview #1). Equally as important for participants was navigating the social outlets and individual alone time needed to feel recharged on any given week. To achieve this, social functions had to be prioritized as shared by Sarah when deciding on whether or not she should join a sorority “I wanted there to have a life outside of partying Friday, Saturday and Sunday” (Interview #4). While Sarah established a standard for work-life balance during her first semester, Ruby reflected the challenges of shifting to more of a class focus

during her third year lamenting how she had to leave behind what she perceived to be “...living my best life at the time” (Interview #2). Clearly, the participants had to know their own capacity and tendencies before taking concrete steps to establish and maintain such a balance.

In exploring this topic at the campus level, several participants spoke to how their pursuit of work-life balance intersected with the culture of the university. In speaking about the university’s motto of “Mountains and Minds”, Riptide found his individual approach towards work-life balance to be compatible with the university “...the balance between work hard, play hard has definitely been a super good fit for me” (Interview #1). Whereas Sarah expressed regret in this area for testing out of some entry level courses via Advanced Placement (AP) tests during high school. “I also think that I probably could use those classes in college to kind of just be a more well-rounded person” (Interview #1). Ruby also acknowledged the importance of university classes in this area in sharing how taking a university activities class (i.e. Beginning Yoga) was instrumental in helping her make this transition. “I think that this was helpful for me because in my yoga class, the whole kind of overarching theme for that is like gratitude and being more aware of the things that you’re thankful for that contribute to your well-being” (Interview #2). Regardless of a designated personal space, peer group or taking a specific class, the participants demonstrated varying degrees of success in finding their own work-life balance with many indicating this was still a work in progress. As offered by Sarah “I guess I know I’m trying to still figure out the work life balance” (Interview #2).

In pursuing financial stability, several participants related some of the resulting challenges they faced in balancing work and school. For Sarah, striking a balance between these two priorities was a continual struggle:

That was probably the hardest thing to manage because from 8:00AM-5:00PM I was either in class or I was at work. And then for the rest of the day I had free time, which was nice. But know it's really hard to balance all of that...And I did notice an increase of my grades as soon as I dropped down from like from I think I was working sixteen and I dropped down to thirteen. But also, the less amount of hours you work, the less you get paid, the less that goes into your bank account (Interview #2).

Alternatively, Anna viewed this interplay between work and school as both a defining moment of her college career as well as a place for potential misunderstanding by others.

I guess the capability of being able to go to school full time and hold a 40 hour a week job and continuing to not have to take classes over and over and over again... I just don't think they know much about me and my lifestyle here and trying to uphold the right GPA while taking the right amount of credits to graduate, plus working... (Interview #1).

Many of the participants found work-life balance unattainable due to their need to work significant hours in order to off-set the costs of their higher tuition rates.

Obtaining a job not only generated much needed financial resources but appeared to serve as a milestone or significant experience for a number of participants (John, Sarah, Riptide, Thor). For Sarah, an on-campus job related to her major provided much needed experience prior to her major-specific coursework. "Getting a job that has that will prepare me for my future has been huge...It's helped me learn so much more outside of the classroom..." (Interview #1).

Coincidentally, the other three participants were all previously or currently working as resident advisors (RA) within the host campus residence life department. To this effect, John shared "I'd say last year I worked as a resident advisor on campus. I'd say that was a pretty big milestone" (Interview #1), while Riptide related "Getting this RA position was a really big achievement for me" (Interview #1). Finally, Thor credited his initial RA role to enhancing both his professional and connections on campus. "In that first year, being an RA was definitely a milestone. I would

say, like I was super involved on campus and I like knew a whole lot of faces around campus” (Interview #1). The pursuit of work-life balance often resulted in obtaining both an on-campus job and a sense of personal satisfaction for these participants.

To conclude, the financial category spanned not only the cost of attendance, but also what adaptations nonresident participants took to make their lived undergraduate experience possible. Through a combination of family support and outside employment, participants were largely successful at covering their expenses. Yet, most participants found attaining a healthy work-life balance to be elusive under their current circumstances.

Distance from Home

While most participants identified “something different” as a key motivation for enrollment at the host institution, the majority indicated this came with a trade-off in identifying distance from home as a significant resulting challenge requiring adaptation during their lived experience. The category distance from home encapsulated how the time and mileage between a participant’s hometown and the host institution impacted their undergraduate experience. On average, the participant cohort hometown was 828 miles from campus with a range of 275 miles (Ben) to 1651 miles (Riptide).

Table 4. Geographic Overview: Participant Place of Origin

Participant	Home Time Zone	Hometown Classification	Distance to Campus
#1	Central	Rural	1000-1250
#2	Pacific	Urban	500 -750
#3	Mountain	Urban	500 -750
#4	Pacific	Rural	250-500
#5	Pacific	Urban	250-500
#6	Mountain	Rural	250-500
#7	Pacific	Urban	1000-1250
#8	Eastern	Urban	1500-1750
#9	Pacific	Urban	1000-1250

Source: All data reported in this table is derived from an initial Qualtrics questionnaire completed by study participants in advance of their first interview.

Following the interviews, it was apparent that distance from home served as a salient topic of focus for six of the participants. Distance symbolized a range of topics including: awareness, time, inconvenience, residency distinction, family/friends, and even a reason for departure. In terms of awareness, Anna & John knew the exact mileage from campus to the doorstep of their home. “Just under a thousand miles or just over a thousand miles. It’s like 1028 miles like from here to my driveway” (Anna, Interview #1). Whereas others spoke to the challenge of home being a significant time commitment (Ruby, Sarah, Evelyn). “It’s about 10 hours of driving. If not, it’s like, a three hour direct flight to [home town airport]. So, it’s not horrible” (Ruby, Interview #1). For the most part, participants equated this distance as being

more of an inconvenience than hardship in citing: expense (Ruby), limit on personal belongings (Sarah), and the practicality of going home for a long weekend (John, Evelyn).

Through document analysis, a small, but significant contribution emerged within the host institution's viewbook. Within the "Facts and Figures" section of all four viewbooks, a map and accompanying chart presented fourteen US cities that offered direct flights to the host community's airport. Further, a seal with the words "#1 in Montana: Montana's Largest Airport with Six Airlines" was placed adjacent to the list of cities. Evidence not only suggested an awareness on the host institution's part of the potential challenges associated with distance for prospective students, but a proactive approach to help mitigate this challenge by conveying accessibility through air travel.

Understandably, distance from home emerged as key differentiator between a resident and nonresident for several participants (Sarah, Evelyn & Riptide).

A lot of, I've noticed, like people who are residents of Montana can just like drive home. And it's like I grew up an hour away from here, three hours really close. And I mean, [hometown] is six hours away. That's not that bad. But I'm not going to drive all the way to [hometown] for the weekend just for fun, you know? (Evelyn).

Home was synonymous with family and friends for most as demonstrated by Ruby in sharing "Maybe other challenges could be just missing family and friends and not being able to see them as often as you like" (Interview #1). In a related fashion, Sarah spoke to how distance from home has made her consider leaving her host institution. "I am in a long distance relationship that has made me like kind of think about transferring" (Interview #1). Collectively, distance from home served as a prevalent challenge in the nonresident lived experience. Yet, this challenge was able to be mitigated by some participants after obtaining a reliable means of transportation during their undergraduate career.

Figure 4. Experience-Thor



I think my third year being at MSU. I get to this point where I want to take a little bit more my chances, I guess. I remember I was looking like a little bit like a new car...And so I found this van in Billings...And then like since then, it's like going on little adventures with it going on camping trips. I love it...like the bikes and everything, just like all the little adventures that me and my buddies have gone on in that thing... (Thor, Interview #2).

Transportation

Transportation served as one of the few categories that carried both practical and symbolic implications for the participants. For the purposes of this study, transportation was defined as instances where the presence or lack of a mode of transportation proved central to a participant's given experience. As shared by Thor in his opening image and quote, obtaining his van generated a new sense of freedom to pursue his hobbies and facilitate various social opportunities with friends all at once. Overall, five participants referenced transportation as part of their nonresident story.

For some participants, having a reliable mode of transportation served as a vital lifeline between their university and home. “I went there and that’s when I took the picture; we were going back to Wisconsin to go mountain biking” (Anna, Interview #2). John stated that his recent acquisition of a car made it possible to potentially visit family on a more regular basis “...like now that I have transportation,” (Interview #1) and specifically his brother, “So I was actually last fall, I was able to go drive out and visit him for the weekend trip” (Interview #2). In short, having reliable transportation provided participants with more control over their circumstances, particularly when considering potential trips home.

For others, transportation symbolized a freedom to engage in their interests, activities and work. Ruby interpreted this aspect in functional terms in stating “I have a car here, thankfully, and so I can go everywhere that I need to go” (Interview #1). Other participants indicated either not having a car of their own on campus or at least not obtaining one until later on in their undergraduate career. The lack of a vehicle made these participants more reliant on air travel to get to and from home. Other participants interpreted transportation as a potential “home away from home.” Riptide shared how his vehicle served as a backup plan centered on skiing.

I just bought a van this past year with that’s all built how to live in. I’m like, oh, we should just drop out. And all just live in the Bridger [Bridger Bowl Ski Area] parking lot and I’ll beg for change or whatever. So that’s kind of a recurring joke (Interview #1).

Lastly, having one’s own mode of transportation provided flexibility to plan and take part in any number of activities. Thor equated transportation to be his ability to go anywhere with his van allowing an opportunity to build social capital along the way.

And then, yeah, I think it’s totally the availability and accessibility for them. I think like we’re always just around and we always like pretty much plan to go on trips together. I might be gone this weekend you alright cool. You want to come. I’m

going to Driggs [Driggs, Idaho]. Yeah. Let's go to Driggs and it's been cool (Interview #2).

All in all, the acquisition of a reliable mode of transportation helped to elevate the participants' experience in both practice al and symbolic ways.

Mental Health

Several participants referred to mental health during their interviews. Mental health was inclusive of positive well-being as well as prolonged stress, anxiety or other cognitive ailment resulting from a de-stabilizing event immediately prior to or during their transition to the host campus. Three participants (Callie, Evelyn, Ruby) spoke to how mental health served as a challenge at some point during their time at the host institution. Two participants specifically identified a significant life event as impacting their mental health both prior to and following college enrollment. Callie hesitantly shared the story of the loss of a family member prior to applying to college.

So, a big milestone for me is I lost my Dad recently, and that was probably the hardest thing I've ever gone through in my entire life and it was the whole process of going to college as well. So, I guess my milestone is that my mental health is okay because I know a lot of people mental health, going to college, having a job and being distracted it's, I think of myself, I have my head on correctly compared to some of my other peers that I know and how they handle situations (Interview #1).

Evelyn's mental health challenge arose from switching majors, resulting in her seriously considering leaving the host institution. "I did consider dropping out last year before I changed my major to landscape design just for mental health reasons, just so I could take a break with school" (Interview #1). In contrast, Ruby did not identify a single event precipitating this challenge for her, but a periodic occurrence.

I know I struggle with anxiety sometimes and getting into my head about either my health or school or friend situations or just like really diving deep into things that I probably shouldn't overanalyze. Just having a better outcome and being able to talk openly about that with people that you care about if you're struggling. I think that's definitely helped (Interview #1).

While mental health served as a significant challenge, all three participants credited their family and friend support networks in ultimately overcoming these setbacks in their lives. Even with the challenges of being at a distance from loved ones back home, these nonresident undergraduates adapted both in how they communicated from afar as well as expanded the social network found within their local host community.

Weather

The weather of the host institution was referenced on multiple occasions, albeit in a more indirect way, when discussing daily life and activities. Overall, this discussion was largely positive in nature. However, there was a vocal minority who brought up potential challenges for nonresidents in this area. Sarah described the weather as “harsh” and conveyed considerable relief after discovering what type/brand of clothing to wear in order to stay warm during the winter months. “...before I moved here, I never heard of Patagonia, the brand, Patagonia. But once I saw a lot of people wearing it I was like, dang that must be a really, really warm brand. And I have my jacket with me today” (Interview #1). Another participant jokingly reminisced about how when talking with friends during a particularly difficult winter cold spells how “I could have gone somewhere else...” for school (Ben, Interview #1). In contrast, adjusting to the conditions, particularly in the winter, proved more trying for others. John related:

...I remember one of my freshman year labs and I just looked outside and it was just dumping outside. And I was just freezing. I didn't bring a coat that morning. So, I had to go run back to my dorm and grab a coat just because I was so cold. Not used to that. And last spring I got frostbite like twice, two separate times (Interview #1).

While a colder weather climate was largely well received for the outdoor opportunities it helped ensure, it also emerged as a challenge that impacted some participants' daily way of life.

In analyzing the institution's viewbooks from the participants' enrollment years, weather appeared to be leveraged as an apparent strength of the host area and a catalyst for the many outdoor opportunities showcased for prospective students. Both summer and winter scenes were featured in an interchangeable way across academic, extracurricular and student life activities. Of particular note, was the decision to use an aerial shot of the campus/surrounding area during the winter in the most recent viewbook (2019-2020), whereas the previous three aerial shots were all taken in a summer setting. This was an important development considering that for the limited number of direct participant references made about weather, all spoke of the potential challenges the winter climate could present for nonresidents unaccustomed to the cold. Nonetheless, the institution appeared to tout, rather than hide the winter weather as something for undergraduates to embrace through outdoor activities, rather than shy away from this challenge while students at Montana State University.

Campus Change

In response to a growing student enrollment (fueled primarily by nonresident undergraduates) in recent years, the host institution has undergone significant change to its physical amenities as well as its internal staffing and programming. The degree to which this change was perceived positively by nonresident undergraduates provided important context and insights on the lived experience of this nonresident cohort. In total, three participants specifically referred to this category.

Change was a phenomenon that had the potential to generate strong reactions in people based on the individual's perceptions of how this change will impact their daily lives. At the holistic level, Ben expressed considerable enthusiasm for the apparent change to the physical campus. "And there's all these new things coming to campus, new buildings and new activities and stuff like that. It's fun to see the campus growing" (Interview #1). Whereas, Thor spoke to some of the drawbacks change can have in terms of service delivery.

One thing that has hindered me has been like the campus is always growing and everything's changing so quickly. And I think maybe that's why I mean, we're just catching up to all these new out-of-state residents and I'm sure resident or enrollments increasing every year (Thor, Interview #1).

Interestingly enough, Thor associated this growth primarily to increased nonresident enrollment without being prompted. He went on to share how this change impacted his advising experience. "And I think one of these growing pains is like sometimes you get lost with an advisor" (Interview #1). For a participant who already did not identify closely with his major, a change in college/department staffing removed his primary contact and resource for navigating his degree and course sequence. He went on to relate "...I don't know if the new guy I think I just got an email saying the new guy's gone now. So, I never met the new guy that came after her...It's just like sometimes you might get lost in. It's like an abyss" (Interview #1). Such potential student alienation was likely not the intent of the university yet could potentially serve as the resulting impact. Furthermore, Riptide shared considerable concern not about the campus change itself, but rather the reasons behind the change. In reference to recent proposed programming and building projects, he cautioned MSU about trying to be like other schools and implored them to stay true to the university mission of "mountains and minds."

We got to do our own things. We have our own unique experience going on. We don't need to be like anyone else because we've got the mountains, we've got the minds. That's something that I think is really critical to this university, is that we recognize that the experience that we create here is so different from everywhere else (Interview #2).

Of worthwhile note, both Riptide and Thor lived and worked on campus through residence life which potentially provided an 'insider perspective' wholly different from a typical third year nonresident undergraduate.

Through document analysis, discussion on growth and change from an institutional perspective proved noteworthy. As part of the local newspaper articles, eleven references were made to campus buildings and infrastructure projects. In response to a growing student population, new dining halls, residence halls and academic buildings served as the primary areas of focus. The university president spoke to the challenges these large scale projects presented particularly when discussing a multi-use academic building (Romney Hall). "I need support from legislators with capital projects...I need Romney Hall" (Schontzler, 2017a, p. 4). Furthermore, the residence and dining halls received full page images within the, "A Day in the Life" section of the 2017-2019 academic viewbooks. Furthermore, in contrast to Thor's challenges in finding a reliable academic advisor, the fact that MSU had been hiring additional staff & faculty to exceed 4,000 employees overall as of fall 2017 (Schontzler, 2017b) seemed to indicate an increase, rather than decrease in the university's ability to meet student needs despite the increased growth. As was the case in previous themes, the university intent versus actual impact on the students did not always align. Overall, this growth was portrayed as a positive development and a sign of success by the university.

Yet, even representatives from the institution itself expressed some potential downsides to the recent growth taking place on campus, especially when referring to infrastructure. To begin with, there is the potential for too quick of growth in student enrollment. The university's vice president for university communications, in speaking to the rapid growth of undergraduate enrollment in fall 2017 related "We are trying to dial it back...We wanted to slow down our growth so it can occur at a pace where we can get projects done" (Schontzler, 2017e, p. 2). On the other end of the spectrum, it was acknowledged if enrollment slowed too quickly such as during the recent pandemic, this newly created infrastructure (i.e. Dorms, classrooms & dining halls) would go empty and would not be able to pay for itself any longer (Schontzler, 2020b). While both the institution and student participants seemed to agree on the importance of sustainability, whether or not changes to campus were perceived positively reflected an important degree of variability. In short, while change may have been viewed by the university as progress, a nonresident undergraduate could actually view these adjustments as deviating from the formula that originally compelled them to enroll at the host institution in the first place.

On the whole, the adapting from home to university theme conveyed not only the challenges faced by nonresident undergraduates, but how they have responded in kind helping to define their overall third year experience. While six distinct categories emerged in this section, it is important to note the variability across the cohort on the degree each participant was successfully able to adapt to each challenge. For some, a given challenge may have still had a pronounced influence on their day-to-day experience, whereas for others the challenge had more of a pronounced effect earlier on in their undergraduate experience. Either way, the results reported within this particular theme proved dynamic necessitating both interview, photo

interpretation and document analysis methods to fully capture the true lived experience of the nonresident undergraduate.

Motivating from Enrollment to Degree

Motivation served as a significant theme for all nine participants. This theme was defined as the primary impetus for either initial attendance and/or continued attendance as a nonresident undergraduate at the host institution. Overall, 63 references were associated with motivation reflecting a high of thirteen instances (Ben) to a low of four instances (John). Motivation categories included: something different, career, goal, peer influence, time to graduation, undergraduate research and opportunity. Goal and something different categories represented the greatest variety of participant contributions (seven), while undergraduate research represented the fewest participant contributions (two).

Something Different

Of all the motivation categories, a call for something new and different served as a significant driving force for this nonresident cohort. In total, seven participants cited ‘something different’ as a major factor in their decision to enroll at the host institution. While slight differences existed amongst participants in terms of perspective, a common thread emerged concerning the appeal of something different at this out-of-state university.

Something different equated to assuming a new found sense of anonymity for a couple of participants. For instance, Anna, in reflecting on her K-12 peer group, stated “And I just didn’t care for that crowd. I wanted to go somewhere where I wouldn’t know anyone...” (Interview #1). While escape represented one form of anonymity, other participants embraced this potential for anonymity as an opportunity to build upon their K-12 experiences in exciting and new ways.

Ruby shared attending an out-of-state institution served as a fresh start free from drama where “...you create yourself compared to what you were in high school,” and have the ability to meet, “...a new group of people without any repercussions” (Interview #1). Assuming a new identity was liberating for these participants.

Within this motivation also arose a desire to break away from both their K-12 peer group and home state institutions so as to have a new experience to speak to. As Ben shared:

...I really didn't want to go to the [state university at home]. I just thought, you know, everybody from [home state] ends up going to the university down there. So, I wanted something that was a new experience, place I wasn't used to or familiar with. So, I could meet new people, and just have those new experiences...So I definitely think I've got a unique perspective on, you know, trying something new and something that's scary to a lot of people (Ben, Interview #1).

Similar sentiments arose for Riptide in reflecting on recent exchanges with peers from back home “I talk to my friends back at home who are going to school back at home and a lot of their stories sound the same or not the same, but similar” (Interview #2). Furthermore, Thor interpreted something different as being inclusive of the experience itself and the propensity for the individual to seek out new things contrary to their friends back home. “But I was also like in high school. I don't know, maybe more willing to just like try new things like I'm the only of my friends, I think that went this far away for college” (Interview #1). In sum, these participants sought out something new as opposed to feeling like they had remained stuck in the past.

Finally, the desire for something different was broadened in a few instances to include their hometown or state. Evelyn stated, “I just wanted to go somewhere else” (Interview #1) whereas Callie put it more bluntly, “I live in [hometown and state], and I've lived there my whole entire life. And I really wanted out into the mountains. I wanted something totally different...And I couldn't stand being in [hometown] for one more year of my life” (Interview

#1). In both exchanges, it was not as much about the people as it was the place that needed a “refresh” for these nonresident undergraduates.

Goal

Seven participants shared goal orientation as a defining attribute of their lived experience. While broad in nature, this category was delineated into more manageable parts. For one participant, the pragmatic aspects shone through in stating “...I don’t really like spending a lot of money towards a goal and then just dropping it” (Riptide, Interview #1). Whereas Thor dismissed departure before graduation in terms of personal character in relating “I don’t want to leave because then it looks like failing” (Interview #1). Similarly, Anna indicated this goal orientation made permanently departing from the university a non-starter even after stopping out for a semester due to financial reasons citing “The need to graduate...” as the primary reason for her return (Interview #1). For John, challenging coursework and even contemplating a change of major became of “badge of honor” and a defining characteristic of his lived experience.

Just sort of thinking about the end goal. Seeing that getting that degree. I know that. I mean, overall, it’s been a very positive experience, now there are days and weeks, midterms and finals and projects. All this work weighs pretty heavy just thinking about that. Just thinking about that end goal (Interview #1).

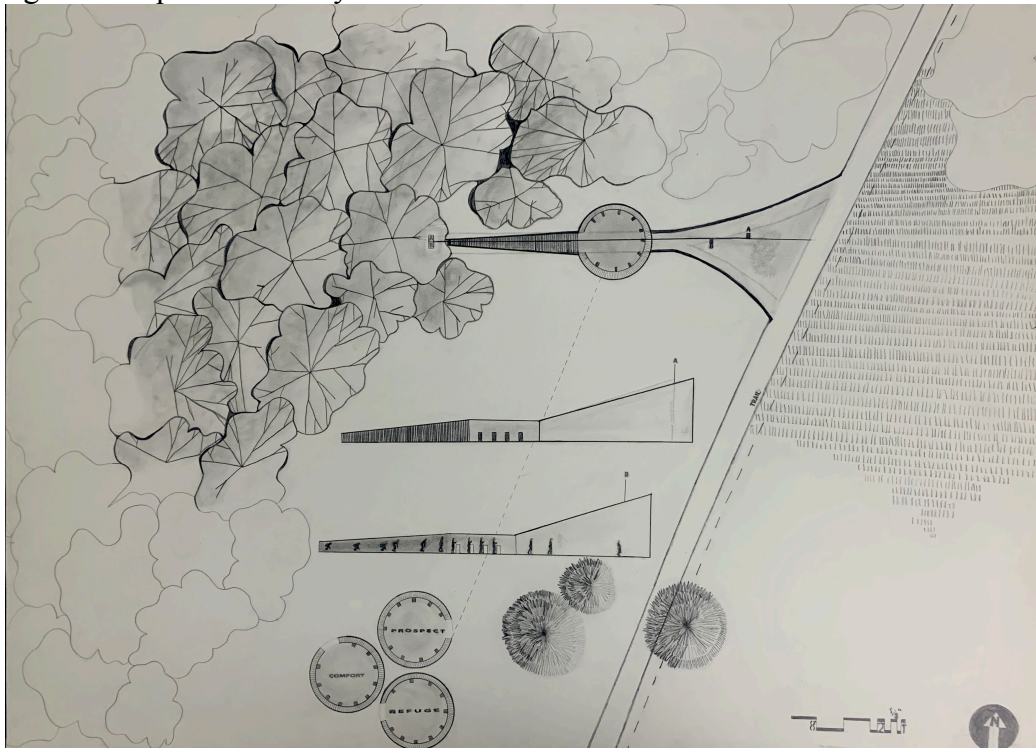
Furthermore, a few participants echoed these sentiments in speaking to the importance of seeing their degree through to the end. “So, I think just having that determination to see it through has really been part of that” (Ben) and “So I’m just finishing my degree I guess” (Evelyn). Whether due to pragmatic or personal characteristic terms, most participants leveraged a goal orientation as a motivating factor in their lived experience from one semester to the next.

Finally, non-academic goals also emerged for these third-year nonresidents when discussing their extracurricular involvement. Ruby discussed her pursuit of a leadership role in her sorority.

But I knew going into it that I didn't want to join and not do something to contribute. And so junior year, second semester so this is my second semester, junior year, I decided that as a senior if I didn't get this position now, I would not have one going in my senior year, and then I would have not fulfilled my goal of wanting to do something for myself and for the organization that I joined. So, I feel much more confident now and I feel like I need to take on a leadership role as an upper classman as well to do my part for the next generation... (Interview #2).

Whether academic or non-academic, a pronounced goal orientation was evidenced for the majority of participants as part of their life as a nonresident undergraduate. While for others, gaining clarity in their career path helped to further augment their level of motivation during their third year experience.

Figure 5. Experience-Evelyn

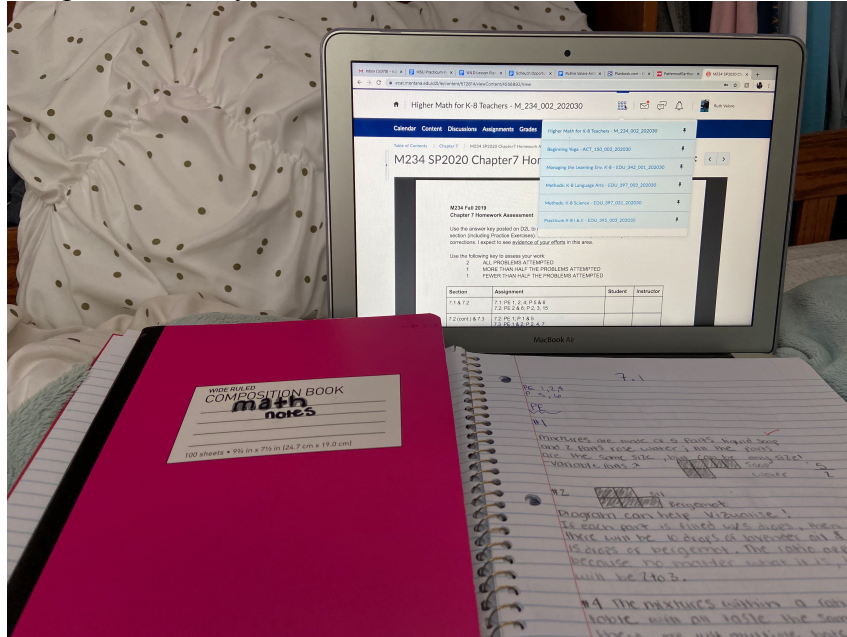


...Well, I chose for that one was my final project and that one definitely represents my third year experience so far because this year is represents the year that I finally chose. Like this is what I actually want to do with my life is landscape design...And then I had to present it in front of all these architects, like in a pantsuit. And it was such a good memory because I killed it, because I was like, really good at it. And I finally was like, this is what I'm supposed to be doing (Interview #2).

Career

Despite various challenges as a nonresident, participants often cited their future career as an important characteristic of their third year experience. In many instances, career and purpose were used interchangeably to describe this category as reflected by Evelyn with the opening thematic image. For her, finding success in her architecture class and related career field helped to establish a renewed sense of purpose on campus. Ben summed up these sentiments well in stating "I've known for a while that I want to be a teacher and I want to be in education and helping students to grow. So, I think just having that determination to see it through has really been part of that" (Interview #1). The practical utility of the degree was also an enticing motivator and symbolized progress for some participants. Comments to this effect included: "Then until I graduate, I can't have that career that I want. So, I guess it's getting to that next step in life" (Anna, Interview #1) and "And I'm glad that I didn't [drop out] it because then I would just be, you know, not moving forward with my life. I would just be stagnant in a job" (Evelyn, Interview #1). For these participants, successful completion of individual courses served as a figurative step on a ladder to ultimate career attainment.

Figure 6. Experience-Ruby



So, I chose to take a picture of my math homework while also having my D2L portal pulled up with all my classes...I think the overarching experience for my third year has been school...I have to start taking it seriously, even though I'm a junior. Like, I'm almost graduated and have to have that professional mindset so kind of encompassing that into my life (Interview #2).

Participants also valued the practical utility of courses and internships when clearly linked to preparation for their future career. As offered by Ruby in the quote above, the shift in intensity of studies in assuming upper division courses specific to her major was quite pronounced. Accordingly, relevancy within course work and internships is what helped make this challenging point in their undergraduate career worthwhile. In more pragmatic terms, Sarah equated her work study opportunity as "Getting a job that has, that will prepare me for my future has been huge" (Interview #1). In a similar way, Ben related how his work study contributed to his future career as a teacher "I've had a lot of opportunities to work in the schools around here through America Reads/America Counts and just kind of get familiar with the teachers and just

the program here in Bozeman” (Interview #1). However, not all participants valued these practical applications of their major into the career field. Thor bluntly stated:

I don’t really reach out to like my major as much as I should. Like I think there are so many opportunities, like to get internships and do all these things, being like, but I don’t really care. I don’t feel I need an internship that way because of that. I haven’t really reached out to them for academic support (Interview #1).

Despite some evident differences of opinion on the value of internship related opportunities, the overall sense of purpose found within the career category appeared more pronounced during this third year of preparations for most participants. “But I know I’m taking school a lot more serious and that my career and the whole point why I’m at school is ten times more serious now than it would have been” (Ruby, Interview #2). The connection between school and future career was a category with staying power for this cohort.

Time to Graduation

Whether due to time limitations on scholarships to a desire to begin that next phase in life, several nonresidents weighed in on how time to graduation impacted their experience. Time to graduation referred to comments referencing decisions that would ultimately impact graduating on a standard, four year timeline. For Anna, after two years in community college and nearly three full years at the host institution, it was beginning to feel as if time to graduation had moved into overtime. With the necessity to maintain a full time job, she cited hesitation to reduce classes or put off enrollment at this point in time primarily “Cause I’m already older than everyone else” (Interview #1). For others, graduating in four years was just how it needed to be. “And I also just wanted to graduate in four years” (Sarah, Interview #1). In contrast, not all participants viewed graduation in four years as the most important outcome. Evelyn, while contemplating the prospects of pursuing residency status, minimized the importance of

graduating in four year when compared to the potential benefits of reducing the tuition she pays each semester. “I would just be like a year behind because I would have to take a year off or be part time. But that’s not that big of a deal” (Interview #1). While not explicitly mentioned by most participants, time to graduation was clearly a significant motivation for several nonresident undergraduates during their third year.

Peer Influence

Even though motivation is typically discussed as an individual’s internal drive, influence from peers and family members proved compelling when discussing several participants’ decisions to remain enrolled at the host institution. In the case of Thor, his decision to remain enrolled resulted from not wanting to replicate the path set forth by some of their friends back home.

I never really considered stopping cause I know if I were to stop then I wouldn’t really get back into it. That’s the way several of my friends have gone and then transferring I don’t know where I’d go outside of MSU. And so, I never really thought about that one either. And also like I was hooked like from freshman year. I got hooked. And then it’s like a drug, you just need more of it like this (Interview #1).

In contrast, Anna discussed peer influence in more indirect, yet potent terms. “But I also feel like a lot of people my age have already graduated. And I feel like a lot older than some of my classmates that also like drives me to want to finish sooner rather than later, also” (Interview #1). Finally, peer influence was referenced as impacting incremental decisions that would ultimately prove far more significant later on in participant’s undergraduate career. Callie exhibited this outcome in discussing how a friend convinced her to pursue a change in her residence hall freshman year ultimately leading to her joining a campus sorority. “But she was my inspiration of changing Hapner [Residence Hall] from Yellowstone [Residence Hall]” (Interview #2). In

short, peer influence was an important factor both in what to do and what not to do in the undergraduate decision making process.

Undergraduate Research

Opportunities to engage with the host institution in a scholarly research fashion were evident in a couple of participant responses. John indicated how undergraduate research opportunities stood out early on as an appealing aspect of attending the host institution. As a result, he found himself working closely with faculty on a project outside of class “With the undergraduate scholars program and sort of within the Department of Chemical Engineering too” (Interview #1). In a complementary way, Sarah found research opportunities very accessible within her academic college and something actively promoted by her instructors.

We need a lab technician for this study done on gut microbiome or something like that. Or teachers often say, hey, like, they’re part of a research study or we need somebody to help with this. And then that all kind of goes to how we like outside of learning experiences (Interview #1).

While slightly less formal, Evelyn spoke to how she has noticed a theme across her courses involving the incorporation of nature into the course assignments and projects.

So, I think that’s the outdoor research aspect is a very important resource that this campus provides...It’s like going on a nature walk. But you’re still applying yourself...I like when I’m not at school, I look at nature a lot differently now just from like thinking I’ve already said this a lot, but thinking abstractly has really made me view the world differently, as cheesy as that sounds (Interview #2).

Combined, both formal and informal research opportunities contributed and continue to support nonresident undergraduates during their third year academic and life pursuits.

In summary, the motivations underlying the lived experiences of this cohort of nonresident undergraduates varied in both type and scope of influence. No single category was exclusive to or completely illustrative of an individual’s story. Rather, multiple motivations

converged with some being more pronounced than others at various points in their experience. Even with such overlapping influences, this analysis helped to pinpoint which motivations had staying power and were most pronounced during the sixth semester of these nonresident undergraduates' respective journeys.

Recreating as a Lifestyle

Recreation served as a pronounced theme for eight study participants. Within the context of this study, recreating encompassed references to exercise-related activities outside of the socially constructed campus or Bozeman communities. Examples included: skiing, hiking, fishing and mountain biking. In sum, there were 61 individual references within this theme reflecting a high of 19 instances (Thor) to a low of three instances (Evelyn & Ben). Within the recreating theme, the following categories emerged: Outdoors access and awareness, mountains, skiing and hiking. Outdoor access and awareness offered the most variety in participant responses (six participants), whereas skiing included the fewest (three participants).

Outdoors Access & Awareness

From the participant interviews, the “outdoors” emerged as a key initial expectation that has had staying power throughout their first three years at the host university. When asked whether or not his expectations have been met so far, Thor shared:

...it's been like I think the expectations are of like getting into the outdoors and working in the outdoor rec, having that opportunity to do all that nonsense like that that has lived up to what I aspired to do when I first came here as a freshman (Interview #1).

Similarly, Riptide considered outdoors the central conduit for his belonging at the host university. “So, all the factors are important, but as far as best fit and most belonging, it's

definitely outdoors with people who love the outdoors as much as I do” (Interview #2). Even though the outdoors by itself generated considerable recognition by most participants, it was the proximity of the outdoors to the campus that really set it apart for other participants. In thinking of his home state university, Ben saw an important difference in this area by sharing “I think access to just to the outdoors is key. I mean, thinking about [own state university host city] they’ve got pretty decent access, but I don’t think it’s as readily available as it is here” (Interview #2). In a related fashion, Sarah commented on how proximity allowed her to engage in the outdoors on a frequent basis, particularly compared to her home town.

I would have to drive about two hours to find a decent hill that was open all the time (Interview #1)...whereas nonresident students kind of came here because of the draw to the outdoors. And yeah, this is something I do every weekend. If not twice a weekend” (Interview #2).

In sum, recreation shaped many of the participants’ lived experiences.

Even for participants who did not actively take part in the outdoor activities, there appeared to be a perceptible awareness of access to the outdoors and the associated social benefits.

I feel like a lot of people mountain bike and a lot of people ski and like, that’s how I get my mountain bike places, that’s how I get my skis places, which I’m sure if I tried, I could meet all kinds of people that go here, that mountain bike and ski (Anna, Interview #2).

Evelyn offered similar sentiments in relating how she would not mind having to stay in the local area an extra year in order to change her residency as “...I think it’s pretty out here” (Interview #1). Outdoor access and awareness were found to have a transcendental effect on participants regardless of their degree of actual engagement on a day-to-day basis.

Such participant findings on the recreating theme coincided with a document analysis of local newspaper articles and the student viewbook during this same period of time. Through an interview with a nonresident freshman undergraduate during the campus move-in day, the student shared “It’s beautiful, the location, the campus has so many things to do—like camping, hiking, biking, skiing, photography” (Schontzler, 2017c, p. 3). Such an awareness of access to recreation has become a key part of the recruitment message from the institution’s admissions office. According to the assistant admissions director, “MSU and Bozeman have both grown in the past decade, getting on lots of “top 10” lists for livability and outdoor activities, and that’s attractive to students. It’s become a hot spot” (Schontzler, 2017b, p. 8). Imagery found in the university viewbooks illustrated this point as activities of students hiking, snowshoeing and skiing were prominently displayed throughout. Furthermore, quotes from various magazines/publications (i.e. College Magazine, National Geographic, Lend EDU, etc.) reinforced the outdoors life students experience when attending MSU. Finally, the titles of the institution viewbooks themselves (i.e. *Explorer’s Guide*, *Think Outside*) with section themes such as “A place for adventure” helped to reinforce this recreation and outdoors focus. Clearly, generating awareness of the outdoors culture served as a key component to the institution’s nonresident recruitment strategy and an important part of the lived experience for the currently enrolled nonresident undergraduate study participants.

Mountains

In connecting with the motto of “Mountains and Minds”, mountains were frequently mentioned by participants as a standalone draw or the catalyst for their favorite outdoor activities. Ruby credited the mountains as being the single greatest enticement for nonresidents

like herself. “...most people that come to school here that are out-of-state come here because they want the mountains and they want all this stuff” (Interview #1). Sarah echoed these comments by revealing some of her own motivations for attending the host institution. “I think a lot of people that go to school here are all about the outdoors as well. And they also saw the same thing in Bozeman as I did the draw to the outdoors, the mountains...the mountains are awesome” (Interview #1). For Callie, moving from her hometown in [home state] to the host community was largely because she “...wanted to experience life in the mountains” (Interview #1). The host university’s mountains provided an academic filtering effect for some participants set on their program of study, but unsure of how to differentiate between each. As previously mentioned, Riptide summarized his enrollment decision process quite succinctly in discussing how he wanted to find a university with a great Engineering program and access to great mountain opportunities. Clearly, topography, in the form of mountains, enhanced the initial draw to and continued experience with the host campus for most of the participants.

Figure 7. Experience-Riptide



So first picture is me, my friend [friend's name], right next to me and my friend [friend's name] on the far side on top of Bridger, that's on the Ridge at Bridger Bowl...that's where I spend a lot of time here at some place I love and a place that's definitely tied me to the university...if I were to, if that picture trying to sum it up is I have maintained my friendships with nonresidents and residents, but a lot of nonresident friends through these three years and a lot of those memories have occurred right there at Bridger Bowl (Interview #2).

Skiing

Among the various activities, skiing served as the most commonly discussed outdoor activity amongst the participants. This activity appeared in seven of the participant's interviews. As evidenced in Riptide's image and explanation, skiing was referenced by several participants as a key differentiator between residents and nonresidents. For instance, Sarah conveyed through a deep sigh her disbelief that more Montana residents didn't take part in the skiing at Bridger. "I ask a lot of people that are from Montana. Oh, yeah, I do this. Do you ski? No, I hate skiing. I'm just like that blows my mind..." (Interview #1). Similarly, another participant stated "I think a lot of non-residents are the skiing community...it's very rare that I'm skiing with someone from Montana" (Thor, Interview #1) and went on to equate this more to the motivation for nonresidents attending MSU than a lack of interest on the part of Montana residents. Skiing served as a defining activity for many of the nonresident participants' recreating agendas.

Hiking

As a seasonal counterpoint, hiking served as the most widely cited non-winter activity for this group of participants. As a tie to support networks, Anna followed the lead of her dog on favorite hikes. "She loves to go on hikes, which most dogs do, but especially like she likes to go on hikes. She likes to go places she's never been before..." (Interview #2). Being out on the hiking trails also provided an opportunity to experience the outdoors for people of all interest and

ability levels. More specifically, Ruby considered the variety and quality of hiking trails superior to comparable opportunities in her home state.

Like going on hikes or going to Bridger (Bridger Bowl Ski Area) and making sure I get involved with my surroundings. So, it's not like I'm here in the middle of a bunch mountains and that's it... being able to be up there because not a lot of people get to have a mountain that close to their home and in the summer definitely taking advantage of going on hikes in a bunch of different places and exploring because Montana is different than [home state] in the sense that I feel like I have never gone on more beautiful hikes than I have here (Interview #1).

Similarly, Callie commented on how hiking enabled her to take in the aspects that differentiate the host campus environment from that of her home town. "I love going on hikes, especially in Montana because the air. It's just tastes good. It is way different" (Interview #2). In contrast, Ben viewed hiking as one more chance to further his connection to the host university. "That even take you off campus like hikes and stuff. The outdoors group as well. Just kind of solidify your connection to the school" (Interview #1). Combined, hiking served as the summer version of skiing both in participant popularity as well as a way to distinguish the host community's outdoors options to those back home.

In review, recreating as a lifestyle was a theme with transcendental properties for the lived experiences of this nonresident cohort. For some participants, just being aware of and having access to the outdoors was sufficient, while others spent enough time in the mountains skiing or hiking to rival any other single activity in their lives. Needless to say, recreation served as a defining trait of the nonresident experience across measures of mind, body and soul.

Research Question #1 Summary

To address the question, "What is the lived experience of a third-year nonresident undergraduate on a land grant university campus?", I reported data in the form of three themes:

adapting from home to university life, motivating from enrollment to degree, and recreating as a lifestyle. Results indicated that while nonresidents faced various challenges in their transition (i.e. financial, new environment, etc.), these sacrifices were largely expected and considered worthwhile if it helped them attain their degree and career goals. Furthermore, recreation was nearly a universal theme for the participants that provided an important outlet in their lived experience. In short, the lived experience of nonresidents reflected a lifestyle of adaptation that encompassed a simultaneous drive towards degree/career purpose and embracing the surrounding outdoors as a source of inspiration.

Factors in Nonresident Persistence

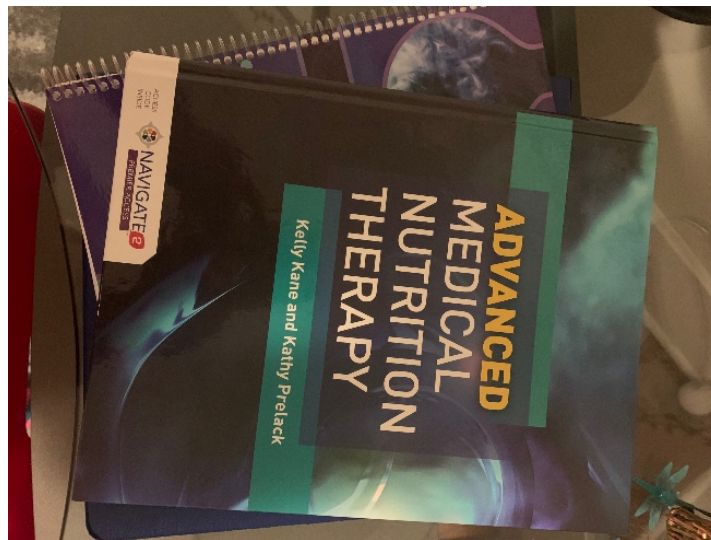
The second research question for this study asked, what factors contribute to the persistence of third-year nonresident undergraduates on a land grant university campus? Following data analysis, three related themes emerged: accessing campus resources, familying from afar, and socializing to stay. Each theme was subdivided into related categories and codes that were supported by an interwoven set of interviews, participant generated imagery, and document analysis based data. Altogether, this section offered essential background information and insights on what factors impacted the ability of these nonresident students to persist during the third year of their respective undergraduate careers.

Accessing Campus Resources

Accessibility served as a universal theme for all nine participants. This theme encompassed the participants' perceived or actual ability to utilize services and resources with reasonable effort. In total, 90 unique references were made within this thematic category ranging

from a high of eighteen instances (Evelyn) to a low of four instances (Callie). The accessing theme included the following categories: formal learning, campus professional interactions, campus health care and transportation. Formal learning was the most widely cited accessibility category (eight participants), whereas campus health care served as the lowest referenced (three participants).

Figure 8. Persistence-Sarah



...quite a few students came to school here to fulfill a dietetic major degree. And that's why I took a picture of my nutrition textbook...I'm getting supported by the university with nutrition...I'm really enjoying reading this textbook and I plan to use it for the rest of my life (Interview #2).

Formal Learning

While there were many informal aspects to the nonresident undergraduate experience, formal class instruction and related resources persisted as a core theme linking these snapshots from life into a cohesive progression for the nonresident undergraduate. As Sarah mentioned in the above image and quote, her participation in major-specific coursework and the related content helped to establish a renewed purpose for her on campus. To clarify, formal learning

constituted reflections related to interactions within the class itself, rather than external studying and application.

Across multiple participants, elevated expectations with courses arose as a key feature when considering formal learning. Ruby shared “But I think the overarching experience for my third year has been school. It’s been project after homework, after test, after the fact that I can’t skip classes anymore. Like I have to start taking it really seriously, even though I’m a junior” (Interview #2). Also, John spoke to how the increased rigor in a particular class made him consider changing his entire major.

I did consider last year I was sort of contemplating whether or not to switch majors. It’s kind of from like organic chemistry, that class was just pretty rough for me and I thought I was like, I should just switch to a math major because I just like math anyways. But I stuck it out, and so I’m still, still in chemical engineering (Interview #1).

Alternatively, Evelyn spoke favorably of the challenges presented in one of her first classes since beginning her new major.

...it tied together my love and interest and passion for plants as well as art, because it’s an interactive art installation. And then it also challenges me because I’ve never, ever worked with like construction or dimensions until this year. And so that was just like an addition to everything that I was doing” (Interview #5).

Challenges with classes were not always by design requiring support from family to help navigate the fallout. “...there were some just challenging classes both in my content and then in terms of like professor expectations as well. And so, it was just it was nice to have somebody to kind of vent to, but also to share out my ideas with” (Ben, Interview #1). Formal learning presented both anticipated and unanticipated challenges that tested the academic wherewithal of these nonresident undergraduates.

Furthermore, several participants spoke to their discovery of just enjoying being a student, an active contributor, and ultimately finding success in their courses. As an undeclared major for her first four semesters, Callie conveyed relief in sharing “And I kind of just found this passion from, I don’t know, just, I guess, taking classes and realizing that I want to help people” (Interview #1). Furthermore, Ben spoke to how he was able to bring a different political perspective to class discussions.

Thinking like from my history classes and just any political science classes. [Home state]’s got a very unique kind of almost libertarian kind of hands off approach. So, I think that’s a unique thing that’s brought into some of these courses into like discussions and stuff like that, too (Interview #1).

Also, formal learning provided opportunities for these participants to experience success. For example, Riptide cited academic achievement as his greatest accomplishment during his first two years.

I think my significant milestone number one was I was able to achieve a 4.0 my freshman year... maintain my GPA sophomore year, I maintained the same GPA...That was like a really big thing for me. I’m only allowed to be out here because my grades Mom’s rules and we all listen to mom. So that was a big achievement (Interview #1).

Finally, the unique nature of some of the courses stood out to the participants. Thor discussed the impact a second year seminar course (i.e. Sophomore Surge) had on his trajectory.

But so, Sophomore Surge was cool because they had the like the mentor person and I know if that is still how it is ran, but there was like a sophomore who was like my mentor and she was a mentor for like seven other people...So I think Sophomore Surge was a cool support because she like put on little like dinners and hangout sessions at the dining halls. Like she did a really great job. And again, like no one really utilized it. It was like me and one other person to go. So that was a good idea (Interview #1).

Document analysis from local newspaper articles, while limited, did refer to formal learning when reporting on programming efforts at the university level focused on supporting

retention and graduation efforts. According to the university president, when discussing nonresident recruitment “...we also understand that simply attracting students is not enough. We must also provide the resources to help students succeed...They include the Sophomore Surge, which gets experienced students to serve as mentors to freshmen” (Schontzler, 2019b, p. 2). From a university standpoint, peer mentorship is an important key to student persistence. A finding also shared by Thor in relating his own freshman experiences. This comparison from a student and university official on a common program offers valuable perspective on the intentions of this program at a university level and the actual impact from a nonresident student perspective.

While Sarah related a class, her friend introduced her to that perfectly coincided with her established skiing skill set. In relating this experience, she expressed regret about not knowing about these types of classes sooner.

I went skiing last Friday with one of my friends who's in a ski class, and I joined her ski class and they took me to a part of the mountain I've never been to, which I didn't think that was. I've been skiing there since freshman year, so I thought I have discovered everything. Apparently not so. Yay, MSU ski class (Interview #2).

In summary, the formal, “classroom” learning experiences surfaced as an important source of support and contributor to the participants’ ultimate persistence at the university. As offered by Riptide in discussing how the university’s land grant mission fostered a supportive community through learning, “The purpose of a land grant university is a way for people to get invested in where they live through their education. I think it’s something really cool about it” (Interview #1). Such sentiments help to bolster the “minds” portion of this university’s “mountains and minds” tagline.

Campus Professional Interactions

Campus professional interactions was inclusive of any direct exchanges between a participant and an individual acting in an official capacity for the host institution. For some participants, these interactions started well before the first day of their freshman year. Thor who still remembered these exchanges from over three years ago.

...they [Montana State University] also sent tons of like actual I guess like outreach stuff like some other colleges my senior year was sending like some little pamphlets or like a postcard, but MSU was sending me fat books. I was like, ‘this is nuts, I’ll read this, okay’ and it got me to look at MSU for sure” (Interview #1).

He went on to relate how he never looked back after applying and enrolling the summer before his senior year in high school. At a more specific level, three areas of interactions emerged during participant interview and will be discussed further: academic advising, faculty and academic support offices.

Academic Advising. Within this broad category, academic advising received the most specific references to meaningful interactions on campus. However, much like any undergraduate student, the nonresident participants varied considerably on how often and to what degree each utilized their department advising staff. In total, seven participants specifically spoke about interactions with their advisors. All summarized their experiences as being supportive. Yet, a stark difference appeared on what “supportive” meant to each participant. On one side, some participants favored “guidance” over directives. Evelyn illustrated this position in relating:

I feel pretty like my hand isn’t being held the whole way through. I feel very independent because I’m the one who will in the end, like you go to the advisor and they tell you, like, these are the classes you should take. But in the end, I choose what I take and how many classes I want to take (Interview #1).

While John preferred more “explicit direction” captured in the following quote:

Just kind of helps me through what classes to take which semester. Because there are quite a few options on when to take classes and it can be a bit overwhelming at times. So, he’s been very helpful because he kind of realizes like my strengths and weaknesses and sort of how much of a load I can carry each semester. And so, he’s helped me to sort of distribute that (Interview #1).

The remainder of participants fell somewhere in-between valuing access above all else. For instance, Ruby appreciated her advisor being “always there to help me” (Interview #1) and Thor sharing, “...just having [them] available to talk to you about new opportunities” (Interview #1). Such sentiments were reflective of the majority of contributions made by participants in this area.

Faculty. Another observation within this category involved how faculty modeled quality communication skills and made themselves accessible to the students as resources. As shared by Riptide “Like the faculty here also buy into that mountains and minds culture, which is it’s really satisfying. And that was something that exceeded my expectations. I had no idea the faculty would be that keyed into that, how important that is to students” (Interview #1). Furthermore, Ruby experienced how welcoming faculty had made her feel across various classes. “...it’s like a personable thing and they care about my well-being. And I’m not just another student in that class too” (Interview #1). In transitioning from a department or class-wide level and focusing on individual interactions, participants provided some key observations regarding their faculty advisor. For Callie, the accessibility and undivided attention is what stood out most to her.

She does everything in her possible passion to help the students out. And there’s also a lot of other professors, a lot who just you go up to them and talk to them. They block out everyone else and just talk to you. Yeah, they help you out (Interview #1).

Whereas for Sarah, the well informed nature of her faculty advisor is what she valued above all else. “She has all of the answers, it seems like... I have as I went into her office and just asked her multiple questions about that. I know other students have also” (Interview #1). In summary, a faculty member’s personalized approach, accessibility and informed nature surfaced as standout criteria during interactions for these nonresident undergraduates.

Such sentiments were reinforced in the document analysis when sharing the university’s thoughts on professional interactions on campus. According to the host institution’s president regarding what makes the university appealing to students “Here [Montana State] the difference is they’ve received individualized attention, from the person who answers the phone to...the way the faculty interacts” (Schontzler, 2017b, p. 10). Furthermore, the assistant admissions director described MSU as having an “attitude of caring” and a “culture of putting students first” (Schontzler, 2017b, p. 8). Combined, the presented experiences of the nonresident undergraduates appear to underscore the claims made by university officials regarding professional interactions between faculty and students—an important contributing factor to student persistence.

Academic Support Offices. Professional interactions also extended to various general academic support offices. For the purposes of this study, academic support offices refer to centers available to any student that are outside of an on-campus living arrangement, advising or other department-specific program. In total, seven participants cited one or more of these support resources as being an instrumental resource at some point in their undergraduate careers. Such resources were further categorized by type and number of unique references in the following: Math Learning Center (4), Tutoring Services (4), Writing Center (3) and the campus library (2).

For instance, Thor found the Math Learning Center (MLC) as his ticket to getting through a particularly challenging math course in his program sequence. “The MLC has been a great one...They definitely had their stronger, I think, tutors in there, which is nice. Know it was free, free to a degree so that was really cool to stop in” (Interview #1). Instead of a service dedicated to a specific area of study, Ben viewed the professional interactions from a slightly different perspective in identifying the library as a go to support service. “The library has been really good to just using there’s like the tech checkouts and stuff like that for class projects. And then just, you know, tons of resources that you can use there as well for papers and research, even just meeting to do group projects as well” (Interview #1). Whether by the advice given or resources provided, academic support services were a well utilized dimension of the nonresident undergraduate experience.

Through document analysis, academic support offices were also referenced on a regular basis by the institution. From the local newspaper, seven unique references were made in this area with the renovation of an on-campus academic building (i.e. Romney Hall) to create classroom space along with math & tutoring centers as the most recent examples. This area was reinforced through analysis of the MSU viewbooks by finding the library, writing center, math learning center, center for student success, and tutoring program all featured as support services in each publication (i.e. 2016-2019). Furthermore, it appeared academic centers and student retention were inextricably linked from the host institution’s perspective. As stated by the vice president for university communications, retention could be improved “...through better advising of students on which classes to take, expanded tutoring, helping students make connections and friendships so they have support systems in tough times, mental health counseling and

internships” (Schontzler, 2017e, p. 3). In reference to participant interpretations of these academic support offices, there appeared to be strong alignment in how each office was utilized to assist with the participants’ academic growth and subsequent persistence.

Overall, availability symbolized support for the majority of participants during their campus professional interactions. As summarized by Thor:

I feel like that’s like one way that they’ve been very supportive, supported through their faculty, just being available. And even if like they don’t have office hours, they’re always like, hey if you email me, I will make time for you... (Interview #1).

Just knowing these professionals were available, when needed, provided great comfort in helping these nonresidents navigate the academic space on campus.

Campus Health Care

Having access to quality health care arose as an important aspect of several participants’ campus experiences. For some, just knowing health care was available provided the necessary reassurance. To this effect, Riptide related “Nothing bad has happened so far. But if I were like to get an accident or something. You know, be pretty brutal to have hospital bills and stuff. Parents so far away” (Interview #1). While for others, accessing student health was a regular necessity. “I’m thankful that student health is nearby because I have found myself sick or needing help quickly and at a good rate too. I feel like it’s not super expensive. Which has been awesome” (Ruby, Interview #1). Even though the nonresident experience is not unwholly different from their resident peers in this area, it does present some unique circumstances, nonetheless. Evelyn, in speaking to challenges for nonresidents offered

And if I get sick, it’s a whole big thing with my out-of-state insurance. Like I have to either have to go here, which is really nice, that I can go here like as a full-time student for free. But if I go anywhere else, like off campus, then with after hours, the out-of-state insurance sucks (Interview #1).

While health care was only specifically mentioned by three participants, the possible repercussions to not having access had the potential for a disproportionately negative impact for a nonresident undergraduate.

Study Spaces

As established in the motivation-career section, participants indicated a pronounced shift in the focus and intensity of their courses and subsequent studying in their third year as an undergraduate. Accordingly, a majority of participants commented on their approach towards studying, compatible study spaces and university-provided resources that helped to support these efforts.

Even though advising and academic support centers were frequently referenced previously by participants, some of the less formal study spaces also emerged as important features of the nonresident undergraduate experience. Ben communicated how the type and timing of studying often dictated the space he sought out on campus. “I spent a lot of time on the [campus library’s] third floor last year because that’s the most quiet. But if I’m doing group projects you know the second floor, because that’s more than the norm” (Interview #1).

Similarly, John shared that the library served as an important study space, but expanded on comparable space elsewhere on campus.

It’s like I thought about. I have some friends and we there’s like a study room in the library and it’s like our study room where we like to go and stuff... And I like Norm [Norm Asbjornson College of Engineering] for the way that they have their different sort of study areas, I compare it more to the library. I like the library study areas too, cause they have the individual ideas and they also have like the round tables, that sort of thing (Interview #2).

Clearly, having options for more informal study spaces was an important factor in the academic persistence of some nonresident undergraduates.

To sum up, nonresidents indicated an appreciation for having access to a wide range of campus resources. In particular, formal learning, professional interactions, health care and study spaces arose as key areas of focus. In some instances, just knowing these resources were available provided comfort and symbolized support for this cohort. At the very least, these more formalized resources interacted in a complimentary way to the more informal, emotional support offered by their family members.

Familiying from Afar

Support from family served as a universal factor in the nonresident experience with multiple references from each participant throughout the interview process. This category is defined as direct or indirect influences of family members on a participant's persistence. While the source of support varied between participants, the end result was support for continuing forth with their education. Overall, 62 references were identified with this theme with a high of seventeen mentions by Sarah and a low of four mentions by Ben, Ruby & Sarah. The following categories proved most prominent in this area: parental guidance, family visits, sibling influence, and daily support. Daily support provided the most variety in references (five participants), while sibling influence provided the least (three participants).

Figure 9. Persistence-John



...that photo was just like a photo book that my parents made for me before I went off to college. And I just love the title of the book. And then even when I'm feeling sort of lonely or lost, I just kind of read through the book...And it's just like the theme that, you know, throughout every stage of my life, you know, my family's been there for me (Interview #2).

Parental Guidance

Advice and counsel provided by parents prior to the start of the participants' undergraduate careers proved instrumental in these undergraduates' preparations. John's image and quote above helped to set the stage on just how much he valued his parents' presence, in general, as he transitioned to this next stage in his life. While for Anna, her father's expertise in the loan industry helped her navigate more of a specific need—tuition and other college expenses. In a similar way, John also sought out specific guidance and reassurance from his parents in making his actual decision to attend the host institution in the first place. "No, they they're actually pushing for me to come to MSU. And I was still sort of entertaining the idea of

[home state university] for a little bit. And they knew that it was what was kind of best for me” (Interview #2). Riptide also received key, initial encouragement from his parents in considering attending the host institution. “My dad actually sent me the Montana State like webpage link and I looked it up. I looked through it...” (Interview #1). Under a unique set of circumstances, instead of moving further away, Ruby ultimately made her choice to attend the host university to be closer to her parents after taking a gap year after high school. “I wanted to be close to my parents because after a year off, I missed them. So initially I only came to MSU because my parents lived here” (Interview #1). In summary, parents proved highly influential in the pre-college decision making process for a number of participants within this study.

Family Visits

In focusing more on the during college period of time, family visits while in college served as a common talking point amongst the participants. Anna spoke to the frequency and unique visiting arrangements found across her parents and siblings.

I don’t know, like they all come at different times. Like it’s never like my sister was in Denmark all year last year. So, whenever they came, she obviously didn’t. So, it was just my parents and my other sister or after July last year, just my little sister came back with me. And then there’s times where it’s been just my dad or just my mom. So, I guess at least twice a year, depending on who came. It was mostly the whole family (Interview #1).

Sarah wished there was a way to increase visits by her family in sharing “...for me at least is like people visiting. And I wish they could visit more...” (Interview #1). Evelyn contributed in this area by relating the frequency of visitation by parents as a clear differentiator between residents and nonresidents. “...it’s just like a totally different because they’re like their parents will come up...” (Interview #1). While frequency of visits from family are typically less for nonresidents, the visits families did make proved to be a cherished event. Ben shared that his family is his

number one support and proudly reminisced on the times his family members were able to visit him in college.

They've been here a couple times. So, my freshman year, my parents came up for the parents weekend and then they came again a second time with my brother in the spring. So, he got to stay with me in the dorms for a couple of nights. So that was pretty cool. Last year my dad came up, once to go on a fishing trip in the fall. And then my brother drove up with a friend in the spring. But so far, they haven't come up. They haven't made it up this year (Interview #2).

Regardless of the actual frequency, family visits served as a topic of discussion for several participants over the course of the interview sessions.

However, not all participants viewed visits from parents equally. For instance, Anna shared in a matter of fact way how she spent a limited amount of time with her family during their most recent visit as she had to work. "...I don't take any time off while they're here. So, like when they were here for a week, I saw them twice....which most people are like your family is here, aren't you seeing them? You know work and school" (Interview #1). While Evelyn did not indicate an aversion to parental visits, but contrary to some other participants, expressed no interest in living with her parents following this college experience either. "I am moving here and I'm never going to live with my parents again. Hopefully" (Interview #2). Participant perception of family visits, much like other decisions within a semester, were dependent upon the timing and duration.

Figure 10. Persistence-Ben



And so that picture is from this fall, my brother's senior year. They won the state championship. And so that was fun to get to go down there and to see them play in it and just reconnect with my family and with some friends down there, too. But it's really cool as a really proud moment as a big brother to see him playing in that games (Interview #2).

Sibling Influence

Even though parents served as the primary manifestation of family, siblings also emerged as a prominent influence on the participants' decisions to initially attend an out-of-state institution. After receiving a merit scholarship offer, Thor looked to his siblings and their own college experiences to help inform his ultimate enrollment decision.

And I was like, sweet, I'm already accepted. I've got this scholarship and my brother went to Idaho State University and my sister went to Utah. So that kind of fits that puzzle. And I guess that's the reason why I applied. Attending, I think my brother had really great experiences with the whole outdoor culture and Pokey in ISU [Idaho State University] (Interview #1).

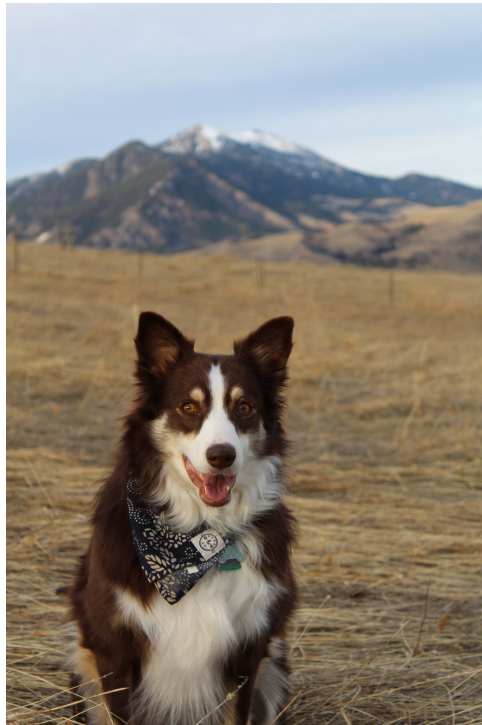
Whereas Ben shared a slightly different perspective in stating "Montana State is close to home. So, you know, if I wanted to go, I could you know on the weekend, I could do that" (Interview #1). He went on to share how the weekends he ultimately chose to go home coincided with his

brother's high school football games. Accordingly, enrollment at this host university allowed him to visit family, in general, but more specifically, during his brother's athletic events. In contrast, Riptide, after experiencing his sister's campus, purposely sought out something different when it came to college from a political-cultural perspective. "My sister goes to Michigan State University in East Lansing. So, this like it's very like very liberal climate and stuff like that" (Interview #1). Siblings also contributed in both direct and indirect ways to participant persistence.

I'm also I'm a third child, I have an older brother who's almost, oh gosh, is he turning 30 this year, oh no he's twenty nine, he's turning twenty-nine and my sister is turning twenty seven. And they both went through college and they both loved it. So, yeah, that's one reason why I remain (Thor, Interview #1).

In all three instances, sibling experiences helped to inform participants on their college path either in what to replicate or what to avoid in their own enrollment decision-making process.

Figure 11. Persistence-Anna



So that's kind of like the picture of my dog. Just because I feel like she's the closest thing to like my home and family and whatnot that I've had...I feel like just going on a walk with her and seeing how happy she is and just kind of changes my mood and gives me that, like, push (Interview #2).

Daily Support

Finally, parents, grandparents and even a participant's dog were credited with being a key source of support during the day-to-day of their nonresident undergraduate experiences. As Anna indicated in the opening image and quote, her pet dog served as a proxy family member in providing an immediate source of encouragement and support for her to persist even during the most challenging of days. Considering the majority of participants lived in their host university community year-round, there were relatively few opportunities to spend time in person with their families. Accordingly, several participants relied on routine communication schedules to stay connected and receive this much needed support. Like others, John finds tremendous reassurance in being able to talk over decisions with his parents even if from afar.

But to me it's more of just like talking with them. They have like scheduled Facetime chats or whatever and just, you know, hearing the words of affirmation from them that, you know, everything's good. Like you're doing everything you're supposed to be doing (Interview #1).

Similarly, Ben maintained regular communication with his parents, but more so when specific needs arose.

I mean, my dad will text me almost every other day and, you know, it's just brief catching up. But, you know, when there's something that's bugging me or something I'm concerned about, I usually call my mom and she's always there to hear what I have to say about them (Interview #2).

Finally, Riptide shared how he looks forward to his weekly chats with his folks. "I call my mom and dad. I call my mom dad once a week every Sunday and I give them an update and ask them questions" (Interview #1). For other participants, they had the luxury of having at least some of

their family support located in close proximity. For example, Callie related just how influential her grandma had been in her progressing to this point in her college career. “I think honestly, like my grandma, she kind of expects us all to go to college. And she’s the main reason I’m enrolled” (Interview #1). From family to pet, Anna leaned heavily on her pet dog “Cricket” for the day-to-day support. “...she’s the closest thing to like my home and family and whatnot that I’ve had...So she helps me get out. And I think she definitely keeps me in that. Like, I wouldn’t say depressed, but like that really slumpy like feeling” (Interview #2). Combined, the role the “extended family” provided, even from afar, was a big contributor to the persistence shown by these nonresident participants.

All in all, family served as a consistent source of persistence for this nonresident cohort throughout their undergraduate career. In particular, results indicated family helped in offering advice, sharing in common experiences and being available for periodic support. While ‘family’ took various forms based on the participant, parental guidance, family visits, sibling influence, and daily support emerged as the most prominent resulting subthemes in this study.

Socializing to Stay

Social interaction with peers served as an important theme for all study participants. This theme incorporated participant disposition, composition of peer group, and the situations in which these interactions occur. In total, 118 unique references were recorded for this theme with a high of 20 (Riptide) and a low of 7 instances (Evelyn). Categories that made up this theme included: peer group-general, peer group-nonresident, personality trait-introvert and personality trait-extrovert. Peer group-general represented the most (eight participants), whereas personality trait-extrovert was the least represented (three participants).

Figure 12. University Support-Callie



So, I tried to just capture more so my friends in this still the same Montana. On my grandma's ranch...I did more of the friendships. And these are my really close friends...They've always supported me. They're definitely the people I go to when I need to talk. When I need to hear something supportive in my life (Interview #2).

Peer Group-General

Support from peers proved to be as an essential aspect of the nonresident undergraduate experience. As shared by Callie with the opening image and quote, close friends served as an essential source of support and persistence—sentiments consistently echoed by her nonresident colleagues. Peer group-general encompasses references involving interactions with peers as friends since the start of college, yet separate from specific class-related and nonresident contexts. In total, eight participants referred to this category as part of their interview reflections.

Without exception, all eight participants shared “friends” or “friendships” that have evolved since college as part of their support network. Ruby established how the support provided by friends had overlapping aspects, but was distinctly different from the kind of support she received from her parents and family members.

I don't know what I would do without my friends and who are the friends that support me and like belonging where in the midst of all of this. I was thinking about who do I go to when I'm sad, who do I go to when I want to go out for sushi. Who do I go to for really anything? And although I'm thankful that I can call my parents and stuff like the reality is that those two girls and they are my best friends, they are my place to vent and to uplift me, to support me in anything that I do like with school. And I'm feeling down or when I'm just feeling down about myself or when I need help doing anything, I know that I can call them and that they'll be there for me (Interview #2).

Furthermore, the majority of participants shared how friendships formed early on during freshman year played a significant role in the trajectory of their respective undergraduate careers. Thor related how a friend he met during the university's "week of welcome" was essential in turning what could have been a very difficult start to his transition to college (no show of roommate) into a positive experience. His friend went on to become his roommate and "like [roommate's name] and like some really good friends, I could go to if I was ever struggling like with academics or personal or anything of the sort" (Interview #1). In a related manner, both Ruby and Callie credited friends from freshmen year in helping them find "home" in a sorority setting. "And I guess when I, I was there for the first semester then I went over to Yellowstone [Residence Hall] and I had met when I was going through recruitment, I met some girls and sorority...And they helped me to come out of my comfort zone" (Callie, Interview #1). In all three instances, the friends that participants made early on freshman year would prove influential in their subsequent living arrangements the following school year.

Discussing friendships, provided clear evidence of how these connections contributed to the participants' ultimate persistence. Riptide was initially hesitant, but ultimately opened up about the degree of trust and vulnerability he had with a friend he met early on at MSU going so far as to share:

I'd say that [friend's name] is one of the few human beings I've actually cried in front of. I'm one of those classic dudes that doesn't like to cry in front of people. But [friend's name] is one of those few people who I have definitely he's definitely seen some tears and he's cried in front of me, which is a big thing for him, too. (Interview #2).

In a similar way, Callie shared how her friend network helped her navigate both the challenges and successes of her first three years on campus. "They've supported through my ups and downs. And I've also supported them through their ups and downs as well" (Interview #2). As illustrated by these participants, having at least one close friend was essential for them to navigate the circumstances of the nonresident undergraduate experience.

Peer Group-Nonresident

A majority of participants indicated having a peer group of mostly, if not exclusively nonresident friends noting some level of common understanding and comradery. As stated by Riptide from freshman year on "I would say almost a large capacity of my friends were not were nonresidents. I didn't know a whole lot of people from Montana" (Interview #1). Similarly, John reflected how vital this peer group was for him in overcoming initial challenges as a nonresident undergraduate due to having a shared experience in stating:

I do kind of notice that like I tended initially, I tended to hang out with people that were from [home state] and western side of [home state] more than, you know, branching out, meeting people from Montana...So I had quite a few friends who were from out of state, not necessarily from [home state], but just all over the place and kind of sticking together with them and looking out for each other (Interview #1).

Other participants spoke to the potential advantages by having a significant number of peers on campus from their home state. "...honestly, if you say, oh, hey, I'm from [home state]. And the other person goes, oh, hey, I am too. You can connect with them..." (Sarah, Interview #1) and "...I hear someone, oh, you're from [home town] what part it's like you can kind of you can

connect and we can kind of help them maybe make connections or feel like they're okay" (Callie, Interview #1). Finally, the existence of common state peer groups benefitted other nonresidents even from another state. "And then I met this other guy in my orientation group who introduced me to like a handful of guys he knew coming from Washington. And then because of that, we all hung out in the room one night at orientation" (Thor, Interview #1). Whether planned or more circumstantial in nature, nonresident peer groups were critical, at least initially, for several of these nonresidents to successfully transition to campus.

Furthermore, several participants went on to also have roommates from out-of-state. Evelyn offered how having nonresident roommates has helped in sharing a common experience. "...And then, like I said, like my roommates are out-of-state...And they have experienced the same from my roommates actually.....South Dakota and Colorado" (Interview #1). Furthermore, Ben compared his own orientation experience to that of his out-of-state roommate in sharing, "My roommate did that. He did the orientation like right before classes started. And so, I think that kind of helped him and set him above too because he's from Colorado" (Interview #1). Finally, Ruby found comfort in choosing a roommate freshman year with a common out-of-state experience as her own.

So, the girl on the far left was my freshman year roommate. We lived together at Hapner [Hapner Residence Hall]. She's from California. And I met her on a Facebook the group for the incoming freshman and she was looking for a roommate. And I signed up really last minute cause I thought that I was going to [home state university]. So, it just worked out that we both got a room and in Hapner together (Interview #2).

Through these reflections, it appeared that just by being a nonresident, the potential exists for long term friendships and roommates due to a shared experience.

While nonresident peer groups can clearly be established with great intentionality, some participants equated this development to just being more of a statistical reality. Thor offered advice to incoming nonresident undergraduates that “I think the thing that nonresident should know that when they come out here, if you’re afraid of not knowing people, there’s a majority at this point, right? The majority are now nonresidents, just like them, which is kind of neat” (Interview #2). Furthermore, this pronounced nonresident freshman class naturally interacted through existing structures such as orientation, residence life and first year seminar classes. Evelyn echoed these sentiments in sharing “...my roommates are out-of-state. That’s most a lot of my friends are out- of-state just because...my freshman classes, mainly nonresidents” (Interview #1). In closing, belonging to a nonresident peer group had the potential to generate additional support as nonresidents shared a common bond not necessarily through just having a common home state, but in possessing a different geographical background than their resident peers.

Personality Traits

Considering the many benefits expressed by the nonresident participants in establishing a peer group, personal disposition appeared to be an important factor in facilitating this socialization process during their undergraduate transition. More specifically, participants frequently cited their inherent introvert or extrovert tendencies in influencing social experiences, and subsequent support outcomes, as undergraduates. Findings in this area are reported through two categories: introvert and extrovert

Introvert. Characteristics of an introvert remain the same whether or not an undergraduate is a nonresident. However, the potential impact on a nonresident’s transition to college may be

more pronounced by not already having an established peer group in the local area in contrast to many of their resident counterparts. Evelyn was the only participant who explicitly categorized herself as being “introverted” in sharing her choice for a living arrangement “And I prefer to live off campus because I’m more introverted” (Interview #1). Still, several participants offered characteristics synonymous with this disposition. For instance, in relating her uncharacteristically bold move to attend an out-of-state university, Anna established “I’m a quiet person...I’m not one to put myself out there” (Interview #1). While Ben categorized himself in a similar way, “I’m a little bit shy and a little bit reserved at first, but once I get to know people or talk to them, I’m, I open up quite a bit” (Interview #1). Lastly, Callie spoke to how her introverted tendencies combined with her freshman year living arrangements held her back in embracing the campus by relating “I started in Hapner [Hapner Residence Hall] and Hapner is all girls and very quiet. And again, I was a quiet kid” (Interview #1). Combined, these stories presented a different perspective on how possessing introverted tendencies could have a pronounced impact on the adjustment period for nonresident undergraduates.

More specifically, a couple of participants shared insights on the inherent challenges nonresidents can face in initially forming these connections. Ben offered “I like I’d like to meet new people and I’d like to get to know them on a more personal level. But just putting myself out there is where it gets uncomfortable, so...” (Interview #1). Whereas Ruby shared some of her regrets in not participating in social events offered in her residence hall during freshman year. “I was shy, I was nervous, but if I were to have gone, I think I would have made a lot more friends. And I think I would have felt way more comfortable with my campus and the people I was going to school with...” (Interview #1). Such challenges suggested nonresidents with a naturally

introverted disposition are aware of social opportunities but can struggle in bringing themselves from where they are at to where they ultimately want to be without an already established peer group.

Extrovert. Whether an inherent or an adaptive trait, several participants identified the value of being an extrovert as a nonresident undergraduate. For Thor, making connections required him to not hold back and introduce himself to others whenever the opportunity presented itself.

I had the ability to go out like meet new people. And I'd never like I had this fear factor. If I didn't do that, then I would not make friends. Whereas like, if you're a resident and you're coming with people you already know, you're pretty comfortable already. So, you don't have this like fear of not knowing people. Which is also challenging I guess because if you're not like that. That's because if you're not like thinking for the future or like wanting to make these relationships with people... (Interview #1).

While Ruby offered insight into a potential advantage she found in her extroverted approach to college. "And so maybe comparatively to other people, I'm an extrovert and I know that I need help and I'm not afraid to ask for help" (Interview #2). Finally, Callie indicated her awareness of the value of social interactions for her own wellbeing. "And I am a social bird, so that's I need to be social in order for my mental health to be okay, so they have impacted it a lot" (Interview #1). In sum, while inherent extroverted tendencies appeared to be a potential asset, this personality trait was clearly not required for nonresidents to successfully transition on to an out-of-state campus.

Research Question #2 Summary

To address the question, "What factors contribute to the persistence of third-year nonresident undergraduates on a land grant university campus?" I presented data results via three

themes: accessing campus resources, familying from afar and socializing to stay. Results reflected a nonresident undergraduate's persistence was influenced by a combination of personality traits and access to support mechanisms—both academic and social. Furthermore, while family members served in an influential role regarding initial college decisions, this source of support continued to play an important role throughout participants' undergraduates careers. Finally, a nonresident peer group appeared to serve as an important source of support for many of the participants, particularly early on in their transition to college. In conclusion, the nonresident undergraduate's ability to persist was influenced by myriad of internal and external factors that combined to offer support when it was needed most.

Nonresident Sense of Belonging

The third research question for this study asked, how do nonresident undergraduates describe their sense of belonging on a land grant campus? After conducting a data analysis, three related themes were identified: transforming through personal growth, identifying across groups and areas, and supporting across communities. Each theme was subdivided into related categories and codes that were supported by a combination of integrated interview, participant generated imagery, and interpretation from a document analysis. Altogether, this section helped to establish the cumulative sense of belonging of this nonresident cohort at a personal, campus, and greater community level.

Transforming Through Personal Growth

Each nonresident undergraduate indicated the necessity of having some degree of personal growth and development in order to make a sense of belonging possible. Similar to the

third vector presented in Chickering's Student Development Theory (1969, 1993), these nonresident undergraduates moved through autonomy toward interdependence at various points in their first three years on campus. Accordingly, this process enabled them to, "...recognize and accept the importance of interdependence, an awareness of their interconnectedness with others" (Evans, Fortney & Guido-DiBrito, p. 39, 1998). As indicated earlier, transformation served as a thematic category inclusive of all nine participants. In sum, 61 distinct coding entries were recorded within this theme ranging from a high of thirteen instances (Ruby) to a low of two instances (Sarah & Thor). Transformation-related categories included: independence, self-discovery and reflection. References to the independence category appeared for eight participants, whereas, self-discovery were represented across seven participants. Combined, these transformational categories offered insight into how nonresidents initially interacted with, and ultimately adapted to, the unique conditions of their lived experience to establish an overall sense of personal belonging.

Independence

Independence was a transformational aspect that likely most undergraduates aspire to achieve regardless of residency status. Depending upon a number of factors, the degree of independence fulfillment can vary considerably. For the purposes of this study, the independence category encompassed participant references to their transition from pre-college support systems and subsequent adaptations to collegiate environmental factors in pursuit of personal autonomy. Further the term 'independence' was selected over 'autonomy' to reflect how this study's participants chose to describe their perceived self-sufficiency. Decisions about school, social life and finances served as common testing grounds for realizing this independence.

For third year nonresidents, there appeared to be a more accelerated need to develop independence due to the lack of physical proximity to a family support network. By the very nature of the nonresident experience, living with family was not option. Accordingly, Anna offered how this arrangement immediately elevated her personal accountability in sharing, “I mean, going to college and not living with your parents. You definitely have to be more aware of what you’re doing” (Interview #1). While other participants spoke specifically to the realities of the physical separation from their parents. Evelyn related how being a nonresident undergraduate influenced her path to independence and impacted her daily life:

I feel a lot more independent than I would if I was a resident of Montana. Like with family here because I would just be the same thing as I don’t know as if I went to school in [hometown] or something or [home state], where it’s like closer. I’m on my own... like this is the start of the rest of your life, like into adulthood, I guess. Because I didn’t realize I was like, oh, God, now I have to do everything myself. (Interview #1).

Examples of these new considerations consistently emerged across participant interviews leading these nonresident undergraduates to recognize that they had to do things on their own with their parents being so far away. Riptide offered insights on his unfamiliarity to newfound life responsibilities resulting from his parents being at such a great distance in relating:

You know, I got to do I got to figure out a lot of stuff out on my own. A lot of big boy stuff. So, whether it’s going and getting car insurance for my new van or going getting doctors’ visits and stuff, it’s just like a lot a lot of adult stuff that kind of swings right into my neighborhood that I’m not used to (Interview #1).

Aspects of independence were not limited to the interplay of distance from home and general life decisions. Rather, references to independence also appeared regarding interactions on campus. Sarah reflected on how independence influenced her decision-making process on joining a campus organization. “I was conflicted...I didn’t really know what to do because I

wanted to be in a sorority and I wanted to have those friendships. But I also wanted those friends, I also wanted to not have to be there 24/7” (Interview #1). In contrast, Callie credited joining a sorority in helping establish her closest friendships. In turn, such support helped her to develop a new-found confidence within her social group on campus. Callie reflected on this personal transformation in sharing:

And then when I came out here, like my friends here have a totally different image of me than my friends in [home state]. Like here, they think that I am a strong independent person. And then in [home state], people think I am dependent on people for some reason and I’m not. And it really gets me upset (Interview #1).

With independence serving as a key aspect of the nonresident experience, it is important to further explore the origin of independence for this nonresident cohort and how this ultimately led to their search for sense of belonging. As established previously, the journey to independence appeared to serve as a conduit to their ability to developing a sense of belonging in their new environment. Such claims prompted an important question; is independence solely the result of interactions with the environment or is independence somehow an inherent trait commonly possessed by nonresident undergraduates? With this group, the answer appeared to be both.

Potential answers reside in how participant personality and the way independence evolved into interdependence for these participants. For Riptide, his upbringing significantly influenced his sense of autonomy “So I was already I would say I was already pretty independent person. But by the time I left, I left my home in [home state]. But that’s definitely helped out a lot” (Interview #1). More specifically, he spoke to how not really having an option to go home on the weekends as a nonresident set the stage for him to seek out campus events and even join the ultimate frisbee club his freshman year. However, his full realization of interdependence with the campus community emerged in his realization that “You know, no one likes asking for help,

but sometimes it's just what you gotta do" (Interview #1). While it was difficult for Riptide and his independent self to admit needing help, this moment reflected a turning point in arriving at an interdependent sense of belonging to the people and resources found in his new campus community. In contrast, other participants equated independence in terms of their tendency to prefer working on their own. Ben revealed, as a result of his naturally shy disposition "I like to do things kind of on my own. I'm kind of I'm very independent and kind of just, you know, I can just get this done by myself. It'll be quicker" (Interview #1). Yet, Ben acknowledged the value found in working with groups during his classes and his excitement in the prospects of meeting new people. Ultimately, he credited his shift from independent to interdependent with his new community during the first few weeks living in his residence hall.

Yeah, it's just the way that the dorms are laid out in that kind of pod shape is really cool. You know, getting to know those people because you just run into him and bumped into him all the time and everybody just uses the pods as kind of a communal sort of area. Doing homework or sitting around talking, hanging out Friday nights. So that was that was a big thing" (Interview #1).

For Ben, while he felt comfortable functioning alone, the sense of belonging formed through building a friendship network on his residence hall floor pushing him to realize how many more opportunities existed on campus both socially and academically. While the nonresident undergraduate experience can clearly contribute to fostering independence due to circumstance, in more than one case, this self-autonomy trait appeared to be present in many nonresidents well before this life transition helping to set the stage for a sense of belonging to emerge in their newly found campus community.

In sum, personal independence, whether largely inherent or developed as a result of the undergraduate experience, appeared to be a necessary precursor for participants to be receptive to

pursuing a life of interdependence and interconnectedness—key components of sense of belonging. Nonresident undergraduates, by their unique circumstances, lack the immediate, physical support from their pre-college support network upon arriving at their out-of-state campus destination. Accordingly, participants leveraged their new found independence (autonomy) to ultimately embrace and feel a sense of belonging to their campus and surrounding community.

Self-Discovery

Personal growth was another defining category of the transformational theme. Similar to independence, such change was not unique to nonresident undergraduates, but when considered in concert with other circumstantial factors, could accelerate this self-discovery timeline. The self-discovery theme included participant references to a process, risk and ultimate learning as a result of their decision to pursue a nonresident experience.

Without exception, participants indicated this growth did not come easy and was a process. John illustrated this evolution in relating the biggest challenge for a nonresident is “...sort of finding themselves (Interview #1)...freshman year, I was definitely trying to find myself kind of where I fit in with the university on top of like trying to fit in as a nonresident (Interview #2). He went on to credit his experiences as a campus resident advisor in ultimately reaching this self-discovery “I definitely learned a lot about other people, about myself” (Interview #1). In a similar way, Riptide credited his interactions on campus for setting him on this path towards self-discovery. He shared his personal transformation from high school equating this to “...these connections that I’ve made here at Montana State, my like, I feel like I’ve evolved a lot since then. And now I’m a lot more a lot less timid. And I’m ready to put

myself out there for sure...” (Interview #1). In both instances, participant learning resulted from a combination of self-discovery and interactions with one’s personal support network.

While self-discovery as an undergraduate is not unique to nonresidents, this cohort’s unique circumstances may create opportunities for nonresidents to grow in ways they may never had imagined otherwise. Taking the risk of leaving the familiar behind in pursuit of something more served as a permeating sentiment expressed by the majority of participants within this theme. In offering advice to future nonresident undergraduates, Riptide expressed

It is a big leap of faith and it is a little freaky at first, but I think it’s completely worth it...I’ve gained a lot more educational wise and cultural wise by going somewhere very far away as opposed to going somewhere close to home” (Interview #1).

Regardless of actual distance from home, Ruby suggested her nonresident status was actually beneficial in advancing her learning and self-awareness:

...that if you feel comfortable becoming your own person an out-of-state experience is amazing. I feel that I have learned a lot more than I probably would have had I stayed where it was comfortable. I have had opportunities to grow. I’ve had opportunities to self-explore. And I feel that you make the most out of wherever you go (Interview #2).

In a similar way, Ben shared how the fear of leaving the supports of home could actually be leveraged into an invaluable learning opportunity. More specifically, he equated the circumstances of living on your own helps to actually push a nonresident to find out more about themselves as a person:

...getting the experience of finding out what it means to be on your own. There’s a little a little bit of kind of figuring out who you are that goes along with that. And it can be scary. And it’s I think that might be one reason why most people stay home is just the fear of leaving. And so, I think it’s definitely worth it. And it builds a lot of character to go out and do something that scares you so (Interview #2).

Finally, Callie credited her nonresident experience in advancing her beyond a previously held self-limitation. “Getting out of my box and meeting people and just being dropped in the middle of nowhere and kind of making starting your life” (Interview #1). Collectively, these four participants indicated that the change of environment required in a nonresident experience served as a catalyst for their respective journeys to self-discovery and introspection. In turn, participants were able to better embrace the new environment and proved more receptive to the experience as a whole. A sense of belonging to the campus and community emerged for the participants because this environment and the interactions found within helped to make their self-discovery and growth possible.

Reflection

Throughout the interviews, participants had the opportunity, both prompted and unprompted, to reflect on their undergraduate experiences to date. During this process, a number of new insights materialized. In some instances, a sense of regret was even detected such as when Anna related “I think I would have liked to maybe get more involved with stuff that happened on campus. I probably would know a lot more people who would then maybe know about those different support areas” (Interview #1). In a similar way, Ruby lamented not taking part in more of the opening activities hosted by her residence hall freshman year. “I wish that I would have done that more because I kind of hid in my room” (Interview #1). Alternatively, Callie reflected on her decision to attend the host institution at all. More specifically, she wondered aloud how differently things might have turned out had she remained in state. “I guess sometimes I wonder what my life would be like going to like [home state university]” (Interview #1). Such reflections helped participants to consider their nonresident perspective from different

points in their respective undergraduate careers. While all three participants were able to successfully persist to their third year, reflection helped reveal how each could have felt a stronger sense of belonging sooner had they embraced more of the on-campus social opportunities and resources during their first semester. In turn, this “lost time” might have been avoided helping them feel a part of, and more likely to participate in, all that the host campus had to offer from the start.

In the end, the transforming through personal growth theme provided invaluable insights into how the participants’ sense of independence, coupled with their subsequent self-discovery and reflection, combined to enable sense of belonging to their new campus and community environments possible. Moreover, much like Chickering & Reisser’s (1993) “moving through autonomy towards interdependence” vector, sense of belonging served as the ultimate manifestation of interdependence for these participants. The campus and greater community served as both a place for participants to receive support from and to contribute their unique talents back into resulting in a mutually beneficial purpose. While this transformation can occur at vastly different rates, moving from autonomy towards interdependence was a necessary process that resulted in students developing instrumental independence or self-direction (Evans, et al., 1998)—a necessary precursor to having a purposeful sense of belonging in one’s environment.

Identifying across Groups and Areas

Identity emerged as an important theme for all nine participants. For the purposes of this study, identity encompassed an expressed personal association to a group, culture and/or geographic area that has been a significant influence on their undergraduate perspective. In turn,

by identifying to one of these categories, participants provided evidence of their sense of belonging. Considering “perceived social support” and “the feeling of being included” have been found to be significant indicators of sense of belonging for students in past studies (Freeman et al., 2007), Hoffman et al., 2002, Hurtado & Carter, 1997), reporting results on the study participants’ level of identification to these various social groups offered further insight into nonresidents’ sense of belonging to campus. Overall, 89 unique references were made with a high of 18 instances (Sarah) to a low of six instances (John & Riptide). Identifying across groups and areas categories include: major-academic, major-social, nonresident, place based, residency agnostic, rural & urban. Major-academic was reflected to some degree for all nine participants, while the rural category was represented in the fewest cases (two participants).

Figure 13. Sense of Belonging-John



I chose Norm Asbjornson Hall. I just there’s something about the building. Whenever I’m in there, I always just feel like it’s super busy. There are people like

bustling around and I just feel like as an Engineer there aren't many. There's more like non like out-of-state residents for Engineering because even talking to friends back home like MSU is more considered like a STEM like Engineering school (Interview #2).

Major-Academic

As illustrated with prior discussion of the host university's motto, "Mountains and Minds", the nonresident cohort typically indicated a strong affiliation with their academic area of study. In the opening image and quote, John spoke to his identity as both an Engineer and out-of-state undergraduate. The major-academic identity referred to participant interactions whose primary purpose resided within their major or academic area of study. This form of identification was further classified into one of the following areas: reputation, application or loosely affiliated.

Major identification served as an influential force in the decision to initially enroll at the host university for several participants. For some participants, the reputation of the specific program was a key consideration. "I knew that the Education Department here was really good" (Ruby, Interview #1) and "I initially came here for pre-med and I heard that the pre-med program was really good" (Evelyn, Interview #1) provided examples of this effect. For other students, it was more the major outwardly driving the decisions. John shared "So I knew pretty much right away. Like end of junior year in high school start of senior year in high school, I wanted to do chemical engineering" (Interview #1). While Sarah reflected on how the host university was one of only a few institutions in the region to offer her study interest. "A lot of students also came here within my major because it was one of the only schools in the area that offered this four-year program for dietetics" (Interview #1). While the major still served as the driving force for Riptide, the location also weighed in heavily on the decision. "So, I knew I want to go to an engineering school located next to some mountains" (Interview #1). For each

participant, their program of study proved central to their decision to attend this out-of-state host university.

In several instances, the participants' identification with their major fulfilled an important applied role in their feeling a part of the community. Ben reflected on how a monthly department meeting went a long way in making him feel supported within this major. "But there was like a history kind of department meeting. I think it was like once a month last year where they would just have professors who would come in and give talks on their field of study" (Interview #1). Similar structures emerged for John in assessing his department's approach to building identity. "They support us all like really well. They always have like workshops and different like social gatherings to where we can meet other people in the department" (Interview #1). Also, as previously established, internships served in a vital role for relevancy and career-readiness for participants. Sarah provided further evidence to this effect in stating "I've learned much, much more in my internship and in my job than here, then just going to school...I feel like I am very much a part of this campus community because of my internship" (Interview #1). In both direct and indirect ways, a participant's program contributed to their sense of belonging on campus.

For others, affiliation with their major was more variable in nature as a few participants came into the university either undeclared or changed their major at some point in their first two years as an undergraduate. In considering her biggest milestones to date, Callie shared "Also, I declared my major so I mean, that was also a milestone, so that was exciting" (Interview #1). Alternatively, two participants changed their majors at least once during their undergraduate careers. Evelyn succinctly conveyed that even though deciding to change her major was not easy, once she committed to her new program, the process became manageable. "I changed my major

and it's fine" (Interview #1). Whereas Thor struggled in deciding to change his major even when he felt it was the right thing to do for himself.

I really think I can go back to this point where I was involved in electrical engineering or enrolled in electrical engineering, and I was like I don't know if it's really for me and so I like went through this mental crisis...So I was like, oh, maybe environmental science would be more up my alley. So, I switched into that. And that's been kind of neat (Interview #1).

Clearly, all three participants showcased how the affiliation with their major contributed to their experience, yet the practical significance varied considerably both in the timing and the relative compatibility between the degrees being changed. In each instance, participants indicated that finding their "major home" ultimately helped to improve their sense of belonging to, and purpose on, their out-of-state host campus.

As a result of document analysis, evidence suggested the university also took steps to reinforce this major-academic subtheme. The local newspaper offered three passages relevant to this categorical area. In particular, one reference addressed how the shift of parental preference following the Great Recession to STEM-related fields was embraced by the host institution who chose not to install any enrollment caps within their Engineering programs (Schontzler, 2018c). Considering how Engineering served as the initial program field of choice for three participants in this study, this decision had relevant implications for this study. Additionally, the university's news service director aimed to capitalize on the "minds" portion of the institution's motto in stating, "The education we offer is world class...Why wouldn't they [nonresidents] want to come to MSU?" (Schontzler, 2019b, p. 3). Interestingly enough, for an institution featuring its strong academic profile, there appeared to be a shift in focus reflected in their accompanying viewbook. While a two page spread for each academic college at the institution was present in all four

viewbooks during the designated period of time, starting with the 2017-2018 viewbook, this section was relocated to the back and supplanted by the more “nonacademic extracurricular offerings” of attendance instead. Such a finding was supported by Hartley & Morpew’s (2008) analysis of college viewbooks finding over a third of institutions featured campus community and co-curricular life ahead of academics. Accordingly, while academics certainly served as a priority for the participants and institution alike, both seemed to imply academics alone were not sufficient for establishing a sense of belonging for this nonresident cohort.

Major-Social

Relationships with peers served as a persistent theme throughout the participant interviews. However, to classify these interactions into one category, would not adequately reflect the diversity of function each type of relationship meant to this nonresident cohort. Major-social identification spoke to participant interactions whose primary purpose was related to academic pursuits and/or is the result of being affiliated with a like major. Such interactions were classified as both organic and by design.

Considering the amount of time undergraduates spend with their classmates, cohort identity has the potential to provide much needed support to participants at various points in their undergraduate journey. Sarah spoke to this aspect when sharing, “And I also have found a good group within my major that has really helped me with school and kind of just like bouncing ideas off of each other” (Interview #1). A natural comradery emerged within a major that offered a much needed community sense for these nonresidents. “There’s a lot of classes where we do group work. So just, you know, pushing myself out of my comfort zone to reach out and just talk to new people. And those group works also kind of force you to do that as well” (Ben, Interview

#1). Even for participants who did not find a close link to the campus, their major provided an identification, albeit perhaps in name only. “I mean, there’s all the other education majors. But, you know, I kind of belong in that group of education majors” (Anna, Interview #1). In short, the major-social identifier served as one way nonresidents describe their sense of belonging at this host university.

Nonresident

While nonresidents experience many of the same events as their resident peers, their identity as an “out-of-state” student can result in this group processing experiences very differently. In this context, nonresident identity referred to instances where participants acknowledged their nonresident status setting them apart in some way from their resident peers. In total, seven participants shared at least one example of how their nonresident identity played out during their undergraduate experience. Exploring this category was critical as identifying with the nonresident cohort served as a potential extra layer of support helping this group to not feel alone and instead feel a sense of belonging to this common peer group. For Callie, the residency distinction served as such a strong force, she felt compelled to offer her justification of the very existence of nonresidents and their experience.

Maybe like all because all we’re nonresidents doesn’t mean that we don’t experience what people experience, that lived in Montana and we want to experience that. We think it’s really cool. We all came to Montana for a reason. So being a nonresident or a resident, it shouldn’t really change how we learn or how we experience things or if we belong or if we have that sense of belonging or not (Interview #2).

A majority of participants related experiencing specific instances of a distinct nonresident peer group during their time as an undergraduate. In sharing where nonresident peer groups were most prominent on campus, John shared “You know, meeting other people like in other groups

and know they there are most of them tend to be like either all from Montana or all out of state” (Interview #1). Evelyn expanded in this area in concluding making this distinction between residents and nonresidents is rather straightforward. “I think it kind of is easy to tell. Like who grew up here and who didn’t” (Interview #1). While identifying as a nonresident generated a wide range of interpretations from the participants, this affiliation, at the very least, stood out as a source of recognition and a validation. As such, a nonresident identity provided some nonresident students with an affiliation in common and sense of belonging despite their out-of-state residency.

While the nonresident identity was obvious for some participants, other nonresidents conveyed this distinction on campus to be largely irrelevant. For example, Sarah indicated little evidence of their distinct nonresident peer groups. “Yeah, I don’t really see that. I think it’s a I think the fact that half of MSU students are out-of-state students. So, I don’t think I see that very often” (Interview #1). Speaking to this pronounced presence, Evelyn rationalized that it really was due to the numbers as most of her own friends are nonresident as well. “I think it’s just because there is a lot of nonresidents and that just happens to be that way” (Interview #5). Accordingly, the nonresident affiliation was more circumstantial than possessing any inherent difference by most measures for these participants.

In some cases, the home state of a nonresident impacted interactions with other students. A few participants related the benefits of identifying with others from your home state. However, Callie shared how her [home state] identity generated some backlash amongst other students at her host institution.

I guess when I tell people I’m from [home state], I always get a weird look. So, I don’t know that’s probably I don’t know how it is for the resident undergraduates

on campus, but sometimes. Yeah, it's unique. I have a couple of situations that I don't know if you want to hear them. But my friend parked in her parking garage and they. This person, she had a [home state] license plate and on the back of her car, it was a little dirty. So, in the dirt they wrote [home state]s. But instead of the [home state], they put the F word (Interview #1).

Such hostile encounters, while an exception across the participant cohort, did still establish nonresident identity as a potential liability for the participants.

As a result of the document analysis, nonresident identity is largely defined in a numerical sense. First, the increase in nonresident undergraduates in recent years was referenced on eight separate instances within the selected newspaper articles. Defining examples included: a 111% growth between 2007-2016 in nonresident enrollment (Schontzler, 2017b), how for the first time in 2016 over half of the freshman class was composed of nonresidents (Schontzler, 2017a) and how nonresident enrollment numbers actually went up from previous years during the pandemic (Schontzler, 2020c). In a complementary fashion, the 2018-2019 viewbook chose to list the "Top Home States" and number of nonresident students from these students overall, rather than just the freshman class resulting in a more pronounced "nonresident presence" in total numbers. Combined, the nonresident identity was reflected through growing numbers from across the country. Second, nonresident identity appeared to be largely downplayed by university officials when this student subgroup was discussed in relation to their resident peers. For instance, the composition of the MSU student body as a whole, rather than each incoming freshman class, was emphasized by university officials, helping to establish a 61% resident majority in the public eye (Schontzler, 2019b). Further, since 2016, the viewbooks have maintained a 50/50 freshman class resident/nonresident enrollment statistical split even when enrollment rates have fluctuated slightly between resident and nonresident majorities. Such a

statistic helps to preserve the appeal to prospective nonresidents, while not discouraging resident undergraduates from attending. Finally, only one article addressed the potential benefits of nonresidents outside of tuition dollars and enrollment numbers. In this article, the president of the university related “...the rising number of out-of-state students has been great news for MSU—financially, academically, and in expanding diversity and enriching the education of Montana students” (Schontzler, 2017b, p. 2). The president went on to share how high achieving nonresidents help push all students to achieve academically and have been the recipients of many national scholarships (Schontzler, 2017b). Collectively, nonresidents were primarily discussed in a numerical sense in official documents with a limited number of references speaking to non-numerical attributes. In many ways, these imbalanced document analysis findings parallel the study participant experiences as some could identify defining characteristics of nonresidents, whereas others concluded the only difference between nonresidents and residents is the tuition rate.

In summary, identity as a nonresident was variable based on state of origin, degree of interaction with residents, and the specific context that is being explored at the time. Combined, these factors proved influential on each participant’s sense of belonging and purpose on campus.

Place Based

Where someone is from serves as the catalyst for starting most initial conversations in day-to-day, let alone campus life. Similarly, the participants generally indicated a heightened awareness of how place-based conversations took form for them as nonresidents. For the purposes of this study, place based was defined as participant contributions specifically associated with someone’s state of origin. For Anna, the only way she could discern the

differences between a nonresident and resident were through these initial conversations. "...other than just when you get to class and you meet someone and they're like where are you from" (Interview #1). Furthermore, Evelyn suggested that residency could also emerge through unprompted interactions on campus. "But most residents I've noticed announce that they are from Montana. Like they're like, oh, yeah, I grew up like an hour away, like I grew up in Whitehall or something" (Interview #1). Regardless of how one's place of origin was elicited, differences in home state may actually generate a common bond for nonresidents on this host university campus. Thor shared through the orientation process that "Just realizing how oh how many people are from [home state]. How many people are from Wyoming? Like you guys all like from random places. But you're all here right now. So, you connect" (Interview #1). In short, identifying with one's state of origin provided a natural opportunity to, at the very least, initiate a conversation, but had the potential to do so much more in building social capital through a common experience and feeling a part of the campus community.

Residency Agnostic

Despite some participants expressing clear identity markers based on residency, other participants did not find this distinction obvious on campus. Residency agnostic referred to a participant concluding that there were no obvious distinctions between resident and nonresident peers based on their experiences. As stated by Callie "I'm a nonresident. So, what do I look like? I don't know" (Interview #1). In a similar way, Anna found such a distinction untenable without individual interaction. "I just don't know that, you know, that it is apparent that I'm out-of-state without saying it" (Interview #1). At a group level, Ruby also did not see any pronounced associations based on residency.

I've never seen cliques like that where it's like separated for the people that don't live here... I don't think there was a one group of people that we're from out-of-state, one that weren't that were. It was like a mix of people that we're in. We're all over the place (Interview #1).

For all of the established differences between residents and nonresidents, at least some of the participants struggled to form this distinction without opportunity for more in depth interaction on campus. Accordingly, residency alone had inherent limitations in establishing a sense of belonging for several of these nonresident undergraduates.

Hometown Population Size

While state of origin provided an immediate comparison with the campus host state, the context of a participant's hometown served as a significant influence on their transition to an out-of-state university. In turn, the participants' sense of belonging can be influenced by the degree the host campus community compares to their pre-college home community. Hometown population size referred to a participant's description of the size and accompanying characteristics of their community of origin. A majority of participants (i.e. 5) provided contributions on how similarities between size of home community and campus community aligned to promote a sense of belonging.

Rural. For participants who grew up in a self-described small town, compatibility with the campus and surrounding community was a constant consideration. Anna indicated the size and types of industries found in her hometown provided an important comparison to her present community. She described where she grew up as a "really small town" with a strong association with agriculture. Combined, Anna credited this background in preparing her and connecting with students from the host state.

But it's pretty cool to be out here and not feel I feel like if I went to like New York or something like. A place that really wasn't because there's a lot of dairy farms. I grew up around a lot of ag kids in [home state] was like farm dairy farms and corn and all that stuff. And so, I feel like I don't differ a whole ton from my idea of a kid that grew up in Montana (Interview #2).

Subsequently, Anna's sense of belonging to the host community was rather seamless as the degree of familiarity generated considerable comfort in her undergraduate transition. In a related way, Sarah also described her hometown as a "very small town community," but actually equated this to serving as a detriment more so than an asset in her transition and academic preparations. "I think that my high school education kind of put me back. I think it's kind of hindered it because my teachers were very lackadaisical and didn't really prepare me the best and or I didn't take advantage of it when I was there" (Interview #1). For Sarah, moving to a much larger community for her undergraduate education was a welcome relief with increased resources and supports. Interestingly enough, while both participants originated from what each described as being smaller than the host community, each participant reconciled this size disparity quite differently. While Anna's sense of belonging rested in familiarity, Sarah's sense of belonging to the host community was embraced more for its differences to her own hometown.

Urban. The majority of participants related growing up in an area with a much larger population than the university's host city. This "urban identity" served as a significant factor in how they initially interacted with, adjusted to, and ultimately considered their host city and state for future job prospects. John shared how he had to combat both "false assumptions" from his peers and himself prior to moving to the smaller and more rural host state and town. "Well, just like when they think of what they think of like, oh, like cowboys and like super like country"

(Interview #1). While appreciative of the town and outdoors access, Ruby's urban identity served as an influential factor in where she envisioned living post-graduation. "...I want to teach in a city if I could imagine myself anywhere in like three years with a really good stable job, it would be somewhere in a city but had mountains and outdoorsy things. That's why [home state] will always be home to me" (Interview #1). Interestingly enough, the urban identity had the exact opposite effect on other participants. For instance, Riptide related how "It encourages me to stay here for sure...I would love to stay here. Montana. Bozeman" (Interview #1). Others referred to the preferable change of pace found in the area in stating "So when I go back to [hometown], I get super stressed out. I'm like, I hate this. And when I come up here, it's just really nice and relaxing" (Callie, Interview #1) and "So here's a little bit different because it's more of a quaint feeling. You still have what you need, but it's not as much going on. It's just a little bit slower paced, I guess" (Ruby, Interview #1). Overall, participants who referenced an "urban identity" appreciated the smaller town feel and its more relaxed lifestyle of the host community. Such findings helped to establish how a nonresident's sense of belonging is not reliant on having an equivalent population size to their hometown, but rather can have a dramatically different population base, yet be exactly right for where the participant is in their undergraduate journey.

Supporting across Communities

Supporting across communities encompassed all nine participants and served as the single largest theme in terms of volume of entries. Out of the three themes that addressed the sense of belonging research question, supporting across communities was the most active focusing on the interactions of nonresidents with both the on-campus and off-campus communities. Subsequently, this theme uniquely contributed to understanding the nonresident's

sense of belonging from a more informal, extracurricular sense helping to present a more well-rounded understanding of the participants' perceived community. In total, 169 unique entries were coded with a ranging from a high of 28 instances (Ben) to a low of six instances (John). This theme included the following categories: campus familiarity, campus events/activities, campus involvement, campus overall community & belonging, campus residence life, area familiarity, off campus home & lifestyle, greater community and Montana culture. Campus involvement was the most prominent supporting category (eight participants), while lifestyle was the least referenced category (two participants).

On-Campus Interactions

Familiarity. The degree to which a participant felt a sense of familiarity with the host campus served as an important influence both in their initial enrollment decision as well as decision to ultimately persist. Familiarity was defined as positive commonalities with past experiences contributing to a “home away from home” feeling. Participant experiences were discussed in two areas: initial and sustained impressions.

For many of these participants, the decision to enroll at the host university required a number of key considerations. Something different and familiar were not two mutually exclusive considerations. Rather, most participants indicated familiarity as a favorable aspect, while also maintaining a deep desire to experience something new. Ben captured this paradox quite nicely in stating “So it’s just similar enough [host community], but different people and kind of a different big enough school too” (Interview #1). In speaking to traveling to the area on family vacations, Anna indicated this familiarity led to her only needing to submit one college application. “And so, when I found out that there was a university here, I just went with it and

applied and got in and that was that, I guess” (Interview #1). While familiarity proved a persuasive factor for initial enrollment, the majority of participants spoke to this category as part of their transition since enrollment.

Figure 14. Experience-Ben



Yeah, I think the picture I pulled up was of Gold Rush Night. So, the first football game of the season and I just the community and the energy that surround that that one night of football...And it's just nice to reconnect with everybody. I think that's like the first weekend that everybody's back in town. And so that just really, I think highlights my third year... (Interview #2).

Events and Activities. Campus events and activities served as an important influence in building a sense of belonging for this nonresident cohort. As offered by Ben, MSU's annual Gold Rush Game provided an experience that brought the community together and allowed him to feel a sense of belonging to something much larger than himself. This category encompassed all officially-sanctioned on-campus programming in a given academic year. Six participants

referenced at least one campus event or activity in reflecting on their undergraduate experiences to date. Responses ranged from first year retention events to on-campus living activities to college athletics. Combined, these examples of sense of belonging assisted with the continued transition to life on campus.

Campus intramural sports served an important role in building several participants' on-campus sense of belonging. John indicated intramurals as an enjoyable outlet in relating "But then intramurals, which I find to be pretty fun, I've done basketball and then frisbee" (Interview #1). Furthermore, Ruby welcomed the opportunities offered through intramurals indicating "I did intramural soccer and volleyball my sophomore year and I'm thinking about getting into that again..." (Interview #1). While Riptide, did not stop at just intramural involvement electing to also pursue club level sports. "I have been part of intramural sports all three years. I joined the ultimate Frisbee club for a little bit freshman year" (Interview #1). Further still, individual recreation opportunities emerged for other participants. As evidenced by Sarah "...and the just like outdoor rec has a lot of different things that you can rent from them for like a day, try out cross-country skiing" (Interview #1). Regardless of degree of formality, intramural events and resources helped to support memorable peer interactions and group identity for several participants.

In addition, residence life programming for freshman students appeared to have staying power with these third year undergraduates. Even though Ruby did not have an overall positive experience living in the residence halls, she still acknowledged the value found in some of these early activities.

...but I think it was those activities that they presented to freshmen to get to know their class and get out in Bozeman, whether it be like swimming that first, like the

first week at the Hot Springs or going to paint the “M” or going to the block party or whatever it is like, those first activities are really important (Interview #1).

Ben also indicated value in the residence life programming in forming a sense of belonging during freshman year.

Not necessarily as a whole building, but I remember we had like a dodgeball game every couple of nights or every couple weeks when it snowed. Kind of, you know, being able to go down in between there and Miller [Dining Hall] kind of sledding, skiing right through there. And when it got warmer, using the field between there and Yellowstone [Residence Hall] as well was kind of cool because we’ve mixed with the Yellowstone residents. The Hedges [Residence Hall] residents kind of I think we played Frisbee and stuff out there too. So, yeah, it’s just a cool kind of crossroads in the area (Interview #1).

As established through these two participants accounts, activities supporting their adjustment to college began early and was maintained through various residence life functions.

Finally, university-wide welcome week programming provided a number of memorable moments for these participants. Three participants shared how events leading up to the official start of classes were instrumental in getting them acclimated to the campus and peers. For Riptide, these events were critical in jump starting the development of his peer group and sense of belonging.

Like a lot of the MSU Debut events, I remember that’s where I met a lot of those a lot of those relationships started there...I feel like there is definitely more nonresidents than residents at those things especially. There’s they make it known that there is a group for everybody (Interview #1).

Thor echoed these statements in acknowledging all of the opportunities to get involved in these MSU Debut events, but explained his intentions encompassed the importance of orientation for social interactions.

...but like I remember at orientation. Everyone is like, this is wild. Like, this is nuts. We’re all like thousands of us are in this big SUB Ballroom and everyone is excited

to be here. Which is cool. You can meet so many people. And then that's when you make a lot of your friends (Interview #1).

Finally, Ben indicated such a value for him in the events leading up to the start of school that MSU should consider expanding both the advertising and duration to further clarify the potential value for students.

Catapalooza is awesome. There's a lot of things going on there through that whole first week, but maybe just emphasizing the importance behind that. I mean, there's just so many groups that you can go and see and get involved with right off the bat (Interview #1).

From orientation to welcome events, nonresident participants recognized their value in conveying support while simultaneously creating the venue to further their sense of belonging through informal peer groups.

Involvement. In contrast to the many one-time campus events and activities, involvement encompassed the more long-term commitments participants shared involving groups and organizations on campus. In turn, the potential for a more sustained sense of belonging emerged based on the time and duration these experiences typically required. Participants consistently expressed their awareness of opportunities to become involved on campus.

I felt like there was a lot of things that were, were offered or made available that I knew I could access if I wanted to...I mean, there's just so many groups that you can go and see and get involved with. Right off the bat" (Ben, Interview #1).

However, only some of the participants chose to engage in the campus community in this way. Evelyn provided this perspective in relating how awareness was not enough to compel her to become involved "...the first thing I noticed was there's so many things you can be a part of. If you want to be like clubs and activities and definitely like I wanted to be a part of it, I could and people would accept me. But I just don't want to be" (Evelyn, Interview #1). Sometimes just an

awareness of these campus community opportunities was sufficient for participants to feel a sense of belonging.

Figure 15. Persistence-Ruby



I chose my sorority because I have lived in for four semesters now. So that's almost two years. And other than my dorm room, which didn't really feel like home because nobody would leave their room to talk to anyone and there was no sense of community or it's kind of like everyone was on their own there and everyone came home from class and shut the door and that was it. But ever since I moved into my sorority...it's not like I feel alone. It's like that. Those are my people. This is my home (Interview #2).

Not surprisingly, some of the more substantial involvement opportunities for participants occurred in residence settings. Two participants were active members of a sorority. As Ruby shared in the aforementioned image and quote, the community sense resulting from her sorority participation generated a sense of belonging that served as a home away from home. In a similar way, Callie's sorority affiliation served as a conduit in defining her connection to campus. "I guess I feel like part of the campus. I have my own little community in [sorority name], so it's always something to go back to. And we do things on campus and outside of campus that makes

me feel like we have a campus community almost” (Interview #1). Similar sentiments were expressed by Ruby,

...so definitely joining my sorority, I did that freshman year and that has been a huge support to me. I feel like I am a part of it [campus] because of my sorority. I feel like that ties me into being involved... having that many people surrounding you that are all going through the same thing as you have made a huge difference on my experience here. That’s why being in a sorority has helped me a lot because it’s like a home away from home (Interview #1).

However, not all participants felt the same way about this involvement opportunity. Sarah related how she found what some viewed as benefits, proved to be limitations for her.

I was interested in joining Greek Life...But then I also ended up dropping because I thought, well, a lot of the women in the sorority, they really were just in the sorority for friendships and kind of just doing nothing, maybe. I don’t know how to say that nicely. But they really liked just going to parties and then just like lounging around (Interview #1).

While the potential for engagement was well established in a sorority/fraternity setting, the degree and type of commitment required was not always compatible with the sense of belonging goals of all participants.

Overall, the majority of participants reported being in a wide range of clubs and organizations. In many instances, joining a club led to further outreach opportunities within and outside of the campus community as was the case with Sarah.

I was also a part of the MSDA (Montana Student Dietetics Association). Because my advisor and I talked about earlier also said that you should join this club. And I also got involved. Well, this is a little bit farther down the road and maybe like a month or two months in. And I also got involved with the body project, which kind of dovetailed into the body acceptance movement, which dovetailed into my job now (Interview #1).

Whereas Ben’s involvement transcended campus and community in serving as a liaison between his church and the campus student body. “I just started or got hired by my church here in

Bozeman to kind of start an on campus kind of group that's been really cool too. And something we've been kind of planning for a little while" (Interview #1). For Thor, he did not fully understand the scope of his involvement as a student representative on a campus-wide committee until attending the first meeting. "I was like invited to be like the freshman idea person on this campus advising action team" (Interview #1). Even though considerable purpose resulted for these involvement opportunities, Riptide wanted to convey how involvement can also just be an outlet or source of enjoyment. "Oh, also in there the Swing Dance Club. I've done some swing dancing, I've definitely learned some swing dancing which is super fun" (Interview #1). Combined, these involvement opportunities shaped the nonresident connection and sense of belonging in innumerable ways.

Overall Community & Belonging. For any group of students, individual sense of belonging can vary considerably across a continuum. Similarly, this nonresident cohort reflected a range of responses indicating the degree in which they felt a part of the community. This category centered on participant assessments of general connectedness not limited to a specific event or group. For instance, Thor gauged his sense of belonging in comparison to the experiences of his friends. "I think I feel more a part of this community than a lot of other of my friends do... Like when I walk around I see people that I know and hold good conversations and everything. I know faculty" (Interview #1). While Ben spoke more abstractly to a feeling he has when he is on campus. "I'd say I'm definitely part of it...the just Bobcat kind of pride... I think the culture that's built around kind of this Bobcat mentality is it is easy to buy into..." (Interview #1). Through the document analysis, similar sentiments were conveyed by the host institution's president in sharing phrases such as "cultivating MSU pride", "self-confidence" and a "virtuous

cycle” within a select local newspaper article (Schontzler, 2017a). At least for Ben, the cultural mores communicated by the institution had a direct and positive impact on his overall sense of belonging on campus. In a related way, Riptide found his sense of belonging through alignment between his personal life mantra and MSU’s motto of “Mountains and Minds.”

The one thing that really stuck with us was that the saying of the school mountains and minds that was like something I really thought was a cool theme and a cool definitely a lifestyle I could get behind... The reason why I still attach myself to MSU, have they remained constant. I definitely after freshman year, the lifestyle here... (Interview #1) Let’s go Cats, baby. I love I love what we have here” (Interview #2).

Whether in relation to others or an overarching motto, sense of belonging was a feeling for these participants that cannot be captured in a single dimension and instead had a cumulative effect over time.

Off-Campus Interactions

Area Familiarity. While the familiarity and feel of the campus and surrounding community served as a key factor in these participants’ decisions to enroll and persist at the host institution, their connections with the surrounding area was a salient, supporting sense of community for the majority of the cohort. Area familiarity referred to past and current experiences with the geographic area, in general, or outside of the host campus and town.

Being able to navigate the local area and having a working knowledge of available resources served as an ongoing process for nonresident undergraduates. In speaking to the unique aspects of the third-year nonresident undergraduate experience, Ben identified the disadvantages a nonresident can have in navigating the local area. “I think it’s a familiar that familiarity with the area and the people just kind of exploring and figuring out where things are and how to get

around...” (Interview #1). Furthermore, Evelyn reiterated these sentiments in sharing what she perceived to be a significant advantage possessed by resident undergraduates “...they just know this area a lot better than me or just Montana in general. And I’m like, I don’t know, I’m still figuring it out. Even though it’s my third year here, I’m still figuring it out” (Interview #1). In a related fashion, Riptide suggested a need for additional resources for nonresidents in acclimating to the area.

I just think it would be really nice to have I don’t even know what I would call it, but just like a kind of like it doesn’t even need to be like an office or maybe webpage where it’s just like things like that, like places where you can get like things done in Bozeman... Like, what are some so some general like outside, like life resources, that thing, you know, besides kind of school. That would be really nice. (Interview #2).

For others, familiarity equated to how the surrounding area coincided with their past experiences or home region. Ruby spoke to how seamless the transition was to the host institution because of the close resemblance between her home region and the host institution’s outdoor offerings.

...just because [home state], I feel like in a lot of ways is very similar to Montana mountain and outdoor wise...So I think this wasn’t a hard transition for me because these are the people I’m used to, the clothes I’m used to. The way people talk and carry themselves, I think is mostly the same as everything that I’ve grown up with. So, it wasn’t hard and I didn’t really consider myself an out-of-stater because it just feels the same. I feel like which I’m very lucky (Interview #1).

In discussing his pre-college experiences, Riptide drew from his traveling time as a high school ski racer and familiarity with the host university’s geographic area. “I definitely I’ve traveled out west to the mountain region before and I really like the mountain region” (Interview #1). Finally, Anna made her decision to enroll less based on the university and more on her familiarity with the area through previous family vacations.

Going back to, just getting up and going to Montana of all places. We spent so much vacation time out here that it kind of felt I was comfortable with it, which I think helped make my decision, really random decision just to move out here easier. I don't think I could do that in a place I've never really visited before. But coming out here over and over again for family trips, it just like it had like a meaningful sense in life. There was a security kind of like a security blanket there because I knew about it and knew what it was and knew where I was (Interview #2).

In summary, a nonresident's degree of familiarity with the area was an important precursor in developing a sustainable and cohesive sense of belonging. While a degree removed from campus or the surrounding community, familiarity with the local area helped to establish and reinforce a sense of comfort for these participants in making this transition to an out-of-state university environment.

Figure 16. Sense of Belonging-Callie



I picked this photo just because I love to be outside and...The city of Bozeman. I feel like I belong in it. So, I try to get a picture going down on everything...I feel like I think Bozeman does a really good job of feeling. Making everyone feel belonged and at home. So, I think I picked a really lucky place (Interview #2).

Greater Community. For many participants, the greater community was equally, if not more influential than the campus community on impacting their overall undergraduate

experience and sense of belonging. As shared by Callie in the opening image and quote, she specifically credited the host community of Bozeman in making her feel like this is where she was supposed to be. This feeling of acceptance within the local community served as an important contributing factor to the participants' overall sense of belonging. For this study, the surrounding community was defined as the host municipality surrounding the formal university campus boundaries. Participants related connections to the greater community in the following forms: social activities, career applications and campus partnerships.

In terms of social interactions, several participants noted how positive interactions with locals contributed to their sense of belonging. As shared in the opening image and quote, Callie indicated a perceptible connection with the university host city. Ben had similar experiences interacting with the locals stating "Bozeman is a really, really welcoming, friendly community" (Interview #1). Furthermore, in reflecting on her first three years, Ruby related

But I do feel a part of the community. I feel like I could walk in anywhere and no one would look at me differently or not accept me... But coming here, I feel like for anybody's good. It's refreshing. People are kind and engaging and it's like a slower pace, but still good (Interview #1).

Such observations established how a nonresident's sense of belonging was influenced by more than just what takes place on a host university campus.

The community in which a campus is located also contributes to a sense of career opportunity for these nonresident undergraduates. For Anna, the surrounding community provided practical value that she did not necessarily see on campus.

...getting out and getting to see the schools here. But, you know, then I just get to learn more about Bozeman and what opportunities are out there (Interview #1)...I feel like Bozeman is also like a very outdoorsy place" (Interview #2).

Ben shared similar sentiments in speaking to what the surrounding community symbolized to him.

But just the other thing was it's pretty comparable to the [hometown]. I feel like, you know, proximity to the mountains and outdoor activities and just kind of overall feel of the town...So Bozeman was a little bit bigger and looked like I'd have opportunities here (Interview #1).

Even though participants came to similar conclusions about the surrounding community, the time it took for each participant to arrive at this determination varied considerably during their respective undergraduate careers. For Sarah, the first impression made a lasting impact. "I came to Bozeman and I fell in love with it. I really like the atmosphere here is not too big. It's not too small" (Interview #1). Riptide shared similar thoughts in discussing his visit to the host community prior to his senior year of high school. "...and we popped through Bozeman on our way there. And we, uh, we visited the campus and instantly, like, right when I came here, I knew like this was where I was going" (Interview #1). For others, it took a change of circumstances to fully immerse themselves in the surrounding community. John credited his choosing to not return home over the summers in ultimately opening his eyes to what the surrounding community had to offer.

I think it was more of spending the first summer here in Bozeman during because during the school year. I was so focused on like school...explore Bozeman more and go to different restaurants and other things. I feel like it was then it sort of made me realize or start to feel like as like a second home"(Interview #2).

Whether instantaneous or more of a gradual warming up, all participants who contributed in this area spoke favorably about the impact of the greater community on their sense of belonging.

Within this surrounding community theme, arose a perceptible connection between campus and community. Callie shared how seamlessly her volunteer work bridged her on-campus sorority and community-based organizations.

Like community service, just getting also like engaged in the campus and the community. So, I'm not like the biggest sorority person out there, but I think that once you look past the Greek letters, there is actually a reason for the philanthropy. And I think that's again, I like to help and Make a Wish Foundation. So, I found that actually very helpful (Interview #1).

While Ben expanded on the implications of this campus-community connection in discussing the great intentionality he found with events to bring these two communities together.

There's like an end of the year kind of celebration for the campus down there [Bozeman]. So that's really cool, too. But just the just the connection between the campus and then the rest of the town is really cool. That may or may be different than [home state university city] or other college towns (Interview #2).

While this collaboration may have not been at a perceptible level or a priority for all participants, those participants that noticed this coordination appreciated the ultimate outcomes for themselves and their peers in feeling a part the community as a whole.

In a similar way, document analysis revealed an inextricable relationship between the host campus and surrounding community. Within the selected newspaper articles, three references were made specifically to the surrounding community, while another three references addressed the interactions between the campus and town. In an article interviewing freshman nonresident students, references such as, "Bozeman is a really cool place" and "I love Bozeman" illustrated the positive perception the community has had on nonresident students (Schontzler, 2017c). However, references to interactions between the campus and surrounding community reflected a balance of impacts. In terms of benefits, the host institution was identified as the largest employer and the "economic engine" of the city as the campus has grown in recent years

(Schontzler, 2017a). Yet, such growth has also strained the relationship between these two entities at times. An increased student population, particularly from increased out-of-state enrollment, has put pressures on availability of local housing (Schontzler, 2017a) and during the pandemic has generated concern amongst some community residents of virus spread (Schontzler, 2020b). Furthermore, in an analysis of the viewbook set, images of the surrounding community, quick facts of the city, and a map of all of the direct flights from across the country were all presented. A notable change for the most recent viewbook of analysis (2019-2020) replaced the city quick facts with “Career Facts” speaking to the employment potential in the area following graduation. In summary, the document analysis provided insights on both the benefits and challenges of this campus/city relationship to help augment the singularly positive narrative expressed by the participants within their individual interviews.

State Culture. With considerable insights shared about the campus culture and surrounding community, a number of participants also referenced their perceptions of the greater host state in evidencing their sense of belonging to MSU and beyond. For the purposes of this study, state culture referred to references to social interactions and opportunities separate, but not necessarily exclusive from the participant local campus and community experiences. Four participants offered contributions within this category.

Commentary on the social norms of the area and state emerged throughout the interview phase. Quite frequently, such comments were in comparison to a participant’s own home state. Riptide commented on some difficulties with his initial adjustment, but that he ultimately embraced the diversity of lifestyle present in the host area.

I would say when I was first here, there’s definitely a lot of things I had to culturally get used to like. And I actually really like how like I feel like in Montana here at

Montana State, we have like a really equal balance between that. And it's interesting that because you see like the cowboys and then the hippies and they all kind of meet and it's that cool clash. But then you also realize that there's a lot of things they have the same, like they both love Montana and they both love the area they're in. So, there's still like definitely a lot of places where they can connect, but there's also a lot of places where they disconnect (Interview #1).

In speaking to the same culture, Callie experienced an internal struggle with some language choices and viewpoints expressed by resident students that stood in stark contrast to her own hometown culture and personal experiences.

I've in [home state], there's a lot more diversity and so coming here. That was kind of like a change in...I guess challenges, just like the vocabularies of the residents peoples have, kind of just hits me different. I really don't want to say the words, but you can think about it and guess that's probably just one. It's challenging because I don't I know I shouldn't involve myself because I don't know people. But when I hear something that's derogatory, I get triggered. And I just think just because people in Montana, they just aren't around it. So, it's okay. (Interview #1).

Combined, these two somewhat contrasting opinions combined to provide a glimpse at the complexity of how nonresidents adjust to an out-of-state environment, that may or may not be present on the university campus itself, ultimately impacted the degree to which they felt a sense of belonging.

Research Question #3 Summary

To answer the question, "How do nonresident undergraduates describe their sense of belonging on a land grant campus?" data from three themes were presented: transforming through personal growth, identifying across groups and areas & supporting across communities. Results indicated a nonresident undergraduate's sense of belonging is determined by a combination of factors at the individual, campus and greater community levels. More specifically, nonresident undergraduates indicated the importance of personal growth as a key factor in being able to fully realize a sense of belonging. Furthermore, sense of belonging had a

cumulative effect on the participants both in the groups they have identified with on campus and their interactions off campus. In conclusion, the nonresident undergraduate's sense of belonging went beyond the primary purpose of academics and heavily relied on extracurricular and community influences to reinforce and grow this affiliation over time.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

The purpose of this intrinsic case study is to explore the lived experience of the nonresident undergraduates at a specific land grant university in the Rocky Mountain region helping to identify what factors contributed to their persistence and sense of belonging. Results from this study offered participant insights that led to the formulation of nine themes intended to answer the study's research questions. This chapter begins with a review of the key theoretical aspects used in this study. Next, the major conclusions derived from the research findings are presented to answer each of the three research questions. Furthermore, the conceptual framework is revisited for updates based on study findings. Finally, implications for practice and recommendations for further research conclude this chapter.

Review of Theories Informing Study

In review, Schlossberg's Transition Theory (2006) and institutional logics meta-theory (please cite foundational articles associated with institutional logics theory here and elsewhere when presented in such a fashion) form the theoretical basis behind this study. Each are referenced throughout this chapter to help make sense of the findings. Considering the complexity of each theory, the most germane portions of each theory for discussion purposes are referenced below:

Schlossberg's Transition Theory

Schlossberg's Transition Theory (2006) provides guidance on understanding a transitional event from the participant's perspective. For all study participants, attending the host institution was an anticipated event and common context; however, the impact of the transition varied as evidenced in the study findings and subsequent discussion. As part of the moving through phase of the transition, four key sets of factors collectively referred to as the "four S's" are presented: situation, self, support and strategies. The following provides a brief summary of each factor set:

Situation. Inclusive of the participants' perspective on the circumstances of their own unique journey centered on their degree of control and resulting effects of the transition.

Self. The personal and demographic characteristics of the participant & how each aided and/or hindered their transition.

Support. The types, functions & measurements of various support structures available to the participant.

Strategies: Inclusive of the approaches and coping modes participants have used in order to persist during this transition.

Institutional Logics Meta-Theory

Institutional logics provides a theoretical lens on decision-making from an institutional perspective. Considering the complexity of such a process, the components and applications of this theory are extensive. For the purposes of this discussion, institutional logics will be applied using the four dimensions as presented by Thornton & Ocasio (2008): collective identities &

identification, contests for status & power, classification & categorization and attention. A basic definition for each dimension is provided in the following:

Collective Identities & Identification. Includes the feeling of connection and social status felt by the individual participants of a social group (Poletta & Jasper, 2001). (ex. Nonresident identity)

Contests for Status & Power. Provides meaning behind strategic relationships and the ultimate results of an institution's strategic pursuits (Thornton & Ocasio, 1999; Lounsbury & Ventresca, 2003). (ex. Enrollment management goals)

Classification & Categorization: Offers insight into the change in meanings of select categories within an institution (Ocasio & Joseph, 2005). (ex. Nonresident tuition status)

Attention: Encompasses how organizational leaders respond to environmental stimuli (Ocasio, 1997). (ex. Great Recession)

Review of Emergent Themes and Discussion

This section presents key themes useful in addressing the study's original research questions. Each theme is discussed in relation to context, applicable literature and through relevant applications from the study's theoretical framework. The discussion is presented in the following order:

Research Question #1: What is the lived experience of a third-year nonresident undergraduate at a specific land grant university campus?

Theme #1: Adapting from Home to University Life

Theme #2: Motivating from Enrollment to Degree

Theme #3: Recreating as a Lifestyle

Research Question #2: What factors do third-year nonresident undergraduates identify as contributing to their persistence at a specific land grant university campus?

Theme #1: Accessing Campus Resources

Theme #2: Familying from Afar

Theme #3: Socializing to Stay

Research Question #3: How do third-year nonresident undergraduates describe their sense of belonging at a specific land grant campus?

Theme #1: Transforming through Personal Growth

Theme #2: Identifying Across Groups and Areas

Theme #3: Supporting Across Communities

Research Question #1:
Nonresident Lived Experience

The study's first research question aimed to determine what the lived experience of a third year nonresident undergraduate was like on a land grant university campus. Following data analysis, three analytic themes emerged: adapting from home to university life, motivating from enrollment to degree and recreating as a lifestyle. Each theme is first interpreted overall, followed by discussion on how each thematic finding relates to past empirical literature and the study's theoretical framework.

Theme #1: Adapting from
Home to University Life

The adapting from home to university life theme was evidenced by all nine participants and referred to a participant's response to one or more environmental factors present in their daily lives as a nonresident undergraduate. Collectively, the factors found in this theme

contribute to the overall “impact” of the transition on the undergraduate. Anderson, Goodman & Schlossberg (2012) suggest the larger the impact, the more coping resources required by the student and the longer duration needed to successfully move through the transition itself. Accordingly, a given factor may have impacted some participants for only the initial semester or two, whereas other participants continued to cope with this factor throughout their third year as a nonresident undergraduate. Of the many factors referenced by participants, financial considerations and distance from home provided the most instructive points of discussion in relation to the literature and theoretical framework.

Financial Considerations. Financial considerations proved influential on the nonresident experience both during participant interviews and photovoice methods. While participants were abundantly aware of the higher tuition rates incurred by nonresident students prior to their initial enrollment, the manner in which financial obligations impacted their respective undergraduate experiences varied considerably in duration and scope. These students were faced with making critical decisions about financial aid, jobs and course load each semester. As shared by Sarah,

Having a job has been a really main part because it costs money. A lot of money for out-of-state students to go here and being able to after paying tuition. It's really made my bank account kind of be somewhat unstable after it's really hard for after paying tuition to keep it at that (Interview #1).

In short, even though the tuition costs were largely transparent on the frontend, the actual impact of this financial burden proved highly influential on what students were and were not able to do as part of their day-to-day lived experience as nonresidents.

Past empirical literature characterizes nonresident undergraduates as generally being of higher socioeconomic means (Oseguera & Rhee, 2009; Zhang, 2007) and thus nominally price elastic regarding higher tuition rates (Adkisson & Peach, 2008; Barylka & Dotterweich, 2006;

Zhang, 2007). While this study revealed instances of participants' families providing significant financial support by covering full tuition expenses (i.e. Ruby, Callie), other participant stories offered evidence that may contradict this generalized characterization. To begin with, six participants still accepted financial aid loans on a semester basis. Furthermore, five participants also indicated a need to hold at least a part time job to help pay for each semester's tuition and living expenses. For Anna, working a full time job while also taking a full credit load really became the totality of her experience. While Sarah discovered the diminishing returns of pursuing more work hours at the expense of her grades and work-life balance. Such struggles in achieving work-life balance are indicative of the moving through stage of Schlossberg's Transition Theory (2006). As shared by Anderson et al. (2012), "Once in a new situation, adults confront issues such as how to balance their activities with other parts of their lives and how to feel supported and challenged during their new journey" (p. 57). In this area, the host institution itself serves as a potential source of support within Schlossberg's Transition Theory (2006). Despite the Financial Aid Office being specifically identified by a couple of participants (Anna & John) as a helpful resource and six participants having acknowledged the value of their merit scholarships facilitated through this office, financial costs still remained an issue throughout their first three years for this nonresident cohort. These findings were consistent with the pilot study results recognizing that finances were a participant concern starting with the very first semester of enrollment. Such evidence contributes an important alternative perspective to the largely singular narrative in the literature regarding nonresidents and financial considerations (see Recommendations: Staggered Tuition).

In balance, even though financial costs were consistently cited as a challenge of the nonresident experience during this study, there was little indication the tuition and fees were insurmountable or led participants to consider not re-enrolling contrary to prior literature (Hoyt & Winn, 2004; Johnson & Muse, 2012; Yu et al., 2010). One alternative explanation may center on the participants' parents using financial aid loans as a budgeting tool something evidenced with Anna's discussion of her father serving as a commercial lender and assisting her in the financial aid process. While eligibility for certain loans (i.e. subsidized) is determined by household income, families who did not qualify would still be eligible for some unsubsidized loans to help with costs in the short term. Furthermore, none of the nine participants were first generation students, which helped to provide an important awareness and understanding of the university, particularly when it came to the financial processes. This finding seems to support Nora & Crisp (2012) as they reported a rising third year undergraduate's retention prospects are most influenced by the pre-college factors of parental education and socioeconomic status. Finally, Evelyn shared she was seriously considering stopping out or only attending part time next year in order to obtain residency tuition status. Combined, this body of evidence does not diminish the valid concerns presented by the participants, but offers some support to the literature that nonresidents typically have more financial support whether in actual financial contributions or in the financial literacy offered by their parents.

Financial considerations were also evidenced from the institutional perspective through document analysis. Similar to individual nonresident undergraduates, the host institution also faces financial challenges, just at a much larger scale. As reflected in the literature, land grant universities across the country have seen a consistent decrease in the percent of state

appropriations funding to address operating expenses in recent years (Jaquette & Curs, 2015; Mortenson, 2012). In the most recent fiscal year, the host institution was projected to receive only 28% of its operating budget from the Montana legislature (Schontzler, 2020b). Accordingly, the host institution was reliant on student tuition to make up 70% of its operating revenue—44% of which is specifically from nonresident tuition (Schontzler, 2020b). Much like the nonresident undergraduates dependence on merit scholarships, financial aid and employment in order to “operate”, the host institution relies on nonresidents to operate for all of its stakeholders. Indeed, such evidence appears to reflect the host institution using financial aid as an enrollment management tool as discussed in previous literature (Doyle, 2010; Perna, 2006) and is reflective of the status and power institutional logics dimension. As a result, MSU’s strategic approach to financial considerations is largely supported by the existing literature and institutional logics theory.

Table 5. Institutional Historical Nonresident Tuition and Enrollment Data

Academic Year (Fall Term)	Nonresident Tuition (Annual)	Overall Student Enrollment	Freshman Nonresident Cohort
2016-2017	\$23,185	16,440	1454/2854 (50.9%)
2017-2018	\$24,071	16,703	1329/2698 (49.3%)
2018-2019	\$24,993	16,902	1463/2707 (54%)
2019-2020	\$25,855	16,766	1489/2743 (54.2%)
*2020-2021	\$27,100	16,249	1577/2692 (58.6%)

Enrollment and tuition data relevant to study context. The table reflects data from academic years immediately prior to, during, and immediately following the three year study time period of focus. Adapted from the MSU Office of Planning and Analysis “Historical Tuition and Fees” <https://www.montana.edu/opa/facts/tuition.html> & “Student Retention and Graduation” <https://www.montana.edu/opa/students/outcomes/retentiongraduation.html>

More specifically, based on evidence presented in the document analysis, the host institution exhibits the classification & categorization dimension during the three year period of time (2017-2019) with a 7% increase in overall nonresident tuition (\$24,071 to \$25,855), increased overall enrollment (16,703 to 16,766) and increased recruitment of nonresident undergraduate freshman classes (1329 to 1489). Such a strategy appears to coincide with Brint et al.'s (2016) institutional logics 'complete arsenal' approach of increasing tuition, enrollment and nonresident recruitment, just at a more modest scale. Further, in an effort to remain competitive in the nonresident recruitment market, MSU has placed an increased focus on merit scholarships to help meet nonresident students' needs with the fiscal year 2017-2018 reflecting \$16.7 million in merit and tuition waivers (Schontzler, 2017d). Literature suggests recruiting high achieving students plays a factor in generating a perception of quality for nonresidents (Adkisson & Peach, 2008; Cooke & Boyle, 2011) and is reflected in the following comments by MSU's president, "We are giving a \$1,000 or \$2,000 discount to attract the profile of students we're very, very interested in. Something good happens when you attract a very high-achieving student to the classroom. It pushes all students to excel...it elevates everybody" (Schontzler, 2017b, p. 7). These sentiments reflect the "attention" aspects of how organizational leaders respond to environmental stimuli. In this case, generating nonresident tuition revenue to offset insufficient state appropriations made it possible for the host institution to meet an ever increasing annual institutional operating budget. Furthermore, MSU has illustrated the attention dimension in undergoing extensive campus capital renovation projects in recent years that have featured new cafeterias, residence halls and athletic facilities. Such developments also support findings by Jacob et al. (2013) on a tendency for universities to cater to nonresident undergraduates through

providing more consumption amenities. Altogether, the host institution has made relatively predictable decisions in the post-Great Recession era when evaluated from an institutional logics perspective.

Even still, the subsequent changes that resulted to the physical campus itself generated slightly unexpected results for participants. While most participants indicated an excitement with the change, others reflected some of the consequences of change, with both Riptide and Thor almost imploring MSU to remain on its own path instead of trying to be like other universities. This commentary ties directly to the institutional logics theory dimension of “contests for status and power.” As reflected in the document analysis, “Chasing after out-of-state students is a growing national trend” (Schontzler, 2017b). With nonresidents serving as a finite resource nationwide (Canche, 2014), MSU has appeared to position itself to be able to successfully recruit nonresidents even as outside competition has increased. Undoubtedly, change is often difficult for people to embrace. However, such changes in this instance may inadvertently contribute to undermining the “secret sauce” that has worked for these very same students in the past.

Distance from Home. In addition to financial challenges, adapting distance from home also served as an important factor in the nonresident experience, albeit to a much lesser extent than financial considerations. In comparison between the results of this study and the existing literature, the role of distance in the participants’ decision-making generated divergent perceptions. Contrary to some studies that found the further away from home, the more difficult the transition was for nonresidents (Jones-White et al. 2010; Yu et al. 2010), there did not seem to be a perceptible difference in the degree of the nonresident experience due to distance for this particular nonresident study cohort. Rather, the inherent limits in being able to have in-person

visits with family/friends, access to transportation, navigating health insurance and inclement weather appeared to be bigger influences on the nonresident experience than actual miles. Such findings seem to support past findings that after a certain distance threshold, the impact on nonresidents is largely mitigated (Dotzel, 2017). With all participants at least 250 miles away from home, at some point far is far. Such inconsistency with the literature regarding how distance from home impacts the nonresident experience serves as a pervasive theme that will be expounded upon in subsequent study theme discussions (see Recommendations: Transportation; Nonresident Insurance).

In summary, the adapting from home to university life theme presented a number of key discussion points related to financial considerations and distance from home. Financial considerations posited both supportive and contradictory findings in terms of the existing empirical literature base as well as illustrated several dimensions of institutional logics including contests for status & power, classification & categorization, and attention. In addition, findings regarding distance from home helped to extend the literature base on how distance itself did not appear to be the key factor, but rather availability of the necessary support strategies and resources to be able to adapt to the situation—a role both the individual and institution play in shaping the nonresident's lived experience on campus and in the community.

Theme #2: Motivating from Enrollment to Degree

Motivating from enrollment to degree encompassed all nine participants and reflected influences on their motivations for their undergraduate experience at the host institution. Findings provided several connections to the existing literature and the study's theoretical framework. Subsequent results established a particular emphasis on the following subthemes:

something different, career motivations, time to graduation and undergraduate research opportunities.

Something Different. The something different subtheme offered several unique insights into the nonresident experience. This concept can be thought of as “making the familiar strange” in that while it appeared important that participants had visited the campus prior to officially attending (i.e. seven of nine visited formally or informally), the majority of participants also sought a change from the familiarity of their respective hometowns. Even more telling for this nonresident cohort was their desire to have a different experience than that of their peers who chose to attend college at home or in their home state. The implication being that by somehow attending school back home, it would have represented in the participants’ words being *stuck* or *not making progress*. Several participants related the appeal of attending an out-of-state institution as it brought a new story and experience to tell when visiting with peers back home over the summer or during breaks. Such an experience can be explained by Schlossberg’s Transition Theory (2006) as this physical relocation outside of the participants’ home state represented the catalyst for “separating from the past” both in a literal as well as a symbolic sense by leaving their friends from high school behind. Further still, the study participants reflected a universally positive appraisal of entering this “transition” into attending an out-of-state university. Such a finding may be attributed to the participants feeling that they had more control over their situation (Anderson et al., 2012). In comparison, other than when a nonresident’s parent is an alum of the institution, it is far more likely that an undergraduate may feel forced to attend an in-state university due to parental or financial pressures. However, there is a pronounced difference between feeling control over the initial decision compared to the

actual day-to-day decisions while actually attending the university. Accordingly, Anderson et al. (2012) offer, “The only way to understand people in transition is to study them at several points in time” (p. 48). Accordingly, several additional motivations are introduced in hopes of providing more insight into this transition over time.

Career. More specifically, career motivations were reflected in seven of the nine participants’ stories. Terms such as *purpose* and *relevancy* emerged as defining traits of the participants’ third year experience. In terms of theory, this sense of meaning and purpose appears to coincide with Schlossberg’s “Self-Psychological Resource” where having such direction helps make the transition more manageable. Such findings seem to support and further define the position offered in the literature that the third year is distinctly different from previous years both in priorities and needs (Braxton et al., 2007; Willcoxson, 2010). Based on the participant accounts, the third year appeared to overall be *challenging*, *rewarding* and *stabilizing* in nature. As expressed by Sarah on being able to take courses related to her major:

Finally, I’m getting supported by the university with nutrition and I know that’s maybe not the best way to phrase it, but this is my second class, I guess that really captures nutrition and being a dietitian and figuring out the source of the dietetic or the dietary problems within an individual and how to change that and how to structure like counseling them (Interview #2).

Accordingly, the career motivations subtheme seems to both support and extend the literature on how the third year uniquely contributes to understanding the nonresident undergraduate experience.

Time to Graduation. Another motivating factor for nonresident undergraduates’ experience was time to graduation. Most participants indicated plans to graduate in four years. These findings support existing literature that nonresidents have a financial incentive to graduate

“on time” (DesJardins et al., 2003; Wohlgemuth et al., 2007). Furthermore, research concluded that nonresidents who persist, while still at risk throughout their undergraduate careers for departure (Singell & Waddell, 2010), tend to graduate at similar rates to those of their peers (Wohlgemuth et al., 2007). From an institutional logics perspective, the host university evidenced the classification and categorization dimension through scholarships and retention programming. To begin with, most of the participants are currently on university merit scholarships that are set to expire after four years. Also, the university’s “Freshman 15” program normalizes taking at least 15 credits per semester for eight consecutive semesters for “on time” graduation (MSU, 2020a). Even though most participants indicated a four year graduation plan and the university has communicated a four year expectation, how these perspectives coincided is inconclusive based on the available evidence.

In contrast, not all participants valued graduating in four years to the same extent. Evelyn discussed how graduating on time is less of a concern than the long term picture of graduating without too much debt by relating, “I would just be like a year behind because I would have to take a year off or be part time. But that’s not that big of a deal” (Interview #1). Furthermore, Anna spoke more to how she felt an urgency to graduate based on the standards set by her peers back home and the cumulative duration she had spent as an undergraduate to date. Such findings align with Schlossberg’s Transition Theory (2006) in stating, “...most adults have built-in social clocks that are their barometers to judge whether they are “on time” or “off time” with respect to family, career, and self-issues” (pgs. 68-69). Regardless of the specific barometer used, this nonresident cohort generally appeared motivated to graduate in four years. In summary, the degree time towards graduation for a nonresident’s undergraduate experience is influenced by a

number of academic and social circumstances that largely align with existing literature and theory.

Undergraduate Research. Undergraduate research opportunities at this land grant host institution also emerged as an important subtheme. The president of the university made re-establishing an R1 designation AND maintaining a high undergraduate population a major focus during the enrollment timeframe of this study's student cohort. In early 2019, the host institution received a Carnegie designation of a "very high research institution" and an enrollment profile as "very high undergraduate"—one of only two universities currently with this distinction (Cantrell, 01/10/2019). As outlined in the "classification and categorization" portion of institutional logics, this designation has both symbolic and practical implications when it comes to being an undergraduate at MSU. Symbolically, a prestige element emerges, contributing to the "quality effect" on nonresident enrollment discussed in prior literature (Baryla, Jr. & Dotterweich, 2001). While practically, there is increased capacity and resources for undergraduate research opportunities. Accordingly, the host institution was operating as a land grant institution with a renewed sense of research focus. More specifically, the host institution ranks in the top 3% of all US colleges and universities for research expenditures (MSU, 2020b). For instance, John spoke of the university's Undergraduate Scholars program and how important this was to his initial enrollment decision and subsequent experience. Further, he characterized the applied, Science Technology Engineering Math (STEM) reputation at MSU as more appealing than his home state engineering program. Similarly, Sarah indicated an awareness of research opportunities through her classes with regular announcements such as, "We need a lab technician for this study done on gut microbiome or something like that. Or teachers often say, hey, like, they're part of a

research study or we need somebody to help with this” (Interview #1). Document analysis supported this STEM focus as a purposeful decision by the university to emphasize science and technology majors following the 2008 Great Recession to appeal to a desire for good paying job prospects for its student body (Schontzler, 2018c). The emphasis by MSU to invest and market these STEM fields to prospective students and their parents is reflective of the “attention” dimension within institutional logics helping the institution not only survive but thrive as opposed to other state institutions in the same region (Brint et al., 2016). Ultimately, while undergraduate research opportunities were discussed less frequently by the participants than the university, research and its many iterations did emerge as a motivation with continued significance throughout a nonresident’s undergraduate career.

In summary, nonresident motivations centered on something different, career motivations, time to graduate and undergraduate research opportunities combining to drive the undergraduate experience for these participants. Such findings illuminate various aspects of Schlossberg’s Transition Theory (2006) in respect to situation, self and support. In addition, evidence suggests the third year may serve as an optimal time to capture input from the focused and actualized undergraduate self—a key to analyzing what factors have contributed to the persistence of each study participant. Most of the participants consistently reported a level of investment and stability during their third year as an undergraduate. Finally, evidence from the strategic decisions made by the host institution regarding STEM and research opportunities seem to hold practical utility in decoding the experiences of several study participants. Motivations for this study’s nonresident undergraduate population appeared to remain from initial enrollment through the third year of their undergraduate career.

Theme #3: Recreating as a Lifestyle

Recreating as a lifestyle was directly reflected by eight of the study participants. This theme is inclusive of exercise-related activities outside of socially constructed campus or Bozeman communities. Results evidenced several parallels with the empirical research base and theoretical framework exhibited by the following subthemes: outdoor access and mountains.

Outdoor Access and Awareness. Outdoor access and awareness served as a transcending subtheme of recruitment and a defining aspect of the participants' third year experience. Not only did the results of this study support existing literature that nonresidents may be more likely to initially enroll and migrate to university locations with high natural amenities (Dotzel, 2017; Faggian & Franklin, 2014), but it also contributed to extending the literature in how outdoor access remains a part of the participants' experience well beyond the initial enrollment phase. Participants referred to the outdoor access as *key* and the reason why *nonresidents came here*. Furthermore, this finding relates to institutional logics theory regarding the "attention" dimension. While "Mountains and Minds" has served as a tagline for the university since 1983 (MSU, 2020c), the efforts to market access to the surrounding outdoors has noticeably been emphasized in recent years evidenced by text and images highlighted in select host university viewbooks. Hartley & Morpew (2008) support this conclusion in sharing, "Viewbooks spend considerable space highlighting their geographical attractiveness, or making the most of their location" (p. 678). Even still, Thor related how the outdoors experience could be better leveraged by the university to move from just an initial recruitment tool to a long-term retention plan. Such convergence between individual and organizational perspective illustrates a potential entry point into institutional logics in providing, "...meaning to their daily activity" (Thornton & Ocasio,

1999, p. 804). The outdoors served as an integral part of the undergraduate experience for most of the study's participants. As Evelyn related, "So I think that's the outdoor research aspect is a very important resource that this campus provides. Even not even like in other areas than landscape design. I've experienced this in like biology classes and or horticulture" (Interview #2). Considering such participant sentiments, finding a way to further formalize these perceived benefits with the host university's "Mountains and Minds" tagline holds considerable promise.

Mountains. More specifically, the subtheme of mountains emerged as a potential defining characteristic and catalyst for nonresident undergraduate experiences. There is evidence 'mountainous topography' has a disproportionate influence on nonresident undergraduate migration (Dotzel, 2017). In relation to this study's findings, mountains served as a key differentiator and has an "academic filtering effect" for students. As illustrated by Riptide, finding a strong engineering program was not the issue, rather it was finding a strong engineering program AND access to mountains. "We don't really need to be like anyone else because we've got the mountains, we've got the minds (Interview #2). Further, three other participants (Ruby, Sarah & Callie) echoed this claim in highlighting the mountains as the biggest draw for them and/or fellow nonresidents. Such sentiments are firmly embedded in the definition of institutional logics "in organizing the space and reproduce their experiences" (Thornton & Ocasio, 1999, p. 804). In short, the mountains are not just an added side benefit, but a central part of MSU's institutional DNA...something shared by Riptide when discussing how MSU faculty embrace the mountainous surroundings, "And that really helps me see them as like. Not just some PhD up there, but they're like I seen my freshman year, me and Lars saw our physics teacher up on up on the ski hill. I've seen a few my teachers at Spire Climbing Center..."

(Interview #1). Considering how mountains serve as a defining aspect of so many participant experiences and an existing part of MSU's brand, finding ways to further leverage this physical feature into practical benefit for nonresidents beyond initial recruitment holds potential for supporting a number of university priorities. (see Recommendations: Expand Outdoor Curriculum).

In short, access to the outdoors and specifically, the mountains, serve as a defining aspect of the undergraduate experience for these nonresident undergraduates. Through application of spatial/topography research and institutional logics, an opportunity arises for extending the literature into how a university can better utilize local, natural resources to further the nonresidents' overall university experience.

Research Question #1 Nonresident Lived Experience Summary

Discussion on study results related to the first research question centered on three themes. First, the theme of *adapting from home to university life* generally offered support to existing literature on nonresident socioeconomic status and institutional logics theory regarding university enrollment management and campus amenity decisions. Evidence extended the literature on financial challenges encountered by many nonresident undergraduates and partially contradicted some past research findings indicating distance itself is not the primary issue, but more of the day-to-day inconveniences result from out-of-state circumstances. Second, the theme of *motivating from enrollment to degree* provided evidence to support existing literature on the distinct, purpose-driven nature of the third year for nonresident undergraduates. Furthermore, Schlossberg's Transition Theory (2006) offered relevant applications in understanding participants' enrollment choices and appraisal of their transition. Also, institutional logics

dimensions provided a useful companion application on how the host university programming on credit load and research has influenced nonresident motivations and their experiences. Third, the theme of *recreating as a lifestyle* supported existing literature on the positive appeal of outdoor recreation and mountains on nonresidents and how the university has leveraged these aspects as a recruitment tool. Findings potentially extend the literature in how these factors remain influential throughout the nonresident undergraduate career. The lived nonresident experience at this host institution is encapsulated by Riptide's "work hard, play hard" sentiments.

Research Question #2: Factors in Nonresident Persistence

The study's second research question is focused on what factors contributed to the persistence of third year undergraduates on a land grant university campus. Following data analysis, three analytic themes emerge: accessing campus resources, familying from afar and socializing to stay. Each theme will first be interpreted overall, followed by discussion on how each thematic finding related to past empirical literature and the study's theoretical framework.

Theme #1: Accessing Campus Resources

Access to campus resources was a theme reflected by all nine participants and encompasses the participants' perceived or actual ability to utilize services and resources with a reasonable effort. The findings reflected several connections with the empirical research base and theoretical framework. Results were inclusive of the following subthemes: formal learning and campus professional interactions.

Formal Learning. In analyzing participant statements, formal learning and coursework served as a prominent subtheme in addressing student persistence. Such a finding supports and

advances third year undergraduate literature (Braxton et al., 2007; Willcoxson, 2010) indicating there is something distinctly unique about this undergraduate year. For Sarah, finally taking classes specific to her major along with the interactions that ensued with her peers combined to help support her ultimate persistence.

I have one pretty good partner, I guess, within this whole college experience. She's also a dietetic major and we have a lot of the same classes and we both kind of go throughout our classes together and kind of discuss what we need to complete our assignments. And I help her with some stuff and she helps me. And she has honestly been really a really good support system for that... But I think dietetics did draw her in, but not that wasn't like the main reason, whereas mine was (Interview #2).

Thus, finally learning about and taking in dietetic-specific coursework reinforced her reason for still being enrolled at the host institution. In contrast, Thor found his persistence was rooted in his first semester freshman seminar course and his participation in one of the host institution's related retention programs (i.e. Sophomore Surge). Thor spoke highly of the experience; however, he indicated that it appeared to be underutilized in some respects. From a "collective identities and identification" dimension, the institution's Sophomore Surge program identifies successful upperclassmen to mentor freshmen in an effort to improve student retention (Schontzler, 2019b). As nonresidents continue to be an increased focus for institutional recruitment efforts, evidence suggests the institution will also explore the classification and categorization dimension by shifting from more broadly defined retention efforts and focusing more on targeted efforts towards this student subgroup. For instance, the mentorship offered through the existing Sophomore Surge program could be expanded beyond the associated class and into developing affiliated identity groups in subsequent years. Considering the potential positive influence offered by peer mentorship, adding this layer to formal learning and

coursework aligns with existing literature and the institutional logics framework as applied in this study. (see Recommendations: Nonresident Peer Mentoring).

Campus Professional Interactions. Furthermore, campus professional interactions also served as a noteworthy subtheme. In particular, participants appeared to value *access*, *a personalized approach* and *expertise* when working with faculty and staff. Such a theme offers direct connections to Schlossberg's Transition Theory (2006) as evidence of the "Support S" in terms of what is or is not offered by the host university. Anderson et al. (2012) postulate, the moving through phase only begins once participants "know the ropes" (i.e. Deadlines, forms, scheduling, etc.), and "because it can be a long transition, learners may need help sustaining their energy and commitment" (p. 57). Campus professionals have helped these nonresident undergraduates successfully persist to their third year in their formal capacities. As related by Ruby, "So I know if I ever need help or if I'm struggling in one area, I could go to any of the teachers that I've had and they would know my face and know how to personally help me. So, I've never considered transferring or leaving" (Interview #1). Such sentiments were reinforced through document analysis of campus officials discussing why the host institution has been successful in recruiting nonresident undergraduates. According to the assistant director of admissions, "Everyone on campus, from the president on down wants to see students be successful" (Schontzler, 2017b). Combined, this evidence illustrates the "feeling of connection" found within the institutional logics collective identities and identification dimension. Clearly, the interactions between these nonresidents and campus professionals goes beyond recruitment or initial enrollment semesters, contributing instead to the persistence of nonresident undergraduates throughout their undergraduate careers.

Combined, formal learning and campus professional interactions better define the role accessing campus resources has on nonresident persistence. Based on participant interviews, nonresidents feel like “more than just a number” starting with initial recruitment outreach and continuing through daily interactions on campus. In turn, these nonresident undergraduates were compelled to persist realizing they are not alone and that they can receive the necessary support even during those more difficult and trying times of the moving through portion of their undergraduate careers.

Theme #2: Familying from Afar

Familying from afar served as a theme that impacted all nine participants in very significant ways. This theme encompassed interactions with family during their time enrolled at the host university. In total, 62 unique references were logged for this theme with a high of 17 (Anna) and a low of 4 instances (Evelyn, Sarah, Ruby). The findings reflected numerous connections with the empirical research base and theoretical framework inclusive of the following categories: parental guidance, family visits and sibling influence.

Parental Guidance. The subtheme of parental guidance was distinctly influential when discussing initial enrollment—helping participants to overcome impediments associated with attending an out-of-state university. This may directly support Anderson et al.’s (2012) discussion on the “individual’s appraisal” of the transition. In other words, despite distance, cost, etc., the participants’ parents actively took steps to help make attending an out-of-state university seem possible. In speaking to her parents’ advice, Ruby shared, “...they encouraged me to come tour” (Interview #1) which helped make attending the host institution a real possibility for her. While John’s parents took a more active approach in relating, “And they thought, where I would

fit in best. And I came to realize that on I definitely agree with them the distances. You know, it's hard, but we know that like big picture, it's the right thing to do" (Interview #1).

Accordingly, a positive appraisal arose for participants going into freshman year helping to make the moving in (familiarizing stage) of their respective transitions that much more manageable.

The researcher did not find any evidence of participants expressing hesitancy or a feeling of being forced to attend the host institution. Rather, MSU served as the first choice for most of the participants. Past research indicates nonresidents are far more likely to graduate from the institution if it was their first choice (DesJardins et al., 2003; Ruffalo Noel Levitz, 2018).

Findings from this study help to illuminate the intrinsic value parents bring to the enrollment process and generates for discuss on possible ways to further differentiate the recruitment/enrollment process to better meet the unique needs of the nonresident undergraduate.

Furthermore, several participants indicated parents remained a constant source of support and persistence despite the existence of a significant geographical distance. Such a finding cannot be fully discussed without acknowledging the role technology has played in enhancing communication opportunities and, in turn, helping to make being away from family more manageable. Regardless, having family accessible was an important aspect of persistence for this study group. Several participants (John, Riptide, Ruby) discussed weekly "standing meetings" with parents to touch base further evidencing Schlossberg's "support" found within family units. Clearly, no matter the distance, parents remained involved in participants' lives even from afar. (see Recommendations: Orientation).

Family Visits. Finally, family visits, and the frequency thereof, served as a valuable talking point amongst participants. While family visits were clearly less frequent than for most

resident peers, such interactions proved to be important touch points for several of the participants (Sarah, Ben, John) to share in their new lives. Such interactions were a figurative “shot in the arm” to validate their decision to attend an out-of-state university and get a true sense of how one another was doing. In contrast, Anna indicated family visits served as just one more event in her busy schedule. As an alternative perspective, just because family was in closer proximity (i.e. residents), it cannot be assumed that this necessarily results in more frequent visits or a desire for visits from resident peers. Furthermore, due to the size of the host state, distances to/from home were in some cases further in miles than their nonresident peers who lived closer to the border of the host state. Thus, it might be more a matter of participants knowing they could visit/be visited by family, than the actual visit itself that matters more in this finding.

Sibling Influence. In a related way, if parental guidance and support helped establish the possibility, then sibling influence created the space for participants to envision themselves in this out-of-state context. As was the case with parents, sibling influence came in both direct and indirect forms. In terms of direct influences, Thor was able to hear about the experiences of his older siblings who had successful experiences as nonresident students themselves. Further, Riptide cited his older sister’s experiences in establishing a general sense of what to expect with his own college experience even though she attended a different land grant institution when relating, “So when I definitely had this idea coming into college that I was gonna be like in this. My sister goes to Michigan State University in East Lansing” (Interview #1). In contrast, Ben showcased more indirect sibling influence in having the ability to make it home for his brother’s football games. As stated earlier, none of the study participants were first generation students,

which helped with support and recognition that family members had successfully navigated this type of transition before. Sibling influence primarily impacted the moving in phase for participants, with Anna, John and Ben referring to siblings in a home state context—part of Schlossberg’s “Support-Family Units.” Each of these participants’ siblings provided important support from afar since the very beginning of their transition to college. In summary, having siblings available to share their own experiences or just in the participant’s own college experience aided in making the potential barriers to embarking on this transition far more manageable to navigate (see Motivations: Disaggregating Family Weekend).

Overall, as found in the literature, access to family was found to be an important factor in nonresident persistence (Dotzel, 2017; Sabharwal, 2005; Yu et al., 2010). However, this study identified great variability depending on the timing, type of family member (i.e. parent or sibling), and the form of interaction (i.e. Remote or in person). Accordingly, a lack of perceived family support could undermine persistence, particularly if some of the other supports presented in Schlossberg’s Transition Theory (2006) were absent.

Theme #3: Socializing to Stay

Socializing to stay was a theme present in all nine participants’ stories and is inclusive of participant disposition, composition of a participant’s peer group, and the situations in which these interactions take place. The findings demonstrated clear connections with past research and the theoretical framework. Featured subthemes included: general peer group, nonresident peer group, and participant disposition.

General Peer Group. As cited in the literature, having consistent access to a peer/social group (i.e. Having friends) was important during the initial transition process (Palmer &

Gasman, 2008; Whalen et al., 2009; Wohlgemuth et al., 2007). As cited in Schlossberg's Transition Theory (2006), relationships are an important determining factor on the degree of impact felt during this transition. Further, participants experiencing a transition must assess to what degree their support system has been disrupted, particularly in terms of their network of friends. Study participants exhibited considerable vulnerability during interviews by sharing how friends contributed to their ability to move through this transition as a nonresident undergraduate (Thor, Riptide, Callie, Ruby). For instance, Riptide shared, "And we talk about like a lot of deep personal family stuff. I'd say that [friend name] is one of the few human beings I've actually cried in front of" (Interview #2). Often times, these stories intersected with systems put in place (i.e. campus housing and programming) that indirectly or directly facilitated these initial interactions with friends. For example, Callie discussed the support offered by members of her sorority, "They've always supported me. They're definitely the people I go to when I need to talk. What I need to hear something supportive in my life" (Interview #2). Such findings appear to support past research on how perceived social support and student motivation were found to be significant influences on retention (Morrow & Ackermann, 2012). Having a perceived or actual nonresident peer group seems to have contributed to persistence for a number of those nonresident study participants.

From an institutional logics perspective, the "collective identities and identification" dimension is evidenced by the host institutions actions (i.e. residence halls, first year seminars, Sophomore Surge, etc.). Accordingly, a sense of connection was cultivated that ultimately proved quite influential in the paths these participants would ultimately take in subsequent

semesters. Identifying an accessible peer group was a key factor in the persistence of this study's nonresident cohort.

Nonresident Peer Group. More specifically, forming a nonresident peer group early on in the transition offered distinct advantages driven by a common familiarity with the nonresident experience. A number of participants (John, Riptide, Thor, Callie) routinely cited how important it was to find friends either from their own home state or just from out-of-state, in general, during their first weeks on campus. Furthermore, some participants (Sarah) suggested nonresidents were more inclined to engage in certain social activities (i.e. skiing) than their resident peers providing common experiences and building what Schlossberg would characterize as "Self-Psychological Resources-Resiliency." In short, knowing others were navigating like experiences contributed to persistence as these nonresident undergraduates no longer felt alone during this transition. (see Motivations: Orientation Programming).

Participant Disposition. Finally, the socialization process was directly impacted by participant disposition. This subtheme coincided with Schlossberg's "Self" as personal and psychological resources were accessed by participants during this transition. The majority of participants self-identified as being an *introvert* or *extrovert* over the course of their interviews. Due to the unique circumstances encountered by nonresidents, personal disposition could serve as what Schlossberg's Transition Theory (2006) suggests as an "asset" or "liability." For instance, unlike their nonresident peers, introverted resident undergraduates typically have a peer group from their hometown or local areas to build from when transitioning to campus. In contrast, nonresidents may not have anyone from their hometown or even home state. Several participants reflected on missing out on opportunities early on (Callie, Ruby, Anna) due to their

introverted tendencies. While more extraverted participants reported this transition as being much easier. According to Thor,

So, I think with that skill of meeting new people...trying to get everyone involved and different activities and stuff like cheering each other on, I think that helped me become an RA (Resident Advisor) and then because I became an RA it allowed me to stay connected to campus and then I was involved, so I don't want to leave (Interview #1).

While dispositions are an inherent part of being human, having an awareness of one's natural tendencies may be the first step in overcoming student attrition and withdrawal which nonresidents more disproportionately do.

In conclusion, socializing to stay offered an important non-academic influence to persistence for nonresident undergraduates. While feeling a part of a social group was important throughout the transition, identifying at least a few nonresident friends early on in the transition served as a critical catalyst to progressing through the transition. Awareness of personal characteristics and how to frame these as “assets”, rather than “liabilities” was another key finding explained further through application of Schlossberg's Transition Theory (2006).

Research Question #2 Nonresident Persistence Summary

Discussion on study results related to the second research question focused on three themes. First, *accessing campus resources* revealed a clear theoretical convergence between the support aspects of Schlossberg's Transition Theory (2006) and multiple institutional logics dimensions specific to the university's retention programming (i.e. Sophomore Surge) and overall campus climate. Participants identified having access, a personalized approach, and expertise to campus professionals as important influences on their persistence. Also, being enrolled in major-specific courses and the renewed purpose that ensued for participants

supported past literature on the distinct nature of an undergraduate's third year. Second, *familiyng from afar* bolstered past literature and Schlossberg's Transition Theory (2006) on the essential support role parents/guardians serve in a nonresident undergraduates enrollment and subsequent persistence decisions. This study extended the literature on family support by establishing the unique support features provided by siblings during this transition. Third, *socializing to stay* reinforced existing literature pertaining to the importance of undergraduates having friends during this transition phase. Findings expanded the literature on how having specifically nonresident friends early on in this transition can help improve outcomes. Institutional logics helped explain how the "collective identity and identities" dimension was evidenced by the host campus through various institutional structures including: orientation, housing, and retention programming. Furthermore, student disposition was found to be an important indirect factor in persistence as nonresidents with self-reported introvert tendencies indicated less than ideal initial transition experiences. Schlossberg's Transition Theory (2006) helped to explain how these dispositions could serve as an "asset" or "liability." Ultimately, nonresident persistence relies on consistent and varied human connection.

Research Question #3:
Nonresident Sense of Belonging

The study's third research question addressed how nonresident undergraduates described their sense of belonging on a land grant university campus. Following data analysis, three analytic themes emerged: transforming through personal growth, identifying across groups & areas and supporting across communities. Each theme will first be interpreted overall, followed by discussion on how each finding relates to past empirical literature and the study's theoretical framework.

Theme #1: Transforming through Personal Growth

Transforming through personal growth was a part of all nine participant's interviews. This subtheme described how personal development influenced a participant's interdependence in their newly found communities. Within this area arose valuable insights reflected through the following subthemes: independence, self-discovery and reflection.

Independence. Most prominent of these subthemes was the “sink or swim” phenomena found within the participants' level of independence during this transition. Nonresidents quickly realized they lacked familiarity of their new environment, therefore it became necessary to form not just a sense of independence, but interdependence in order to access needed resources and supports (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). Schlossberg's Transition Theory (2006) speaks to how participants moving through a transition recognize their support system has been disrupted and thus have to establish new supports to off-set these losses. Such personal adaptations connect directly into Schlossberg's Transition Theory (2006) “strategies” that participants put in place to modify the situation, control the meaning and manage the stress. Several participants (Evelyn, Riptide, Ben) frequently communicated this realization during interviews with common phrases such as: *on my own* and *doing everything myself*. Further, self-initiative was a key for these nonresidents as such a transformation proved overwhelming at times resulting in a debilitating state of inertia. In short, it appears that a nonresident's recognition that the support landscape has changed and they now have decision-making responsibilities (i.e. independence) is a necessary precursor to being fully receptive to embracing their new environment. Subsequently, a nonresident's shift towards interdependence by assessing how they can assemble

and utilize new resources to assist them in achieving their short and long term goals formalizes their entry into feeling a sense of belonging on campus and/or the surrounding community.

Self-Discovery. Additionally, self-discovery emerged on how a state of being ‘uncomfortable’ can actually be a good thing. This state of uncertainty pushed participants to take a self-inventory of what Schlossberg refers to as “Self-Psychological Resources” such as personal outlook, self-efficacy and resiliency. Based on the nonresident experience, participants are left with conducting self-introspection concerning what aspects of self can be maximized to strike a healthy balance between support and challenge. Participants (John, Riptide, Ben, Callie) consistently used terms such as *freaky*, *scary* and *uncomfortable* to describe the start of this self-discovery phase, but in the end indicated going through this process was well worth it. As John equated, this stage helps nonresidents “find themselves” (Interview #1) whereas Callie indicated this transition resulted in “starting your life” (Interview #1). Goodman et al. (2006) equates this resulting “outlook” as an important psychological resource found in “self.” Having a clear self-awareness in one’s own strengths and weaknesses helps to determine the next steps to successfully navigate and contribute to a nonresident’s new community.

Reflection. Finally, the reflection subtheme revealed participants adapted at varying degrees and on their own timelines. Several participants lamented how if they only had embraced social opportunities sooner and asked for help, it might have changed their trajectory or at least made for a more complete undergraduate experience sooner (Callie, Anna, Ruby). This connects to Chickering & Reisser (1993) regarding the growth of individuals within the independence to interdependence vector. Embracing and seeking out resources that further connectedness ultimately expedites making the most of the transition and better prepares the nonresident for the

next transition in their life journey. Such findings suggest earlier and more frequent reflection by participants during their transition may help to establish a sense of belonging for nonresident participants.

In closing, transforming through personal growth helps set the stage for nonresident participants to seek out and achieve a sense of belonging. In relation to Schlossberg's Transition Theory (2006) and Chickering's Theory of Identify Development (1993), achieving independence can only bring a nonresident undergraduate so far. It is recognition of this newly found state coupled with actively pursuing interconnectedness in their surroundings that helps make a sense of belonging possible. As shared by the study participants, independence, self-discovery and reflection contributed greatly to finally realizing a sense of belonging to their campus and/or surrounding community.

Theme #2: Identifying across Groups and Areas

Identifying across groups and areas was a theme reflected in all nine participants' accounts. This subtheme represents personal association to a group, culture or geographic area and serves as a significant influence on their undergraduate perspective. Within this theme, three identity subthemes proved significant to their sense of belonging: major-academic, nonresident, and hometown population size.

Major-Academic. A nonresident's ability to identify with their major/academic program proved particularly influential in establishing a sense of belonging in this study's findings. Through an overlay of Schlossberg's Transition Theory (2006), this identification closely aligns with "self-psychological-sense of meaning & purpose." Evelyn described her change of major

during her third year as, “...this is what I actually want to do with my life is a landscape design... And I finally was like, this is what I’m supposed to be doing” (Interview #2). In short, these third year nonresidents found purpose and direction through their declared major regardless of when their current major was formalized. From an institutional logics perspective, this connects to the “collective identities and identification” dimension. Academic programs serve as built-in structural support to form connections and create the potential for an academic peer group. This participant group was a representative sample of the greater student body in showcasing a wide range of major circumstances (i.e. initial, changed, undeclared, etc.). Evelyn and Thor offered some valuable insights concerning the process of changing majors in contrast to John’s story about reconsidering, but ultimately deciding to remain in his original major. While Callie remained undeclared (i.e. University Studies) through her first two years of enrollment. Combined, being able to identify with a major helped to illustrate how having a sense of meaning and purpose serves as an adaptive strategy for the participants allowing them to modify their circumstances to ultimately feel a stronger sense of belonging to the campus community.

Nonresident. Further, identifying as a nonresident was found to be a complicated subtheme within this study. While such identification can help with personal validation and even recognition, it can also lead to perceived hostility from other members of the community (Callie). “I guess when I tell people I’m from [home state], I always get a weird look” (Interview #1). In contrast, a nonresident peer group commonly resulted in roommates (Ben, Evelyn, Sarah) and a social group to participate in outdoor activities (Sarah & Riptide). Such findings seem to align with past literature on how a student’s “perceived cohesion” can boost their overall morale (Bollen & Hoyle, 1990). However, nonresidents can also struggle with this identity as they feel a

need to justify their very existence (Callie) amongst resident peers. “So being a nonresident or a resident, it shouldn’t really change how we learn or how we experience things or if we belong or if we have that sense of belonging or not” (Interview #2). Clearly, having a nonresident identity generates a conflicted range of emotions and interactions.

From an institutional logics perspective, the “classification and categorization” dimension was clearly reflected as nonresidents increasingly represent financial sustainability for the university. Yet, campus leadership exhibited the “attention” dimension in being cognizant of how the MSU land grant mission made it imperative that their various statewide stakeholders do not perceive nonresidents as overshadowing or otherwise displacing the resident student in importance. Literature would argue mission creep may also be in play (i.e. Jaquette et al., 2016) as strategic campus decisions center on continued recruitment of the nonresident student population. Interestingly, the majority of participants lacked an understanding of the meaning or purpose of a land grant institution when asked during their initial interview. Responses such as, “I guess I don’t even know what a land grant university is” (Anna, Interview #1) and “I genuinely have no idea. I feel like I don’t even know what that means, which I’m a little embarrassed about...” (Ruby, Interview #1). In balance, would this be any different for residents or other land grant campuses? Only those participants with a “campus insider” perspective (Thor & Riptide) along with a social studies major (i.e. Ben) offered a clear understanding of the land grant mission. Alternatively, might the participants have experienced what the land grant mission looks like in practice through participation in outreach and research projects, but just do not have the textbook definition internalized? Clearly, the nonresident identity offers both individual and

institutional perspectives across a theoretical and applied sense when discussing sense of belonging.

Hometown Population. Finally, a participant's hometown origins were found to influence perspective on sense of belonging. No participants equated the campus or surrounding community as being the "same" as their hometown. However, Ben indicated a sense of familiarity when discussing common aspects between the host community and his own hometown. Anna presented one of the more compelling insights in discussing how she had a difficult time identifying as a nonresident because the host community brought together similar industries (i.e. Agriculture and Recreation)—a space she was very accustomed to in her own hometown. Overall, participants either equated Bozeman to being bigger (Anna, Ben, Sarah) or smaller (Remaining participants). Participant responses reflected more divergence in their perceptions concerning past literature on host community characteristics. In terms of support, Bozeman represents a non-metro location (Dotterweich & Baryla, Jr., 2005), smaller town (Adkisson & Peach, 2008), younger population (Cooke & Boyle, 2011) and an area of high natural amenities (Dotzel, 2017). However, the wealth of the host state (Montana) as compared to the participants' home state (Adkisson & Peach, 2008; Canche, 2017) and future job prospects (Baryla, Jr. & Dotterweich, 2001) were minimally reflected in this study's findings. Results from this study suggest the size and composition of their hometown might influence the expediency of, and receptivity to, fostering a sense of belonging as a nonresident, whereas more statewide economic indicators and characteristics appear relatively insignificant in this process. Such findings appear to run in contrast to a recent update in the host institution's viewbook where a former international map was replaced with a Montana state map giving the impression of there

being a renewed land grant to state focus. While a relatively subtle change overall, it illuminates how nonresidents are in Anderson et al.'s (2012) terms truly “betwixt or between” even with their geographical identity during this moving through phase.

In summary, the degree a nonresident identifies with their major, nonresident status, and hometown size, the more inclined they are to feel a sense of belonging to the campus and surrounding community. A participant's identification provided direction and purpose. A nonresident's identity also generated a complicated picture of both individual and institutional perspectives. Lastly, the hometown origins of a participant can offer insights into the degree of belonging a participant may feel to the host campus and community. Ultimately, both internal and external influences combine to determine the extent a nonresident felt a sense of belonging on this land grant university campus.

Theme #3: Supporting Across Communities

Supporting across communities was inclusive of all nine participants' experiences. This subtheme focuses on the interactions of nonresidents with both the on-campus and off-campus communities. Within this theme, several subthemes emerged regarding sense of belonging including: campus events & activities, involvement, familiarity with host community, and state culture.

Campus Events and Activities. Campus events and activities contributed to sense of belonging in a myriad of ways. In particular, several participants (Riptide, Thor & Ben) cited the host institution's “week of welcome” programming as a contributing factor to their sense of belonging. Such findings seem to support Hurtado & Carter's (1997) study on sense of belonging and the students feeling “included” in the college community. Further, Ben discussed how the

host institution's "Gold Rush" football game generated community sense for him and Ruby spoke to the initial residence life events as fostering community for her. Combined, these efforts contribute to the "collective identities and identification" dimension of institutional logics in fostering connection and establishing a social group for the participants. Such efforts at the institutional level help introduce the students to key resources and systems serving as an investment in subsequent long term retention efforts. Further, these traditional events reinforce institutional logics in providing meaning and memories for the participants as predictable, anticipated events from one year to the next.

Involvement. In addition, the involvement subtheme contributed to sense of belonging for these participants, but in a different way. The acculturation offered through belonging to clubs and organizations, specifically residence life and Greek life, had a distinctly different impact on participants than one time events. With on-campus living arrangements, participants (Thor, Riptide, Ruby, Callie) appeared to have much more awareness of, and were more likely to participate in, various campus events. Such arrangements connect with Schlossberg's Transition Theory (2006) regarding "support" in terms of a network of friends as these participants were immersed in a social, campus setting on a daily basis. Further, a "community within a community" emerged and was frequently selected in the photovoice portion of the study. Nonresidents who committed to more long term involvement on campus either through work or social organizations, had a greater depth and breadth of understanding of the community. In turn, the significant association between sense of belonging and university belonging, as cited in the literature, could be realized (Freeman et al., 2007). Through long term commitments to

university-affiliated organizations, these nonresidents felt as if they had a voice and an invested stake in what took place in their respective communities.

Overall, the degree to which sense of belonging was realized varied considerably across the nine participants. A common theme was all participants, at the very least, recognized opportunities and resources to get involved on campus were available to them. However, due to various circumstances, some still felt less connected to campus. Anna viewed campus as a place of business transaction whereas Evelyn found value in primarily the academic components. Thor, Riptide & Sarah all viewed campus from an insider perspective as this is where they held an on-campus job. While Callie & Ruby considered their sorority house as their “home away from home.” Finally, Ben represented the most balance of all participants regarding sense of belonging by still participating in a range of campus events and activities, yet still living off campus. Accordingly, from an institutional logics perspective, the degree in which the “collective identities and identification” dimension was fully realized may be more reliant on place of living/proximity than any other single factor.

Surrounding Bozeman Community. Despite all participant references being neutral or positive, familiarity with the surrounding Bozeman community and the local area served as a persistent deficit for nonresident participants. Even after three years of enrollment, a couple of participants (Riptide, Evelyn) still indicated a lack of awareness of the general area, at least compared to their resident peers. Such insights seem to reflect Schlossberg’s Transition Theory (2006) with these participants in possibly underutilizing the potential supports available in the community. In contrast, there was a small, but compelling counterpoint amongst participants who elected to stay in Bozeman for the summers (Riptide, Thor, John, Anna) compared to those

who returned home. For instance, John spoke to the pronounced differences in pace of the student lifestyle between the academic terms and summer. “But during the summer, I had so much more time and I had a couple of friends who like cars. I was able to kind of, you know, explore Bozeman more and go to different restaurants and other things. I feel like it was then it sort of made me realize or start to feel like as like a second home” (Interview #2). In short, while the surrounding community presented a generally positive impression, the more functional aspects of community resources still required further understanding to meet the basic needs of some of the participants (see Recommendations: Practical Guide to Community).

State Culture. State culture was infrequently cited within this study yet offers potentially significant insights when discussing sense of belonging. While there were few mentions outside of the local area, the references participants did make proved compelling. Riptide spoke to how the culture of the host community compared to that of his hometown resulting in his consideration of possibly living and working in Montana following graduation. These sentiments seem to support past literature arguing the increased likelihood of nonresidents staying to live and work in an out-of-state university’s geographic area following graduation (Baryla, Jr. & Dotterweich, 2001; Winters, 2012; Zhang & Ness, 2010). Alternatively, Callie related the potential negative impact of cultural stereotypes when discussing her past upbringing and family. While Callie references how empathy is emphasized by the college of her program of study (institutional logics), she did not feel this always carried over when in the general community.

I guess challenges, just like the vocabularies of the residents peoples have, kind of just hits me different. I really don’t want to say the words, but you can think about it and guess that’s probably just one. But when I hear something that’s derogatory, I get triggered (Interview #1).

This occurrence can be categorized as a stress-inducing event through Schlossberg's Transition Theory (2006) and has implications for a participant's ability to successfully navigate the moving through phase of their transition. The interplay of campus and the surrounding culture has clear potential to influence the degree a nonresident establishes and maintains a sense of belonging.

In review, the supporting across communities theme provides important insights on how on-campus and off-campus experiences shape a nonresident's reported sense of belonging. While participant contributions, literature and theory all identify the benefits of campus involvement, this study indicates the degree of involvement (i.e. One time event vs. Campus organization) made a difference on both overall awareness and engagement. Also, off-campus involvement offered some evidence for sense of belonging; however, a gap in the literature existed concerning nonresident versus resident awareness of community resources. Further, participants provided evidence of how existing cultures found within the host state can both encourage and discourage sense of belonging with nonresident participants. Overall, all participants recognized a sense of belonging; yet, there was variability when applying this concept across all campus and greater community contexts.

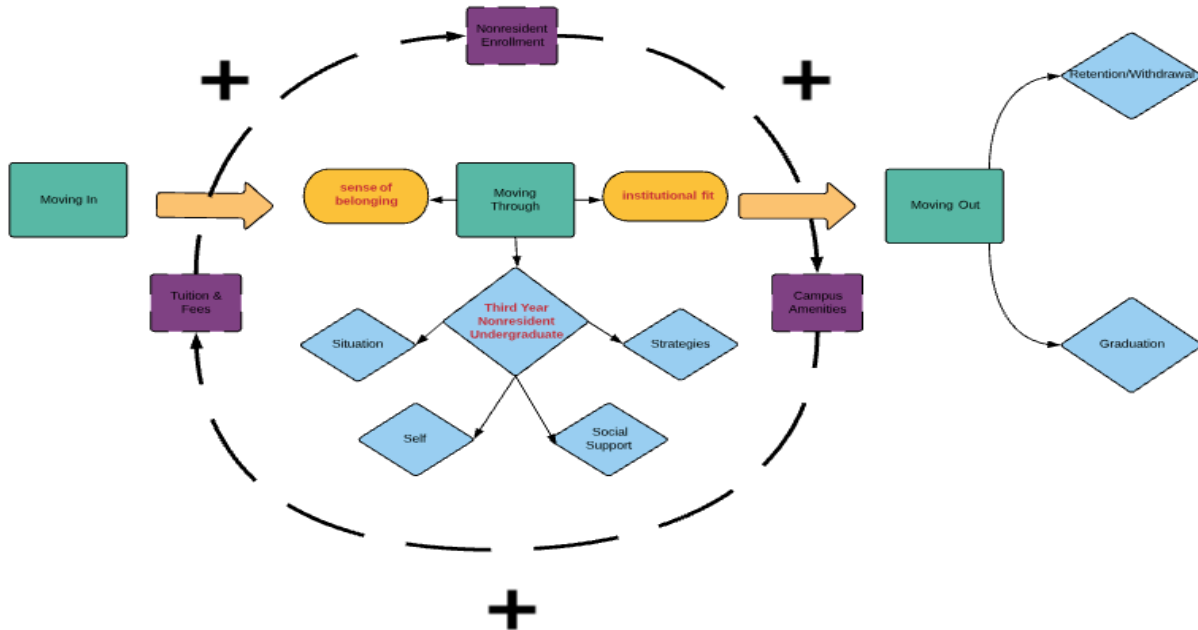
Research Question #3 Nonresident Sense of Belonging

Discussion on study results related to the third research question focused on three themes. First, *transforming through personal growth* illustrated the convergence of two theories (i.e. Schlossberg's Transition Theory (2006) and Chickering's Seven Vectors Identity Development Theory (1993) in establishing how nonresidents had to first recognize their newly found sense of independence during the transition prior to being receptive to engaging with other resources leading to a sense of belonging. Second, *identifying across groups and areas* provided insights

into how identifying with a major/program and as a nonresident contributes to sense of belonging. Nonresident participants appeared to lack much direct awareness of the land grant context, suggesting little to no influence on their sense of belonging. In applying institutional logics theory, several dimensions helped to explain a potential shift in mission focus by the host institution, which aligned with past literature. Further, while characteristics of the surrounding community appeared to support findings from past literature (i.e. non-metro/smaller town, younger population, natural amenities), their practical impact on the participants' sense of belonging seemed to serve more of a secondary role. Third, *supporting across communities* provided a contrast in how participation in "one-shot" events to more long-term organizational commitments contribute to sense of belongings. Findings appear to support past sense of belonging literature. Institutional logics and Schlossberg's Transition Theory (2006) further explain how these institutional supports ultimately contribute to the participant's transition to campus. A disparate example of a nonresident's stress inducing event regarding clash of cultures provided important insight into potential roadblocks to achieving a sense of belonging. Further, evidence suggests a lack of awareness of resources in the surrounding community may impact fully realizing a sense of belonging at this level. In summary, a nonresident's sense of belonging is a complex interplay of self-awareness and access to surrounding resources contributing to actualizing sense of belonging over time.

Theoretical Framework Reimagined

Figure 17. Transition of Third Year Nonresident Undergraduate (copy of Figure 1)



Transition of a third-year nonresident undergraduate on a land grant university campus.

The figure depicts the intersection of the institutional logics of a land grant university (dashed circle) intersecting with the experiences of a nonresident undergraduate in the moving through phase of Schlossberg's Transition Theory (2006). Adapted from "How Colleges Work: The cybernetics of academic organization and leadership," by Robert Birnbaum, 1988, p. 47; "Counseling Adults in Transition (3rd ed.)" by Goodman, J., Schlossberg, N. K., & Anderson, M. L. (2006); "Surviving and Thriving: The adaptive responses of four-year colleges and universities during the great recession," by Brint, S., Yoshikawa, S., Rotondi, M., Viggiano, T. & Maldonado, J.

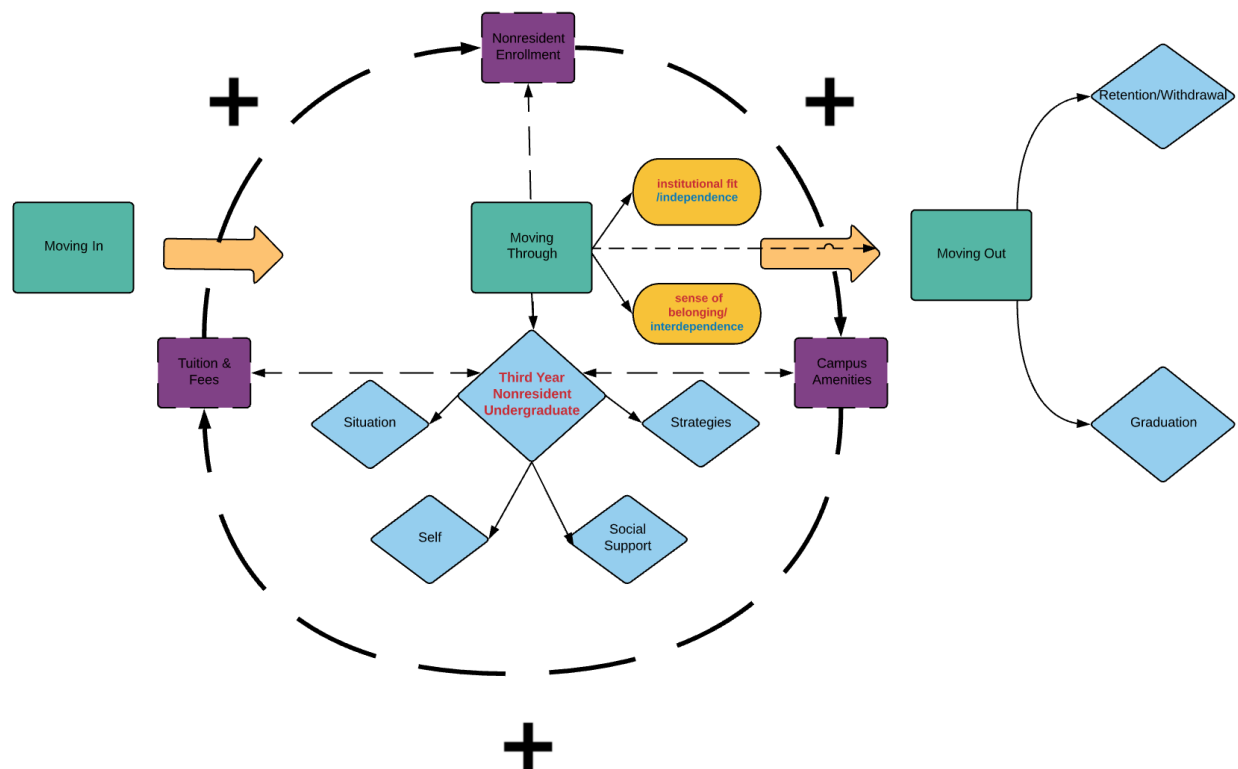
For this study, Schlossberg's Transition Theory (2006) and the Institutional Logics Meta-Theory (Friedland & Alford, 1991) were used to help make sense of the nonresident experience from a student and university perspective. Further, sense of belonging and institutional fit were incorporated to better define the moving through phase for participants. Based on the results of this study, two modifications are proposed.

Institutional Logics and Four S's. Upon further analysis, it appears institutional logics not only helps to better define the context, but also directly influences nonresident undergraduates lived experiences. For instance, increased tuition and fees impact the situation, self-outlook, student decisions on accessing supports & resources and the subsequent strategies they used to cope. In turn, these decisions made by the individual impacts, at least indirectly, decisions made by the institution itself when considered as a collective. For instance, the host university has made a strategic investment in various campus amenities (i.e. new residence halls, cafeterias, etc.), in part, to better position themselves for recruitment purposes, particularly of nonresidents who form an increasingly larger share of the freshman study body each year. Thus, this reciprocal relationship is better represented by two-way arrows between the "Third Year Nonresident Undergraduate" and the three institutional logics areas of focus: tuition and fees, nonresident enrollment, and campus amenities.

Chickering's Autonomy to Interdependence Vector. Based on study findings, Chickering's Seven Vectors of Identity Development Theory (1993), with particular emphasis on the third vector (i.e. autonomy towards interdependence), proved influential in better understanding the nonresident progression towards establishing a sense of belonging. Accordingly, a re-envisioned conceptual framework would include a bifurcated moving through

phase where nonresidents initially experience institutional fit during their autonomy/independence phase, but only fully realize sense of belonging once interdependence with the host campus and/or surrounding community is realized. In short, a nonresident can achieve a functional fit as an autonomous individual, but only realizes a sense of belonging in the fullest sense of the concept after embracing the available resources and opportunities available to them on campus (i.e. interdependence). As a result of this re-envisioning, a modified conceptual framework appears below.

Figure 18. Transition of Third Year Nonresident Undergraduate-Revised



Transition of a third-year nonresident undergraduate on a land grant university campus-revised.

The figure depicts the intersection of the institutional logics of a land grant university (dashed circle) intersecting with the experiences of a nonresident undergraduate in the moving

through phase of Schlossberg's Transition Theory (2006). Chickering's Seven Vectors of Student Development Theory (1993) provides further refinement to the transition. Adapted from "How Colleges Work: The cybernetics of academic organization and leadership," by Robert Birnbaum, 1988, p. 47; "Counseling Adults in Transition (3rd ed.)" by Goodman, J., Schlossberg, N. K., & Anderson, M. L. (2006); "Surviving and Thriving: The adaptive responses of four-year colleges and universities during the great recession," by Brint, S., Yoshikawa, S., Rotondi, M., Viggiano, T. & Maldonado, J.; "Education and Identity (2nd ed.)" by Chickering, A. & Reisser, L.

Recommendations for Policy and Practice

Policy

1. Expand Outdoor Curriculum (Associated Theme: Recreating as a Lifestyle): The host institution's motto of "Mountains and Minds" appears to have long term staying power with this nonresident population. Participants were appreciative of class projects that integrated the outdoors. Instead of isolated occurrences, the outdoors could be more intentionally infused throughout the academic and/or community aspects of each college. Also, whether formalized in the university's strategic plan or part of the institution's student co-curricular e-portfolios, integration with the "mountains" aspects has distinct buy-in potential for nonresident participants. In addition, potential for inclusion of outdoor classrooms exists to reinforce the campus motto in a very tangible way. Finally, there is room for further expansion of extracurricular outdoor opportunities to promote greater engagement overall by the student body. As suggested by a study participant

(Thor), Outdoor Recreation could help coordinate and facilitate this integration through residence halls and the campus as a whole.

2. Nonresident Insurance (Associated Theme: Adapting from Home to University Life):

Potential exists for generating greater awareness of the university's insurance policy as it pertains to nonresident undergraduates. While information on this process is made available on the University Health Partners website, it is not always clear how significant of a difference the university's AcademicBlue plan can be compared to a nonresident staying on as a dependent on their parents' plan. Since nonresidents are very likely to be out-of-network from the start, automatic enrollment in the university plan by default may be preferable to an opt-in model that currently exists at registration.

3. Staggered Tuition (Associated Theme: Adapting from Home to University Life): While reciprocity agreements were not a significant discussion points of this study, merit scholarships did emerge as a significant factor in the nonresident experience. Under this arrangement, nonresidents who demonstrate adequate academic progress are eligible for a set amount of merit aid for each academic year. Maintaining a four year model (i.e. limit) appears to serve as an effective motivation for timely nonresident undergraduate graduation. However, when addressing disparities in nonresident persistence, a "success stipend" sliding scholarship scale may be more appropriate where students are eligible for greater funds with each academic year they remain enrolled. Even though this would reduce potential revenue generated by the university, it may be off-set by retaining, rather than losing a significant number of students between their first and third year of

enrollment and reduce marketing/recruitment costs of first year students needed to recoup these losses.

4. Nonresident Mentoring (Associated Theme: Socializing to Stay): Considering the demonstrated value of nonresidents establishing connections with other nonresidents early on in their time on campus, establishing a network of current nonresidents with incoming nonresidents holds promise. Such introductions could be embedded within the existing Sophomore Surge and freshman seminar program. Even if a small number of incoming nonresident freshman utilize this mentoring resource, as reflected in the study results, it has potential to make a difference as just being aware that these resources are available can contribute to feeling a sense of belonging. As offered by Braxton et al., 2007, universities may improve retention outcomes by treating all students at risk. Expanding the mentoring efforts to explicitly recognize nonresidents as a subgroup on campus with unique needs may help to generate awareness and further university action during this critical transition phase.

Practice

1. Orientation Programming (Associated Theme: Socializing to Stay): Based on several study participant comments, potential exists for modifying and/or adding to existing program in the following areas:
 - a. Develop sessions to better maximize nonresident interactions and subsequent connections (both same state and in general).

- b. Include more programming on a statewide level concerning Montana history and culture. Such efforts may help to provide a starting point for understanding and discussions with residents from across the state.
 - c. Establishing a user-friendly interface and guidance for parents of nonresidents to enhance quality interactions from afar. Such guidance could first be introduced during the parent portions of orientation and disseminated widely prior to the start of the academic year. This study demonstrated how important staying connected with family is for nonresident students. Developing a user-guide or comparable resources serves as a valuable investment to ensure this importance source of support is maximized both on campus and at home.
2. Transportation (Adapting from Home to University Life): As a result of this study, transportation emerged as an important aspect of the nonresident experience. Many nonresidents do not have a vehicle of their own and rely on air travel to get between campus and home. While the host university partners with the local city public transit and often provides transportation for organized events, nonresidents are more inclined to require transportation on the weekends and more for on demand, short term convenience. This is particularly important during the student's first year on campus with added expenses and limited access to parking spaces. A ridesharing program such as Zipcar currently services 500+ university campuses and is well suited for a less dense living area as offered by the host university campus and community (Zipcar, 2020). Generating further awareness of existing transportation and working to make short term rentals

available has the potential to greatly enhance the overall experience felt by this nonresident undergraduate population.

3. Disaggregating Family Weekend (Familying from Afar): Participants generally indicated great value with visits from family members to offer encouragement and support during their time as an undergraduate. Considering the pronounced value of siblings with initial enrollment and support throughout, room exists to consider including a siblings weekend both as a retention and recruitment tool. The study findings appear to indicate something distinctly different about sibling influence in this capacity. While family members can technically visit anytime, having the host university formalize two weekends helps to establish this as an institutional value and expands opportunities. Furthermore, this may help with both retention of current students, while simultaneously recruiting younger siblings currently in high school.
4. Practical Guide to Community (Supporting Across Communities): Study findings indicated a clear focus from the host campus to communicate on campus, entertainment and outdoor recreation opportunities. However, there appears to be a deficit on more practical information such as places to go for a haircut, car repair or grocery shopping. This need may generate an opportunity for furthering the existing campus-community partnership by working with the Bozeman Chamber of Commerce to help make this information more accessible and readily available to the students through a common web portal, app, etc.

Future Research Recommendations

As a result of this intrinsic case study, a number of potential areas for future research on nonresident undergraduates arise. Whenever relevant, associated recommendations from past literature are included. Areas of focus include: multi-site case study, COVID, nonresident departure, residency change process & a longitudinal study from start to finish.

Collective Case Study

The host university was chosen as an exceptional case concerning the disproportionately high percentage of nonresidents enrolled at this land grant institution. From here, it would be valuable to explore several other land grant universities across the region to better understand how universities are marketing and recruiting nonresident undergraduates at a much larger scale. In turn, this would assist in contributing to the spatial literature and seeing how state legislatures encourage and discourage this practice in their own states.

A collective case study involving three to five land grant university campuses in the Rocky Mountain region would offer an informative set of initial data sources. The researcher would select these sites for the following reasons: peer institutions, adequate nonresident population, and differences in nonresident undergraduate enrollment levels. Cases in this design are expected to have some similarities (Savin-Baden & Howell Major, 2013), yet offer a wide range of perspectives (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Peer institutions with varying degrees of nonresident enrollment fulfill this criterion. Also, this design promotes replication (Yin, 2009) and has a manageable case number (Creswell & Poth, 2017). A collective case study provides a logical next step in expanding this type of study design.

COVID Era

Existing literature points to how the Great Recession led to a fundamental shift in how land grant universities approach enrollment & tuition (Brink et al., 2012, 2016), in general, let alone in regard to nonresident undergraduates. Similarly, the COVID era pandemic has pushed universities to again pivot in order to survive in another challenging economic time. Questions emerge on whether this environmental change will lead to even more fervent recruitment of nonresidents or will universities take a different approach from an institutional logics standpoint? Early indications from this host institution reveal that nonresidents will be more coveted than ever before. Fall 2020 numbers reflected nonresidents making up 58% of the freshman class (MSU, 2020d). This helped to keep enrollment/tuition dollars lost to a minimum (MSU, 2020e). An alternative explanation is that Montana was perceived to be a “safer” college destination due to its lower population density and relative geographic isolation making nonresidents (and their parents) more inclined to attend in-person than their home states. Finally, the university made a commitment early on to offer the majority of courses in-person, rather than online. This study helps to address whether or not this was a temporary response or if this decision will hold more long-term implications for the university and its nonresident student population.

Nonresident Departure

While it is valuable to understand the reasons why nonresidents persist, the obvious counterpoint is providing an in-depth qualitative study on why nonresidents actually depart. Typically, there are very few existing university mechanisms to capture this data other than an exit survey. By conducting in-depth interviews with individuals who chose to depart, invaluable information can be gathered to extend the current literature in this area. Such information may be

able to pinpoint key points in their undergraduate career that influenced this decision helping to inform future programming and to address the inherent survivorship bias present in this study.

Residency Process

Even though discussion in this area was limited to two participants (Evelyn & Sarah) and a change in residency status is a relatively rare event (Johnson & Muse, 2012), considerable policy implications exist on how the residency policy for tuition purposes is communicated and implemented from a student perspective. Phrases used by students in this study to describe this process such as *kept under the radar*, *kind of shady* and *it's hard to do that* generate interest both at a theoretical and practical standpoint. With recent decisions by the Montana University System to further “tighten the rules” (Schontzler, 2018d) on obtaining resident tuition status, an insider student perspective on this experience, potential challenges, and ultimate outcomes would be invaluable in determining how this policy decision ultimately impacts the university’s retention outcomes.

Longitudinal Study

While the researcher worked with most of these students during the first semester of their freshman year, the primary focus was on their sixth semester, which generated a richness of detail both in word and image. Conducting a long range four year study allowing for comparisons at the end of each year would yield even greater data on the key benchmarks for nonresidents and the subsequent experiences encountered by nonresidents throughout their time at the university.

Geographical Regions & Cultures

Within the limited data available of nonresident undergraduates, distance from home has received much of the attention. However, based on comments from one of the participants, it would be valuable to see if not just distance, but the culture of the particular region has an impact on the time and degree of sense of belonging that results for the students. This study encompassed participants from four time zones, but was not able to capture input from other major geographical/cultural regions of the country (i.e. Northeast, Atlantic, South, Alaska/Hawaii, etc.) Incorporating voices from nonresidents across all major regions may help to expand literature on the reciprocal contributions between residents and nonresidents along with potential areas of conflict to assist universities with campus climate programming.

Summary

This chapter presented conclusions based on the data resulting from this qualitative intrinsic case study. Key aspects of this study's guiding theories were reviewed. Subsequently, emergent themes were discussed in answering the study's three guiding research questions centered on the nonresident lived experience, persistence and sense of belonging at a specific land grant institution. Based on the discussion, the study's conceptual framework was revised to account for contributions made by Chickering's Seven Vectors of Student Development Theory (1993). Finally, recommendations for policy, practice and future research were presented.

As offered at the study outset, the researcher attempted to explore this largely "anonymous anomaly" in order to make this case study more of an "explained entity." Through interviews, photovoice and document analysis methods, the story of this nonresident cohort and their host institution was revealed. While many of the findings overlap with their resident peers,

significant differences were also discovered. Additional research and programming is warranted to help make the nonresident undergraduates and host institution a viable and sustainable partnership moving forward.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

INITIAL PARTICIPANT INVITATION EMAILS

Email Invitation to Possible Participant

Dear ____ ,

I hope your 2020 is off to a great start and you are looking forward to the spring semester that awaits! My name is Joe Hicks and I am inviting you to participate in a research study exploring the experiences of third year nonresident undergraduates at MSU. I am a doctoral student in the Adult and Higher Education program at Montana State University. Hearing about your experiences would serve as an invaluable addition to my dissertation study.

During Fall 2017, I reached out to various first year seminar classes at MSU for volunteers to participate in my pilot study on this topic. At the time, you indicated an interest in participating. The current study serves as a follow up and will entail a brief questionnaire, two interviews, and a discussion of photos that you select as representing your college experience. The time and location of the interviews will be scheduled based on what works best for you. Participants who complete all phases of this research process will receive a \$50 Amazon gift certificate for your time.

Participation is voluntary and you can choose to not answer any questions you do not want to answer and/or you can stop at any time. Participation or non-participation will not affect your grade or class standing. The investigator will treat your identity with professional standards of confidentiality. There are no foreseen risks to you for participating in this research. However, should you feel discomfort you may choose to not answer a question and/or terminate your participation at any time.

If you are willing to participate in this study, please respond to this email james.hicks5@montana.edu. I will follow up with the next steps, a link to the online questionnaire, and access to a consent form to review in advance of our first in-person interview.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Sharing the nonresident voice is of great value to MSU and the overall research community.

Sincerely,

-Joe

Follow Up Email Reminder to Participants-Nonresponse

Dear _____ ,

Last week you received an invitation to participate in a research study involving your experiences as a third year nonresident undergraduate at Montana State University. At this time, I have not received your response. This serves as a reminder that it is not too late to participate! Hearing about your experiences would serve as an invaluable addition to my dissertation study.

During Fall 2017, I reached out to various first year seminar classes at MSU for volunteers to participate in my pilot study on this topic. At the time, you indicated an interest in participating. The current study serves as a follow up and will entail a brief questionnaire, two interviews, and a photo collection activity. The time and location of the interviews will be scheduled based on what works best for you. **Participants who complete all phases of this research process will receive a \$50 Amazon gift certificate for your time.**

Participation is voluntary and you can choose to not answer any questions you do not want to answer and/or you can stop at any time. Participation or non-participation will not affect your grade or class standing. The investigator will treat your identity with professional standards of confidentiality. There are no foreseen risks to you for participating in this research. However, should you feel discomfort you may choose to not answer a question and/or terminate your participation at any time.

Please confirm or decline this invitation by replying to this email (james.hicks5@montana.edu) by **Monday, January 20th** so I am aware of your intentions and can move forward with the next steps in the research process. If you indicate an interest in participating, I will follow up with the next steps, a link to the online questionnaire, and access to a consent form to review in advance of our first in-person interview.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Sharing the nonresident voice is of great value to MSU and the overall research community.

In gratitude,
-Joe

Follow Up Email-Participant Declination

Dear ____ ,

Thank you for time and consideration regarding this research study opportunity. I am confirming your decision to not participate in this study at this time. Should you change your mind, you are welcome to let me know at james.hicks5@montana.edu . Also, if you know of anyone else who may be interested in participating in this study, please feel free to forward my initial email to them. I wish you a great spring semester!

Best regards,

-Joe

APPENDIX B

CONFIRMED PARTICIPANT EMAILS

Follow Up Email-Participation Confirmation

Dear ___,

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this research study. I look forward to working with you this semester. Also, I currently have several late afternoon time slots that should work out nicely with your schedule. As introduced in my previous email, here are the next required steps in the research process:

1. Questionnaire: Please take time to complete this initial background questionnaire in advance of our first interview using the following Qualtrics link https://montana.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_7P0WCFgBeGRfN2d. You are asked to respond to a total of 12 questions in a yes/no and fill-in-the-blank format. This survey should take approximately five minutes for you to complete.
2. Consent Form: Embedded within the questionnaire, you will find the research consent form that provides an overview of the study and your role as a participant. Please let me know of any questions you may have after reviewing this document. If you understand and agree to the study requirements as presented, you can indicate your intent to participate by typing in your name and the date. At the beginning of our first interview session, we will review the consent form together again and, if in agreement to moving forward in the study, you will be able to confirm your participation via a hard copy signature and date.
3. Scheduling: Considering the busy nature of the semester, I am interested in scheduling the initial interview prior to the beginning of February. I am willing to accommodate your scheduling and meeting location preferences. Please access the Doodle Poll <https://doodle.com/poll/y8th53xwdw4yeayr> indicating three days/times that would work for your schedule. I will provide a follow up email with a confirmed date, time, and location on campus.

If you have any questions between now and then, please do not hesitate to let me know. I look forward to hearing your story.

In gratitude,

-Joe

Follow Up Email—Interview #1 Scheduling Confirmation

Dear ___,

I appreciate you taking the time to share your scheduling availability for our initial email. After coordinating your preferences with my schedule and checking for room availability, I am pleased to confirm our upcoming interview taking place on _____ taking place in _____.

Please plan on setting aside 60-75 minutes for this initial interview. Should you have any questions or need me to clarify any of the requirements, please don't hesitate to reach out at james.hicks5@montana.edu at any time. I wish you a great start to your semester!

In gratitude,

-Joe

Follow Up Email—Day of Scheduling Reminder

Dear ____,

I look forward to speaking with you later today at ____ take place in _____. If you have any questions between now and then, please feel free to contact me at james.hicks5@montana.edu. See you soon!

Best regards,

-Joe

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

In Advance of Interview #1

*2-3 weeks before interview

-January 9th: Reach out to pilot project participants via email the week prior to the start of the spring semester (i.e. January 9th) to re-establish contact, introduce my proposed study, and request participation. (See Appendix A)

-January 16th: Send follow up email one week later (i.e. January 16th) to ensure participants received initial invitation and to elicit participant confirmation/declination in the study. (See Appendix A)

-January 20th: Send confirmation email to willing participants that includes a copy of the participant consent form, Doodle poll interview scheduling link, and a link to the questionnaire of preliminary screening questions via Qualtrics. (See Appendix B)

-Based on any indicated participant preferences (i.e. date, time, location), I will look into and reserve appropriate interview space on campus in a centralized location (i.e. SUB, library study room, Reid conference room, etc.) that is free of potential distractions.

*1 week before interview

-Email participants with confirmation on the time and place for the interview. Note: The window for the initial interview will take place Monday, January 27th-Sunday, February 9th. (See Appendix B)

-Remind participants to review the participant consent form and to complete the questionnaire of preliminary screening questions via Qualtrics prior to attending this initial interview. (See Appendix B)

-Test Otter Voice Meeting Notes App on phone, Voice Memos on laptop, and backup audio recording device to ensure functionality and proper uploading of transcripts to secure Box folder.

Day of Interview #1

-Send a reminder email to participant(s) of interview time and location. (See Appendix B)

-Have hard copies of the participant consent form, interview questions (participant and researcher), designated researcher notes sheet to record observations or standout moments to complement the content shared during the interview, and photo elicitation collection instructions.

-Check-in to space 10 minutes beforehand to ensure potential distractions addressed (i.e. light, sound, temperature) and to set up recording devices.

Beginning of Interview #1

-Welcome participant and check to see how their day/semester is going.

-Introduce myself, role, and dissertation research study.

-Provide an explanation of the purpose of today's interview (i.e. Gain a better understanding of their unique experiences as a third year nonresident undergraduate on a land grant campus) and to expect the interview to last between 45-60 minutes.

-Share steps taken to ensure confidentiality and elicit input for a preferred pseudonym.

- Distribute and review the hard copy participant consent forms. Ask if the participant has any questions. Ensure a signed copy is kept by both the participant and researcher. (See Appendix I)
- Explain the recording procedures and purpose behind each tool. Combined, my notes, audio-recording device, Voice Memos on my laptop, and iPhone Otter Voice Meeting Notes help to ensure accuracy of information. All data will be securely stored. Also, I will follow up prior to the second interview to ensure the transcription is accurate and to clarify any responses that may have not recorder properly.

Interview #1

- Encourage participant to ask for clarification if any question is unclear. Also, offer to come back to any questions that they wish more time to consider and come back to later on in the interview.
- Proceed with proposed interview protocol; however, allow for unscripted follow up questions as offered in a semi-structured interview format. (See Appendix E)

Interview #1 Conclusion

- Remember to end with question, “Is there anything you would like to add or perhaps I didn’t ask?”
- Allow space for participant to ask more general questions about the topic or research process.
- Confirm date/time/location for follow up interview (Approximately two weeks from today.)
- Introduce photo elicitation protocol: (See Appendix E)
 - *Distribute photo elicitation collection instructions
 - *Between now and our next interview, you are asked to use your own personal phone to take photos on campus that answer the following questions:
 - 1. What image most accurately reflects your third year nonresident experience?
 - 2. What has been the most important source of support in your persistence on this land grant university campus?
 - 3. Where do you feel you belong the most and/or represents where you best fit as a nonresident?
 - *You are encouraged to take as many photos initially, then narrow your photos down to the single image that best answers each of these questions. (i.e. Total of three photos)
 - *Ensure that you first secure permission to use any photos with recognizable faces prior to formally submitting these images to the secure Box folder.
 - *Upload your photos in the following format “Participant #-Experience/Support/Belonging” in the corresponding folders found on Box at <https://montana.account.box.com/>
 - *Photos should be uploaded prior to our interview session in two weeks.
 - *During our follow up interview, we will have the chance to talk about your experiences and why you selected these photos for submission.
- Thank the participant for their time and contributions during today’s interview

Between Interviews #1 & #2

- Transfer recorded interviews to secure digital location on Box.
- Transcribe interviews using Otter Voice Meeting Notes App & NVivo Transcription.
- Share initial transcripts and a summary of preliminary themes with individual participants through the secure Box folder prior to interview #2. Encourage participants to share their initial responses and to clarify any points of confusion during the upcoming interview. (See Appendix G)

*1 week before interview

- Email participants with a reminder of the time and place for the interview. Note: The window for the second interview will take place between **Monday, February 24th-Friday, March 13th**. (See Appendix G)
- Remind participants to complete the following:
 - *Upload their final photo selection for each of the three questions
 - *Review the provided transcripts and preliminary themes for accuracy and feedback.

Day of Interview #2

- Send a reminder email to participant(s) of interview time and location. (See Appendix G)
- Have hard copies of transcripts and summary of preliminary findings for reference.
- Bring laptop to verify successful upload participant photos, intended title confirmation and for projection of images.
- Check-in to space 10 minutes beforehand to ensure potential distractions addressed (i.e. light, sound, temperature), set up recording devices, and ensure secure Internet connectivity.

Beginning of Interview #2

- Welcome participant and check to see how their day/semester is going.
- Summarize what took place with interview #1 and what we will be focusing our attentions on during this interview #2:
 - *Reviewing transcript for accuracy and any feedback on preliminary themes
 - *Check to make sure photos uploaded correctly/securely with accurate, intended titles.
 - *Discuss the photo elicitation process and your interpretations of the photos.
- Provide an explanation of the purpose of today's interview (i.e. Gain a better understanding of their unique experiences as a third year nonresident undergraduate on a land grant campus through images) and to expect the interview to last between 45-60 minutes.

Interview #2

- Ask participants if there was anything inaccurate with the transcripts and/or if they have any feedback on the preliminary themes.
- Pull up and display Box folder with participant images; troubleshoot any challenges in uploading the images.
- Encourage participant to ask for clarification if any question is unclear. Also, offer to come back to any questions that they wish more time to consider and come back to later on in the interview.

-Proceed with proposed interview protocol; however, allow for unscripted follow up questions as offered in a semi-structured interview format. (See Appendix E)

Interview #2 Conclusion

- Remember to end with question, “Is there anything you would like to add or perhaps I didn’t ask?”
- Allow space for participant to ask more general questions about the topic or research process.
- Preview next steps regarding verification of transcript/theme interpretation.
- Verify preferred email address to receive Amazon gift certificate. (Will be sent after participant verifies transcript/preliminary theme interpretation.
- Thank participant for their time and participation.

After Interview #2

- Transfer recorded interviews to secure digital location on Box.
- Transcribe interviews using Otter Voice Meeting Notes App & NVivo Transcriptions.
- Share initial transcripts and a summary of preliminary themes with individual participants through the secure Box folder following interview #2. (See Appendix H)
- Request participants to review transcripts for accuracy and to verify preliminary theme interpretations.
- Send electronic Amazon gift certificate with thank you email for participation.
- The interview process and participant verification phases will be completed by **March 31st, 2020.**

APPENDIX D

PRELIMINARY SCREENING QUESTIONNAIRE

-Questionnaire of preliminary screening questions (Close-ended Demographics)

*Student indicates interest. Complete short Qualtrics & scheduling information.

1. What is your permanent home town and state of residence? [Open-Ended, Text Box]

2. How often do you visit home during an academic year? (i.e. August-May) [Close-Ended, Categories]

0 1 2 3 4+

3. What best describes your current housing type? [Close-Ended, Categories]

Residence Hall Fraternity/Sorority Off-Campus (Bozeman) Off-Campus (Outside Bozeman) Other: Please explain [Text Box]

4. Were you enrolled in a first year University Seminar class associated with the Sophomore Surge program? [Close-Ended, Separate]

Yes No

5. Are you classified as a Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE) scholarship recipient? [Close-Ended, Categories]

Yes No

6. Are you currently the recipient of any other significant merit scholarship through MSU (i.e. Achievement and/or Distinction Awards)? [Close-Ended, Categories]

Yes No

7. Do you currently receive any financial aid loans or grants? [Close-Ended, Categories]

Yes No

8. Are you a first generation college student? (i.e. Your parents have not graduated with a four year degree) [Close-Ended, Separate]

Yes No

9. Are you enrolled as a full time student? (i.e. Taking 12 or more credits this semester) [Close-Ended, Separate]

Yes No

10. What is your current academic major? [Open-Ended, Text Box]

11. What is your projected graduation semester? [Open-Ended, Text Box]

12. What is your current: [Open-Ended, Text Box]

-Age:

-Gender:

-Race/Ethnicity:

APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interview #1 (Semi structured closed AND open ended participant's background)

**Initial participant perceptions*

1. Why did you initially apply and choose to attend MSU?
2. How are these reasons similar/dissimilar for you now as a third year nonresident?
3. To what degree have your initial expectations of MSU been realized?
4. What have been any significant milestones/events that have defined your college career to date?
5. Have you ever considered dropping out, stopping out, or transferring out of MSU? Why?
6. Why do you think you have been able to remain enrolled as a student on this campus?
7. What, if anything, about your own experiences prior to coming to MSU has helped and/or hindered your ability to stay enrolled at MSU?
8. What has MSU specifically provided that you have found to be helpful/not helpful in your ability to stay enrolled?
9. What is different/unique about being a third year nonresident versus resident undergraduate on this campus?
10. What advantages, if any, does a nonresident have on this campus?
11. What challenges, if any, does a nonresident face on this campus?
12. If you had a challenge, what strategies have you personally tried/used to overcome these challenges?
13. In what ways or circumstances have you noticed or felt a nonresident peer group on campus?
14. To what degree have you felt supported by faculty members on campus?
15. To what degree has your major/program supported you while on campus?
16. What campus-wide offices and support services have been most useful?
17. What extracurricular activities (i.e. nonacademic) have you been involved in during your time at MSU?
18. To what extent do you feel a part of this campus community? Why?
19. In retrospect, what campus resource or source of support would you recommend for a first semester freshman to access to help in their transition as a nonresident on campus?
20. What is something that could be offered or made available by the campus to better assist a nonresident in their transition?
21. MSU is a land grant university. With this in mind, how would you define the purpose of a land grant university?
22. What implications does this purpose have for a nonresident undergraduate?
23. Is there anything you would like to add or perhaps I didn't ask?

**Participant-generated photo methods and procedures*

****Next Steps: Participant-generated Photo Methods and Procedures***

Researcher's Notes

___ Review of Interview #1 Transcripts	Date_____
___ Verification of successful image upload	Date_____
___ Discussion of follow up verification steps	Date_____
___ Explanation of Amazon gift card distribution	Date_____
___ Thank you sent	Date_____

APPENDIX F

MAPPING OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS TO RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Table of Specifications-Interview #1 Questions

Research Question	Interview Questions
1. Lived experience (Individual Level)	1. Why did you initially choose to attend MSU? 2. How are these reasons similar/dissimilar for you now as a third year nonresident? 3. To what degree have your initial expectations of MSU been realized? 9. What is different/unique about being a third year nonresident versus resident undergraduate on this campus? 10. What advantages, if any, does a nonresident have on this campus? 11. What challenges, if any, does a nonresident face on this campus? 12. If you had a challenge, what strategies have you personally tried/used to overcome these challenges?
2. University supports (Institutional Level)	4. What have been any significant milestones/events that have defined your college career to date? 7. What, if anything, about your own experiences prior to coming to MSU has helped and/or hindered your ability to stay enrolled at MSU? 8. What has MSU specifically provided that you have found to be helpful/not helpful in your ability to stay enrolled? 16. What campus-wide offices and support services have been most useful? 17. What extracurricular activities (i.e. nonacademic) have you been involved in during your time at MSU? 19. In retrospect, what campus resource or source of support would you recommend for a first semester freshman to access to help in their transition as a nonresident on campus? 20. What is something that could be offered or made available by the campus to better assist a nonresident in their transition? 21. MSU is a land grant university. With this in mind, how would you define the purpose of a land grant university?

	22. What implications does this purpose have for a nonresident undergraduate?
3. Sense of belonging (Combined)	5. Have you ever considered dropping out, stopping out, or transferring out of MSU? Why? 6. Why do you think you have been able to remain enrolled as a student on this campus? 13. In what ways or circumstances have you noticed or felt a nonresident peer group on campus? 14. To what degree have you felt supported by faculty members on campus? 15. To what degree has your major/program supported you while on campus? 18. To what extent do you feel a part of this campus community? Why?
Closing	23. Is there anything you would like to add or perhaps I didn't ask?

Table of Specifications-Interview #2 Questions

Research Question	Interview Question
Opening	1. What was your experience while collecting images related to your experiences as a third year nonresident undergraduate?
1. Lived experience (Individual Level)	2. What image most accurately reflects your third year nonresident experience?
2. University supports (Institutional Level)	3. What has been the most important source of support in your persistence on this land grant university campus?
3. Sense of belonging (Combined)	4. Where do you feel you belong the most and/or represents where you best fit as a nonresident?
Closing	5. Is there anything you would like to add or perhaps I didn't ask?

APPENDIX G

INTERVIEW #1 FOLLOW UP EMAILS

(Conditional—More Interviewees Needed)

Dear ____,

Thank you for your time during last week's interview. I enjoyed having the opportunity to meet with you and hear about your experiences at MSU. I look forward to our follow up interview on _____ regarding the images you are currently collecting that reflect your unique experience at MSU.

As a follow up, do you have any other contacts who may be interested in participating in this study? I still have some interview slots yet to be filled. When time allows, feel free to share my contact information and/or how best to reach your suggested contact. My goal is to ensure the most well represented nonresident voice possible during this study.

I wish you a great rest of your week and look forward to our continued dialogue in the weeks ahead.

In appreciation,

-Joe

(Interview #1 Follow Up—Photo Elicitation Process Detailed Description)

Dear ____,

Thank you for taking the time to interview today. I really appreciated hearing your story as a nonresident undergraduate at MSU. For the next phase of this research study, you will be asked to collect digital photos that answer three questions central to this study. Afterwards, you will select the photo that best addresses each question, upload your photos to the designated Box folder, and participate in a follow up interview.

As an extension of our interview, you are asked to collect digital images that represent your experiences as a nonresident on the MSU campus. To help guide your efforts, please take pictures that address the following questions:

1. What image most accurately reflects your third year nonresident experience?
2. What has been the most important source of support in your persistence on this land grant university campus?
3. Where do you feel you belong the most and/or represents where you best fit as a nonresident?

Initially, you are encouraged to take as many pictures as you deem appropriate. Then, select the image that best answers **each** of these guiding questions (Total of 3 pictures). Please upload your

final image selections to the corresponding Box folder I recently shared through your email address: . **Note: If any of your images include recognizable faces of people, please receive permission from these individuals prior to using this image for research study purposes.**

During our scheduled follow up interview on _____ in _____, you will have an opportunity to discuss these images. Also, I will provide you with a summary of initial findings and a transcript of our interview to obtain your feedback and to ensure accuracy of transcription.

If you have any questions about this process, please do not hesitate to reach out to me at james.hicks5@montana.edu at any time. I look forward to working with you again soon!

Best regards,

-Joe

(Interview #1 Follow Up—Transcript & Preliminary Theme Verification)

Dear _____,

I hope your midterms are going well. Since we last met, I have been able to transcribe our interview. You can access this document using our secure Box folder. Between now and our second interview, please review the contents and be prepared to verify its accuracy. During our interview, I will also have a list of preliminary themes to share and elicit your initial responses.

Also, remember to take, select, and upload the picture that best represents each of the following three questions provided in your photo elicitation collection protocol. (Total of 3 pictures).

1. What image most accurately reflects your third year nonresident experience?
2. What has been the most important source of support in your persistence on this land grant university campus?
3. Where do you feel you belong the most and/or represents where you best fit as a nonresident?

Please follow the format “Last Name-Experience/Support/Belonging” when titling your photos and upload these to the corresponding secure Box folder files prior to our interview.

If you have any questions about either of these processes or need assistance accessing our shared Box folder, please don’t hesitate to let me know at any time. Based on recent experiences, this follow up interview should be shorter than the first, lasting around 30 minutes in total. I look forward to speaking with you about your experiences during our second interview scheduled for _____ in _____.

In appreciation,

-Joe

Follow Up Email—Day of Scheduling Reminder

Dear ____,

I look forward to speaking with you later today at _____. Please remember to review the interview #1 transcript, preliminary themes summary, and upload your selected photos to the secure Box folder prior to our interview. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at james.hicks5@montana.edu. See you at _____!

Best regards,

-Joe

APPENDIX H

INTERVIEW #2 FOLLOW UP EMAILS

(Interview #2 Follow Up—Transcript & Preliminary Theme Verification)

Dear ____,

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me last month to share your photos and nonresident story. Since we last met, I have been able to transcribe our second interview and compiled a summary of preliminary codes & themes. You can access these documents through our shared Box folder. In order to complete this final phase of the research study, please follow these steps:

1. Review both documents for accuracy.
2. Email me at james.hicks5@montana.edu indicating your completion of your review along with any changes (if needed), questions, or additional information you would like to share.
3. Upon completion of this step, I will email your electronic Amazon gift certificate to your preferred email address ().

I have enjoyed having the opportunity to work with you this semester and over the past several years. I am grateful for your contributions and look forward to sharing my findings. I wish you a great spring break and finish to your semester!

Sincerely,

-Joe

APPENDIX I

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD DOCUMENTS

*IRB Application for Review*Full Committee Review ☐Expedited Review ☐

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY
Institutional Review Board Application for Review
(revised 06/01/15)

THIS AREA IS FOR INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD USE ONLY. DO NOT WRITE IN THIS AREA

Application Number: Approval Date:
 Disapproved: IRB Chair's Signature:

Date:

I. Investigators and Associates (list all investigators involved; application will be filed under name of first person listed)

NAME: **Joe Hicks** TITLE: **Assistant Teaching Professor**
 DEPT: **Education** PHONE #: **994-6753**

Complete Department and/or Home Address (where you want the approval letter sent): **Reid Hall, Room 245 PO Box 172880 Bozeman, MT 59717**

E-MAIL ADDRESS: james.hicks5@montana.edu

DATE TRAINING COMPLETED: **09/13/2017** [Required training: CITI Training; see website for link]

SIGNATURE (PI or ADVISOR): _____

NAME: **Tricia Seifert** TITLE: **Associate Professor**

DEPT: **Education** PHONE #: **994-3127**

COMPLETE ADDRESS: **Reid Hall, Room 213 PO Box 172880 Bozeman, MT 59717**

E-MAIL ADDRESS: tricia.seifert@montana.edu

DATE TRAINING COMPLETED: [Required training: CITI Training; see website for link]

(repeat for additional investigators if needed; or delete extra if not necessary)

Do you as PI, any family member or any of the involved researchers or their family members have consulting agreements, management responsibilities or substantial equity (greater than \$10,000 in value or greater than 5% total equity) in the sponsor, subcontractor or in the technology, or serve on the Board of the Sponsor? ____ YES ____ NO

If you answered Yes, you will need to contact Kellie Peterson, Legal Counsel-JD at 406-994-3480.

II. Title of Proposal: **Anonymous Anomaly: Nonresident Undergraduates on a 21st Century Land Grant Campus**

III. Beginning Date for Use of Human Subjects: **01/01/2020**

IV. Type of Grant and/or Project (if applicable)

Research Grant:

Contract:

Training Grant:

Classroom Experiments/Projects:

Thesis Project: **Dissertation as part of Doctor of Education in Education**

Other (Specify):

V. Name of Funding Agency to which Proposal is Being Submitted (if applicable):

VI. Signatures

Submitted by Investigator

Typed Name: **Joe Hicks**

Signature:

Date:

Faculty sponsor (for student)

Typed Name: **Tricia Seifert**

Signature:

Date:

VII. Summary of Activity. Provide answers to each section and add space as needed. Do not refer to an accompanying grant or contract proposal.

A. RATIONALE AND PURPOSE OF RESEARCH. (What question is being asked?)

4. **What is the lived experience of a third-year nonresident undergraduate on a land grant university campus?**
5. **What factors contribute to the persistence of third-year nonresident undergraduates on a land grant university campus?**
6. **How do nonresident undergraduates describe their sense of belonging on a land grant campus?**

B. RESEARCH PROCEDURES INVOLVED. Provide a short description of sequence and methods of procedures that will be performed with human subjects. Include details of painful or uncomfortable procedures, frequency of procedures, time involved, names of psychological tests, questionnaires, restrictions on usual life patterns, and follow up procedures. **If you are planning on posting flyers, posters, etc. anywhere on Campus, you must check with the building managers and/or departments located in MSU buildings and obtain their approval prior to the posting.**

The purpose of this intrinsic case study is to explore the experiences of third year nonresident undergraduates on a public, land grant university campus. This may establish better understanding of the factors that contribute to retention and sense of belonging for nonresident undergraduates at Montana State University. The researcher will use a questionnaire, interview protocol, and photo elicitation protocol as instruments of data collection (see attached for questions). The information obtained through these interviews will assist the researcher in

assessing the participants' lived experiences during their third year of enrollment at Montana State University.

Purposeful sampling will initially be used based by reaching out to participants who previously participated in a pilot study in Fall 2017 [JH102317-EX] by the same researcher on a related topic.

The researcher will email these purposefully selected individuals using existing email addresses provided through the original pilot study process. Respondents interested in participating in this study will complete the following: a questionnaire, one semi-structured interview, and one interview that includes a photo elicitation collection activity. (Specific details for each process are provided below.) The data will be collected during spring semester 2020. Participants' names and other identifying information will not be included in the recording. Pseudonyms will be used for participants in all subsequent research processes with no connection to actual identifying information. All information obtained through this research process, including digital recording data, will be stored in either a locked drawer in the researcher's office or a secure Box folder. The study will conclude on December 12, 2020.

1. Questionnaire of Preliminary Screening Questions (Qualtrics via Email)

Participants will receive an email inviting them to participate in a research study involving the experiences of a third year nonresident undergraduate at a land grant institution. If interested in participating, they will be asked to review the provided participant consent form, indicate their scheduling availability using Doodle Poll, and complete a short Qualtrics background questionnaire (See attached). Estimated Time: 15 minutes.

2. Interview #1 (Initial)

Participants will participate in an initial semi-structured interview at a time and location convenient to them. During this interview, participants will respond to a set of interview questions (See attached) related to the central research questions. In addition, the researcher and participant will discuss the photo elicitation collection activity requiring participants to take and upload a total of three images representing their experiences as a nonresident undergraduate on campus. Estimated Time: 75-90 minutes

3. Photo Elicitation Collection Activity

The researcher will provide participants approximately two weeks to collect photos related to their experiences as nonresident undergraduates on campus. For this activity, one photo will be selected and uploaded to a secure Box folder for each of the three research questions related to this study. Estimated Time: Variable

4. Interview #2 (Follow Up)

Participants will review the previous interview transcript and summary of preliminary findings. In addition, the researcher will prompt the participant to explain each of the three photos they selected during the photo elicitation collection activity using a set of semi-structured interview questions (See attached). Participants will also review the final transcripts and summary of preliminary themes for accuracy. Estimated Time: 45-60 minutes

C. DECEPTION - If any deception (withholding of complete information) is required for the validity of this activity, explain why this is necessary and attach debriefing statement.

N/A

D. SUBJECTS

1. Approximate number and ages

How Many Subjects: **10 (Subject to saturation)**Age Range of Subjects: **20-40**How Many Normal/Control: **N/A**Age Range of Normal/Control: **N/A**

2. Criteria for selection:
- Pilot study participants (First time, full time third year nonresident undergraduates enrolled at Montana State University-Bozeman)**

3. Criteria for exclusion:
- (Resident, part time, non-third year, non-first time, not enrolled at MSU)**

4. Source of Subjects (including patients):
- Purposeful Sampling (Pilot Study)-Snowball Sampling (If Necessary) If saturation is not reached through the initial purposeful sampling, participants will be asked for recommendations on any nonresident peers who may be interested in participating this study. Study nominees will be contacted via email with a standard introductory email and request for participation in the study.**

5. Who will approach subjects and how? Explain steps taken to avoid coercion.

The researcher will make Initial contact via email. Participants will be provided with a consent form. The voluntary nature and right to stop the study at any time will be emphasized at the beginning of each study phase.

6. Will subjects receive payments, service without charge, or extra course credit? **Yes or No**
 (If yes, what amount and how? Are there other ways to receive similar benefits?)
Yes, Amazon gift card (\$20).

7. Location(s) where procedures will be carried out.

MSU campus public space at a time and location mutually beneficial to researcher and participants. (i.e. SUB, MSU Library, Reid Hall Conference Room)

E. RISKS AND BENEFITS (ADVERSE EFFECTS)

1. Describe nature and amount of risk and/or adverse effects (including side effects), substantial stress, discomfort, or invasion of privacy involved.

Participants may encounter minimal risk during this study. Participants may experience discomfort recounting transition to campus and challenges they have faced while at MSU. Furthermore, participants are asked to obtain photos around campus, which may create stress due to time requirements and any unanticipated circumstances while out in the field.

2. Will this study preclude standard procedures (e.g., medical or psychological care, school attendance, etc.)? If yes, explain.
- No**

3. Describe the expected benefits for individual subjects and/or society.

Through this study, nonresident undergraduates will have an opportunity to establish a voice previously nonexistent in the literature. The resulting information may help to address a university-level problem of practice regarding a high attrition rate for

nonresident undergraduates resulting in possible programming and other resources to better support this campus subpopulation of students.

F. ADVERSE EFFECTS

1. How will possible adverse effects be handled?

By investigator(s): **Participants have the option to skip questions and/or leave the study at any time.**

Referred by investigator(s) to appropriate care: **Students experiencing any emotional distress will be referred to the MSU Counseling & Psychological Services, when appropriate. (CPS materials available upon request.)**

Other (explain):

2. Are facilities/equipment adequate to handle possible adverse effects? **Yes** or **No**
(If no, explain.)

3. Describe arrangements for financial responsibility for any possible adverse effects. **There are no arrangements for financial responsibility for possible adverse effects.**

MSU compensation (explain):

Sponsoring agency insurance:

Subject is responsible:

Other (explain):

G. CONFIDENTIALITY OF RESEARCH DATA

1. Will data be coded? **Yes** or **No**

2. Will master code be kept separate from data? **Yes** or **No**

3. Will any other agency have access to identifiable data? **Yes** or **No**
(If yes, explain.)

4. How will documents, data be stored and protected?

Locked file: **All hard copy data will be stored in a locked cabinet in the researcher's office.**

Computer with restricted password: **Data will be stored using a designated folder on MSU Box.**

Other (explain): **Recorded portions of the study will be securely stored in two capacities. Audio recordings on a digital recorder will be transferred as an audio file on the Box file. Recordings on the researcher's phone will be within the password protected Otter App and not on the device itself.**

VIII. Checklist to be completed by Investigator(s)

- A. Will any group, agency, or organization be involved? **Yes** or **No**
(If yes, please confirm that appropriate permissions have been obtained.)

- B. Will materials with potential radiation risk be used (e.g. x-rays, radioisotopes)? **Yes** or **No**

1. Status of annual review by MSU Radiation Sources Committee (RSC). Pending or Approved
(If approved, attach one copy of approval notice.)

2. Title of application submitted to MSU RSC (if different).

C. Will human blood be utilized in your proposal? Yes or No
(If yes, please answer the following)

1. Will blood be drawn? Yes or No
(If yes, who will draw the blood and how is the individual qualified to draw blood?
What procedure will be utilized?)

2. Will the blood be tested for HIV? Yes or No

3. What disposition will be made of unused blood?

4. Has the MSU Occupational Health Officer been contacted? Yes or No

D. Will non-investigational drugs or other substances be used for purposes of the research? Yes or No

Name:

Dose:

Source:

How Administered:

Side effects:

E. Will any investigational new drug or other investigational substance be used? Yes or No

[If yes, provide information requested below and one copy of: 1) available toxicity data; 2) reports of animal studies; 3) description of studies done in humans; 4) concise review of the literature prepared by the investigator(s); and 5) the drug protocol.]

Name:

Dose:

Source:

How Administered:

IND Number:

Phase of Testing:

F. Will an investigational device be used? Yes or No

(If yes, provide name, source description of purpose, how used, and status with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration FDA). Include a statement as to whether or not device poses a significant risk. Attach any relevant material.)

G. Will academic records be used? Yes or No

H. Will this research involve the use of:

Medical, psychiatric and/or psychological records Yes or No

Health insurance records Yes or No

Any other records containing information regarding personal health and illness Yes or No

If you answered "Yes" to any of the items under "H.", you must complete the **HIPAA worksheet**.

- I. Will audio-visual or tape recordings or photographs be made? **Yes** or **No**
- J. Will written consent form(s) be used? (**Yes** or **No**. If no, explain.) (Please use accepted format from our website. Be sure to indicate that participation is voluntary. Provide a stand-alone copy; do not include the form here.)

Participant Consent Form

**SUBJECT CONSENT FORM FOR
PARTICIPATION IN HUMAN RESEARCH AT
MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY**

Project Title: Anonymous Anomaly: Nonresident Undergraduates on a 21st Century Land Grant Campus

Purpose of the research study: You are being asked to participate in a qualitative research study exploring the experiences of third year nonresident undergraduates on a public, land grant university campus. Your participation will help us better understand the factors This may help us obtain a better understanding of the factors that contribute to retention and sense of belonging for nonresident undergraduates. You were identified as a possible subject as a result of your expressed interest in this topic during your First Year Seminar class and subsequent pilot study of this project in Fall 2017.

Procedures involved: Participation is voluntary and you can choose to not answer any questions you do not want to answer and/or you can stop at any time. Participation or non-participation will not affect your grade or class standing. If you agree to participate you will be asked to complete an initial personal background questionnaire, participate in two (2) face-to-face interviews with the researcher, and collect and discuss photos representative of your experiences at MSU. Each interview will be audio recorded and last between 75 to 90 minutes in duration. The questions address your perceptions of your third year experience as a nonresident undergraduate at Montana State University. The recorded interviews and discussion will subsequently be transcribed verbatim and any personally identifiable information will be coded to preserve anonymity. I may follow up with you following the interviews to clarify responses and to gain insight into the interpretation of the data and findings.

Risks: There are no foreseen risks to you for participating in this research. However, should you feel discomfort you may choose to not answer a question and/or terminate your participation at any time.

Benefits: The study is of no benefit to you.

Compensation: Participants who complete all requires portions of this study will receive a \$50 Amazon gift card.

Source of Funding: NA

Cost to Subject: None

Confidentiality of records: The investigator will treat your identity with professional standards of confidentiality. You will be identified by a pseudonym. The audio recording of each interview will be transcribed and identified by a code number that will not be associated with your name in any way. All audio recordings will be destroyed by June 1, 2021. Any information uniquely identifiable to you will not be disclosed. Data gathered from this research may be presented in professional outlets, but this information will remain entirely anonymous.

Whom to contact if you have questions about the study: Should you have questions about the research, please contact Joe Hicks (994-6753; james.hicks5@montana.edu). Participants are encouraged to ask the researcher any questions about the study in order to better understand the purpose, procedures, risks, benefits, etc. Additional questions about the rights of human subjects can be answered by the Chair of the Institutional Review Board, Mark Quinn, (406) 994-4707 [mquinn@montana.edu].

AUTHORIZATION: I have read the above and understand the discomforts, inconvenience and risk of this study. I, _____ (*name of subject*), agree to participate in this research. I understand that I may later refuse to participate, and that I may withdraw from the study at any time. I have received a copy of this consent form for my own records.

Signed: _____

Investigator: _____

Date: _____