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HOW A UNIVERSITY CIVICALLY ENGAGES COLLEGE STUDENTS:
A COMPARATIVE ETHNOGRAPHY OF CUBAN AMERICANS AND
NON-HISPANIC WHITES

A Thesis in
Higher Education
By
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ABSTRACT

The focus of this ethnographic study is to: 1) identify how and why Florida International University (FIU) civically engages Cuban-American and non-Hispanic Whites and 2) identify successful and non-successful civic engagement practices at FIU. According to democratic theorists, civic engagement is tantamount to a functioning democracy. According to higher education researchers, there are short- and long-term benefits associated with college student civic engagement. Short-term benefits range from higher GPA’s to critical thinking. Long-term benefits include graduate school attendance, promoting racial understanding, and interest in the social good among others. However, literature on minority student civic engagement is sparse. The political science literature states that differences between Hispanic and non-Hispanic Whites when it comes to voting, party affiliation, charity donations, etc., is considerable. Moreover, most of the college student civic engagement literature is survey based and does not take into account the effects of civic engagement programming on campuses or the process of how students become civically engaged in the first place.

Thus, in this study, I interviewed and observed 14 Cuban American and 15 non-Hispanic White students at FIU, a predominantly Hispanic, urban university in Miami, Florida. This study took place in the Fall of 2002 and was finished in May of 2003 for a total of two semesters or 8 months. I also compared and contrasted FIU’s civic engagement practices to three different national studies on successful college civic engagement practices. When compared to these national studies, FIU’s civic engagement practices were disparate and concentrated in a handful of colleges and offices. Even though FIU’s civic engagement programming did not measure up to successful civic engagement practices at other colleges and universities in the U.S., both Cuban American and Non-Hispanic White students relied on student established networks when
it came to civic engagement. Additionally, there were no differences between both of these distinct ethnic groups when it came to the types of civic engagement in which they participated at FIU. A possible explanation for this is “reverse acculturation,” or the process whereby Non-Hispanic Whites in Miami, Florida begin to adopt Cuban American cultural customs and behaviors.
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4-2 List of Faculty, Administrators, and Position
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Chapter One

Introduction: Democracies and Civic Engagement

This section outlines and gives a brief overview for each chapter of the dissertation. The dissertation summary below includes: 1) the purpose of this dissertation study, 2) a review of the college student civic engagement literature, 3) a review of related literature pertaining to college student civic engagement, 4) case studies of successful civic engagement practices at colleges and universities, and 5) the research design for this dissertation study.

The purpose of this dissertation study is to: 1) identify how and why FIU civically engages Cuban-American and non-Hispanic Whites at FIU and 2) identify successful and non-successful civic engagement practices at FIU. According to many democratic theorists, civic or mass engagement is fundamental for all democracies. For example, the freedom to join organizations (Dahl, 1971; Schmitter and Karl, 1991), the freedom of expression (Huber, Rueschmeyer, and Stephens, 1997), the right to vote (Dahl, 1971), donating to political parties (Almond and Verba, 1963), are all essential components of functioning democracies. Historically, civic engagement has been part of the mission of most colleges and universities in America (Ward, 2003). Since the 1990s, there has been a resurgence of interest in the civic mission of colleges and universities. For example, in 1998, several higher education leaders met in Racine, Wisconsin to discuss “renewing the civic mission of the research university, both by preparing students for responsible citizenship in a diverse democracy” (Campus Compact). Many faculty, staff, researchers, and administrators not only consider college student civic engagement to be integral for the function of American democracy, but also for student developmental and academic reasons. According to Astin (1984), the more students are involved in college, the more likely they will persist to graduation (p. 302). Additionally, Astin and Sax (1998) find that
there are beneficial short-term effects to service-learning which serves to connect academic learning with community engagement. Some of these benefits include: more commitment to helping others, volunteer work, and working in non-profit organizations (p. 256), increased grade point averages (gpa), persistence, or graduation rates, aspirations for educational degrees, general knowledge, and in field or disciplinary knowledge (p. 257). Several life skills are also positively affected: leadership ability, social self-confidence, ability to think critically, among many others (p. 258).

Researchers also find that there are long-term benefits to college student civic engagement. According to Astin, Sax, and Avalos (1999), volunteering, another aspect of civic engagement, produces several long-term effects. They find that participating in volunteer service during college is associated with “attending graduate school, earning higher degrees, donating money to one's alma mater, socializing with persons from different ethnic/racial groups, and participating in volunteer/community service work in the years after college” (¶ 28). In his phenomenological study of community service-learning, Rhoads (1998) states that college students increase their self-exploration, understanding of others, and interests in the social good (¶ 28).

While most researchers, faculty, staff, and administrators tout the benefits of college student civic engagement, they disagree on what civic engagement constitutes. According to Lloyd (2005), there is no consensus to what civic engagement means (¶ 1). Komives, Lucas, and McMahon (1998) define student civic responsibility as a “sense of personal responsibility individuals should feel to uphold their obligations as part of the community” (in Lloyd, 2005, ¶ 1). Astin, Astin, and Associates (2001) state that it “is the act of becoming effective social change agents by making a positive difference in society to help solve the problems that plague
America” (in Lloyd, 2005, ¶ 1). According to *Campus Compact*, a national organization dedicated to expanding civic engagement opportunities at colleges and universities, states that college student civic responsibility as “the commitment of a citizen to his or her community” (Campus Compact, Glossary, ¶ 5). Colby et al (2003) consider only “political involvement” the most important type of college student civic engagement because other types of civic engagement do not examine “policy questions or root causes of social problems” (p.19).

Many researchers have reported a decline in political involvement and a rise in volunteering among college students. Astin (1998) points out that volunteerism among college students has increased. However, he finds that freshmen are less engaged in other types of civic engagement such as: student government voting, environmental programs, and are much less reliant on government programs concerning social and economic issues (p. 132). According to Sax (2000), many students are showing increased participation in voluntary activities. Nevertheless, according to Sax, college students have shown an ever increasing disengagement from politics. For example, Sax finds that in 1998, only 32.4 percent of the 18 to 24 age group voted in the most recent general election while in 1964, 50.9 percent of this same age cohort voted (p. 6). In her most recent study Sax (2003) found that when it comes to politics, there was a slight increase in the percent of freshmen who kept up with politics. Moreover, Sax reports a decline in social activism, specifically in “cleaning up the environment, participating in community action programs, and promoting racial understanding” (¶ 7).

However, in their survey study of first-year students in two separate entering classes (1996 and 2000) at three predominantly White, mid-western institutions, Blackhurst and Foster (2003) observe that “students in both the 1996 sample and the 2000 sample reported fairly moderate levels of cynicism toward politicians and the political process” (p. 166). They attribute
this increase to the age group they studied, the *Millenials*, or those students who were “born between 1982 and 2002” (p. 156), because they are “characterized by faith in politicians and political parties as well as optimism about public institutions” (p. 166). These students also showed “moderate levels of apathy and relatively high levels of personal and collective optimism” which the authors suggest demonstrates “a generational shift in attitudes” (p.167).

Some college students themselves disagree with Colby et al’s and the other researchers’ definitions above of college student civic engagement that appear to privilege political involvement such as voting. In response to the “Presidents’ declaration on the civic responsibility on higher education” in 1998, 33 juniors and seniors from various colleges and universities met at the Johnson Foundation in Racine, Wisconsin for the “Student Wingspread” (Long, 2002, p. v). Students delineated four specific points that they deemed important:

*We view democracy* (author’s emphasis) as richly participatory rather than procedural, we see the work of negotiating difference as the work of democracy;

*We recognize* and seize opportunities to put our community service activities in context, to provide our actions with systems perspectives that politicize service;

*We see ourselves* as misunderstood by those who measure student engagement by conventional standards that don’t always fit our conceptions of democratic participation;

*We have a clear sense* of how higher education can and should change to provide an environment more conducive to civic education. (Long, p. v).

What stands out from the “Student Declaration” is that their views of student civic engagement clash with current researchers’ perceptions.

In the Student Declaration, students declare that student civic engagement can mean many things including: “personal reflection/inner development, thinking, reading, silent protest,
dialogue and relationship building, sharing knowledge, project management, and formal organization that brings people together” (Long, p. 1). Students also state that they are more interested in “local politics and global politics than national politics” because national politics is “inaccessible” (p. 1). While these students are unhappy with conventional politics, they make clear that it does not mean that they are civically disengaged. For students, their “alternative politics” is “community service” because “through relationships with community members, [students] learn skills that can help [them] take on the roles of community organizers” (p. 2).

Another area that researchers have overlooked regarding college student civic engagement is the role ethnicity might play. Verba, Scholzman, and Brady (1995) find that Latinos, when compared to Non-Hispanic Whites and African Americans, had the lowest rates of voting and community service (p. 232). In their study of Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, and Cuban Americans, De la Garza, Desipio, Garcia, Garcia, and Falcon, (1992) find that all three ethnic groups had different rates of political and community participation (p.7). Grenier, Invernizzi, Salup, and Schmidt (1994) similarly find that Cuban Americans, when compared to Mexican Americans and Non-Hispanic Whites, had less rates of political participation other than voting (p.15).

According to Desipio (1996), Moreno and Hill (1998), González (2004), Cuban Americans in Miami exhibit unique civic engagement characteristics. Cuban Americans are part of a large Hispanic majority group in Miami (65.76% Total Hispanic: 34.14% Cuban American) (Census Bureau, 2000). FIU also houses a majority Hispanic student population (51% Hispanic) (FIU Facts and Information, 2004). Stepick, Grenier, Castro, and Dunn in their recent work on immigrant groups’ political participation in Miami in their work This land is our land:
Immigrants and power in Miami (2003), suggest that non-Hispanic Whites have acculturated in reverse to the dominant Hispanic population.

Stepick et al (2003) argue that Miami Whites in the late 1980s “changed their expectations” regarding Cuban Americans (p. 143). Instead of “expecting Miami Cubans to become Americanized, many engaged in reverse acculturation; they heralded Miami as the capital of Latin America, and they began to learn Spanish and to adopt Miami Cuban and Latino culture” (p. 144). Thus, a power shift occurred between both ethnic groups.

My definition of college student civic engagement enlarges and focuses the multiple meanings researchers, staff, and students have given this elusive term. From a functioning democracy point of view, both political and non-political types of engagement are necessary. Some researchers believe only political engagement is important while others state the benefits of voluntary and service-learning activities. Both political and non-political engagement teach that we are not only responsible for ourselves, but also responsible for our communities. Therefore, for this study I define college student civic engagement as political engagement such as voting and donating to a specific political party as well as non-political engagement such as volunteering, service-learning, membership in associations, and other forms of political expression through art, alternative newspapers, recycling, etc., that promote community engagement.

**Successful Civic Engagement Practices**

To gauge the effectiveness of its civic engagement practices, FIU will be compared to recent studies that have analyzed and determined successful college student civic engagement practices at other colleges and universities. For example, Colby et al’s (2003) study of 12 distinct colleges and universities in various parts of the United States, found that their successful civic
engagement programs contained similar components which included: civic and moral competencies (p. 53); effective presidential leadership (p. 72-77); leadership from centers and institutes (p. 77-80); effective faculty leadership (p. 80-83); physical features of the campus that exemplified the civic mission of the institution (p. 86-87), shared stories that promoted shared civic values (p. 87-88), shared ideas, philosophies, and ideologies (p. 89-90), civic rituals (p. 90), socialization strategies (p. 91-92), low levels of discrepancies between campus culture and action (p. 92-93), and a cohesive, non-coercive campus culture (p. 93-95).

Civic and moral competencies include: “critical and integrative thinking, communication, and problem solving” as well as self-understanding, responsibility for one’s actions, informed and responsible involvement among the community, cultural awareness and respect, and the appreciation of global dimensions of many issues (p. 53). Effective presidents initiated programming that consisted of: the common good, moral and civic education, participation of administration and faculty, and collaboration with a selected administrative team (p. 72-73).

Effective centers and institutes were well-funded and had “dedicated leadership over a sustained period of time” (p. 76). Faculty participation in civic engagement programming was essential (p. 80). The physical layout of the colleges and universities provided a sense of community (p. 86-87). Stories highlight the special missions of each campus (p. 88). Shared ideas, philosophies, and ideologies “provide a reference point for institutional norms” such as civic engagement (p. 89). Civic rituals serve “as a guiding idea and a physical reminder of the institution’s values” (p. 90). Socialization strategies allow for “personal connections” to be established (p. 91).

Consistent community values and actions are important because they prevent institutional “hypocrisy” which students can readily perceive (p. 92-93). Coercion or forcing a campus to
abide by a strong moral and civic culture has “no place in programs of moral and civic education” (p. 91).

The students at Wingspread also suggested some indicators of successful student civic engagement. Most of their indicators were similar to what Colby et al (2003) found during their study. According to students at Wingspread, institutional indicators include: making service part of the curriculum, having service-learning programs housed at an institute or center, a high level of service–learning commitment among faculty members, college presidents providing “open forums to encourage the growth of various forms of civic engagement,” creating dorms with “community outreach missions and running alternative spring break programs,” creating “community service scholarships and allocate a percentage of student activity fees to support student efforts to engage in the community,” and a strong mission and culture of the institution by “providing space, resources, recognition, information, transportation, and other forms of support (p. 9).

However, students also mentioned some experiences that were different than Colby et al’s (2003). Students mentioned that their voices were not being heard on campuses regarding civic engagement on campus. They also criticize campuses for not preparing students earlier in their college years to become civically engaged.

Similar to Colby et al’s (2003) research, Meeropol, Jacobs Jones, Lenk, Zltokowski, Gelmon, and Norvell (2003) studied ten minority-serving institutions and found 13 commonalities that reflect successful civic engagement practices (Campus Compact, ¶ 1). These are: 1) the mission is aligned with promoting civic engagement, 2) academic and administrative leadership visibly support civic engagement on campus, 3) community-based learning opportunities can be found across the curriculum, 4) course content is flexible and allows faculty
to integrate community-based strategies in the classroom, 5) the institution provides ample service-learning and community-based training to faculty, 6) the institution’s tenure, promotion, and/or retention guidelines includes rewards for community-based teaching and scholarship, 7) faculty and students are well-informed for the resources available to support community-based work, 8) adequate funding is provided to support community-based work, 9) local history is celebrated on campus of and for the community, 10) the institution provides the community with access to human, technical, and intellectual resources on campus, 11) the institution effectively coordinates community-based activities on- and off-campus, 12) the institution facilitates dialogue around public issues, and 13) student participate on major decisions concerning community-based work on campus (¶ 1-13).

Additionally, the American Association of Higher Education, Campus Compact, and the National Society for Experiential Education studied 27 institutions to determine what were models of good practice for service-learning programs (Kay Schneider, 1998, ¶ 1). They find that institutional programs that have successful service-learning programs: 1) have a vision and well-defined mission that guides service-learning, 2) capitalize on their strengths regarding service-learning, 3) obtain support from high levels of the administration, 4) have individuals that remain current with the service-learning literature, 5) have curricular-wide service-learning programs, 6) have roles and rewards for faculty who participate in service-learning, 7) have different degrees of complexity to reach the widest possible audience, 8) incorporate student voices and ideas into their programs, 9) involve the community with curricular programming, 10) try new approaches, 11) define specific outcomes, 12) the most established and institutionalized programs tend to be older, and 13) pay attention to national, state, and local trends.
Research Design: Ethnography

For this dissertation study I use a qualitative research design. I will specifically be using ethnographic methodology. Ethnography is a qualitative data collection technique that relies on the “description and interpretation of a cultural or social group system” (Creswell, 1998, p. 58). The “essential core of this activity aims to understand another way of life from the native point of view” (Spradley, 1979, p. 3). Specifically, it involves examining “the group’s observable and learned patters of behavior, customs, and way of life,” “prolonged observation of the group, typically through participant observation in which the researcher is immersed in the day-to-day lives of the people or through one-on-one interviews with members of a group,” and finally, studying the “meanings of behavior, language, and interactions of the culture-sharing group” (Creswell, 1998, p. 58).

Interviews

During my research, I conducted two types of interviews: individual, evaluation interviews and focus group interviews. The study included 8 months of “participant observation,” with interviewing and direct observation of Cuban-American and non-Hispanic White students which allowed me an overview of the university cultural setting and atmosphere. I directly observed and interacted with second year students during their daily lives, and looked for specific, key actions that entailed civic disengagement or engagement within their respective universities. Second year students were observed at FIU. I interviewed 14 Cuban-Americans (6 females and 8 males) and 15 non-Hispanic Whites (9 females and 6 males). I also interviewed 3 administrators and 6 faculty involved with different aspects of civic engagement programming at FIU (See Table 1 for list of students and basic demographic information and Table 2 for list of faculty and administrators and their positions and length of positions). Two focus student groups
(7 student government members at FIU and 5 students in my EDG 2701-Teaching Diverse Populations course in the Spring 2003 semester) were also interviewed. Also, by observing these students, I interacted with them and determined if they were likely to participate in future university related civic activities.

Criteria for student, staff, and faculty selection included: 1) the student must either be a female or male Cuban-American or non-Hispanic White, and 2) students had to have been at FIU for at least one year because it is assumed that they have been “enculturated” (Spradley, 1979, p. 47) or have experienced a year’s worth of the effects of college initiated civic dis/engagement activities. Several methods were used to determine potential student volunteers for this study. These consisted of: 1) asking students from my EDG 2701-Teaching Diverse Populations and EDF 3515-Philosophical and Historical Foundations of Education at FIU if they were interested in participating, 2) asking these students if they knew of other students at FIU who were willing to participate in this study, 3) asking Dr. Beverly Dalrymple, the Director of the Center for Civic Responsibility and Leadership at FIU, if she knew of any students who might fit the criteria above, 4) asking Dr. Dalrymple for other faculty and staff who participate in civic engagement programming for students so that I can ask them for other student volunteers, 5) asking the Student Government President at FIU at the time, Devyn, if she and other members could participate in the study, and 6) asking Student Government members if they knew of other students who met the above criteria and who would like to participate.

**Research Limitations**

There are several limitations to this type of interview gathering. First, since this is an ethnographic, qualitative study, based on a “purposeful sample” or a sample based on the criteria above, this study is limited to the students interviewed and not to other female or male Cuban-
Americans and non-Hispanic Whites at FIU. Nevertheless, the focus of this study was “the process students go through” that determined whether or not they were civically engaged and most student interviews within their own ethnic groups were consistent with one another (McDonough, 1997, p. 17). Additionally, this study was done at a specific institution at a specific time and therefore, not generalizable to other institutions. Third, the students from my classes could have biased their interviews by making them more positive since I was their instructor. However, their answers were consistent with other students that were not in my classes. Fourth, while the different students stated that their level of civic participation varied from no activity to many activities, most of the students interviewed participated in several to a lot of civic engagement activities at FIU. Thus, perspectives of why students did not civically engage or engaged in few activities at FIU were limited to a small group of students. Finally, growing up in Miami and having taught at FIU prior to my dissertation research there could be unintentional bias in my analysis.

Criteria for document collection consisted of reading documents that mentioned civic engagement at FIU. These included internal documents at FIU, the catalog, newsletters, websites, memorandums, newspapers, and emails.

Before gathering these interviews, I undertook a pilot study at FIU, where the first stage of this study was conducted to allow[s] the researcher to focus on particular areas that may have been unclear previously (Janesick, “The Dance,” 1998, p. 42). Also, pilot interviews were used to test certain questions (Janesick, “The Dance,” 1998, p. 42). A total of 5 pilot interviews were done from October 1, 2002 to October 2, 2002. After careful review, some minor changes were made to the interview questions (see below). I also reviewed university websites, college newspapers, and university catalogs prior to interviewing to “uncover some insight into the shape
of the study that previously was not apparent” (Janesick, “The Dance,” 1998, p. 43).

Interview questions were formatted in two ways: unstructured and semistructured. These two formats permitted me to “suggest the subject for discussion but [with] few specific questions in mind” (Rubin & Rubin, 1995, p. 5). Unstructured questions were first posed for both individual, evaluation interviews and focus group interviews before the semistructured questions because allowed the students to relax, speak freely, and feel comfortable with the researcher before answering specific questions that might be unintentionally emotionally hard, difficult, and/or contentious. Semistructured evaluation interview questions “introduce the topic, then guides the discussion by asking specific questions” (p. 5). The questions were specifically designed to gain “thick description” (Geertz, 1973) (as cited in Rubin & Rubin, 1995, p. 8) or questions that “obtain[ed] more depth and detail on a narrower range of topics than you would in ordinary conversations,” in other words “encourage[d] people to elaborate, provide incidents and clarifications, and discuss events at length” (Rubin & Rubin, 1995, p. 8).

**Methodology: Observation, Fieldnotes, Journal, and Document Data**

Observation and document data were also collected in addition to interviews. The collecting and analysis of additional data allows for triangulation or “the use of multiple methods” to “secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question” (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, p. 4). Nevertheless, triangulation is “not a tool or a strategy of validation, but an alternative to validation” (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, p. 4). Instead, triangulation combines multiple methods and perspectives that adds depth to the study (Rubin & Rubin, 1998). Triangulation, therefore, “[confirms] the authenticity of the study’s observations and subsequent findings, and it [presents] thematic presence against multiple perspectives” (Janesick, 1998, p. 119). Observation fieldnotes (see Appendix E for “Observational Protocol” adapted from
Creswell, 1998, p.129) are specific notes written down based on specific observations done in the “field,” or among the specific groups I am studying (Creswell, 1998, p. 60). Personal journals serve to expand the qualitative researcher’s analytic, writing, and reflective skills (Janesick, 1998). Public documents in this study included, but were not limited to: university catalogs, website information, flyers, posters, and signs. Public documentation provides contextual information as well as supporting or challenging the students’ perspectives.

**Data Analysis and Coding**

I analyzed my interview data, observations, journals, and documents by using the Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) (Lee & Fielding, 1995) QSR NUD.IST 6.0 (NUD.IST). NUD.IST allows textual data to be quickly inputted into its system and then analyzed in a relatively short period of time. NUD.IST also allows: 1) theory building, or theory to be derived inductively from the data, 2) texts to be coded hierarchically or axially, 3) allows “memos” or notes to be recalled with the coded texts to remind the researcher of any changes, problems, or contexts regarding the texts, and 4) allow for easy retrieval and connections between similar themes/concepts (Prein, Kelle, & Bird, 1995). NUD.IST also allows for 1) searching for prevailing themes, 2) crossing themes or relating themes to one another, 3) diagramming, or providing a visual picture “of the categories and their interconnectedness,” 4) creating a template for organizing information, 5) easier analyzing and reporting (Creswell, 1998, pp. 157-162).

Texts were initially analyzed using “open coding” or the initial strategy of identifying themes/concepts in the first set of documents (Kelle & Laurie, 1995). This kind of coding “at such a very general level is a first step toward organizing the data into meaningful categories” (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996, p. 36). Moreover, “theme analysis is important for initial open
coding” (Strauss, 1987). These initial codings served as a flexible framework developed through the analysis of the remaining textual data in which codes could be added or deleted depending on the context of the remaining documents and the pertinence to the research question. I then went back to the coded texts and reviewed the initial coding and made modifications as needed by creating and/or deleting some codes. Using CAQDAS can lead to fragmentation and decontextualization of texts that have been coded and set apart from the original documents. Nevertheless, NUD.IST allows for whole texts or documents and their coded themes/concepts to be looked at simultaneously, thereby, minimizing data fragmentation. When I established the codes or categories for the initial analysis of the data, I incorporated a hierarchical structure. A hierarchical structure of categories is a natural process of coding that is easily recognizable as well as easily translated because it begins with the general and works its way down to the specific (Richards and Richards, 1995). NUD.IST allows for this hierarchical structure to be formed as vertical units, or codes that are presented visually from top to bottom as general concepts down to specific sub-concepts.
Chapter Two

Democracy and the Historic Civic Mission of Higher Education

This chapter delineates the role of civic engagement within democracy theory in political science. It also describes the historical civic mission of colleges and universities in the U.S. Additionally, it outlines the recent trend among colleges and universities to reevaluate their civic mission. Finally, it provides a summary of the literature on the effects of college student civic engagement.

One essential aspect of all democracies, according to democratic theorists, is civic or mass participation. This can include either mass political or non-political participation. Dahl (1971) states that democracy is made up of two ideal dimensions: public contestation and the right to participate. One of the ways Dahl defines public contestation is the freedom to form and join organizations and the freedom of expression while the right to participate means the right to vote and the right of political leaders to compete for support and compete for votes. Schmitter and Karl (1991) similarly argue that associations are integral for democracies since they provide a gateway in which public citizens can generate political activity and power.

In their classic work on civic culture, Almond and Verba (1963) surveyed the civic (political and non-political) culture in the U.S., Germany, Mexico, Great Britain, and Italy. They found that the U.S. model of civic culture exhibits a balance between the active (such as voting) and passive (donating to political parties) roles of the citizen whereas “the balance appears to be more weighted somewhat in the direction of the active, participant pole” (p. 360-361). Additionally, they argue that this is important because compared to the other four countries, it points to democratic stability (p. 360). In Shin’s (1999) recent study of the inchoate South Korean democratic system, he found that political and non-political participation in society was
essential because “democracy, unlike authoritarian rule, is a political system involving the participation of ordinary people in the making of public policy” (p. 96). For example, he found that after democracy was installed in South Korea in 1988, citizens exhibited high rates of voting, political acts, and participation within voluntary associations such as fraternal and churches. These aspects of democracy are important for Shin because they help to consolidate democracy as well as perpetuate it. Huber, Rueschmeyer, and Stephens (1997) state that “formal democracy” includes “regular and free elections, universal suffrage, accountability of the state’s administrative organs to the elected representatives, and effective guarantees for freedom of expression and association as well as protection against arbitrary state action” (p. 323). However, they contend that even though that these minimal requirements might be met by a democracy, it does not mean that equality of participation is present. If political power is equally distributed among different social categories such as class, ethnicity, and gender, then the political system can be designated a “participatory democracy” (p. 323). If there is an increasing equality in social and economic outcomes and this conforms to the previous two definitions, then the political system is a “social democracy” (p. 323). Huber, Rueschmeyer, and Stephens suggest that the U.S. is more of a formal democracy, than a participatory or social democracy since social and economic categories still prevent American citizens from equal political participation.

Historically, preparation to participate in the American citizenry or civic engagement has been part of the mission of American colleges and universities. It was not until the nineteenth century that this original mission began to wane because of the expansion of research and workforce training in higher education. In the following section, I put civic participation in the context of higher education.
Civic Participation and the University

According to Colby et al (2003), “The belief that there are essential moral and civic dimensions to knowledge and learning is deeply rooted in American intellectual and educational traditions” (p. 26). For example, during the colonial college period between 1636 and 1770, the institutional mission of the colleges like Harvard, William and Mary, Dartmouth, was the “socialization of the young for positions of leadership in the church, education in the classics and Christian doctrine, and, ultimately, preparation of students as public servants” (Ward, 2003, p. 18). According to Mathews, “Colonial colleges saw their mission as bringing civilization to a wilderness; they stamped public life with piety and classical culture” (1997, ¶ 5). Harvard, for example, was founded “and supported, as a college of English university standards for the liberal education of the young men of New England, under strict religious discipline” (Eliot Morison, 1964, p. 22). However, Harvard’s mission was not only “an educated clergy,” but also to educate “leaders disciplined by knowledge and learning, it needed followers disciplined by leaders, it needed order” for the proper functioning of its Puritan society (Rudolph, 1962, p. 7). During the eighteenth century, colleges continued their civic mission as they expanded westward into the mid-western states.

The denominational colleges (1770-1860) were affiliated with several religious denominations (Ward, 2003, p. 20). Because of geographical proximity, denominational colleges were now able to establish close ties to the communities they served in (Ward, 2003, p. 21). Specifically, these colleges “expanded curricular offerings in order to be more responsive to community needs and meet the need for more studies in scientific areas (Ward, 2003, p. 21). This “created the ideal of higher education as a public good and exposed higher education to many people for whom higher education had been elusive” (Ward, 2003, p. 21). Thus, by the mid-
nineteenth century, “moral and civic learning was closely connected to the religions concerns and assumptions that then dominated higher education” (Colby et al, 2003, p. 26).

In his seminal historical study of the American university between 1865 and 1910 titled *The emergence of the American university* (1965), Laurence R. Vesey describes the vacillation between the competing roles of citizenship and research during this transformational period in American higher education:

As late as 1913 an impassioned advocate of scientific emphasis maintained that the average American university still did not sympathize with his aim. All the contemporary oratory, he asserted, was directed towards “education for citizenship,” and administrators lacked any deep sympathy for the Germanic goal of increasing knowledge. These remarks reflected the resurgence of the ideal of practical utility during the Progressive Era and showed that, on the faculty level, the gulf between the vocationalist and the researcher had by no means disappeared. (p. 177)

The establishment of the Morrill Act of 1862 further expanded the role of colleges and universities into the realm of scientific research (Ward, 2003, p. 24). The role of these inchoate research universities (1860-1945), particularly the “land grant” institutions, included “teaching, research, and service” (Ward, 2003, p. 25). During this time, “higher education for the first time was addressing everyday problems for everyday people” (Ward, 2003, p. 27). Moreover, “connections between campus and government ultimately put higher education service to the nation through the support of war efforts and global positioning, areas that would become the hallmarks of the research university throughout the twentieth century” (Ward, 2003, p. 28). Also, “following the Civil War, ‘practical’ education became a powerful imperative that led to the creation of new land-grant institutions known as ‘people’s colleges’” (Mathews, 1997, ¶ 5).
However, at the end of the nineteenth century, “civic education was somewhat de-emphasized during the industrialization and educational specialization of the nineteenth century” (Sax, 2000, p.3).

Between 1945 and 1975, during the “massification” of higher education, “the expansion and democratization of student populations eventually led to calls for more relevant curriculum to address the needs of students and society (Ward, 2003, p. 37). Moreover, “outreach changes, including extension and adult and lifetime learning, brought the university in contact with students who might never before thought of attending traditional college courses” (Ward, 2003, p. 38). Therefore, “higher education, once seen as a privilege reserved primarily for the middle and upper classes, came to be seen as a citizen’s right” (Ward, 2003, p. 38). At the same time, there was an expansion of community colleges whose mission was specifically geared towards democratic ideals such potential education for all American citizens. These institutions focused on “open access and curriculum tied to transfer, remediation, and workforce preparation functions” (Ward, 2003, p. 38).

According to Ward, in the contemporary higher education era (1975-present), the public is questioning higher tuition fees, students are demanding more job training, and government is requiring more accountability (pp. 41-42). Ironically, “a major movement in contemporary higher education is centered around service and engagement as a way to respond to many of these criticisms and as a means to express to higher education’s multiple publics (including parents, legislators, and students) what higher education does and how it contributes to society” (p. 45) even though historically, as Ward and others have shown, colleges and universities have always incorporated some type of civic component into their missions.
Higher Education’s Commitment to College Student Civic Engagement

The clarion call towards higher education’s recommitment to its historical civic mission came from Ernst L. Boyer in 1987 with his publication *College: The undergraduate experience in America* when he stated that college students were being unprepared to partake in the American citizenry because of higher education’s emphasis and reification of research over teaching. With the publication of his report *Scholarship reconsidered: Priorities of the professoriate* (1990), Boyer again chastised higher education for still ignoring its civic engagement role. In it, he declares that “the scholarship of teaching will be necessary to produce an informed citizenry capable of critical thinking that is so needed in America today” (p. 77). Boyer warned that at the time, “college and universities are being asked to account for what they do and to rethink their relevance in today’s world” and that “linkages between the campus and contemporary problems must be strengthened” (p. 76). Before he died, Boyer once again stressed the importance of higher education as a site of a “scholarship of engagement” that focuses on a new commitment to service and a focus on serving the community (1996).

Boyer’s calls were finally heard in 1998. Between December 11 and December 13, 1998, several higher education leaders including presidents, provosts, deans, and faculty members of several colleges and universities, and representatives of professional associations, private foundations, and civic foundations met at the Wingspread Conference Center sponsored by The Johnson Foundation in Racine, Wisconsin “to formulate strategies for renewing the civic mission of the research university, both by preparing students for responsible citizenship in a diverse democracy, and also by engaging faculty members to develop and utilize knowledge for the improvement of society” (Campus Compact). The result of the Wingspread conference was the “Presidents’ declaration on the civic responsibility on higher education.” The main concern of
the “Declaration” participants was that college students were not actively participating in America’s democracy:

We have a fundamental task to renew our role as agents of our democracy. This task is both urgent and long-term. There is growing evidence of disengagement of many Americans from the communal life our society, in general, and from the responsibilities of democracy, in particular. We share a special concern about the disengagement of college students from democratic participation. A chorus of studies reveals that students are not connected to the larger purposes and aspirations of the American democracy. Voter turnout is low. Feelings that political participation will not make any difference is high. Added to this, there is a profound sense of cynicism and lack of trust in the political process (Ehrlich and Hollander, p. 3).

To engage students, the Declaration recommends that colleges and universities must re-embrace its historical “mission to educate students for citizenship” (p. 3):

Faculty, staff, trustees and students must help craft and act upon our civic mission and responsibilities. We must seek reciprocal partnerships with community leaders, such as those responsible for elementary and secondary education. To achieve our goals we must define them in ways that inspire our institutional missions and help measure our success (p. 4).

Thus, the Declaration proffers a “Campus Assessment of Civic Responsibility” which delineates how to identify if an institution is providing civic engagement opportunities. Such opportunities include having all campus stakeholders, such as presidents, students, faculty, administrators and staff, and trustees and alumni actively involved in promoting civic responsibility at their respective institutions (pp. 5-9).
The Declaration was a culmination of a movement that began with Boyer to reemphasize the civic engagement component of colleges and universities. According to Prince, Jr. (1997), in the 1990s, there was a “resurgence in educating for citizenship” with the advent of liberal colleges restructuring their mission statements and practices to focus on civic responsibility (p. 34). Gabelnick (1997) believes that higher education must change its “societal and university paradigm form a strategy of competitiveness to one of collaboration, from a perspective of scarcity to one of sufficiency and inclusion, and from a stance looks for expedient solutions to one that engages and commits to a series of values and a way of life (p. 30). Ward (1997) details what initiatives are currently taking place to reemphasize higher education’s civic engagement commitment:

For example, the American Council on Education is moving ahead with its new project to reexamine higher education’s civic responsibilities. On another front, honors programs across the country are undertaking an unprecedented project of civic engagement; they are talking directly with members of the public about the hard choices that must be made on policy issues of mutual concern. These public forums are sponsored jointly by the National Collegiate Honors Council, the Association of Governing Boards, and the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (¶ 7).

Boyte (2000) states that “in recent years, the world of academia has rediscovered civic education, a once-vital tradition in American higher education, especially at public and land-grant institutions (p. 46). Wellman (1999) argues that there needs to be “assessing and accounting for higher education’s civic teaching and service roles” because “it will help to maintain these roles, which is the right thing to do [author’s emphasis] because it is in the public interest for higher education to continue to serve in these civic and community roles” (p. 10).
Another reason is “that institutions increasingly are being held ‘accountable’ for their accomplishments through performance-based report cards that link funding with evidence of results” (p. 10).

Johnnella E. Butler, one of the Wingspread participants, declares that “colleges and universities must find ways to prepare students for responsible citizenship in a diverse democracy and to help faculty members develop and use knowledge to improve communities” because of “massive cultural shifts” challenging “their purpose and function in society” (p. 52).

Checkoway (2001) reminds us that the original missions of American public research universities always “expressed a strong public purpose” (p. 127). However, “in the process of expanding, the universities transformed themselves from civic institutions into powerful research engines, which gave rise to major changes in their objectives and operations” (Checkoway, 2000, p. 24).

**Effects of College Student Civic Engagement**

Not only is college student engagement important in a democracy, but current studies on college students indicate that there are several other related, positive outcomes which stem from civic engagement participation during college. Astin (1984) found that the more students were involved at college, the more likely they were to stay in college (p.302). Pascarella and Terenzi (1991) found that just by going to college produces “changes toward greater altruism, humanitarianism, and a sense of civic responsibility and social conscience” (p. 277). They also found that students in college found a “greater interest in social and political issues, and greater interest and involvement in the political process” (p. 278). Students additionally exhibit “shifts toward social, racial, ethnic, and political tolerance and greater support for the rights of individuals in a wide variety of areas” (p. 279).
Astin and Sax (1998) find that there are several short-term effects to service-learning, a component of civic engagement. Because of service-learning, “students become more strongly committed to helping others, serving their communities, promoting racial understanding, doing volunteer work, and working for nonprofit organizations (p. 256). Service-learning also increased: students’ grade point averages (gpa), persistence, or graduation rates, aspirations for educational degrees, general knowledge, in field or disciplinary knowledge, preparation for graduate or professional school, academic self concept, time to studying or homework, extra work done for courses, and amount of contact with faculty (p. 257). Several life skills were also positively affected: leadership ability, social self-confidence, ability to think critically, conflict resolution skills, ability to work cooperatively, knowledge of people of different races and cultures, understanding of problems facing community, understanding of problems facing the nation, and satisfaction with college's leadership opportunities, preparation for future career, and relevance of coursework to everyday life (p. 258).

Astin, Sax, and Avalos (1999) found that volunteering, another aspect of civic engagement, produces several long-term effects. They find that participating in volunteer service during college is associated with “attending graduate school, earning higher degrees, donating money to one's alma mater, socializing with persons from different ethnic/racial groups, and participating in volunteer/community service work in the years after college” (¶ 28). Volunteering is also “positively associated with five values measured in the postcollege years: helping others in difficulty, participating in community action programs, participating in environmental cleanup programs, promoting racial understanding, and developing a meaningful philosophy of life” (¶ 28). Moreover, they found that volunteering positively affected students’
“higher degree aspirations and student's perception that college provided good preparation for work” (¶ 28).

In his phenomenological study of community service-learning, Rhoads (1998) discovered that college students increased their self-exploration, understanding of others, and interests in the social good (¶ 28). According to Rhoads, “self-exploration through community service often involved a kind of self-interrogation that helped students to think more seriously about their lives” (¶ 35). He also found that students became more empathetic with people they were helping: “students were able to put faces and names with the alarming statistics and endless policy debates about homelessness as well as rural and urban poverty” (¶ 38). Through community service, students also were further interested in providing solutions to social problems by committing to the social good (¶ 52).

A national study on the benefits of going to college by the Institute for Higher Education Policy (1998) reports that those with a bachelor’s degree have an “increased quality of civic life” (p. 17). The report concludes that “79 percent of persons between 25 and 44 with a bachelor’s degree or more voted in the 1992 Presidential election, compared to 67 percent of those with some college, 50 percent of high school graduates, and 27 percent of those with less than a high school degree” (p. 17).

In their study of students who participated in community service at North Carolina Central University, a historically black university (HBCU), Oritsejafor & Guseh (2004) surveyed 45 students (93.2 percent of the respondents were African Americans, Whites were 4.5 percent, and Asian Americans constituted 1.1 percent) (p. 8) to determine their attitudes on civic engagement. 48.9 percent of the students strongly agreed that (19 percent agreed) voting was the single most important right (p. 17). When asked why they voted, 15.6 percent stated duty, 8.9
percent stated that it was a right (p. 17). When asked why they did not vote, 40 percent stated that it does not matter while 26.7 percent reported that they were uninformed (p. 18). Students also reported that civic duties were important. 46.7 percent said they helped the elderly, 15.6 percent said they donated to church, and 8.9 percent joined a political organization (p. 18). 42.2 percent agreed with the statement that schools do not inform students about voting while 35.6 disagreed (p. 19). The authors conclude that “it appears that institutions of higher learning that include community service in their academic programs are contributing to the promotion of civic engagement and, hence, political participation” (p. 14).

Gurin, Dey, Hurtado, and Gurin (2002) studied citizenship engagement among Latino/a, Asian American, African American, and White college students as a “measure of students’ motivation to participate in activities that affect society and the political structure,” students’ “tendency to consider other people’s point of view,” “how much [students] have learned during college ‘about contributions to American society of other racial/ethnic groups,’” and “student views about the compatibility of difference and democracy” (Measures: Democracy Outcomes, ¶ 1-4). They found that “informal interactional diversity was significantly related to both citizenship engagement and racial/cultural engagement for all four groups” (Democracy Outcomes, ¶ 2). They also found that “White students who had the greatest amount of informal interactional diversity and experience with diversity in the classroom most frequently believed that difference is compatible with democracy and were the most engaged with racial/cultural issues” (Democracy Outcomes, ¶ 3).
Chapter Three

Review of the Literature:
College Student Civic Engagement

This chapter includes a summary of the college student civic engagement literature including case studies of successful civic engagement practices in colleges and universities. In addition, this chapter focuses on the related literature within youth civic development and political science with regards to Cuban American and Non-Hispanic White college student ethnic identity. A review of Putnam’s social capital is also given to explain possible college student civic engagement behavior.

According to Cone, Cooper, and Hollander (2001), “in the mid-1990s the Hardwood Group and the Kettering Foundation conducted a study to explore students’ attitudes about politics and the roles of citizenship” (p. 3). They found that “students believed that, instead of solving problems, politics as practiced in America is self-serving, divisive, negative and often counterproductive” (p. 3). Additionally, “according to four recent studies, students have an increasing interest in volunteering and a declining interest in public affairs” (p. 4).

In his thirty-year trend analysis of freshmen college students, which included civic engagement from 1966 to 1996, Astin (1998) points out that volunteerism among college students has increased. However, “only 16.6% of the 1996 freshmen say that they frequently ‘discussed politics’ during the past year” (p. 132). Additionally, he found that freshmen are less engaged in student government voting, environmental programs, and are much less reliant on government programs concerning social and economic issues (p. 132). Astin also found that “when students were asked how they could be so negative about the country’s social institutions, especially its government, and yet be so positive about its future and the possibilities for change, they gave a common answer,” they stated it was “because of their generation” (p. 140). Students
stated that “they are being made to assume responsibility unfairly for a horrendous array of social problems, selfishly created by their elders” (p. 140). Thus, according to Astin, these college students have turned away from government and instead focused on helping their own communities because they see this as “manageable” (p. 140). Students have “translated” helping their own communities directly into community service (p. 140). Almost “two-thirds of all undergraduates (64%) are currently involved in volunteer activities” (p. 140). Astin found that this majority of students who participate in volunteer activities showed no differences based on region, age, residential and non-residential undergraduates, race, or work status (p. 141).

When it comes to political participation on campus, especially in student lobbies or “state-wide student associations that seek to influence government higher education funding or policy,” students were less interested especially in the 1980s and 1990s (p. 141). Astin attributes this decline in student lobbies to a “current era of decreasing government confidence in and support for higher education” (p. 141). Support/advocacy groups have now replaced campus political groups (p. 142). According to Astin, these groups have both a social and political purpose:

Socially, they have been places where students who saw themselves as marginal or different could find people like themselves. These groups promised a comfort zone, where feelings could be shared and time spent with people who had similar values and experiences. They offered the possibility of emotional support, friendship, and entertainment—in short, an antidote to isolation. At bottom, these organizations have the potential of becoming “homes” in the best sense of the word. Politically, they have also served as special interest groups. Given the perceived marginal status of their members, they have often acted as advocates-identifying problems members face, educating both
members and the larger college community about those problems, and seeking remedies for the problems (p. 142).

According to Astin, student campus organizations are increasing while their individual memberships are declining because of such a wide range of interests based on race, ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation (p. 145). For example, on one campus, “the undergraduate business club was divided into organizations for African Americans, Koreans, and gays and lesbians” (p. 145). While student activism appears to be waning, Astin says that in 1996, “student protest is booming” (p. 145): “in 1969, near the height of the sixties campus unrest, 28% of undergraduates reported participating in a demonstration while by 1976, the proportion dropped to 19%” (p. 145). In 1996, 25% of the students reported participating in a demonstration, “nearly a return to the 1960s level of activism” (p. 145). The characteristics of these students include: “full-time students, ‘traditional-age’ students, residential students, students at selective universities, students whose parents attended college, and minority students” (p. 145). However, in the 1990s, men and women participated equally in protests even though historically, males were “more prone to protest” and African American students are more involved in protests than any other student group (p. 145). The two main issues of protests were multiculturalism and the rising costs of college (p. 146). Multiculturalism concerns were related to “gender equity, sexual orientation, free speech, and civil rights” (p. 146). Astin concludes that today’s college student activism is markedly different than previous types of college student activism:

These realities have been missed because student activism is local in orientation. It is not occurring nationally, but on individual campuses. Moreover, there is a rising propensity for student groups and clubs to undergo mitosis, causing sharp divisions in the issues
which concern undergraduates. The multiplicity of student groups also has the effect of increasing the turnover of student political organizations and decreasing the salience of their issues. (p. 149).

Sax in 2000 finds similar trends regarding volunteerism and political disengagement among college students. According to Sax (2000), “the development of citizenship among college students is a long-standing goal of higher education in the United States” and that “more than 200 years ago, education for citizenship was seen as essential to the development of a well-informed and critically thinking society” (p. 3). Using the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP survey data on American college students (“the nation’s largest and oldest empirical study of American higher education; since 1966) collected at the Higher Education Research Institute, University of California, Los Angeles, Sax found that from using the CIRP longitudinal data from 1989 to 1998, that American college students’ civic engagement has changed dramatically. The sample included 12,376 students from 209 four-year colleges and universities and it “profiles the background characteristics, attitudes, values, educational achievements, and future goals of students entering colleges and universities” (p. 4). She found that for the past decade, student volunteerism has been on the rise with a “record high 74.2 percent of college freshmen in 1998 performing volunteer work during their last year in high school (p. 4). Unlike Astin, Sax finds that there are three specific factors due to this increase in volunteerism based on an increase in support from the federal government and schools; These include: first, the number of voluntary service programs have increased because of renewed support by state and federal governments (p. 5), second, elementary and secondary schools are offering more service-learning opportunities (p. 5), and third, schools are requiring community service for graduation (p. 5). Nevertheless, like Astin, Sax reports that college students have
shown an ever increasing disengagement from politics. In 1998, only 32.4 percent of the 18 to
24 age group voted in the most recent general election while in 1964, 50.9 percent of this same
age cohort voted (p. 6). Sax again offers three reasons why this might occur: first, students see
politics and politicians as negative, second, they do not view politics as a means of effective
change, and third, many students feel alienated from the political process (p. 7). Sax also found,
like previous researchers such as Pascarella and Terenzini (1991), that a college education
positively affects civic engagement as a whole. When it comes to commitment to social
activism, Sax found that at the point of college entry, 57.3 percent of the students “considered
helping others in difficulty a ‘very important’ or ‘essential’ life goal and while in their college
years, 68.1 percent of the students’ commitment grew” (p. 10). However, this level of
commitment dropped to 60.8 percent nine years after these students graduated from college (p.
10).

Using the CIRP 2000 data on “full-time students entering four-year colleges and
universities as freshmen,” the Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA found that “the
political engagement of entering college students reached an all-time low” (Higher Research
Education Institute, 2000, ¶ 5). They added that “the persistent downward trend is noteworthy
since freshmen interest in politics traditionally increases during a presidential election year”
(Higher Research Education Institute, 2000, ¶ 5).

In her most recent study using CIRP 2000, Sax (2003) found that when it comes to
politics, there was a slight increase in the percent of freshmen who kept up with politics. But,
“while the current rate of political interest remains lower than the 60 percent reported in the late
1960s, this recent reversal likely reflects two events that have re-ignited students’ interest in
politics: the hotly contested 2000 presidential election and the events of September 11, 2001”(¶
4. Another reversal is “the students’ commitment to influencing the political structure” (¶ 5). Sax also states that “currently, a record high 83 percent of freshmen report performing volunteer work during the year prior to entering college, compared to a low of 66 percent in 1989” (¶ 6). Moreover, Sax reports a decline in social activism, specifically in “cleaning up the environment, participating in community action programs, and promoting racial understanding” (¶ 7).

However, in their survey study of first-year students in two separate entering classes (1996 and 2000) at three predominantly White, midwestern institutions, Blackhurst and Foster (2003) found that “students in both the 1996 sample and the 2000 sample reported fairly moderate levels of cynicism toward politicians and the political process” (p. 166). Specifically, “the results suggest that students’ faith in elected officials may have increased during the latter half of the 1990s” (p. 166). They attribute this increase to the age group they studied, the Millennials, or those students who were “born between 1982 and 2002” (p. 156), because they are “characterized by faith in politicians and political parties as well as optimism about public institutions” (p. 166). These students also showed “moderate levels of apathy and relatively high levels of personal and collective optimism” which the authors suggest demonstrates “a generational shift in attitudes” (p.167).

While most researchers, faculty, staff, and administrators tout the benefits of college student civic engagement, they disagree on what civic engagement constitutes. According to Lloyd (2005), defining college student civic engagement is “difficult” because there is no consensus to what it means (¶ 1). Komives, Lucas, and McMahon (1998) define student civic responsibility as a “sense of personal responsibility individuals should feel to uphold their obligations as part of the community” (in Lloyd, 2005, ¶ 1). Astin, Astin, and Associates (2001) state that it “is the act of becoming effective social change agents by making a positive
difference in society to help solve the problems that plague America” (in Lloyd, 2005, ¶ 1).

According to Campus Compact, a national organization dedicated to expanding civic engagement opportunities at colleges and universities, states that college student civic responsibility as “the commitment of a citizen to his or her community” (Campus Compact, Glossary, ¶ 5). In their comprehensive study of successful civic engagement practices at a variety of 12 colleges and universities, Colby et al (2003) state that “not all forms of civic involvement count as political” (p.19). For Colby et al (2003), “political involvement” is the best form of civic involvement and it:

- does not include some kinds of direct service volunteer work, such as tutoring in after-school programs, and it does not include social activities such as bowling leagues or book clubs, personal commitments such as recycling, and other endeavors not connected to concerns for policy questions (regarding animal treatment or environmental health, for example) or root causes of social problems (such as educational inequity) and not intended to result in broad social or institutional change (p.19).

Thus, the goal of higher education institutions for Colby et al (2003) is “to reconnect college students with political affairs and traditional forms of political involvement” because these are “directly related to public policy” action and change (p.19).

One of the first problems with these aforementioned studies is that they rely on surveys which by their very nature offer a limited amount of answers for college students and do not take into account answers outside of their limited scope. Subsequently, one of the strategies I undertook in this dissertation that differ from what current college civic engagement researchers have done was to ask students which activities they participated in and why they participated in them. I also asked them which activities they wanted to participate that they could not participate
in because of work, family obligations, etc. I also asked them which activities they would like to participate in that FIU did not offer. Second, since these studies focus on the amount of civic engagement of college students, they also do not take into account the process of how these students become civically engaged in the first place. For instance, the above researchers do not know why a hypothetical “cynical” or “apathetic” college student decides not to civically participate or why some inactive students become civically engaged in specific activities. Moreover, these researchers focus on terms such as “cynicism” and “apathy” to describe low levels of political engagement among college students and their attitudes towards politics; could there be other reasons for low levels of civic engagement among college students other than disenchantment with the political system such as: they are shy, they have to work full-time jobs, they do not like the civic opportunities offered by their college and surrounding community, etc.?

A college student perspective on the limits of researchers’ conceptions of civic engagement that could explain the above issues is delineated in the “Wingspread summit on student civic engagement” (Student Wingspread, 2002). In response to the “Presidents’ declaration on the civic responsibility on higher education” in 1998, 33 juniors and seniors from various colleges and universities met at the Johnson Foundation in Racine, Wisconsin for the “Student Wingspread” (Long, p. v). Campus Compact, a national coalition of college and university presidents committed to promote the civic purposes of higher education, established the meeting “to hear directly from students about how they view their own civic development rather than on surveys about student civic engagement” (Long, p. v). It provides a glimpse into students’ own views and perceptions “of civic engagement, politics, and service” (Long, p. v). Students delineated four specific points that they deemed important:
We view democracy (author’s emphasis) as richly participatory rather than procedural, we see the work of negotiating difference as the work of democracy;

We recognize and seize opportunities to put our community service activities in context, to provide our actions with systems perspectives that politicize service;

We see ourselves as misunderstood by those who measure student engagement by conventional standards that don’t always fit our conceptions of democratic participation;

We have a clear sense of how higher education can and should change to provide an environment more conducive to civic education. (Long, p. v).

What stands out from the “Student Declaration” is that their perceptions of student civic engagement is markedly different than current researchers’ perceptions.

In the Student Declaration, students declare that “student civic engagement has multiple manifestations including: personal reflection/inner development, thinking, reading, silent protest, dialogue and relationship building, sharing knowledge, project management, and formal organization that brings people together” (Long, p. 1). Additionally, “cultural and spiritual forms of expression are included here, as are other forms of expression through the arts such as guerilla theater, music, coffee hours, poetry, and alternative newspapers” (Long, p. 1). For these students, civic engagement also means “unraveling obstacles to progress,” and “confronting the norm” (p. 1).

Students also state that they are more interested in “local politics and global politics than national politics” because national politics is “inaccessible” (p. 1). While these students are unhappy with conventional politics, they make clear that it does not mean that they are civically disengaged:
We discovered at Wingspread, however, a common sense that while we are disillusioned with conventional politics (and therefore most forms of political activity), we are deeply involved in civic issues through non-traditional forms of engagement. We are neither apathetic or disengaged. In fact, what many perceive as disengagement may actually be conscious choice; for example, a few of us at Wingspread actively avoided voting, not wanting to participate in what some of us perceive to be a deeply flawed electoral process. Others chose to vote solely on local referendums and initiatives. (p. 1).

For students, the “alternative politics” is “community service” because “through relationships with community members, [students] learn skills that can help [them] take on the roles of community organizers” (p. 2).

Students at Wingspread also defined their personal motivations for being “civically involved” (p. 2). These motivations include: concern for their communities and service as a solution, concerns for local and global issues, to avoid apathy, their personal identity such as faith, ethnicity, race, etc., their own privileged lives, social injustices, intolerance and human suffering, being told they are too young to do anything, inspiration of other youth, possibilities for change in their communities, division between their lives in academia and their time away from their own communities, and seeing themselves as the “people” they serve (pp. 2-3).

The problem, according to students at Wingspread, is that our democracy is not “inclusive” nor “accessible:”

The politics of participatory democracy should start with the question of who is allowed to participate. In theory, everyone should be included “collective” decision-making. As young people, however, we are often left out of this process, even when the decisions may directly impact our lives. Our experience with oppression and exclusion have shaped
our identities and have made us committed to political inclusion. We see many people in our communities—the young, the poor, the uneducated—being left out of decisions that affect them. Power and access in our political system have historically been granted to upper class, well educated, older white males. (p. 4).

To solve these perceived problems, students believe that service-learning “with it rich integrations of readings, reflection, and class discussion, offers feedback and recognition and makes [them] realize that collectively [they] are a powerful force for social change. (p. 7).

Students were also disconcerted at how others perceive their civic movements:

Students are also uneasy with the fact that their generation is being held accountable to a different generation’s standards of political involvement, such as those of the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s. We believe that through our work in community service we effectively confront some of the same “-isms” and institutional inequalities that the Civil Rights Movement challenged. However, our challenge is often to recognize and address more subtle forms of sexism, racism, ethnocentrism, homophobia, etc. (p. 12).

The “Student Declaration” reveals that college student engagement researchers have ignored college students’ own perceptions of what constitutes civic engagement. Nevertheless, these students, for the aforementioned reasons, renounce an important segment of civic engagement, namely traditional political participation. However, without political engagement such as voting and donating to political parties, democracies are vulnerable to apathy and loss of political representation and perhaps failure. However, unlike Colby et al (2003), I disagree that political engagement is the most important type of civic engagement. Service-learning, community service, volunteering, recycling, etc., all teach that we are not only responsible for ourselves, but
also responsible for our communities. Therefore, for this study I define college student civic engagement as political engagement such as voting and donating to a specific political party as well as non-political engagement such as volunteering, service-learning, membership in associations, and other forms of political expression through art, alternative newspapers, recycling, etc., that promote community engagement.

Another issue that is problematic with researchers’ conceptions of college student engagement is that these studies aggregate and categorize college students in such broad ethnic terms like White, Hispanic, African-American, etc., that they do not account for differences among distinct ethnic groups such as Cuban-Americans and Puerto Ricans and also inter-ethnic differences. Verba, Schlozman, and Brady (1995), for example, found that there were differences between civic engagement rates between non-Hispanic White and Latino American citizens (p. 232-242). In de la Garza, DeSipio, Garcia, Garcia, and Falcon’s (1992) seminal Latino National Political Study, for the first time, researchers disaggregated Mexican-Americans, Puerto Ricans, and Cuban-Americans and analyzed together their attitudes and behaviors concerning their political activities. They found that these groups exhibited different types of behaviors concerning their political activities (p. 13-17).

Ethnicity and Civic Engagement

One overlooked area in the higher education literature above is the affect of ethnicity on college student civic engagement. Youth civic engagement researchers, however, have found that ethnicity plays an important role on how youth become civically involved. For example, “research suggests that children who are members of minority groups may have weaker affective ties to the polity than their peers” (Flanagan & Gallay, 1995, p. 36) because “according to some ethnographers, the political disaffection of minority youth should be expected because they are
so frequently marginalized from the mainstream” (Flanagan & Faison, 2001, p. 5). This means that specific groups of adolescents who politically participate have greater control of civic matters that affect their own lives and that affect those groups that do not participate. When it comes to Latinos and civic engagement, research indicates that there are not only differences between Cuban-Americans and non-Hispanic whites, but there are even differences between Cuban-Americans and Mexican-Americans, Puerto Ricans, and other Latinos of Hispanic descent.

**Cuban Americans and Civic Engagement**

Verba, Schlozman, and Brady’s (1995) analysis of civic engagement result from their “The Citizenship Participation Study,” a random phone survey of 15,053 members of the American public (p. 33). These included 894 Latinos and 1,400 African-Americans. They then conducted longer, in-person interviews with 2,517 of the original 15,053 respondents, “weighting the sample so as to produce a disproportionate number of both activists and members of the two minority groups” (p. 33). The authors define civic volunteerism as participation in voluntary activities in several spheres such as churches and organizations as well as in politics such as voting (p. 32). More importantly, they found that there were differences between civic engagement rates between non-Hispanic Whites and Latinos. Even though they aggregate Mexican Americans, Cuban Americans, Puerto Ricans, and other Latin Americans, these results demonstrate that ethnicity can play a role in rates of civic engagement. For example, they found that the mean number of political acts by non-Hispanic Whites was 2.2. Latinos ranged the lowest with 1.2, the lowest of any ethnic group they studied (p. 232). When it came to voting, campaign work, campaign contributions, contact with politicians, informal community activity, and affiliation with a political organization, Latinos had the lowest rates of participation among
non-Hispanic Whites and African Americans (p. 233). When it comes to non-political organizational affiliation, activity in a non-political organization, time for charitable work, and charitable contributions, Latinos again had the lowest rates for all these categories (p. 242). The authors argue that these differences are caused by three factors: lack of time and money, no interest and little knowledge of civic events, and “isolation from networks of recruitment through which citizens are mobilized by politics” (p. 15).

While Verba, Schlozman, and Brady compare Latinos with Non-Hispanic Whites and African-Americans, the study ignores the cultural differences between Hispanic/Latino groups such as Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, and Cuban Americans that affect civic engagement (de la Garza, DeSipio, Garcia, Garcia, and Falcon, 1992, p. 7). It is “culturally demeaning and conceptually indefensible to aggregate a priori all these groups under a single label such as ‘Hispanic’ or ‘Latino’” (de la Garza, DeSipio, Garcia, Garcia, and Falcon, 1992, p. 7). In de la Garza, DeSipio, Garcia, Garcia, and Falcon’s (1992) seminal Latino National Political Study (LNPS), for the first time, researchers disaggregated Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, and Cuban Americans and analyzed together their attitudes and behaviors concerning their political activities. From August 1989 until April 1990, the authors conducted interviews of 1,546 Mexicans, 589 Puerto Ricans, 682 Cubans, 456 non-Hispanic Whites (Anglos) (pp. 7-8). Their sample of these Hispanic/Latino groups represented 91 percent of the Mexican, Puerto Rican, and Cuban populations in the U. S. (p. 7). They found several findings that demonstrate the ineffectiveness of aggregating these Hispanic/Latino populations.

Respondents identified themselves primarily with their national origin (p. 13). Also, the three Hispanic/Latino groups have little interaction with each other and prefer to interact with their own ethnic communities (p. 14). While Cubans and Anglos report almost identical rates of
interests in current events and voting (both at 78 percent; the highest of all the other groups, p. 121), Mexicans and Puerto Rican reported rates are lower (p. 15). Grenier, Invernizzi, Salup, and Schmidt (1994) in fact state that “in Dade County [where Miami is located], it is common knowledge that Cubans vote” (p. 162). However, Cubans are much less active regarding political activities other than voting than the other two groups (p. 15). All groups express “ethnic solidarity and support for co-ethnics” when it comes to politics (p. 15). All groups reported high levels of school involvement such as attending Parent Teacher Association meetings (p. 15). Cubans and Anglos were also more likely to talk about political problems than the other two groups (p. 73). Finally, while Mexicans and Puerto Ricans generally voted Democratic and were more liberal than their mainly conservative, Republican Cuban counterparts, the authors of this study found that these responses were less than expected and that many Mexicans and Puerto Ricans were increasingly more conservative and Republican while more Cubans were increasingly liberal and Democratic (p. 83). For example, “on domestic issues, [Cuban-American] positions are often more progressive than the Florida Republican Party (of which is a significant component)” (DeSipio, 1996, p. 38). Thus, the authors found “scant evidence that a ‘Hispanic’ political community exists that is rooted in alleged distinctive cultural traditions such as Spanish language-maintenance, religiosity, or shared identity” (pp. 13-14).

In their analysis of younger Cuban Americans, including college students, using the LPNS data, Moreno and Hill (1998) also identified several generational political gaps:

However, the survey did find some evidence that younger Cuban[-]American attitudes were becoming “socialized” into mainstream U.S. politics. U.S. born Cubans and those who immigrated at the age of 10 or less are far more politically active and a little more knowledgeable than their parents. Moreover, younger Cubans are developing (like most
other U.S. citizens) a cynical view of U.S. politics; a stronger correlation was found between length of residency and distrust of the U.S. government. The results of this paper hint at the possibility that Cuban-American politics is becoming less monolithic. The political cohesiveness which characterized the first generation of exile politics may be giving way to more diversity. As the inexorable march of time and the inevitable toll it takes on human mortality continues, one would logically expect Cuban-American attitudes in the aggregate to mirror those attitudes seen in the younger generations of this analysis. (Conclusion, ¶ 4).

More recently, the William C. Velásquez Institute (Institute), a non-partisan Latino think tank, found that while “Cuban-Americans share basic working class, populist concerns like other U.S. Latinos” (González, 2004), they also found that there were generational political gaps. For example, “arrivals after 1980 and those born here disapprove of the increased restrictions on travel” to Cuba recently enacted by the George W. Bush administration (González, 2004).

The Institute also found that while the majority of the respondents (43%) indicated they were Democratic registered voters, most respondents (63%) would vote for George W. Bush if the elections were held today (Florida Cuban Survey, 2004). The majority of Cuban Americans in the Florida Cuban Poll also reported that they speak Spanish and English equally (51%) and preferred to be identified by their country of origin, Cuba (40%).

According to the studies above, Cuban Americans in Miami exhibit unique civic engagement behaviors. Cuban Americans are part of a large Hispanic majority group in Miami (65.76% Total Hispanic: 34.14% Cuban-American) (Census Bureau, 2000). FIU also houses a majority Hispanic student population (51% Hispanic) (FIU Facts and Information, 2004). Thus, will non-Hispanic Whites who make up part of the minority in Miami be more or less apt to
participate in civic engagement activities than if they were at a majority non-Hispanic White institution? Also, since Spanish is spoken in all facets of Miami including FIU, could there be a language barrier preventing non-Hispanic Whites from engaging with their Cuban-American classmates? Stepick, Grenier, Castro, and Dunn in their recent work on immigrant groups’ political participation in Miami in their work *This land is our land: Immigrants and power in Miami* (2003), suggest that non-Hispanic Whites have acculturated in reverse to the dominant Hispanic population. Could this have had an effect on non-Hispanic Whites at FIU?

**Non-Hispanic Whites and Civic Engagement**

According to Stepick et al (2003), non-Hispanic Whites in the 1970s “began to decline as many moved out of Miami-Dade County” (p. 23). By the year 2000, “they constituted barely over 20 percent of the region, considerably less than the nearly 60 percent Latino population and only slightly more than the [b]lack population” (p. 23). However, Stepick et al explain that while Latinos are the majority population in Miami-Dade County, non-Hispanic Whites “maintained control beyond their numbers” (p. 23):

The leaders of businesses with the most employees in Miami-Dade are 60 percent [w]hite. Seventy-five percent of Miami-Dade County judges are [w]hite. And in the country’s major arts organizations, they constitute 89 percent of the leadership. Even on college and university boards and in political posts, [w]hite non-Latinos hold more than half the positions. While a large independent Spanish-language newspaper has long been based in Miami (*Diario las Americas*), the most influential paper, the *Miami Herald*, is controlled by established resident [w]hites. Even in elected positions, Latinos lag behind [w]hites. A 2000 *Miami Herald* survey of 406 government positions found that whites
held 51 percent of elected and top appointed jobs, while Latinos only had 32 percent (all but 5 percent were Miami Cubans) (p. 23).

Though it appears that non-Hispanic Whites have maintained power in Miami-Dade since the 1970s, Stepick et al found during their participant observation and “intensive interviewing” of Cuban American, African American, and non-Hispanic White Miami-Dade residents (p. 30), found that “power, context, and diversity” were important variables that assimilation studies “previously ignored” (p. 26).

Stepick et al argue that Miami Whites in the late 1980s “changed their expectations” regarding Cuban Americans (p. 143). Instead of “expecting Miami Cubans to become Americanized, many engaged in reverse acculturation; they heralded Miami as the capital of Latin America, and they began to learn Spanish and to adopt Miami Cuban and Latino culture” (p. 144). Thus, a power shift occurred between both ethnic groups:

The transformation was occasioned by a shift in power relations. The local power of the Miami Cuban community reversed the normal flow of assimilation. The business and civic elite recognized that the economic advantages of Miami Cubans and other Latinos made important economic links with Latin America. Rather than resisting the transformation, the business community sought to adapt. They engaged in reverse acculturation (p. 144).

Nevertheless, Stepick et al argue that both Cuban Americans and non-Hispanic Whites are still “assimilating in important ways” (p. 144):

While some [w]hite American CEOs are learning Spanish, English still predominates in the Chamber of Commerce meetings and in any event that brings together the top of the business and civic elite. Miami contains not just reverse acculturation, nor simply
immigrant assimilation. Rather, Miami embodies transculturation, in which the newcomer immigrants and the Americans are changing, adapting to each other. Rather than degenerating into “impenetrable, culturally antagonistic ethic enclaves,” as ProjectUSA fears, Miami contains hybrid cultural mixes. In fact, Miami may be more of a melting pot than existed in other cities with earlier immigrants. (p. 144).

Therefore, could Stepick et al’s theory of reverse acculturation, transculturation, and hybridity hold true for non-Hispanic white students? Feagin, Vera, and Imani’s study (1996) on Black students in predominantly White students provides an alternate point of view of how non-Hispanic White students at FIU could possibly interact with their Cuban-American classmates as well as point out the types of civic engagement activities in which they would be inclined to partake.

In The agony of education: Black students at white colleges and universities (1996), Feagin, Vera, and Imani did a “focus group interview with thirty-six randomly selected [b]lack juniors and seniors at State University and with forty-one [b]lack parents in nearby metropolitan areas, areas that often send students to the university” (p. xi). In one of their findings, Feagin et al state that Whites “assume, consciously or half-consciously, they are in [w]hite places” (p. 51). For example, one Black student described his interaction with a White female in the parking lot of the university:

I was walking to class…It was about twelve noon and I had my backpack. I’m a [b]lack student, right. And there was this [w]hite girl in the car, and she pulled in the parking space, right. And she’s about to get out. And I’m walking up. I’m not even paying attention to her, and the next think I hear is “click, click.” And she’s looking at me like I’m going to rape her. (p. 50).
Feagin et al argue that the comments on control of spaces by Whites is prevalent in many campuses. For example, “a study at the University of California (Berkeley) found that [w]hites were the most likely among the students to articulate a strong concern that the campus was too balkanized and segregated, with separate political and social groups for different groups of university students” (p. 51).

Feagin et al also found that Blacks were subject to “[w]hite stereotypes and images” on many campuses (p. 66). One Black student describes his “hockey” conversation with some White students:

This one is kind of dumb, but anyway, I’ll say it. I was in one of my history classes when I was a freshman, and these white guys were talking about hockey, and I said something about it, and they said, “Oh, what do you know about hockey? You’re [b]lack.” And I said, “Well, just because we don’t dominate that sport too doesn’t mean I don’t know nothing about hockey.” (p. 66).

Feagin et al explain that “today, racism also encompasses subtle and covert [w]hite responses, as well as nonresponses, that make African[-]Americans feel uncomfortable, out of place, or unwanted” (p. 67).

“White denial” of racism was also prevalent on campuses according to Black students (p. 69). Feagin et al argue that “many [w]hites fail to perceive the existence of racism, in part because [w]hite privilege is taken for granted and in part because most whites have not experienced being in a subordinate position or have not been educated about the character and impact of racism” (p. 70). Since FIU is predominantly Hispanic, it would appear more likely that non-Hispanic Whites do experience a “subordinate position” but, it is not necessarily clear
whether Cuban-Americans are blatantly racist against them since FIU faculty and administrators are predominantly White (Stepick et al, 2003, p. 23).

Feagin et al subsequently found that Black students formed cohesive groups among each other “for defensive, social-support, and self-determination reasons” (p. 74). Whites see black groups as a “sign of anti[w]hite hostility and ‘reverse discrimination’” (p. 72). Tatum (1997) also argues that Blacks group together in school and colleges as a support mechanism, but she also contends that they are searching for their own “positive racial identity” (p. 53-55). While Cuban-Americans have a clear sense of cohesion according to previously mentioned research on civic engagement such as volunteerism and politics, do non-Hispanic Whites? And, does it affect their civic engagement activities in college? Tatum suggests that Whites do not perceive race or racism like “people of color” (p. 95):

While they have been breathing the “smog” and have internalized many of the prevailing societal stereotypes of people of color, [whites] typically are unaware of this socialization process. They often perceive themselves as color-blind, completely free of prejudice, unaware of their own assumptions about other racial groups. In addition, they usually think of racism as the prejudiced behaviors of individuals rather than as an institutionalized system of advantage benefiting Whites in subtle as well as blatant ways. (p. 95)

If White college students cannot perceive their own biases among their peers of color, then of course it will affect them. Both Feagin and Tatum hint at a cohesive White identity that they have demonstrated affects the collegiate environment. However, White ethnic identity in the aggregate higher education literature on civic engagement has been glossed over or ignored.
According to Torres, Howard-Hamilton, and Cooper (2003), “[W]hite racial identity
development theories acknowledge that the theories are based on how Whites perceive other
racial ethnic groups and not their own” (p. 28). White identity is also “constructed within a
complex set of interconnecting social locations (for example, race, class, and gender), and it is
shaped by social, economic, and historical processes” (p. 28). Torres et al argue that in any
model of White identity, Whites need to “become more introspective and understand that race is
a nice thing to have” (p. 30). They stress that it is “important for Whites to become comfortable
with their white racial identity, because of the demographic changes in society have occurred and
our diverse cultures are becoming more predominant on college campuses” (p. 30). Do Whites at
FIU then appreciate their White identity in relation to Cuban-Americans or do they perceive
themselves as a minority group struggling to survive in a largely “foreign” institution?

Whites at FIU could feel out of place and instead of exuding a positive White identity
like Torres et al suggests, could instead feel like an isolated minority where they have no say in
major decisions. The implications would consequently be that Whites at FIU participate in less
types of civic engagement than their Cuban-American counterparts. While ethnicity may play a
part in college student civic engagement, Robert B. Putnam argues in his work *Bowling alone:*
*The collapse and revival of American community* (2000) that social capital can “bridge” and
“bond” “broader identities” to encourage civic engagement (p. 23).

**Putnam’s Social Capital and Implications for
College Student Civic Engagement**

One important aspect of the higher education literature on college student civic
e-engagement that is not discussed is how college students become civically engaged in the first
place. For example, while the higher education literature on college student civic engagement
focuses on the percentage of students engaged in traditional types of college activities such as
voting, volunteering, etc., they do not explore the specific processes that lead to a student to become civically involved. Putnam’s concept of social capital provides a possible explanation for how college students civically engage.

In “Bowling Alone: America’s Declining Social Capital” (1995), Putnam laments the decline of various types of associations such as “religious, moral, serious, futile, very general and very limited, immensely large and very minute...” (p. 65). He adds that there is “empirical evidence that the quality of public life and the performance of social institutions (and not only in America) are indeed powerfully influenced by norms and networks of civic engagement” (p. 66). Moreover, “research on varying economic attainments of different ethnic groups in the United States has demonstrated the importance of social bonds within each group” (p. 66). These social bonds such as “networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit” for Putnam is “social capital” (p. 67). In other words civic engagement adds to one’s social capital. Education as a means of attaining social capital, according to Putnam (1996) “is by far the strongest correlate” of civic engagement “in all its forms, including social trust and membership in my different types of groups” (p. 67). Moreover, “the effects of education become greater and greater as we move up the educational ladder” (Putnam, 1996, p. 67). Even though many critics, such as Norris (1996), Tarrow (1996), Paxton (1999), and Sobel (2002) have criticized Putnam’s methodology and causal inferences, these same critics acknowledge that Putnam’s studies on social capital do correlate to their own and other studies that demonstrate a general decrease in civic engagement in the U.S. due to a decrease in dense networks of trust among people or social capital (Norris, 1996, p. 479; Tarrow, 1996, p. 395-396; Paxton, 1999, p. 124; Sobel, 2002, p. 151-152).

By analogy with notions of physical capital and human capital—tools and training that enhance individual productivity—the core idea of social capital theory is that social networks have value...

Whereas physical capital refers to physical objects and human capital refers to properties of individuals, social capital refers to connections among individuals—social networks and then norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them. In that sense social capital is closely related to what some have called "civic virtue." (p. 19).

Using Putnam’s social capital concept, college students that are civically engaged do so because of “social networks and then norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness,” meaning they are supported by their interaction with and trust among their college peers. According to the literature above, until recently, Cuban-Americans and non-Hispanic Whites in Miami, Florida have relied on their own ethnic social networks regarding voting, political opinions, jobs, etc. According to Stepick et al, however, Cuban-Americans and non-Hispanic Whites in Miami, Florida are starting to develop interethnic relations based on reverse acculturation. Putnam calls both of these types of social networking, *bonding social capital* and *bridging social capital* (p. 22).

Bonding social capital is “inward looking and tend[s] to reinforce exclusive identities and homogenous groups” (p. 22). Some examples of bonding social capital “include ethnic fraternal organizations, church-based women's reading groups, and fashionable country clubs” (p. 22). It “provide[s] crucial social and psychological support for less fortunate members of the
community, while furnishing start-up financing, markets, and reliable labor for local entrepreneurs” (p.22). Bridging social capital is “outward looking and encompass[es] people across diverse social cleavages” (p.22). Some examples of bridging social capital include “the civil rights movement, many youth service groups, and ecumenical religious organizations” (p.22). Bridging social capital “is better for linkage to external assets and for information diffusion” (p.22).

However, some ethnic groups in higher education do not accumulate either types social capital necessary to be civically engaged. For example, Tatum (1997) shows how African-Americans in schools develop peer groups with one another only to develop an “oppositional identity” that undermines their accumulation of social capital. Additionally, she cites Walter Allen’s (1991) “Nationally Study on Black College Students.” In this work, Allen found that “on predominantly White campuses, Black students emphasize feelings of alienation, sensed hostility, racial discrimination, and a lack of integration” while “on historically Black campuses, Black students emphasize feelings of engagement, connection, acceptance, and extensive support and encouragement.” Thus, environment can have an effect on social capital accumulation and stratification among different ethnic groups. Therefore, since FIU is a majority Latino institution, have Cuban-Americans accumulated the necessary social capital to establish strong enough networks that go beyond bonding social capital and instead developed bridging social capital? Since non-Hispanic White students are part of the minority at FIU, have they, like African-Americans in majority White institutions, developed an “oppositional identity” and not enough bonding or bridging social capital that develops strong enough networks to allow for civic engagement? Does FIU promote an institutional environment where both Cuban-Americans and Non-Hispanic Whites can develop both bonding and bridging social capital and thus, become
civically engaged within and outside their distinct ethnic communities? Many recent studies of colleges and universities suggest that social capital among college students can be fostered to promote civic engagement.

**Successful Institutional Civic Engagement Practices**

Colby et al’s (2003) work, *Educating citizens: Preparing America’s undergraduates for lives of moral and civic responsibility*, is a comprehensive study that focuses on how colleges and universities specifically promote successful college student civic engagement strategies. In their study of 12 distinct colleges and universities (Alverno College; the College of St. Catherine; California State University, Monterey Bay; Duke University; Kapi’olani Community College; Messiah College; Portland State University; Spelman College; Turtle Mountain Community College; Tusculum College; the United States Air Force Academy; and the University of Notre Dame) in various parts of the United States, Colby et al found that their successful civic engagement programs contained similar components which included: *civic and moral competencies* (p. 53); *effective presidential leadership* (p. 72-77); *leadership from centers and institutes* (p. 77-80); *effective faculty leadership* (p. 80-83); *physical features of the campus* that exemplified the civic mission of the institution (p. 86-87), *shared stories* that promoted shared civic values (p. 87-88), *shared ideas, philosophies, and ideologies* (p. 89-90), civic *rituals* (p. 90), *socialization strategies* (p. 91-92), low levels of *discrepancies* between campus culture and action (p. 92-93), and a *cohesive, non-coercive* campus culture (p. 93-95).

*Civic and moral competencies* include: “critical and integrative thinking, communication, and problem solving” as well as self-understanding, responsibility for one’s actions, informed and responsible involvement among the community, cultural awareness and respect, and the appreciation of global dimensions of many issues (p. 53). *Effective presidents* initiated
programming that consisted of: the common good, moral and civic education, participation of administration and faculty, and collaboration with a selected administrative team (p. 72-73). Effective centers and institutes were well-funded and had “dedicated leadership over a sustained period of time” (p. 76). Faculty participation in civic engagement programming was essential (p. 80). The physical layout of the colleges and universities provided a sense of community (p. 86-87). Stories highlight the special missions of each campus (p. 88). Shared ideas, philosophies, and ideologies “provide a reference point for institutional norms” such as civic engagement (p. 89). Civic rituals serve “as a guiding idea and a physical reminder of the institution’s values” (p. 90). Socialization strategies allow for “personal connections” to be established (p. 91).

Consistent community values and actions are important because they prevent institutional “hypocrisy” which students can readily perceive (p. 92-93). Coercion or forcing a campus to abide by a strong moral and civic culture has “no place in programs of moral and civic education” (p. 91).

Similar to Colby et al’s (2003) research, Meeropol, Jacobs Jones, Lenk, Zltokowski, Gelmon, and Norvell (2003) studied ten minority-serving institutions (Benedict College, Johnson C. Smith University, LeMoyne-Owen College, North Carolina Central University, Xavier University, CSU Stanislaus, Heritage University, Our Lady of the Lake University, St. Edward’s College, and West Hills Community College District) and found 13 commonalities that reflect successful civic engagement practices (Campus Compact, ¶ 1). These are: 1) the mission is aligned with promoting civic engagement, 2) academic and administrative leadership visibly support civic engagement on campus, 3) community-based learning opportunities can be found across the curriculum, 4) course content is flexible and allows faculty to integrate community-based strategies in the classroom, 5) the institution provides ample service-learning and
community-based training to faculty, 6) the institution’s tenure, promotion, and/or retention guidelines includes rewards for community-based teaching and scholarship, 7) faculty and students are well-informed for the resources available to support community-based work, 8) adequate funding is provided to support community-based work, 9) local history is celebrated on campus of and for the community, 10) the institution provides the community with access to human, technical, and intellectual resources on campus, 11) the institution effectively coordinates community-based activities on- and off-campus, 12) the institution facilitates dialogue around public issues, and 13) students participate on major decisions concerning community-based work on campus (¶ 1-13).

Additionally, the American Association of Higher Education (AAHE), Campus Compact, and the National Society for Experiential Education studied 27 institutions to determine what were models of good practice for service-learning programs (Kay Schneider, 1998, ¶ 1). They find that institutional programs that have successful service-learning programs: 1) have a vision and well-defined mission that guides service-learning, 2) capitalize on their strengths regarding service-learning, 3) obtain support from high levels of the administration, 4) have individuals that remain current with the service-learning literature, 5) have curricular-wide service-learning programs, 6) have roles and rewards for faculty who participate in service-learning, 7) have different degrees of complexity to reach the widest possible audience, 8) incorporate student voices and ideas into their programs, 9) involve the community with curricular programming, 10) try new approaches, 11) define specific outcomes, 12) the most established and institutionalized programs tend to be older, and 13) pay attention to national, state, and local trends.
The students at Wingspread (2002) also proffered some indicators of successful student civic engagement. Most of their suggestions were similar to what Colby et al (2003), Meeropol et al (2003), and the American Association of Higher Education, Campus Compact, and the National Society for Experiential Education (1998) found during their studies at the above diverse institutions. According to students at Wingspread, institutional indicators include: making service part of the curriculum, having service-learning programs housed at an institute or center, a high level of service–learning commitment among faculty members, college presidents providing “open forums to encourage the growth of various forms of civic engagement,” creating dorms with “community outreach missions and running alternative spring break programs,” creating “community service scholarships and allocate a percentage of student activity fees to support student efforts to engage in the community,” and a strong mission and culture of the institution by “providing space, resources, recognition, information, transportation, and other forms of support (p. 9).

However, students also mentioned some experiences that were different than Colby et al’s (2003), Meeropol et al’s (2003), and the American Association of Higher Education, Campus Compact, and the National Society for Experiential Education’s (1998) research. Students mentioned that their voices were not being heard on campuses regarding civic engagement on campus:

We feel that the leaders of colleges and universities often consider the voices of trustees and donors to be more important than that of their students, creating an academic atmosphere that is not necessarily conducive to civic engagement. Presidents should instead “practice what they preach” to their students, by facilitating quality service-learning opportunities. (p.11)
They also criticize campuses for not preparing students earlier in their college years to become civically engaged:

In addition, students are generally unaware of how to participate in college community. They know little about the administrative functions of higher education and are organizationally illiterate about the particular universities they attend. Many of us who do try to navigate the bureaucracy often lack access to the institutional system and find progress to be painstakingly slow and difficult. (p. 11)

The students at Wingspread also identified what they thought were institutional barriers to successful student civic engagement:

- One student noted that his campus interpreted work-study in such a manner as to prohibit some students from doing the kind of work they would prefer to do in communities.
- Compulsory community service programs (such as those administered by the criminal justice system) send a message to students and community members that service is a form of punishment.
- Many campuses do not attempt to orient students to the neighborhood outside of campus, leaving it to individual students to become self-educated about the community.
- Oftentimes there are physical barriers between the university and the community that augment the disconnection between them.
- Community service centers on campuses (if they exist at all) often lack adequate resources, staffing, and funds. (p. 11)
Colby et al (2003), Meeropol et al (2003), AAHE et al (1998), and the Student Declaration (2002) agree on many aspects of successful civic engagement practices at colleges and universities; they all agree that 1) the missions of colleges/universities should exemplify their focus on civic engagement, 2) civic engagement should be taught across the curriculum, 3) faculty should be involved with civic engagement teaching and programming through a rewards system including tenure, 4) presidents and administration in general should provide leadership in this area, 5) colleges/universities provide adequate support to civic engagement programming, and 6) involvement between the college/university and the community is essential. Surprisingly, all of the researchers except Colby et al (2003) agree that student input and participation is important on colleges and universities that have successful student civic engagement programs. Only Colby et al (2003) and the Student Wingspread declaration (2001) agree that civic engagement should be centralized or housed at a specific institute or center on campus.

This study will compare and contrast Colby et al’s (2003), Meeropol et al’s (2003), the AAHE’s (1998) research, and the Student Declaration (2002) with FIU to identify any similarities and differences in successful institutional civic engagement programming.

Defining Civic Engagement

My definition of college student civic engagement expands the multiple meanings researchers, staff, and students have given this elusive term. From a functioning democracy point of view, both political and non-political types of engagement are necessary. Some researchers like Colby et al (2003) believe only political engagement is important. Astin and Sax (1998) find that service-learning benefits students when it comes to academics and interest in helping their community. Similarly, Astin, Sax, and Avalos (1999) find that volunteering also benefits both
the student academically and their interest in helping their communities. College students in the
Student Declaration find that political engagement is inaccessible and that service-learning and
volunteering are the most important aspects college student civic engagement and in fact, state
that this is a form of “political” engagement. However, without political engagement such as
voting and donating to political parties, democracies are vulnerable to apathy and loss of political
representation and perhaps failure. However, unlike Colby et al (2003), I disagree that political
engagement is the most important type of civic engagement. Service-learning, community
service, volunteering, recycling, etc., all teach that we are not only responsible for ourselves, but
also responsible for our communities. Therefore, for this study I define college student civic
engagement as political engagement such as voting and donating to a specific political party as
well as non-political engagement such as volunteering, service-learning, membership in
associations, and other forms of political expression through art, alternative newspapers,
recycling, etc., that promote community engagement.
Chapter Four

Methodology: Qualitative Research

This chapter explains the reasons for choosing an ethnographic research design to investigate college student civic engagement. It demarcates the research limitations, interview protocols, and the specific participants. It also explains how the data was collected and analyzed.

In this research, I examined the processes whereby universities civically engage second year college students. I used qualitative research to illuminate these processes. According to Merriam (1988) (cited in Creswell, 1994, p. 145), there are six assumptions inherent in qualitative research: 1) process, 2) meaning, 3) the researcher as primary research instrument, 4) fieldwork, 5) descriptive function, and 6) inductive function. My primary purpose was to discover the specific processes that might lead distinct groups of students either to disengage, engage, or both from specific civic activities at universities. Instead of documenting the outcomes or products of the engagement experiences, my study examined specific processes at an American university (FIU) focusing on the ways it promotes engagement. Since I was the primary collector and interpreter of the research data, the research will be inherently subjective. I collected the data based on ethnographic methodology. My research involved interviews, observations, a personal journal, and collecting documents. My research was “inductive” since I developed “abstractions, concepts, hypotheses, and theories from details” (Merriam, 1988, p. 145).

Ethnography

Ethnography is a qualitative data collection technique that relies on the “description and interpretation of a cultural or social group system” (Creswell, 1998, p. 58). The “essential core of this activity aims to understand another way of life from the native point of view” (Spradley,
1979, p. 3). Specifically, it involves examining “the group’s observable and learned patterns of behavior, customs, and way of life,” “prolonged observation of the group, typically through participant observation in which the researcher is immersed in the day-to-day lives of the people or through one-on-one interviews with members of a group,” and finally, studying the “meanings of behavior, language, and interactions of the culture-sharing group” (Creswell, 1998, p. 58).

“Participant observation,” or the “immer[sion] in the day-to-day lives of the people” of the cultural groups being observed (Creswell, 1998, p. 58), was used to discern whether or not the universities they attend are filtering them towards either civic disengagement and/or civic engagement. I gained access to the specific student groups by first, obtaining permission from The Pennsylvania State University’s Office for Research Protections (Approval number IRB #14667) and FIU’s Institutional Review Board (Approval number 091202-00), and second, by becoming an adjunct instructor in the College of Education at FIU which allowed me to have direct access to faculty, administrators, and students that eventually led to the interviews and observations of Cuban-American and non-Hispanic white students. My goals were to examine which groups were promoted and/or prevented from certain types of civic dis/engagement, determine why, and finally, to make recommendations for further study on a broader scale aimed at rectifying the particular problem(s) (if any) with differences in civic engagement opportunities.

**Access to Students**

Permission for interviewing students at FIU was provided by The Pennsylvania State University (Penn State) Office of Regulatory Compliance (ORC) and the FIU Institutional Review Board on Human Subjects (IRB). Dr. Alex Stepick, professor of sociology and anthropology at FIU and an expert on immigrant groups in Miami, helped me with the initial
stages of my study. After permission was granted I contacted professors, administrators, and students and asked them if they knew of other programs or courses where I might find second-year students. After initiating contact with Cuban-American and non-Hispanic White students, I asked them if they knew of other similar students that were willing to participate in the study. This served as a tool to generate a pool of interviewees.

I protected student interviewees by strictly following the ORC’s and IRB’s guidelines and research on human subjects. I additionally followed Spradley’s recommendations on ethical, ethnographic interviewing (1979, p. 34-39). I: 1) always considered the interviewee’s “physical, social, psychological welfare and to honor their dignity and privacy” (p. 35), 2) safeguarded interviewee’s rights, interests, privacy, and sensitivities; one specific method I will employ is to use pseudonyms for all students in my study (p. 35), 3) clearly communicated my research objectives to my interviewees so they had the opportunity to ask questions or not participate in the study (p. 36), 4) did not exploit interviewees for personal gain (p. 38). Also, after the dissertation is approved, I will 5) make reports available to informants (p. 39).

**Interviews**

As part of my research, I conducted two types of interviews: individual, evaluation interviews and focus group interviews. The study included 8 months of “participant observation,” with interviewing and direct observation of Cuban-American and non-Hispanic White students attending FIU. This time at FIU allowed me an overview of the university cultural setting and atmosphere. I directly observed and interacted with second year students during their daily lives, and looked for specific, key actions that entailed civic disengagement or engagement within their respective universities. Second year students were observed at FIU. I interviewed 14 Cuban-Americans (6 females and 8 males) and 15 non-Hispanic Whites (9
females and 6 males). I also interviewed 3 administrators and 6 faculty involved with different aspects of civic engagement programming at FIU (See Table 1 for list of students and basic demographic information and Table 2 for list of faculty and administrators and their positions and length of positions). Two focus student groups (7 student government members at FIU and 5 students in my EDG 2701-Teaching Diverse Populations course in the Spring 2003 semester) were also interviewed. Also, by observing these students, I engaged with them and determined if they were likely to participate in future university related civic activities.

Based on the review of literature on college student civic engagement and the civic and political trends of Cuban-Americans and non-Hispanic Whites in Miami, Florida (in Chapter 2), I chose Cuban-American and non-Hispanic White students at FIU for this dissertation study. Criteria for student, staff, and faculty selection included: 1) the student must either be a female or male Cuban-American or non-Hispanic White, and 2) students had to have been at FIU for at least one year because it is assumed that they have been “enculturated” (Spradley, 1979, p. 47) or have experienced a year’s worth of the effects of college initiated civic engagement activities either through institutionally required civic engagement activities, voluntary engagement, or a combination of both. Several methods were used to determine potential student volunteers for this study. These consisted of: 1) asking students from my EDG 2701-Teaching Diverse Populations and EDF 3515-Philosophical and Historical Foundations of Education at FIU if they were interested in participating, 2) asking these students if they knew of other students at FIU who were willing to participate in this study, 3) asking Dr. Beverly Dalrymple, the Director of the Center for Civic Responsibility and Leadership at FIU, if she knew of any students who might fit the criteria above, 4) asking Dr. Dalrymple for other faculty and staff who participate in civic engagement programming for students so that I can ask them for other student volunteers,
5) asking the Student Government President at FIU, Devyn, if she and other members could participate in the study, and 6) asking Student Government members if they knew of other students who met the above criteria and who would like to participate.

**Research Limitations**

There are several limitations to this type of research methodology. First, since this is an ethnographic, qualitative study, a “purposeful sample” or a sample based on the criteria above, this study is limited to the students interviewed and not to other female or male Cuban-Americans and non-Hispanic Whites at FIU. Nevertheless, the focus of this study was “the process students go through” (McDonough, 1997, p. 17) that determined whether or not they were civically engaged and most student interviews within their own ethnic groups were consistent with one another. Additionally, this study was done at a specific institution at a specific time. Thus, this study is not generalizable to other institutions. Third, the students from my classes could have biased their interviews by making them more positive since I was their instructor. However, their answers were consistent with other students that were not in my classes. Fourth, while the different students stated that their level of civic participation varied from no activity to many activities, most of the students interviewed participated in several to a lot of civic engagement activities at FIU. Thus, perspectives of why students did not civically engage or engaged in few activities at FIU were limited to a small group of students. Finally, because I grew up in Miami and taught at FIU prior to the start of my dissertation study, unintentional bias could appear in the analysis.

Criteria for document collection consisted of reading documents that mentioned civic engagement at FIU. These included internal documents at FIU, the catalog, newsletters, websites, memorandums, newspapers, and emails.
Before gathering these interviews, I incorporated a pilot study at FIU, where the first stage of this study was conducted to allow[s] the researcher to focus on particular areas that may have been unclear previously (Janesick, “The Dance,” 1998, p. 42). Also, pilot interviews were used to test certain questions (Janesick, “The Dance,” 1998, p. 42). A total of 5 pilot interviews were done from October 1, 2002 to October 2, 2002. After careful review, minor changes were made to the interview questions (see below). I also reviewed university websites, college newspapers, and university catalogs prior to interviewing to “uncover some insight into the shape of the study that previously was not apparent” (Janesick, “The Dance,” 1998, p. 43). Initial pilot study questions came from prior research findings in the higher education, political science,

Table 4-1

List of Students and Basic Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Major</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Curtis</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>Sophomore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniel</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>Social Studies Education</td>
<td>Senior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ian</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Social Studies Education, but changing to History</td>
<td>Junior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jason</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>Junior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jay</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Mathematics Education</td>
<td>Freshman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jorge</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Mathematics Education</td>
<td>Sophomore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mario</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Sports Medicine</td>
<td>Sophomore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xavier</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Psychology with a Minor in English</td>
<td>Senior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Major</td>
<td>Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Devyn</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Political Science, minor in Psychology and Certificate in Law</td>
<td>Senior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faye</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Broadcast Journalism</td>
<td>Junior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graciela</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Bachelor’s and Master’s in History from FIU; working on teaching certification</td>
<td>Certificate in Teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judy</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Political Science</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natalie</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Social Studies Education</td>
<td>Junior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sofy</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Elementary Education</td>
<td>Junior</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Major</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bob</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Finance &amp; Management</td>
<td>Junior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greg</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>Elementary Education</td>
<td>Junior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Management Information Systems</td>
<td>Senior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John II</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Physical Education</td>
<td>Junior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Political Science, minor in Business, Certificate in Law</td>
<td>Sophomore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rico</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Biology Education</td>
<td>Junior</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Non-Hispanic White Females

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Major</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anne</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>International Relations &amp; Minors in Psychology &amp; Geography</td>
<td>Senior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anna</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Early Childhood</td>
<td>Sophomore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claire</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>English &amp; Political Bachelor’s Degree from FIU</td>
<td>Law Student/Alumnus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Danielle</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Elementary Education</td>
<td>Junior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eva</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Early Childhood Education</td>
<td>Junior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marie</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Special Education</td>
<td>Junior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melissa</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Psychology &amp; Secondary Education</td>
<td>Junior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamie</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Social Studies Education</td>
<td>Junior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Liberal Studies &amp; Women’s Studies</td>
<td>Senior</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: All student names above are pseudonyms the student participants chose to protect their identities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Length of Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Robert Hogner</td>
<td>Associate Professor of Management and International Business, &amp; Director of International Business, College of Business</td>
<td>18 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Honors College Professor</td>
<td>8 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Jeff Knapp</td>
<td>Director, The Academy</td>
<td>3 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4-2

*List of Faculty, Administrators, and Position*
and civic development literature already reviewed at the beginning of this study.

Spradley (1979) recommends including three important elements in ethnographic
interviews: “explicit purpose,” “ethnographic explanations,” and “ethnographic questions” (p. 59). Explicit purpose means that the ethnographer will explain to the informant, or interviewee, what exactly is the objective of the interview (p. 59). Throughout the process of interviewing, from the first to the last set of interviews, ethnographic explanations, or explanations of the researcher’s study and intentions must be repeated (p. 59). Ethnographic explanations include: 1) explaining the project to the interviewee, 2) recording explanations, or “statements about writings things down and reasons for tape recording the interviews,” 3) native language explanations, or encouraging the interviewee to speak naturally, or how they speak everyday in the environment being observed, 4) explaining to interviewees the type of interview specifically being performed, and 5) explaining the specific questions being asked of the interviewees (pp. 59-60). Ethnographic questions include: 1) descriptive questions, or questions that illicit answers that describe a function or a purpose, 2) structural questions include questions that discern “how informants have organized their knowledge,” and 3) contrast questions are questions that “distinguish the objects and events” in an informant’s life (p. 60). He also recommends that the interviewer: 1) clarify the asymmetrical turn taking, or making sure that the interviewer and interviewee understand who is asking and answering questions, 2) frequently express interest in the interviewee’s answers, 3) express cultural ignorance to clarify answers, 4) repeat a question to clarify answers, 5) restate the interviewee’s answers so that confusion over meaning can be unambiguous, 6) incorporate interviewees answers, 7) create hypothetical questions to illicit more information, 8) ask friendly questions to establish a rapport with the interviewee, and 9) take leave (p. 67). Spradley’s ethnographic elements will be included in all of the following interview protocols. Appendix A provides a list of elements modeled after Spradley’s suggestions (p. 67).
I did two different types of interviews: individual and focus group. Individual, evaluation interviews (see Appendix B for Individual Interview Protocol) “attempt to learn whether new programs, projects, or other types of intentional changes are living up to expectations” (Rubin & Rubin, 1995, p. 27). Using Astin’s research (1984), previous survey studies on college student civic engagement, Colby et al’s initial findings, and the “Wingspread summit on student civic engagement” statement, my focus in the individual, evaluation interviews would be on whether each specific ethnic, cultural group was participating in such activities as sports, clubs, academic discussion groups, etc., and find out what role the university is playing in promoting and/or preventing these different groups from participating within university life. Individual, evaluation interviews also serve as a method to detect “group think,” or contradictory and similar answers students might give in focus group interviews because of group or peer pressure. Focus group interviews (see Appendix C for Focus Group Interview Protocol) “are a form of evaluation in which groups of people are assembled to discuss potential changes or shared impressions” (Rubin & Rubin, 1995, p. 27). In my study, focus group interviews examined students’ feelings as an ethnic group about their degree of university civic dis/engagement. I found out what they would do to solve their level of involvement in cases where they were dissatisfied and if they formed cohorts in certain activities according to their ethnicities. Administrative and staff interview questions (see Appendix D for Administrative and Faculty Interview Protocol) were based on student interview responses, observations, document collection, and later administrative and staff answers.

Interview questions were formatted in two ways: unstructured and semistructured. These two formats allowed me to “suggest the subject for discussion but [with] few specific questions in mind” (Rubin & Rubin, 1995, p. 5). Unstructured questions were posed initially for both
individual, evaluation interviews and focus group interviews before the semistructured questions because it will allow the students to relax, speak freely, and feel comfortable with the researcher before answering specific questions that might be unintentionally emotionally hard, difficult, and/or contentious. Semistructured evaluation interview questions “introduce the topic, then guides the discussion by asking specific questions” (p. 5). The questions were specifically designed to gain “thick description” (Geertz, 1973) (as cited in Rubin & Rubin, 1995, p. 8) or questions that “obtain[ed] more depth and detail on a narrower range of topics than you would in ordinary conversations,” in other words “encourage[d] people to elaborate, provide incidents and clarifications, and discuss events at length” (Rubin & Rubin, 1995, p. 8).

Methodology: Observation, Fieldnotes, Journal, and Document Data

Other than through interviews, data was also collected through observations and document data. The collecting and analysis of additional data provides for triangulation or “the use of multiple methods” to “secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question” (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, p. 4). However, triangulation is “not a tool or a strategy of validation, but an alternative to validation” (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, p. 4). Instead, triangulation combines multiple methods and perspectives that adds depth to the study (Rubin & Rubin, 1998). Triangulation, therefore, “[confirms] the authenticity of the study’s observations and subsequent findings, and it [presents] thematic presence against multiple perspectives” (Janesick, 1998, p. 119). Observation fieldnotes (see Appendix E for “Observational Protocol” adapted from Creswell, 1998, p.129) are specific notes written down based on specific observations done in the “field,” or among the specific groups I am studying (Creswell, 1998, p. 60). Personal journals serve to expand the qualitative researcher’s analytic, writing, and reflective skills (Janesick, 1998). Public documents in this study will include, but are not limited to: university catalogs,
Data Analysis and Coding

I analyzed my interview data, observations, journals, and documents by using the Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) (Lee & Fielding, 1995) QSR NUD.IST 6.0 (NUD.IST). NUD.IST allows textual data to be quickly inputted into its system and then analyzed in a relatively short period of time. NUD.IST also allows: 1) theory building, or theory to be derived inductively from the data, 2) texts to be coded hierarchically or axially, 3) allows “memos” or notes to be recalled with the coded texts to remind the researcher of any changes, problems, or contexts regarding the texts, and 4) allow for easy retrieval and connections between similar themes/concepts (Prein, Kelle, & Bird, 1995). NUD.IST also allows for 1) searching for prevailing themes, 2) crossing themes or relating themes to one another, 3) diagramming, or providing a visual picture “of the categories and their interconnectedness,” 4) creating a template for organizing information, 5) easier analyzing and reporting (Creswell, 1998, pp. 157-162).

Texts were initially analyzed using “open coding” or the initial strategy of identifying themes/concepts in the first set of documents (Kelle & Laurie, 1995). This kind of coding “at such a very general level is a first step toward organizing the data into meaningful categories” (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996, p. 36). Moreover, “theme analysis is important for initial open coding” (Strauss, 1987). These initial codings served as a flexible framework developed through the analysis of the remaining textual data in which codes could be added or deleted depending on the context of the remaining documents and the pertinence to the research question. I then went back to the coded texts and reviewed the initial coding and made modifications as needed by
creating and/or deleting some codes. Using CAQDAS can lead to fragmentation and
decontextualization of texts that have been coded and set apart from the original documents.
Nevertheless, NUD.IST allows for whole texts or documents and their coded themes/concepts to be looked at simultaneously, thereby, minimizing data fragmentation. When I established the codes or categories for the initial analysis of the data, I incorporated a hierarchical structure. A hierarchical structure of categories is a natural process of coding that is easily recognizable as well as easily translated because it begins with the general and works its way down to the specific (Richards and Richards, 1995). NUD.IST allows for this hierarchical structure to be formed as vertical units, or codes that are presented visually from top to bottom as general concepts down to specific sub-concepts.

After the themes/concepts emerged, I initiated a “Vector Intersect” search on NUD.IST which allowed me to view what a specific student stated about specific themes/concepts (N6 Reference Guide, p110). For example, for each ethnic group, I chose a male and a female node (Cuban American Female, for example) and intersected it with a node such as “Ethnicity.” Under “Ethnicity,” there are major sub-nodes that include “Cuban American,” “Fidel Castro,” “Elian,” “Non-Hispanic White,” “Ethnic Celebrations,” and “Multiethnic Friends.” When the Vector search is initiated, a report is generated in the “Matrix Viewer” where it shows the student node in the row section and the intersect node in several columns. The number in each cell shows the number of text units coded (N6 Reference Guide, p.110). Intersecting the nodes “gets only what is coded at both nodes” instead of being overly broad (Richards, 2002, p.80). However, one setback is that doing an Intersect node search is that it might decontextualize the texts (Richards, 2002, p.80). When questions of context arose, I went back to the main text and examined the entire paragraphs of texts instead of the intersected text units. I then compared the Matrix Tables
between all male and female Cuban American and non-Hispanic White students at FIU and divided all the major themes/concepts into two major groups and their related sub-groups: Civic Engagement Opportunities at FIU: 1) Civic Issues and Diversity, 2) Student Involvement at FIU, 3) Work and the Importance of Student Involvement, and 4) Popular and Needed Activities; and Student Civic Engagement: 1) News and Current Issues, 2) 9/11/01, and 3) Political Influence and Involvement.
Chapter Five

A Brief History of
Florida International University:
and Institutional Findings

This chapter provides a brief overview of the history of Florida International University. It also details FIU’s civic engagement practices. Faculty, administrator, and staff interviews are summarized focusing on how FIU’s civic engagement practices affect students.

Florida International University (FIU) was founded on June 22, 1965 (Riley, p.11). Charles Perry became the first president at FIU in 1969 and the youngest (he was 32 years old) college president in Florida and in the nation at the time (Riley, p. 23). In 1972, FIU opened its doors for the first time as an upper-division (junior and senior curricula only) serving institution (Riley, p. 13). The first schools to be established at FIU in 1971 included the: School of Hotel, Food, and Travel Services, School of Business and Organizational Sciences, School of Education, School of Technology, and the School of Health and Social Services (Riley, p. 55-59). By the time Perry left FIU in 1976, “there more than 10,000 students attending classes on a $50 million campus which consisted of five major buildings and a sixth” (Riley, p. 135).

On August of 1976, Harold Crosby became president of FIU. By 1977, Florida “had dropped to 33rd among the 50 states in allocation of ‘state and local tax revenue appropriated or levied for operating expenses of higher education’” (Riley, p.149). The Florida Legislature had previously “placed a freeze on all faculty, career service, and administrative and professional salaries” (Riley, p.150). During this period of financial exigency, Crosby transformed the “experimental” organizational structure of FIU into a more “traditional” one (Riley, p. 154). Even though there was a financial crisis at FIU, by 1978, additional programs were added to the schools of Business and Organizational Sciences, Health and Social Services, and Education
(Riley, p. 159). During Crosby’s term between 1976 and 1979, emphasis was put in the “I” of Florida International University, doctoral education was being established, 12,000 students were enrolled, and the new school of Public Affairs and Services was added (Riley, p. 206).

Gregory Wolfe became the new president of FIU on February 19, 1979 (Riley, p. 205). On May 2, 1980, Fidel Castro opened the gates of Cuba allowing 123,000 Cubans to leave the island from Mariel beach (Riley, p. 211). The Cuban population of Miami increased dramatically. Because of the influx of Cubans in Miami, many non-Hispanic Whites fled north (Riley, p. 213). During Wolfe’s tenure at FIU, the School of Journalism and Mass Communication, the School of Nursing, and the School of Engineering were added, the Ph.D. degree was offered in several disciplines, and the following centers and institutes were added: Institute for Citizenship and Public Policy, International Affairs Center, International Banking Center, International Institute for Creative Writing, Small Business Development Center, Southeast Florida Center on Aging, and the Labor Center (Riley, p. 304).

On August 27, 1986, Modesto Maidique, a Cuban American and the current president of FIU, was newly appointed president. Under Maidique’s leadership, FIU became a Doctoral/Research University-Extensive under the Carnegie Classification system (the highest designation), established a law school and an Honors College, and several new programs were created in several schools (Riley, p. 466-472). Additionally, in 2001, in FIU and the University of Miami co-established The European Union Center, a “‘think tank’ focusing on economic, political, and social issues related to the European Union” (Riley, p. 472) and in 2002, FIU’s newly formed football team played for the first time.

FIU’s current stated mission is: “serving South Florida, the state, the nation and the international community. It fulfills its mission by imparting knowledge through excellent
teaching, promoting public service, discovering new knowledge, solving problems through research, and fostering creativity” (Mission, 2004).

**Civic Engagement Practices at FIU**

When you compare FIU to Colby et al’s (2003), Meeropol et al’s (2003), AAHE et al’s (1998), and the Student Declaration (2002) inventories of successful and civic engagement practices at other colleges and universities, FIU civic engagement support and practices are inconsistent. For example, at FIU there is no mission-wide focus on civic engagement. Moreover, civic engagement is not taught across the curriculum. For example, according to the *FIU Undergraduate Catalog for 2002-2003*, “General Education Requirements,” or required courses for all undergraduates at FIU, do not include civic engagement requirements such as service-learning or voluntary service (Florida International University, 2002-2003, p. 19-21). Also, there are no current rewards for faculty at FIU to be involved with civic engagement teaching. According to administrators interviewed at FIU, the president at FIU does not believe that it should join Campus Compact, the national organization that promotes college student civic engagement at colleges and universities in the U.S.. Support and funding for civic engagement practices is not institutionally uniform and most faculty, staff, and students interviewed stated that they could use more money for more civic engagement programming. The linkages between the university and the community are not mandated and are voluntary even though part of FIU’s mission is public service. Additionally, civic engagement is prescribed with little or no student input. Nevertheless, faculty, administrators, and students agreed that students that participated in civic engagement activities at FIU were representative of the majority Hispanic student population, but that all civic engagement programming in general was tailored for all students. Civic engagement programming for students tend to be housed in specific
centers or programs with some coordination among these offices. Overall, civic engagement practices at FIU are segmented whereby civic engagement practices are more emphasized in some areas while in other areas it is lacking completely. At FIU, civic engagement programming for students is concentrated in The Center for Leadership and Civic Responsibility (Center), the Volunteer Action Center (VAC), the School of Business, and the Honors College. Civic engagement at the Center and VAC is voluntary while in the College of Business and in the Honors College civic engagement it is required. First-year students at FIU are introduced to civic engagement activities during their first semester by the Office of Orientation and Commuter Students (OCS) and through student government, voluntary, Greek, sport, and political clubs through fliers, website information, and information tables at FIU.

The Center for Leadership and Civic Responsibility (Center), directed by Dr. Beverly Dalrymple provides “programs that enhance student learning and development in leadership competencies so the ability to mobilize themselves and others and to work for change” (interview, October 2, 2002). The Center was established in 2000. Student Government at FIU votes yearly on the Center’s budget including Dr. Dalrymple’s salary (interview, October 2, 2002). Staff members include two part-time graduate assistants and one part-time office assistant. The Center informs students about its programs through flyers, brochures, and a website. They also offer leadership training seminars for all students including groups that request it like Student Government. According to Dr. Dalrymple, the Center caters to residential and commuter students. Even though they have many nontraditional students, the Center does not have programs for them. Dr. Dalrymple also mentioned that when it comes to programming, that the Center is “limited” by its resources, especially “human resources” (October 2, 2002).
Dr. Dalrymple stated that FIU did not belong to Campus Compact, the national organization responsible for gathering and disseminating information about college student civic engagement. When asked why they were not a member, Dr. Dalrymple stated, “I think they [administration] question the cost benefit” (interview, October 2, 2002). She said that being a member to this organization was worthwhile because:

Personally, I think we would get a lot from belonging to Campus Compact and we’re the only state university in Florida who doesn’t belong. And their materials are fantastic and their training is great. And in fact, I’m using this (shows me manual) with a group now that’s meeting student politics, but it’s the decision of the president who decided not to. (interview, October 2, 2002).

Dr. Dalrymple also believes that FIU could do a better job supporting the Center:

Only because I think not that many people know about us because we’re new. And when you’re small you can’t do everything that there is to do. So I think public awareness needs to be heightened about the office and I think people would definitely support it as they learn more about it too. But in other ways the university supports it…I just got a call from the Provost the other day and he wanted three students from one of our Leadership programs to have lunch with the Board of Trustees next month. (interview, October 2, 2002)

Additionally, Dr. Dalrymple said that she worked with “like-minded” faculty primarily from the Honors College and the College of Business.

Nevertheless, for being such a new and small Center, Dr. Dalrymple states that they assess student learning in every one of its programs. They also maintain a database of students’ demographic background who participate in these programs. One program she mentions that
tries to involve first-year students is the *Academy of Leaders*. According to her, the “majority of the students in that program on any given semester are our first-year students and it might be there very first semester on campus and they haven’t done anything yet, but they’re interested in learning and you know, and after they do the Academy then they’ll go out and often get involved” (interview, October 2, 2002).

While the Center does provide opportunities for “civic and moral competencies” (Colby et al, 2003, p. 53), one of the main problems of the Center is that its resources are supported by Student Government and not by FIU. Since Student Government funds it year to year, including the director’s salary, it is always in danger of not being funded. According to Colby et al (2003, p. 76) and the Student Declaration (p.11), effective “centers and institutes” have ample and long-term resources.

Moreover, according to Dr. Dalrymple, a “majority” of the students in her programs are “representative” of the Hispanic population at FIU (interview, October 2, 2002). But, while they cater to all students, Dr. Dalrymple admitted that her programs do not address the needs of non-traditional students. (interview, October 2, 2002).

The Volunteer Action Center (VAC) is another Center at FIU that provides civic engagement activities for students. According to Patricia Temino, the Assistant Director, VAC’s mission is “to connect FIU students with community service activities” (interview, November 20, 2002). They have a variety of programs that students can choose from:

We have a couple of different programs that we do here. One is that we oversee service-learning on campus. We work with faculty members and students and get students helping connected with service experiences. We put together a database of over 128 agencies. We have currently right now that we send
off; those are options for students to be able to participate in. And we give students everything from where they’re located, to the volunteer coordinator, contact information in terms of telephone number, email, fax. Description of what services that particular agency provides there, what volunteer opportunities, and any special circumstances in regard to orientation, training, background check, etc.

If faculty are interested in providing service-learning in their courses, Ms. Temino provides them with an information packet that explains service-learning, what VAC does regarding assessing students, and recruitment and orientation (Division of Student Affairs).

VAC is supported partially by state funds and student government. Ms. Temino works full-time and has another full-time staff member working with the Americorps grant (Interview, November 20, 2002). She also has a part-time student assistant. VAC informs FIU and the surrounding community about its programs through its website and bimonthly newsletter. VAC also maintains a database of all its students that participate in its programs. Programs at VAC includes “lot of different types of agencies everything from working with children, to working with homelessness, arts and humanities, to the environment” (interview, November 20, 2002).

When it comes to funding, VAC has more varied (and not necessarily long-term) resources as compared to the Center because the state of Florida also funds its programs such as Americorps, a national community service-learning program. It is also the main hub for service-learning, or learning that integrates classroom learning with community service. Students in their Student Declaration (2002) state that the most essential part of any college or university curriculum that focuses on civic engagement is service-learning (p.9). However, according to the recommendations made by the Civic Engagement Implementation Task Force (see below), a group of faculty and administrators organized to coordinate civic engagement activities at FIU,
rewards are needed for faculty who participate in civic engagement programming for students (Civic Engagement). Thus, at the time of this study, faculty civic engagement programming at FIU was optional. According to Colby et al (2003), Meeropol et al (2003), the AAHE (1998), and the Student Declaration (2002), faculty participation and commitment are tantamount to successful colleges and universities that incorporate civic engagement (p. 80).

Ms. Temino stated that its programs are not tailored to any specific type of student/s and that they have a good mix of students from different disciplines that participate in VAC’s services:

[We have] everything from 18 year olds to older students in the 40s. Since we’re a commuter campus we have a very diverse groups of students according to ages. Our Americorps is very mixed we have both FIU students and non-FIU students as well. Our service-learning we cover a lot of different courses and disciplines from first-year experience, nutrition, economics, to creative concepts, education. We serve a very large number of students. (interview, November 20, 2002)

Civic engagement at FIU is mandatory in only one of the colleges, the College of Business at FIU. According to Dr. Robert Hogner, Associate Professor of Management and Director of Service-Learning for the Honors College, the College of Business “is modeled after the university’s mission which:

includes the international, the environmental component, I think we’re specifically at the college level we’re very much into much more so than the university, the civic engagement part of it, both the Honor’s College and Business School. In the past, the university’s had to drag out things like civic engagement…The Honors College, that’s excellence in
undergraduate education, development of learning community and interdisciplinary studies in the Honors College. And before, the Business School, to the same degree, engagement in community.

(interview, March 10, 2003).

According to Dr. Hogner, all students in their third-year in the Honors College must take the *Aesthetics, Values, and Authority* course which focuses on civic engagement:

We have students doing projects in a sense of their choice, but approved choice. These are independent…One of the big projects is…Would it help if I talk about the model that I use before hand? Sure! The basic model that we try to use is to use Honors students and Business students as managers of service-learning projects. As such, they are responsible for the development, management, and continuation of these programs. The infrastructure here…we don’t have the infrastructure to do that…this is where it falls on them. That’s from an internal perspective, they recruit the students from other organizations which have community service as a requirement, for instance, the Student Government organizations, that’s one way they build their budget by doing service work. So an organized system is good for them. But the programs that are developed fit with what we call the strategic interests of the students.

Additionally, the Honors College fosters civic engagement in general through its Honors Student Associations:

We try to develop ongoing service-learning projects both locally with the local mentoring…there’s a term for that in education…affiliation between a public school and the university…well, it’s a on-campus elementary school…ok? We also have…I’ve been meeting now with a group out of the Honors residence hall that they will
have their own signature project; they had their own last year, but it’s kind of languished if you will. And I’m trying to develop something that fits better with who they are strategically with what they’re able to do and what resources out there in the community are out there for them…(interview, March 10, 2003).

Dr. Hogner also teaches the mandatory Business in Society for all Business majors at FIU which requires students to do 25 hours of service in the community per semester. He also teaches a Service-Learning in Management course which also requires service-learning. Students in the Honors College tend to be traditional students while those in the College of Business tend to be both traditional and non-traditional students (non-residential and older) according to Dr. Hogner. When asked why the president of FIU did not want to join Campus Compact, Dr. Hogner replied, “The president of the university has been ideologically opposed to that; he thinks it’s a group of communists” (interview, March 10, 2003). However, the Civic Engagement Implementation Task Force, a group assembled to coordinate civic engagement throughout FIU wrote a report entitled, Local and global recommendations (Civic Engagement). In the report, the Task Force made three recommendations: 1) incorporate engagement as primary goals of FIU’s mission as an engaged top public urban research university; apply for membership in Campus Compact, 2) complete an internal audit of all civic engagement activities and audit and benchmark engagement activities of relevant universities within 18 months and report back to the Provost, and 3) explore ways to incorporate engagement activities in the reward structure of the university in faculty and staff assignments; evaluation of teaching, research, and service activities. Thus, FIU faculty, staff, and others are trying to detail and unify all of its engagement practices and make them integral to the mission of the university.
Dr. Hogner also stated that there were ethnic differences regarding student leadership in his courses:

Mostly non-Hispanic White and Blacks and foreign students, there the ones who don’t do most of the leadership. Hispanics do. Why don’t they? I haven’t done any questionnaires on it, I think it the Hispanic culture in general it’s mostly community focused. Just as an anecdote, Dade County sends more and more Hispanics to the legislature; Hispanic culture in general it’s mostly community focused. (interview, March 10, 2003)

According to Dr. Hogner, Hispanics participate in leadership roles at FIU in his courses unlike non-Hispanic Whites or African Americans. Since most of the Cuban American and non-Hispanic White students I interviewed were “recycled leaders,” or leaders in multiple, diverse organizations, clubs, etc., at FIU, Dr. Hogner’s comments seem to reflect the fact that Hispanics are the majority especially considering his comment about sending more Hispanics to the legislature. Additionally, Dr. Hogner admits not studying what he perceives has a lack of non-Hispanic White or African American student leadership roles in his courses.

The Honors College and the College of Business at FIU are examples of programs that that contribute to successful civic engagement programming which range from support from the faculty to consistent community values according to the successful civic engagement inventories above. However, no other college at FIU is committed to civic engagement. For students who are not honors students or Business majors, civic engagement at FIU is localized. For many students at FIU, sometimes finding out about civic engagement activities difficulty because of, according to the Student Declaration, an “impeding” and unconnected “bureaucracy” (p. 11). Additionally, according to Dr. Dalrymple and Dr. Hogner, the president of FIU does not appear to be
committed to university-wide civic engagement because of his limited funding of centers, no rewards for faculty who incorporate civic engagement in their curricular programming, and because of his refusal to join a national collegiate civic engagement organization because of resources or otherwise. According to the aforementioned studies on successful civic engagement programming, a college president’s commitment to civic engagement is important because it demonstrates to the university community that it is vital. Students in the Student Wingspread Declaration suggest that college presidents put too much “focus” on appeasing trustees and donors instead of listening to students and their calls for civic engagement programming that meets their needs and interests (p. 11).

The other office I observed in the course of my research that provides information about civic engagement activities at FIU is the Office of Orientation and Commuter Students. Charlie Andrews, the Director, states that OCS works closely with Campus Life (CL) to orient first-year and transfer students on campus (interview, November 1, 2002). The OCS has three professional staff members, one office manager, two student assistants and a staff of 24 students (interview, November 1, 2002). They also provide information about activities at FIU to these students through their website (http://www.fiu.edu/~orient/), email, postcards, and a newsletter, The Torch, for commuter students (The Office of Orientation and Commuter Student Services, Spring 2003). In its Spring 2003 issue, The Torch details activities available for nontraditional students, information about The Health and Wellness Center at FIU, the Center for Leadership and Civic Responsibility, The Counseling and Psychological Services Center, and about The Children’s Creative Learning Center. They also set up information tables in the student union every semester with pamphlets describing their services. They gauge student interests through infrequent surveys. However, Mr. Andrews admits that OCS does not track student involvement
but he did state that CL tracks who is involved in its activities. He also states that 99% of all first-year students attend OCS’s orientation.

Other sources of civic engagement promotion at FIU were Student Government (SG) which produced the *Student Government Quarterly*, a newsletter providing information about SG services and available activities for students (Student Government, Summer 2002). In its Summer 2002 issue, Student Government Quarterly describes the accomplishments of SG in 2002, its Intern Program for students interested in SG, and available summer civic engagement activities for students.

At the beginning of the Fall 2002 and Spring 2003 semesters, many student clubs, organizations, and Greek sororities and fraternities took their own initiative to provide information tables in the Graham Center, FIU’s student union. They provided prospective students with brochures, t-shirts, and other items promoting their organization.

One of the overlooked items in Colby et al’s study (2003) and in the higher education literature on college student engagement is that it prioritizes prescribed civic engagement activities without considering student opinions on what constitutes effective civic engagement practices. One of the recommendations students make in the Student Declaration is that college presidents should provide open forums for students so that college administrators can gauge what students would like as far as civic engagement activities (p. 9). According to the *Civic Engagement Implementation Task Forces’* recommendations at FIU, student opinions about current civic engagement activities are not considered. Another recommendation students made was that there was no “neighborhood orientation” for students who are interested in service in the community and that “physical barriers” between the community and a college/university create the appearance that the community is unimportant for the college/university (p.11). The
Center, VAC, OCS, Honors College, and the College of Business, all inform the students that participate in their programs about their surrounding communities; unfortunately, other students have to find out on their own at FIU. Moreover, everyone of FIU’s entrances distinguish the campus from the surrounding communities because of its signs. However, at FIU, Cuban-American and non-Hispanic White students felt at home at FIU while non-Hispanic White students from other cities outside of Miami according to student, faculty, and administrator interviews, felt uncomfortable and usually dropped out. Thus, while there are physical barriers at FIU dividing the campus and the surrounding communities, most FIU students felt comfortable.
Chapter Six

Student Findings:
The Florida International University Setting

This chapter details college student civic engagement activities of Cuban American and Non-Hispanic White students at FIU. Moreover, these activities are placed within the major thematic contexts that emerged from the data that include: civic issues and diversity, student involvement at FIU, work and the importance of student involvement, and popular and needed activities.

At the time of my study, there were a total of 33,880 students at FIU (Institutional Research, 2004). The majority of these students were Hispanic with 17,646 students or 52.08 percent of all students at FIU (Institutional Research, 2004). Non-Hispanic Whites made up 21.08% of all students at 7,141 (Institutional Research, 2004). All student interviews were conducted either in room 335B in the Ziff Education Building or somewhere outside on the FIU campus that was convenient for students. Faculty and staff interviews were conducted either in my office or in their offices. On September 2, 2002, I went to the Graham Center or the GC building, the central meeting place for students, to begin observations. Within the GC building, there is a conference room, several classrooms, and all offices for student activities including Student Government. The GC also housed several eateries and a bar. During lunch time, disk jockeys would play very loud music and vendors would showcase their wares.

After my initial observations of the GC, I went from building to building to identify if there were other student “hubs” on campus. I walked through each building’s first floor to identify a lounge area or area in which flyers were posted. I then sat down and observed students, faculty, and staff going in and out. I did this for two weeks and thankfully realized, that I was being too detailed with information that was not going to be relevant to the study. I then
concentrated on attending the GC and conferences and/or meetings that involved students and civic engagement at FIU.

While at GC, one of the first staff members I interviewed after I was given approval by FIU was Dr. Beverly Dalrymple, the Director of the Center for Civic Responsibility at FIU. During our interview, she invited me to observe the Student Honors Mentor Group, a group of students who under the supervision of a faculty or staff member identified a social policy issue they would like to work on. Students had to have a 3.0 grade point average or higher to be part of the Student Honors Mentor Group. During the Fall semester in 2002, “The Miami Coalition on Poverty” cohort and then Spring semester in 2003, the “Save the Bright Futures Scholarship” cohort. Some students that were part of the Fall 2002 cohort returned and were part of the Spring 2003 cohort.

I then proceeded to interview the Student Government President at FIU, Devyn, a Cuban American. After our interview, I asked her if we could do a focus group interview with Student Government members. She announced it at one of her meetings and we were able to do one focus group interview with Student Government student members. I was also able to do individual interviews with most of these students afterwards during my semesters at FIU.

Because of the courses I taught and the help of FIU staff like Charlie Andrews, Associate Director for Orientation and Commuter Student Services, faculty like Dr. Beverly Dalrymple, and Student Government members, I was able to get a diverse cadre of students, faculty, and staff for my civic engagement study. I asked students in my courses if they could volunteer for my study; most of them did happily and some students like Jorge and Natalie thanked me for being interested in student issues and concerns such as civic engagement. Some of these students in my courses then gave me names of other students who would participate in my study. Charlie
Andrews provided me with names of students and staff that might be interested in doing the study. Dr. Beverly Dalrymple was integral in offering names of faculty who incorporated civic engagement activities in their courses and programs at FIU. And, finally, Devyn and Student Government members provided a good overview of what types of civic engagement activities were going on at FIU. I finished my interviews and observations on April 16\textsuperscript{th}, 2003. However, I extended my study for another year so that I could clarify any information I gathered with my interviewees.

**EDG 2701-Teaching Diverse Populations and EDF 3515-Philosophical and Historical Foundations of Education**

The following is a brief description of my students in EDG-2701 and EDF 3515 at FIU. A list of students their majors, ages, and year at FIU is given in Chapter 3 in Table 1.

**EDG 2701 Students**

Anna, a non-Hispanic White student at FIU, is a recent transplant from New York. She has her own bakery business, but came back to school to study Early Childhood Education. She wants to teach at a primary school. She thinks Miami is broken up into ethnic enclaves unlike New York City where she says everyone interacts with each other regardless of ethnicity.

Curtis considers himself an American since he was born here even though his parents are from Cuba. He is 19 years old. He believes he does not fit the typical Cuban American profile since he is blond and blue-eyed. He also does not speak Spanish very well.

Daniel was born in Cuba. He is 56 years old and is a Social Studies Education major at FIU. Before coming to Cuba, he was forcibly drafted into Fidel Castro’s army in 1962. After refusing to comply with Castro’s communist principles, he was put in prison for several years where he survived on rodents and roaches for nourishment. While in my class, Daniel was one of
the most engaged and vociferous students. Daniel was also disabled; due to diabetes, he had one arm and by the end of the class, he was having health problems with one of his legs. He enjoyed his studies at FIU because students at FIU made him feel “young.”

Danielle is a non-Hispanic White, Jewish American. Her favorite holiday since childhood has been Christmas. Her parents wanted her to go off to college, but she decided to attend FIU. She feels that when she leaves FIU, she is discriminated against because she does not speak Spanish. She is using money saved from giving piano lessons to pay for college.

Jay is a recent Cuban immigrant. He migrated to California for a couple of years and finally moved to Miami. While in California, he felt strange being around Mexican-American culture and did not become comfortable until he moved to Miami.

Jorge was born in the U.S. to Cuban parents. He considers himself to be a Cuban American. He is 20 years old and is in his second year at FIU majoring in Mathematics Education. He speaks fluent Spanish as well as Spanglish. He considers himself more conservative than liberal. During his time in my EDG 2701, Jorge was a very quiet student, but when he did proffer an opinion, it resounded in class.

Melissa is a non-Hispanic White female. She went to Florida Atlantic University but left the program to attend FIU; she thought FAU was not very receptive to her educational needs. She is a Psychology and Secondary Education major. She does not participate in any activities at FIU but volunteers every Sunday at her Catholic church.

Natalie also lived in California for many years until recently. Like Curtis, she is blond and blue-eyed and because of this, she is treated differently by other Cuban Americans. She speaks Spanish fluently as well as English and Spanglish.
Rico considered himself to be an Irish, Italian American. He appreciated Miami’s Hispanic culture and was even trying to learn Spanish. Rico was one of the most engaged students I had in this course and he challenged many of his classmates to think about some issues differently.

Sofy considers herself to be a Cuban-American. She is Catholic and her grandmother is very strict regarding social values. She wanted to go away to college at the University of Florida, but was not allowed. Her brother, however, will be allowed to go. She is fully bilingual in English and Spanish and loves to travel to Spain frequently.

**EDF 3515 Students**

Eva is a non-Hispanic White majoring in Early Childhood Education. After one of two car accidents I had while driving to FIU, Eva was kind enough to give me a ride to FIU since we lived close to each other. She was one of the few students I interviewed who did not participate in any activities within or outside FIU. Throughout class, she was very quiet, nevertheless, she was a good student regarding research papers and group work.

Greg, is a non-Hispanic White student majoring in Elementary Education at FIU. He was an elementary Social Studies school teacher at a private school. He stated that he converted from Judaism to Buddhism. He enjoys outdoor activities such as frisbee and basketball.

Graciela, a Cuban American, has a Bachelor’s and Master’s degree in History. She is working on her teaching certification and is debating whether or not to pursue her Ph.D. in History. She was a Ph.D. student in History at the University of Arizona, but missed her family in Miami so she moved back.

Ian is a Cuban American junior at FIU whose major is Social Studies Education. He is 21 years old. He was born in Costa Rica to Cuban American parents. He lived there for 7 years until
he moved to the U.S. He lived in Indiana for some time. Then he moved to Miami. He enjoys surfing and wishes FIU had a scuba diving club.

John II, a non-Hispanic White student enjoys playing guitar. Currently, he is the football coach at a public high school. His major at FIU is Physical Education. Eventually, he wants to finish his music degree as well. He attends both Miami-Dade College and FIU in Miami. At Miami-Dade College, he is majoring in Music, specifically guitar.

Marie was another non-Hispanic White student I had in class. She was 21 and majoring in Special Education. She worked hard in my class and was very opinionated regarding educational issues we discussed.

**Student Honors Mentor Group**

The only person I interviewed from the Student Honors Mentor Group was Victoria. She was a Liberal Studies and Women’s Studies major. She was engaged in several activities at FIU during the time I interviewed her. As a non-Hispanic White female, Victoria felt uncomfortable first when she moved to Miami, but soon she picked up some words in Spanish and acclimated.

I tried to interview other students in this group, but we kept running into time conflicts. Instead, I observed their participation in this group which adds a further dimension to my study. Dr. Dalrymple was gracious enough to allow me access to all their meetings, discussions, and emails. All meetings were held either in the Student Government conference room in GC or in one of the classrooms in GC.

**Student Government Group**

After Devyn, the Cuban American Student Government president, announced I was looking for other Student Government members for interviews for my study, 6 members volunteered.
Bob, another non-Hispanic White, was one of many non-Hispanic Whites that described how other non-Hispanic Whites who had not grown up in Miami felt uncomfortable at FIU. He was involved in many activities at FIU including Dance Marathon.

Claire was a recent law school student at the newly established School of Law at FIU. She was a Student Government member before going to law school. Claire was very involved at FIU and states that it helped her get into law school. Her goals are to continue to be involved with the community after law school. Devyn was a Political Science major, she was considering attending Georgetown Law School. She attended a Catholic private school in Miami before entering FIU. Besides Student Government, she was involved in a plethora of other organizations on campus.

Faye, another Hispanic of mixed origin with a Peruvian step-father and a Cuban American mother, belonged to several organizations other than Student Government. Her career goals were to be a reporter and eventually a politician. Of all the Student Government members in the focus group interview, Faye, along with Devyn, Xavier, and Paul were very enthusiastic in offering information for my interviews.

Judy, a Cuban American, was concerned that students at FIU were very complacent. She like all the other Student Government members were involved in several organizations.

Paul, a non-Hispanic White, became the new Student Government president during the end of my second semester at FIU. Other than the focus group interview, Paul provided an individual interview and was very helpful providing information about student activities at FIU.

Xavier, whose mother was from Guam and whose father was from Cuba, considered himself Hispanic. He likes explaining to people his ethnic origins. His Spanish is not very good and sometimes he speaks Spanglish. By the second semester of my study, I would see Xavier
throughout campus because he was running for Student Government president. Unfortunately, he did not win.

**Other Students**

Jason, a Psychology major, considered himself to be a Cuban American. He went to a public high school prior to his arrival at FIU. He was involved with a fraternity and *Panther Rage*, the FIU booster club.

John, a non-Hispanic White, was a Business major. He was involved with Alternative Spring Break. Alternative Spring Break was an opportunity at FIU to do volunteer work outside of Florida during Spring Break. He was involved also with fraternities and sororities.

Mario was Ian’s best friend. They had grown up together. He was also Cuban American. Both Ian and Mario were involved with the Victim Advocacy Center at FIU where Ian’s mother also worked.

**Faculty**

Dr. Robert Hogner is Associate Professor of Management and International Business. Dr. Hogner directs the only mandatory civic engagement curricula in the College of Business at FIU. The program is called the “Civic Engagement Initiative” and it focuses on “service and community leadership both within and outside the university’s community.” (Florida International University, 2004). Its “Civic Engagement opportunities are integrated in the College's curriculum-in management, accounting, and real estate courses, and in a Service Learning course (GEB 4993), which is the only business school course in the country dedicated entirely to service learning.” (Florida International University, 2004). He also teaches in the Honors College.
Dr. Jeff Knapp is Professor of English and the Director of The Academy for the Art of Teaching, which focuses on “with resources and support needed to ensure that the highest quality of teaching and learning takes place throughout the university” (The Academy, 2004). He is also Director of the Freshmen Interest Groups (FIGs), a program where students take the same four courses together. The goal of the program is to increase student “involvement” and help students make a “more positive transition to college life” (Freshmen Interest Groups, 2002).

Dr. Michael Parsons is the Chair and Associate Professor of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies at FIU. He was also my boss while I taught at FIU. Thanks to him, I was able to have my own office at FIU. He was instrumental in me teaching again in the Spring of 2003 at FIU.

Dr. Brian Peterson, Associate Professor of History, was one of only two professors who incorporated service-learning in his classes. He is one of the founding faculty members of the History Department at FIU.

Dr. Colleen A. Ryan, Associate Professor of Educational Psychology and SocioCultural Foundations, is a founding faculty of the College of Education at FIU. She was my direct supervisor for EDG 2701-Teaching Diverse Populations.

Dr. John Stack, Director of the Jack D. Gordon Institute for Public Policy and Citizenship Studies and Professor of Political Science, is the creator of the Student Honors Mentor Group.

**Staff**

Charlie Andrews was one of the most important contributors to this study because of his intimate knowledge of FIU students, their involvement, and their related retention rates. During our lunch breaks, Charlie and I would play raquetball at the FIU gymnasium where we had many discussions about civic engagement at FIU.
Dr. Beverly Dalrymple, Director of the Center for Civic Responsibility and Leadership, was integral in providing me information about FIU’s civic engagement practices as well as for providing me with names of faculty and staff that were involved with student civic engagement.

Patricia Temino is the Assistant Director of the Volunteer Action Center. She provided me with a great list of services her Center offered faculty, staff, and students at FIU.

**Civic Engagement Opportunities at FIU**

In *Educating citizens: Preparing America’s undergraduates for lives of moral and civic responsibility* (2002), Colby et al found many similarities between 12 different colleges and universities that focused on moral and civic competencies (p. 53). One “common element” among these institutions was that they clearly defined what constituted moral and civic development. Additionally, “many of these campuses have adopted some version of an outcomes-based approach to undergraduate education, so the moral and civic competencies they expect students to master are well know to both faculty and students” (p. 53). One specific civic and moral competency they identified was “informed and responsible involvement with relevant communities” (p. 53). Students in the Student Wingspread Declaration (2002) similarly stated that service-learning programs, or classroom based learning combined with community involvement, is the best form of civic engagement (p. 9). Colby et al (2003) also state that some “disciplines, such as political science, offer obvious opportunities for moral and civic learning, while others, such as those in the sciences, may initially seem more remote from this learning, but actually they offer equally powerful ways to explore the ethical and civic dimensions of the field” (p. 187). To determine whether or not students at FIU students were accomplishing this competency, I asked them whether or not civic issues were being taught in any of their courses and if they ever participated in service-learning. However, unlike Colby et al (2003) who define
and prefer political engagement over other types of civic engagement, I defined civic engagement as any activity involving political, social, and recreational issues that impacted and benefited the individual doing the activity as well as society as a whole. Another civic and moral competency Colby et al (2003) identified was “pluralism; cultural awareness and respect; [and the] ability to understand values of one’s own and other cultures” (p. 53). To find out whether or not FIU concentrated on this moral and civic competency, I asked students, faculty, and staff whether or not diversity and other cultures were taught throughout the courses they had taken. I also asked them if student activities focused on diversity and other cultures were prevalent at FIU. Additionally, I asked them to explain if they thought these subjects were important or not. Overall, both Cuban Americans and non-Hispanic Whites agreed that civic issues were being taught in specific courses at FIU which included: sociology, psychology, philosophy, international relations, economics, history, and political science. They both also agreed that these issues were important. According to both Cuban Americans and non-Hispanic Whites, service-learning courses were infrequent. Both ethnic groups disagreed about what was the focus of the diversity programming at FIU.

**Civic Issues and Diversity:**

**Cuban Americans**

Most of the teaching classes have to have an element of diversity, after all this is Miami.
(Mario, Cuban American)

While Cuban Americans and non-Hispanic Whites agreed that civic issues and diversity were prevalent through courses and events at FIU, within each ethnic group there were similar perceptions of civic and diversity issues. Devyn, the president of FIU’s Student Government at the time, states that since she is a political science major, civic issues come up frequently in her courses:
However, I don’t think professors do a good job of staying up to date necessarily with the all the issues going on. They try, but they’re pushing their course schedule as well I think that becomes a little difficult. I’m taking ethics now and I think that teaches a little bit about, I guess, not necessarily directly, but undercover of it when you learn about egoism…all these different philosophers that basically studied human life and why they did things. So that’s to the extent that my courses actually teach civic responsibility.

(interview, February 10, 2003)

Devyn’s explanation points out that while civic issues might come up in courses, professors appear to be busy with teaching other competencies that might be taking more time than civic issues. Jason declares that even when professors do not explicitly teach him about civic issues, he tries to apply the subject content to issues in his life: “The way I always look at my classes is I always try to apply it to what’s going on in my life. ‘Cause if I can’t do that I find it useless; if I can’t apply to some part of my life, or I don’t see it in the future of my life, then it’s why am I there” (interview, October 1, 2002). According to Ian, most of his classes have dealt with civic issues: “Well, most of my classes deal with something social or political, anthropology, sociology or what not…Indigenous movement…mainly the Miami Circle which I just read about this morning” (interview, October 29, 2002). The Miami Circle was a Tequesta Indian (a native tribe of Miami present 2000 years ago) artifact found in 1998 during construction digging at the mouth of the Miami River for condominium development (Milanich, 1999). The condominium was eventually moved to another location nearby to respect the artifact site.

One of Daniel’s favorite courses was his History of Miami class which was interactive:

I didn’t need it, but I wanted to [know] more about my community. Even though it was a new city, I g[o]t a class in that; we went to the Everglades, I [brought]
my family with me. We [were] paddling like the first natives here [did].

Couple of guys next to us. We bided to the other area of Miami; we [went] to
the north cemetery [and] we found names of [18 people]...from the Bahamas; they were
the first founders of Miami; it wasn’t Dade or Flagler, it was the Bahamian guys. I was
very involved in the reality of Miami. (interview, September 27, 2002)

Daniel’s interest with this course stemmed by his “interest” in his “community.” During the
course, his perceptions of the history of Miami were illuminated through physical experiences
that made an impact on his awareness of Miami’s origins. Daniel was one of my students in my
EDF 3515-Philosophical and Historical Foundations of Education. He was very active in class.
Remarkably, Daniel had survived Fidel Castro’s prison in 1959. While in prison, Daniel had to
survive with little food and water. During my study at FIU, Daniel had diabetes and one
amputated arm; by the end of my study, Daniel was suffering from complications from his
diabetes. Nevertheless, throughout our conversations before and after class, it was clear that
Daniel was very appreciative of being in the U.S. and being able to actively engage in class and
his community because of his experiences in Cuba.

Another student, Faye, describes the importance of civic engagement and diversity in her
South Florida Research History class:

[O]bvously history has so much to do with the diversity and…although, multiculturalists
come together and we’re kind of like the melting pot here. So we can’t help but, for
instance, I have South Florida Research History class, and you can’t help but discuss
immigration, slaves and Blacks, and all these other cultures that have come to make
South Florida or the entire United States for that matter. (interview, March 3, 2003)
Faye sees Miami and FIU as a “melting pot” of cultures that have contributed to the characters of both Florida and the U.S.

Dr. Brian Peterson, associate professor of history, also incorporates civic engagement activities in his courses. For example, in his World Civilization course at FIU, at the end of the semester, students must produce a Chinese opera called Journey to the West. The students produce the opera; they also must perform it in front of an Elementary school camp. The opera focuses on “lots of Chinese culture, Chinese operas, symbolism, Buddhist oriented work, knowledge, [and] educational consultation with teachers” (interview, April 2, 2003).

Nevertheless, Ian’s experiences are different than Daniel’s or Faye’s. He states that he has had no classes that incorporate diversity issues:

For the most part, I’d say no. Even though some teachers make an effort to link it multiculturally; they try to be respectful, they try to fight about the issues I think. Which coming from my high school and my background, we never really did; we would just say what we wanted to do. And I realize you can’t say that now [be]cause you might offend people, but in some regards I think that’s the only way to educate them. Interviewer: So what would you consider a class that incorporates diversity and multicultural issues? What would they do for you in your mind to be adequate? Ian: Well, for one of the Education classes make it…they put an emphasis on your observation hours, instead of going to any random school, they emphasize going to a lower Spanish school, or poverty stricken school, so you can be with them or minority school. Cause a lot of people just go to a school by their house which is very different. (interview, October 29, 2002)
Ian’s conception of engagement and diversity are making sure that students that must observe classes as part of their mandatory observations for their Education courses do so in schools not “by their house.” I can attest to Ian’s comments (Ian was one of my students in the EDF 3515-Philosophical and Historical Foundations of Education at FIU) about observations since I taught the mandatory EDG 2701-Teaching Diverse Populations at FIU. My direct supervisor, Dr. Colleen A. Ryan made it clear to me that students in my class must do their observations in schools other than their own. Many students were able to waive this because of sickness, car trouble, work conflicts, etc. Thus, many students observed schools close to where they lived. Ian’s concerns were that students would not observe and experience poor schools or minority-serving schools and perhaps be ready to serve in these schools when they became teachers.

However, Ian’s perceptions were not the norm when compared to other students. Throughout his time in my class, aside conversations before and after class, and interviews, Ian demonstrated that his views of diversity were very different than other students in class. For example, in one aside discussion, Ian criticized going to the General Classroom building (GC) where students would gather throughout the day where he complained that students wore similar “fashionable clothing” and discussed the same things regardless of ethnicity. One possible contributing factor to Ian’s perception is his background. In two separate interviews, Ian stated he appreciated growing up in Costa Rica to Cuban parents and then moving to the Midwest, and finally to Miami. Because of his different cultural perspectives, Ian saw FIU’s diversity stance as limited to teaching to respect others and teaching overviews of differences without deep explorations and discussions of diversity and social problems.

Natalie believes that at FIU, civic engagement and diversity are geared towards Hispanics: “For Spanish people, like Spanish clubs…you always have these Spanish Heritage
Remembrance themes...you walk through the GC you have Spanish music going on...” (interview, March 15, 2003). When I asked her if they had activities and programming for other ethnic groups, Natalie stated, “Not really, no.” However, Natalie’s perceptions and observations do not correspond to her colleagues or to my own during my time at FIU. For example, Mario states that in addition to the “numerous groups and associations on campus,” there is also an “organization for every religion” (interview, February 6, 2003). Throughout my observations of FIU’s student center, GC, I noticed a myriad of fraternity, sorority, academic, interest groups, and political clubs that were all inclusive regardless of ethnicity. When I asked a member of Lambda Theta Phi if they also allowed students from other ethnicities into their Latino fraternity he said yes and that they had several African Americans and non-Hispanic Whites. However, since FIU is a majority Hispanic university, it might appear to Natalie that it does cater to Hispanics exclusively. For instance, when I asked the student Air Force ROTC recruiter, a Mexican, Cuban American cadet captain, about what the majority ethnic group was in his organization, he stated they were mainly Hispanic (personal notes, September 2, 2002). During my frequent visits to the GC, students from different organizations and clubs would “table,” or have tables set up in the GC hallway with information on how to join them. I collected flyers and brochures for the following organizations, announcements, and student services: Tau Kappa Epsilon (TKE), Lambda Theta Phi (Latin Fraternity Incorporated), Lambda Chi Alpha, Sigma Phi Epsilon, Phi Gamma Delta, Alpha Epsilon Pi (International Jewish Fraternity), Sigma Alpha Mu, The Inter-Fraternity Council, Campus Recreation, Student Programming Council, Air Force ROTC, and a “Remembrance” flyer for the second commemoration of 9/11 at FIU. Celebrations for Hispanic Heritage Month, African American Month, International Day, etc., were posted
throughout the GC. For Paul, “every week is something new” on campus in terms of celebrations and activities.

When it comes to civic issues taught at FIU, for Cuban Americans, they are included in a plethora of courses, yet, at the same time, FIU’s commitment to civic issues in the classroom appear to be inconsistent. Additionally, according to student interviews, it was not clear that FIU’s curriculum as a whole reflected “moral and civic competencies” through an “outcomes-based approach” (Colby et al, 2003, p. 53). Finally, service-learning was not mentioned except as described by Dr. Brian Peterson and his Chinese opera for elementary school kids in his World Civilization course.

**Student Involvement at FIU**

...I just don’t think they have the time to be involved.  
(Xavier, Cuban American)

One of the many questions I asked students at FIU was if they thought most students participated in activities at FIU. Both Cuban Americans and non-Hispanic Whites unequivocally stated that the majority of students did not. One important term that the students themselves incorporated to describe FIU’s student participation vacuum was “recycled leadership.” Most of these students, who are active at FIU, considered themselves to be “recycled leaders,” or students that participated in several leadership roles due to the dearth of students interested in these positions and/or activities on campus. The research on college student civic engagement in their surveys have missed this point since their foci is the amount of political and volunteer activities students perform as opposed to the quality of these activities and what students are actually doing regarding these activities. For example, Xavier, a Student Government representative and
fraternity member, explains that since FIU is a “commuter” school, recycled leaders are inevitable:

Most don’t; we recycle leaders. Interviewer: Is that because students don’t want to, because they can’t…? Xavier: Because they can’t…the average age is 26 years old I believe they are our undergraduate students or students in general. And most of the students are attending FIU have full-time jobs and if it’s part-time, it’s about 30 hours. And they have lives outside of campus. I just don’t think they have the time to be involved. (interview, February 25, 2003)

Not unexpectedly, Xavier during the Spring 2003 ran for Student Government president but lost and remained as Student Government representative and fraternity member, thus, exemplifying the recycled leader. Xavier’s description also brings up another issue ignored by college student civic engagement researchers. The longest and most publicized of these studies, the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (see Sax 2000 and Sax 2003 in Chapter 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE: COLLEGE STUDENT DIS/ENGAGEMENT above), focuses on first year students without taking into account older, non-traditional students at commuter institutions.

Echoing Xavier’s comments about leadership involvement, an editorial on April 8, 2003 describing Student Government elections, in the FIU college student newspaper, The Beacon, stated, “It is great that students participated by voting, but it is necessary that students also participate by taking on these leadership roles” (Editorial, 2003). Judy, another recycled leader, also describes her frustration with students that are not involved on campus:

I can blame them. Because America wouldn’t be where it is today without people like us. Every time someone tells me that, like I’m not going to make a difference, if the founders of this country thought like that there wouldn’t be this country. If the person who found
the chip that makes computers would’ve thought like that there wouldn’t be computers. It’s just people don’t look outside the box. It’s like they’ve become conformist, that everything, they have a computer, and all of a sudden, it came there from a miracle of God. Because nobody put it together because nobody took the time because nobody had weeks to make it happen. For people like us it’s incredibly frustrating. Yesterday, I was standing in a line and people were absolutely doing nothing, there were doing nothing, they were standing in line, doing nothing, but waiting, nothing, and I can’t emphasize enough they were doing nothing. And I asked them to sign the petition for me, and they’re like, no, and me, being the pushy person that I am, I’m like, could you please just put your signature it will only take a minute and it will save many people money for college education. And once you push, they’re like fine, you know; you’re ruining my space because I’m standing here in line doing nothing might as well just sign it! But it’s ridiculous, I can’t understand it, I wish I understood, and I can’t. (interview, February 10, 2003).

Sofy blames student apathy on students having too many responsibilities:

Many people…I’m not going to say that there are any people that don’t join the clubs and organizations because they don’t care but they are. But some people it’s just time consuming, they have to work, they have to go to school, they have houses, some of them are married and it’s just it depends on the person how much they’re willing to give. (interview, April 9, 2003)

While Sax (2000) explains that student political disengagement is due to first, students seeing politics and politicians as negative, second, they do not view politics as a means of effective change, and third, many students feel alienated from the political process, she does not take into
account the issue of time and responsibilities like Sofy does in her interview (p. 7). Natalie, who goes “to class and then to work,” similarly believes that students are “so caught up in their things in working, school, trying to get by, trying to get good grades, trying to you know, do the things that they don’t really have time to sit down and really know what’s really going on even though they should” (interview, March 15, 2003). However, like Sax (2000), Faye says that even if students did have time, “they just rather not, they rather have somebody else do it for them” (interview, March 3, 2003). Nevertheless, almost all the students that I interviewed and observed at FIU who participated in several civic engagement activities also worked either part- or full-time.

Work and the Importance of Student Involvement

...They have to work, or maybe they’re just not interested, maybe they just don’t want to.
(Faye, Cuban American)

After I had some interviews with students who were active that complained of students that were not, I asked one of the founding professors of FIU’s College of Education, Dr. Colleen A. Ryan, why some students might participate in activities at FIU while others did not. She stated that it most likely was caused by socioeconomic (SES) factors where students from lower SES backgrounds had to work while those that did participate in activities at FIU “had time and money” (interview, March 3, 2003). None of the college student civic engagement literature analyzes SES status and civic participation. However, Verba, Schlozman, and Brady (1995), in their study of civic engagement among the general population argue that Hispanics overall have the lowest rates of civic participation when compared to Whites and African Americans because of because of a lack of time or money (p. 15). Charlie Andrews stated that full-time students had a retention rate of 70 percent while part-time students that worked had a 30 percent retention rate
(interview, November 1, 2002). However, all of the students I interviewed worked either part-time or full-time and all but three of these were active in student clubs, organizations, etc., at FIU. Even though Faye works about 20 hours a week because she has no “scholarships or anything” including financial aid, she has to pay to attend school (interview, March, 3, 2003). Yet, she manages to be part of Student Government, Student Alumni Association, Dance Marathon-Morale Captain, Peer Advisor, and more! Xavier, who is involved in Student Government, Peer Advisement, Sigma Alpha Mu, Student Ambassador, and on the Judicial Mediations Committee, does not have to work, but does so to help his parents: “I work because I want to. Not that we’re that financially comfortable, but I know that my parents have pulled through when they had to. So I work to help them out; they don’t ask me to work, I work because I think I should. Interviewer: You help them out? Xavier: Yeah, I pay my own tuition” (interview, March 3, 2003).

It seems that even though almost all of the students worked and were pressed for time, they participated in activities at FIU because they thought it was important. All students, that worked and did not work, thought participating in civic engagement activities at FIU was important. Graciela states that civic engagement is important because it teaches you that making money is not the wherewithal of living:

Extremely important…we’re not just here…to…I’m here…meaning on Earth…we’re not just allowed to make money spend it and die and care for ourselves. I think we have a responsibility to one another in every regard. We should enjoy each others time...

(interview, October 26, 2002)

Sofy believes that civic engagement is important “because you learn a little about everything and it’s good to expand your horizons certain issues about life…you can never learn too much…you
can just expand” (interview, April 9, 2003). Mario states civic engagement is necessary because you [gotta] be aware of your surroundings and what’s going on and it helps you for the real world” (interview, February 6, 2003). Ian thinks it makes you “well-rounded” (interview, February 6, 2003).

**Popular and Needed Activities**

...you have to do certain seminars, they have leadership seminars, how to be social, how to interact with the public. All fraternities and sororities have major interests in those fields. (Jason, Cuban American)

Another aspect of civic engagement at FIU where Cuban American and non-Hispanic students agreed on was that the popular activities at FIU were perceived to be Greek sororities and fraternities and Dance Marathon, a yearly fundraising 24 hour dance to raise money to cure cancer. Mario belongs to Sigma Phi Epsilon and has been a dancer and member of the Activities Committee for Dance Marathon. According to FIU’s student newspaper *The Beacon*, Dance Marathon in 2003 raised $100,138 for cancer research (Dance marathon, 2003). When I asked him why he participated in these he said, “Basically, to give back to the community, help others” (interview, February 6, 2003). When asked how she got started in Dance Marathon and the other activities she participated in, Faye answered, “It’s like a snowball effect like you start one thing and it just keeps growing; the more you meet people and the more you grow as a leader, the more you want to push yourself to see what is it you’re capable of what’s your limit what can you do” (interview, February 10, 2003). Many other students described the role the “snowball effect” or student peer networks had on their participation at FIU. For example, before coming to FIU, Devyn was very introverted, but after joining a sorority, she began participating in other activities at FIU:
This is a long story…I came to FIU with no expectations of anything; I thought I was just going to come here and go home, not a big deal. However, I decided to join a sorority, and my big sister in the sorority pushed me to become a peer adviser; so I applied for peer adviser and I made it and that’s where I met Charlie [Andrews]. Just from there, you got to learn about your school, and want to help it, and to want to be part of it, and make it grow, and you learn how being active is more important than sitting back and complaining, and how by working, you can make a difference in the school there’s the ability to change and move mountains per se. And then, from there, I just fell into everything else I’ve done. I became student ambassador, I became director of Dance Marathon. And then I found another person who believed in me and told me I can be president of student government and I believed them and here I am. (interview, February 10, 2003).

Since the “snowball effect” is a developmental process college students at FIU undergo as part of becoming civically engaged, college student engagement research and its reliance on quantity would have naturally not noticed it. College student engagement researchers such as Astin (1998), Sax (2000), Sax (2003), and Colby et al (2003) lament that college students are volunteering in record numbers while their levels of political engagement are declining yet simultaneously they overlook the processes of how students become civically engaged in the first place such as the “snowball effect” because of their reliance on the number of political engagement activities in which college students are involved.

Despite the popularity of Greek sororities and fraternities and Dance Marathon, many students suggested that FIU could either improve the way it communicates the type of activities it has to offer its students and/or add new programs. Students in the Student Wingspread
Declaration have suggested navigating colleges and universities to find civic engagement activities can be trying:

In addition, students are generally unaware of how to participate in college community. They know little about the administrative functions of higher education and are organizationally illiterate about the particular universities they attend. Many of us who do try to navigate the bureaucracy often lack access to the institutional system and find progress to be painstakingly slow and difficult. (p.11)

Sofy, a former sorority member, for example, suggests that other sororities and fraternities at FIU are restrictive and that other clubs should be created:

I think that they should have instead of sororities and fraternities, they should different types of groups focusing on, not honors societies because that would restricting too many people, that’s based on gpa-wise, but different groups like science clubs, but not so it can be fraternity-wise with the letters or this and that or sorority-wise…groups interested in the same things going on in society…the movie club for example. (interview, April 9, 2003)

Ian believes that information about activities on campus is “scattered:” “I don’t think they do a good job of getting it out there. I think as freshmen, they have some sheet they give you and it has a bunch of clubs. But they don’t relate you should check this out…they have bulletin boards but they’re kind of scattered and few and far between…” (interview, October 29, 2002).

Surprisingly, even though Natalie is Cuban American, she believes that emphasis should be put on cultures other than Hispanics regarding activities at FIU:

Maybe more…since this is such a Hispanic populated school I think they need to focus on other cultures. Like that Muslim awareness thing I think that was very good but they
took a long time to do it. I think they should do more activities that focus on Asian Americans, African Americans, on Muslim, Middle Eastern, any those kind of people. They are part of our world I mean they might not be here but travel outside of Miami and it’s not Little Havana anymore. (interview, March 15, 2003).

Devyn wishes more students at FIU were “politically inclined” because if “more people were active and if more people demanded more from our government and leaders, they would get more” (interview, October 25, 2002).

While some students complained about a lack of information provided about student involvement, according to Charles Andrews, information about student activities is given to all students during orientation and other methods:

Let’s say you’re a [newby] or a…transfer, commuter or what not…We have different things…First of all we send a postcard to every admitted freshmen and transfer student; we get a list from admissions and we send them a postcard specifically advertising orientation. And then, we refer them to our website. Basically, our website has a lot of information for both groups. So we utilize technology to do that. And we also create a newsletter for commuter students that we…actually we are just kind of putting the first issue right now…but we’re going to put that on the internet but also try to make hard copies send it via email to students…we set up tables sometimes in the student union building. Every now and then sometimes we have students fill out surveys so we know what they’re interests are and stuff but also to promote our office. (interview, November 1, 2002)

Moreover, Mr. Andrews is committed to providing information about student involvement to as many students as possible at FIU because it improves retention:
But that’s one of the main things we do at orientation is try to stress involvement; obviously the research says that’s good so we try to get them involved in campus. We actually did something new this year where we did like a whole rotation where they went to different involvement sessions and it was very successful. Campus Life [an organization that governs all student involvement activities] saw an increase numbers in all their different involvement aspects. (interview, November 1, 2002)

Similarly, Dr. Beverly Dalrymple’s office, the Center for Civic Responsibility and Leadership, is also involved with Student Orientation:

There’s written material; our website has everything on it that students need to know plus their application forms, and calendar dates and times, things like that, we participate in all the new student orientation programs. We have a leadership module that we take into the first-year experience class specifically to promote the Academy of Leaders which is our emerging leaders program. We do outreach, we work closely with the Student Organizations Council and provide programs for student organizations so a lot of students will find out about our other programs to do that. We also do a lot of word of mouth students tell each other if they’ve been in a program, that’s usually good recruitment. (interview, October 2, 2002)

Patricia Temino, the Assistant Director of the Volunteer Action Center provides a “bimonthly newsletter” that is “distributed to the FIU community” (interview, November 20, 2002).

Additionally, her office attends “council meetings” to develop methods to increase student involvement.
Non-Hispanic Whites reported several courses that incorporated civic issues. They also described the many aspects of diversity programming present at FIU. However, unlike some Cuban Americans, non-Hispanic Whites tended to view civic and diversity programming at FIU as positive. Rico’s experience in an Economics class changed his perceptions of the world:

Things I didn’t have a clue on before I see now I’m like wow that’s why this happened and that’s why that happened and you see things differently...The way the government likes to keep the socioeconomic status at certain levels. And maintaining funding for certain groups for certain reasons; you wonder why doesn’t this group get money or what do they have taxes so high, there are certain things behind everything...(interview, April 4, 2003)

Rico’s Economics course impacted his views about socioeconomic status, taxes, and economic differences among different groups of people. In fact, in my EDG 2701-Teaching Diverse Populations, Rico would bring up material he learned in his Economics to describe how inequality could affect children’s schooling.

Jamie stated that the EDG 2701-Teaching Diverse Populations class and her Sociology course taught her to understand different cultures which is important for her future teaching career:

The more important classes I’ve taken was your class and a Sociology and both of them changed my perspective the way I see other people and other cultures. Like when I first came down here I felt really alienated, I didn’t speak Spanish, people were rude to
you at the store, but now I see this is their culture and that’s just the way it is. I’m down here and I accept things easier now; I don’t feel as isolated cause I accept things as they are...When I had to do the observations, and I was looking to see what my kids social status was and I couldn’t because they all had uniforms, I didn’t know, they all look the same to me. And I didn’t have that cause I always had the crappy clothes. It’s different things, it changes your perspective on the way you see things in the world. And I hope that I’m more sensitive now as a person with different cultures and I think that’s very crucial cause I’m planning on being a teacher. (interview, April 4, 2003)

Jamie’s alienation subsided once she accepted Hispanic culture not as a competing culture, but a culture different than hers. Her teaching observations helped her understand further how culture affects teaching and learning. The focus of our EDG 2701-Teaching Diverse Populations class was to explore how race, class, gender, and socioeconomic status affected children and schooling. Most of the students agreed with the overall idea of the course that differences because of demographics, economics, geography, ethnicity, etc., can affect a child’s schooling. For Jamie, the Sociology and Teaching Diverse Populations courses connected her experiences being in a new cultural environment to her students’ possible cultural differences. During this interview, I was not expecting to hear comments from my own courses and because of this, it made me aware of the possible influences that my position as researcher and teacher might exert on students. Thus, Jaime’s comments could have also been embellished since I was her teacher, but her comments throughout our class and other interviews were consistent with her other comments. For example, during one of our classes, Jaime mentioned how being of Polish background influenced her familial background and later interaction with children in school. In a different interview, Jaime stated how her identity was made up of different cultures including her
Polish background and her American background. Therefore, Jaime’s sympathy towards Spanish culture, even though she felt isolated when she first moved to Miami, is indicative of her own diverse background.

Paul is able to choose from among a plethora of Political Science courses focusing on Latin America and its impact on the U.S.:

I think there’s a lot more classes offered like that. Like I know, I have 20 million Latin American Politics classes to choose from, like I mean, I don’t think anywhere else you’re going to have that many options…Latin American related I think because where we’re located. Like for example, I’m taking Cuban Politics this semester, last semester I took Authoritarian which was called Latin American Politics, before that I took Latin American and there’s just so much…(interview, October 2, 2002)

However, Paul also states that his professors in his Religion classes could incorporate more diverse perspectives:

Discussion of issues, Religious Analysis for example, in Myth, Ritual, and Mysticism, or both religion classes they could talk about how religion varies between social and…groups they don’t; which is ok cause I guess we get a lot of multicultural influence here, maybe a lot of Hispanics here are interested in it as I am because they are living the culture, but maybe…a lot more interesting. (interview, October 2, 2002)

In John’s Economics classes, like in Paul’s, the focus was on international economies and how they affected the U.S.:

…but even in our Economics classes I have to…we didn’t speak a lot about the American economy, we spoke about the Japanese economy, the Argentinean economy, the Russian
economy the crises that they faced, and how it affects the United States not how we affect them it should’ve been called International Economics. (interview, February 10, 2003)

When it comes to diversity programming, non-Hispanic Whites like the majority of their Cuban American classmates, agreed that there were many opportunities for FIU’s diverse population to be involved in many activities. John is aware of several groups and organizations on campus that are very active:

You can walk down a hallway and on one side of the hallway you’ll have the Muslim Student Association, on the other side of the hallway, you’ll have the Jewish Student Association. And then going…different student programming issues dealing with Hispanic heritage, African-American heritage, American Heritage…As far as the student programming aspect of things you definitely deal with those issues. (interview, February 10, 2003)

John believes participating is important because you get to understand important issues:

I definitely think they’re beneficial. And if you take a little time and little responsibility on your own to go check some of these issues out and some of these displays and what not, there’s a lot of information there. My best experiences with this so far have been with the Volunteer Action Center and Alternative Spring Break program which is focusing on diversity sort of curriculum. Interviewer: And what do you do at the Volunteer Action Center? John: Specifically, the last four years, Alternative Spring Break, and each year it’s a different issues and a different site. I’ve done twice a participant and twice a site leader. How many students participate here? About a 100. Between 70 and 120. Interviewer: What have been some of the projects? John: Some of the projects that I’ve worked on personally it’s been feeding HIV AIDS patients who
couldn’t afford it in Washington, D.C., doing environmental work in a state park in Virginia, doing Habitat for Humanity in a small nothing town in Texas, and this year probably going back to Virginia for environmental work, but we’ve also had groups…go international now, to Mexico, some other groups go to Africa to deal with HIV AIDS work. (interview, February 10, 2003)

Similarly, Victoria is aware of the many types of opportunities FIU offers for student civic engagement and diversity:

It’s all about the fraternities, sororities, having their parties or whatever, but when I do see something that I mention that I must see, for instance just the other day Islam and Diversity, it was a great…it was like 4 hours forum…question and answer it was a great thing at the FLM center and that was definitely promoting diversity obviously to learn more about the Islamic religion and everything. Interviewer: Did you participate in that? Victoria: I volunteered actually through the Student Association…Interviewer: Did you ask any questions? Victoria: I actually had to leave early to go to class so I didn’t get a chance to the question part…Interviewer: What do you think the highlight was of the Islamic Diversity panel? Victoria: From what I saw, I didn’t really get to hear the panel, [be]cause we served the food to the people that were there. And from what I learned, it was basically caught up in the September 11 thing kind of building a bridge between the different views, etc. But I can tell you more about another talk I went to, and I had to leave again because I had to go to class, but it was about Gender Issues in Post-Soviet Era. And this one woman, was from Lithuania, and she was doing a study about prostitution in Lithuania, and found that most women were involved in prostitution by the
economic gain because they were making $1500 a month where being a teacher you made $266 a month or maybe is was a week I don’t know…(November 10, 2002)

Surprisingly, John, a Business major did not state that the College of Business curricula requires all majors to participate in some form of service-learning project. For example, according to Dr. Robert Hogner, associate professor in the College of Business, all students must participate in a specific service-learning project where students themselves “are responsible for the development, management, and continuation of these programs” (interview, March 10, 2003). Dr. Hogner’s class, Business in Society, a required course for all Business majors, is one such class where students create service-learning projects:

The last time I taught it, they did the American Cancer Society Relay for Life; they got the top prize, best tent, best…all that. This semester they’re doing a food drive to replenish the stocks at the what’s called the Daily Bread Food Bank; that’s actually winding up for Saturday. Come in the building, there’s a pit downstairs, if you walk in, what we’re attempting to do is fill the pit…But now with two full semesters of good experiences, we now have a group in two different classes, if you will, and these classes are lock step; group 11 and group 12 have now come together what they want to do is develop a program for service day in which three and soon to be four groups, come together every semester and do something. (interview, March 10, 2003)

Thus, the College of Business is very active when it comes to student civic engagement. Obviously, other courses at FIU incorporated civic engagement activities, however, the College of Business was the only College or School at FIU where civic engagement was part of the curricula for all its majors. But, John either forgot about the service-learning requirements in the
College of Business or was not affected by them with regards to civic engagement. However, this did not prevent John from being civically engaged at FIU.

**Student Involvement at FIU**

...the team work that comes with sports, the leadership that comes with volunteering, and the sense of something more important than just you having a job and earning money out there.

(John, non-Hispanic White)

Non-Hispanic sentiments about student involvement at FIU echoed those of Cuban Americans. Melissa does not participate in any activities on campus and explains that there are “limits and restraints” on her time; if not, “[she] would love to participate” (interview, April 11, 2003). Eva similarly describes why she is not active at FIU: “Pretty much because I don’t have any time. I live in Hollywood. I commute there and I work in an after school program; and then I have to leave here and go straight there and I’m there until 6:00 o’clock. By the time I come home I want to drive home and not do anything else” (interview, October 1, 2002). Paul, on the other hand, believes students do not care:

Yeah…I just think that students are so apathetic that activities aren’t as good as they think; yeah since we’re a commuter school, students come here and go home…I mean I think FIU needs the college experience…but it’s not there for all the students…a lot of students live with their families and they don’t care to come here at night for movies on the lawn…(interview, October 2, 2002)

One specific reason I asked how students felt about student participation is that researchers using aggregate collecting surveys on college student civic engagement can infer similar comments like Paul’s because not enough “percentages” of students vote, for example. But, the “Student Wingspread Declaration” described in Chapter 2 demonstrates that just
because students do not participate in traditionally, research, defined civic engagement venues, does not mean they are inactive or apathetic. Melissa and Eva believe civic engagement is important even though they do not participate in any activities at FIU; they are not apathetic. One important phenomenon regarding student involvement that was mentioned earlier by Xavier was the snowball effect, or student peer networking to become involved in campus activities. Putnam’s (2002) concepts of bridging (outward focused civic participation or participation outside one homogenous group such as the civil rights movement) and bonding (inward focused civic participation such as within similar ethnic groups) social capital described earlier in Chapter 2 is similar to the snowball effect. Xavier’s snowball effect example is equivalent to Putnam’s bridging concept where one is led to civically participate outside one’s own homogenous group. Xavier’s commitment to participation at FIU was limited to his fraternity until a member outside his homogenous group invited him to participate in a different activity such as Alternative Spring Break.

Melissa and Eva do not participate because they have no time, but the rest of the students who do work and also said they had no time, but, they found a way to participate anyway. They mentioned that by participating only in one activity, they were lead to participate in other activities. Additionally, overall, all students exhibited bridging social capital, meaning their activities were not restricted to participating in activities related to their ethnicities. Paul believes that students do not participate because of apathy, but some like Melissa and Eva are not apathetic, it is just that they cannot make the initial network connection to start the snowball effect, or it could be that FIU and active students cannot make the snowball effect link with these inactive students.
Another possible reason for lack of involvement at FIU is its location. According to John, Miami offers so many attractions for students, that they do not consider activities at FIU:

There’s so much noise as far as trying to get activities out cause here in Miami you have, South Beach, you have the Grove, you have University of Miami things, you have Miami Dolphins, you have Heat [basketball], you have Panther hockey, you have the Marlins [baseball]; there’s so much going on out there that there’s nothing at the top of mind when it comes to going on this Friday you have twelve things going on instead of one.

(interview, February 10, 2003)

Devyn explained to me that earlier in the semester of Fall 2002, they brought in a well-known music artist to FIU to give a concert. She said she was embarrassed because there was a very low student turnout which she also blames on Miami’s attractions. Place, location, and type of institution are factors missing from Astin (1998), Sax (2000), Sax (2003), Colby et al’s (2003) research that might impact college student civic involvment.

**Work and the Importance of Student Involvement**

yes…[work] prevents me from sleeping as much as I want to.

(Paul, non-Hispanic White)

Like Cuban Americans, most non-Hispanic Whites work part- or full-time. But this does not prevent them from participating in activities at FIU. For Paul, participating in activities at FIU is more important than doing leisure activities:

It’s just really hard on my schedule. Like I’ve kind of made a decision to sacrifice a bit of my grades for leadership opportunity. Not much on my grades, but a little bit, I don’t think 3.4…I mean I don’t think it’s great, but…this semester is particularly hard because
I didn’t choose my schedule wisely according to my extracurricular activities; I’m taking 15 credits…(interview, October 2, 2002)

However, Paul states that he is sacrificing some of his time on academics for leadership opportunities at FIU. Paul’s commitment stems from the value and emphasis he puts on leadership. He also states that involvement is important for democracy and community:

...in a democracy you have to participate in the system. I think it’s very important and I think that anyone not doing it is missing out. You don’t have to be totally involved, but I mean I think everyone especially who helps people who are need whether it be poverty, or abuse, I think anyone can benefit from that, anybody. And anyone who’s not doing that is really, really, really missing out. And I think eventually they’ll start to lose touch with what’s important. (interview, October 2, 2002)

Paul, like most non-Hispanic Whites and Cuban Americans think civic engagement is important.

Greg believes involvement at FIU and the community is important because it unites people: “As far as getting out in the community, playing sports, or having fundraisers, yeah I think that’s important; you meet new people and you recognize what the area’s about. Especially since Miami is so divided; it’s like this section is this this section is this and here’s the border line” (interview, October 26, 2002). Greg’s attitude is similar to Anna’s earlier comment that she does not see diversity in Miami; instead, she sees “cliques” of ethnic groups.

**Popular and Needed Activities**

They’re the ones really trying to reach out and show there’s student life on campus.

(John, non-Hispanic White)

Non-Hispanic Whites agreed with Cuban Americans stating that Greek sororities and fraternities and Dance Marathon were the most popular activities at FIU. Paul appreciates his
involvement with his fraternity because of the snowball effect, or ability to further network to participate in other activities:

Once you join one you’re going to find about many. I think a fraternity was a great gateway. I don’t know if all fraternities are the same, my fraternity was new and I got the opportunity to become a founding member. And then you have the older members who tell you about new opportunities and they do that because they want their fraternity to be the best. And so from there you join one thing and then you meet people who are involved in other things and then so on and so on…It’s pretty much word of mouth; there are a lot of marketing experts who come to Orientation, but I like the personal aspect of somebody coming up and telling me hey we think you could use you and do this you can do that… (interview, October 2, 2002)

Many non-Hispanic Whites also recommended that several activities and/or services be developed at FIU: LaCrosse, a Women’s Support Group, and more dorms. John II was not sure if he was getting enough information about FIU activities: “I myself I don’t really know what’s going on around campus. I don’t know if it’s my fault or the schools fault” (interview, October 25, 2002). From my time at FIU, I would have to say that information about student activities is concentrated in the GC. For example, at the beginning of every semester, I would see different clubs and organizations provide information tables for incoming students. Additionally, most of the essential student services such as the bookstore, bank, food court, and civic engagement offices were housed in the GC. However, many students do not go to the GC because it is too loud, has too many people, or it does not cross their path when they attend classes. All first-year students attend mandatory First Year Orientation according to Charles Andrews, the Associate Director for Orientation and Commuter Student Services at FIU. He also stated that first-year
students receive information at the Orientation about student activities on campus. Nevertheless, Mr. Andrews stated that since FIU is predominantly a commuter school, many non-traditional students such as older students, do not attend Orientation and therefore, are not informed about student activities. A possible solution according to students that do participate in activities is to make students aware why civic engagement is important for their communities, society, and their careers in the future. Both Cuban Americans and non-Hispanic Whites overwhelmingly agreed civic engagement was important. Some thought it was important enough to risk sleep and academics!

**Student Civic Engagement:**

*News, Current Events, and Cuban Americans*

...other news stations, I’m not going to mention any, but like they have fashion week.

(Faye, Cuban American)

In light of the events that occurred on September 11, 2001, Colby et al (2003) state that “national crises often trigger significant changes in the ways students, along with the public more generally, view public issues and react to those issues” (p. 286). To gauge their awareness of public issues I asked both Cuban Americans and non-Hispanic Whites if they watched or listened to the news and if they were aware of specific current events. Cuban Americans were not complacent when it came to keeping up on current local, national, and international events. Their news sources ranged from local channels to international news sources such as *CNN* and *Telemundo* (a locally shown Spanish news and entertainment television station) and news sources on the Internet such as *CNN.com* and *MSNBC.com*.

Some students were even critical of some news sources. Ian disapproved of *The Miami Herald*: 
Yeah, I like the BBC site; they’re usually more impartial. Interviewer: Than American?
Ian: Yeah. I read *The Miami Herald* they’re tainted…Why are you saying they’re tainted? They have a lot of biased opinions I think. It was interesting after the whole Elian thing, how a lot of newspapers had the boy and his father in the front page picture, and in *The Miami Herald*, they had the guy with the gun. So it’s just interesting to see what most newspapers have and then what others have. (interview, October 29, 2002)

Elian González was a Cuban refugee who lost his mother in the waters off the coast of Florida in 2000. After months of legal wrangling, Elian was repatriated back to Cuba. Most Cuban Americans opposed sending Elian back at the time. Alvarez et al (2001) mention that the Elian González affair is part of the collective identity of Cuban American graduate students (p. 9). For them the Elian affair is symbolic of the unified support for all Cuban refugees and the reprehension they have for Fidel Castro (p. 9). Additionally, they “retain a collective memory, vision or myth of the [Cuban] homeland, including its physical location, history and achievements.” Ian clarifies that *The Miami Herald* does not provide complete information:

*The Herald*, I think it’s fun…Interviewer: So *The Herald* for entertainment meaning you don’t find any news value? Ian: No, I find the value I mean just for background information; I don’t take what they say has what happened. But if they’re talking about what’s going on in Iraq, it’ll interest me to go and find out more about it. (interview, October 29, 2002)

As president of Student Government at FIU, Devyn scans several sources of news information that might be relevant for her position: “I guess the *Wall Street Journal*; I also read *The Miami Herald* occasionally. I get it just because of the positions…I have a lobbyist that
works for the student university system in Tallahassee and he’s done things that are related to our issues. Yeah, and then of course the Internet” (interview, October 25, 2002)

Daniel, who listens to the Spanish radio stations in Miami WQBA and WCMQ, involves himself with the news whenever he can:

Many times I call radio shows, I try to send letter through the Internet, I send letters to the President, I have sent letter to Congress people, I try including in classes, have to touch, try to deviate the classes that they are pointing on what activities is strong. I try to make my opinion known. Most of the time when I feel most people are against me. When I feel it’s a wrong or what I think it’s right, I try to make it noticed. (interview, September 27, 2002)

Graciela describes why she uses *National Public Radio (NPR)* and *CNN.com*:

My two favorite ways of getting news nowadays are CNN.com, when I log on, automatically the first site the comes up is that and NPR. Interviewer: Why those two? Well, I like NPR in particular because I think that they have…as close as humanly possible to objective balance. They do try to present different sides and different political agendas and I like that about them. And I think they’re reporting is very thorough. And the way they report stories is a great narrative style and they give you historical perspective. And CNN.com, because I have a very good habit of checking my email…I do it two to three times I do it routinely. And I don’t watch t.v. that much and I’m not as long in my car. So that’s a way of getting the quick little bite of information at least I know what’s going on and I’m quickly updated since I check so often. (interview, October 26, 2002)
To ascertain their awareness of issues around the world, I asked students if they could name some current events. Most students identified and were informed of current political issues going on in the world. According to Colby et al (2003. p. 19) and all other college student civic engagement researchers, political discussions are an important part of civic engagement.

Mario and Ian, best friends, mentioned North Korea and Iraq:

Mario: Basically, the whole thing with Iraq and I was looking into North Korea…and that’s pretty much…a couple of [fraternity] brothers got activated to go to North Korea and a friend of mine from high school got sent to Iraq. Ian: I just read up, well, lately, I’m reading about Iraq. But I try to read about things in Latin America as well just cause I was born there. Interviewer: Any position on Iraq or North Korea? Mario: I mean, obviously if they’re viewed as terrorists or whatever, then we obviously don’t want them to have weapons. But I think the U.S. is sometimes like a bully, going into places and telling them this is what you got to do. But a position, I guess I have a lot support for the U.S., I don’t want them to have weapons or what not. Ian: If you’re going to go after Hussein then go after him with all you got…Not necessarily nukes, but do it right.

(interview, February 6, 2003)

During political discussions, Graciela frequently discusses multiple topics:

Typically the two topics are the judicial system, and what we see as wrong with it, and economic discussions in terms of have and have nots and who gets what.

We discuss U.S. foreign policy regarding just about whatever comes up. But usually the ones that come up in the news: Iraq, North Korea, China, Cuba, and Cuban politics; that is a very popular topic of conversation. (interview, October 26, 2002)

Devyn also mentions how the topic of Cuba is frequently brought up in her family:
Ever since I was a little girl I have heard nothing but horrid things of Fidel Castro from the people that I respect most in my life. He is a communist dictator that my grandparents "life" and changed it 150%. Again through the years I have come to realize that Castro runs a regime that again is very different from this country that I admire so much even with all its imperfections. I don't respect his regime or anything that he has done because he took freedom from my ancestors but I have to realize that he is the leader of that country. (interview, October 25, 2002)

This “collective memory” excoriating Fidel Castro is typical for many Cuban Americans. Not of direct Cuban American descent, but raised by my Cuban American stepmother and schooled in a predominantly Cuban bilingual elementary school in Miami, Florida, it was inevitable not be acculturated to the Cuban American diaspora and the attitudes engrained in it. For example, at our elementary school in the 1970s, during Jose Marti’s (the “father” of Cuba) birthday one time, the entire school dressed in traditional Cuban celebratory clothes: a red beret, a guayabera shirt, and a red scarf. At another time, we wore a black arm band protesting Castro’s visit to the U.S. Thus, for me at times at FIU, it was hard not to sympathize with Devyn’s or Daniel’s point of view which could be seen as an issue of biasness. However, I made sure I incorporated “triangulation” in my study to include multiple sources of information so that any possible biasness could be lessened.

Another student, Judy describes the importance of being informed about political issues:

There always like oh, the political girl, and I’m not even that political like I’m not even that involved in politics. I have friends who even work in the student government office and I’ll be reading an article about Bush and it’s just whatever the highlight on the Internet it’s not even the in depth stuff and the person will tell me why are you such a
dork wad you know why are you going…I’m not, I just want to know and it goes both ways. Like within this group, definitely, but with other people it’s not because they can’t, but they just don’t care to most of the time I think. I said, I’m going to go watch the State of the Union Address. I was a basketball game and we finish the basketball game and as I’m walking out I’m like ok I’m going to watch the State of the Union who wants to come with me. And silence, silence! I’m like incredible, I can believe this how can you live in this country and not watch the State of the Union, that’s the minimal. (interview, February 10, 2003)

Xavier also complains about the lack of student interest in current issues:

I don’t want to be ignorant. I think ignorance is bliss. I think a lot of students are if it doesn’t affect me and we’re not going tomorrow to the club and it’s not affecting my car payments, not affecting my cell phone bill, I don’t care. And until, one of the, big things right now is taking away…for teachers. So many students are saying so what who cares it doesn’t matter…when they take it away students are going to be like why didn’t you guys do anything… we tried to make you do something. (interview, February 10, 2003)

Unlike non-Hispanic Whites, very few Cubans like Faye, send letters to the editor, call their representatives, etc., when they were passionate about a specific issue. Most like Faye were involved with the letter writing campaign to save the Bright Futures Scholarship of the state of Florida. However, Faye often writes to her government representatives about other issues as well:

I definitely write to my representatives, my Congress, and my Senate I think that’s always important. Interviewer: So you write to them frequently? Faye: Yes. Interviewer: Like what issues have you written to them about lately? Faye: Well, I went to protest for
the Saving the Bright Futures Scholarship and I wrote about it how it wasn’t fair. And I wrote to the ex-Mayor of New York Rudy Giuliani and then I’ve written to the President, just to tell him that I prayed for him and that the Cabinet makes good decisions for the United States. (interview, March 3, 2003)

This scholarship issue that Faye describes was conflicting for me as a researcher. The Bright Futures Scholarship is a merit-based scholarship in Florida given to students based on their high school grade point average (gpa) and their SAT scores. In 2003, the Florida Legislature was thinking of cutting the program because it was expensive to run. While at the Center for the Study of Higher Education at PSU, I worked with Donald Heller on a study that demonstrated that the Bright Futures Scholarship in Florida was unfair to minorities. Many times I wanted to ask students like Faye and Victoria in the Student Honors Mentor Group whether they had read any reports, articles, or research on merit-based scholarships that overwhelmingly stated that these scholarships were unfair to minority students. However, my role in this study was not participatory action for social change, but rather observe and report how students at FIU civically engaged. Nevertheless, this aspect of my study was frustrating based on my perspectives with prior research on the topic.

9/11/01

No one went crazy when Oklahoma happened.
(Curtis, Cuban American)

September 11, 2001 was a pivotal time in the U.S. including at FIU. According to Colby et al (2003), “surveys in the immediate aftermath of September 11, 2001, suggest that the attacks led to shifts in the civic attitudes of college students” and that “for some those events elicited feelings of national pride and patriotism, which were previously largely absent in the
overwhelming majority of the students” (p. 286). I asked both Cuban Americans and non-Hispanic Whites whether or not 9/11/01 affected them at all.

Patricia Temino at the Volunteer Action Center “saw an increase of students who were more willing to put themselves out there and to giving back to the community like a little wake up call.” Dr. John Stack, Director of the Jack D. Gordon Institute for Public Policy and Citizenship Studies, sponsored three symposia about 9/11:

One in student dorms on a Saturday following September 11 where it was standing room only. One maybe a week and a half where we had 250 people. And then one we did a third program called “Just Wars, Holy Wars Throughout the Ages” where I brought together four senior faculty members to talk about the world of Islam from a different perspective. I had a philosopher, sociologist, and a religious professor. We also co-sponsored two events this year on the anniversary of 9-11; one in the community in the Biltmore where they had 350 people and then another one here…Interviewer: Mainly attended by students or by…? Stack: Well, the one at the Biltmore was overwhelmingly community people; mostly students here. (interview, March 25, 2003).

Almost all of the students stated they donated blood. However, many students criticized some acts of patriotism. Sofy describes how 9/11 made her aware of her community’s needs: “I actually donated blood because there was a blood bank all over and I had never done it before, but I said, I’m actually going to give back to the community because there are people who are in need. That actually made me realize that I needed to do something for the first time” (interview, April 9, 2003). Faye likewise describes how 9/11 solidified her sense of belonging and need with other people:
That was my first Alternate Spring Break and I went to Ground Zero and I went to
volunteer at the Salvation Army at the Taj Mahal. And that was the best week of my life.
I couldn’t have felt more fulfilled at that moment, when I felt, after that incident
happened I felt so lost, and oh my God, what do you do and how can you help. It really
helped feel like I was in this with everybody else. (interview, March 3, 2003)

Ian states that 9/11 made him reflect on his “materialism:”

I think it became more of a rallying cry. Interviewer: Rallying cry for what? Ian: Just to
say the U.S. is good and other people are bad. Like I said, I’m very not materialistic so it
was very hard a few months after 9/11 to watch MTV or something and watch everything
revert back to the Oscar and presentations and the red carpet and all that and I kind of
think it’s kind of sad. (interview, October 29, 2002)

Daniel explains that 9/11 did not affect him because he understands that terrorism has existed in
other parts of the world for a long time:

I’m ready for that, it doesn’t impact me. Americans haven’t been exposed to that yet. And
they still have no realize what could happen. I think they have no idea. It’s sad, it’s cruel,
maybe I’m too cynical in that…not because I don’t love human beings, I love human
beings, that’s why I’m too concerned with that. But I believe they have no idea what’s
happening within these four walls that is the United borders. (interview, September, 27,
2002)

Jason describes how he almost joined the military after 9/11:

I know that same day, I wanted to join the military and my dad stopped me. I was
about to join the army, I just went crazy. You know when New York fans are famous for
the most obnoxious people in…that’s just what we are. I mean I just wanted to join the
military and just do something. But after my dad convinced me of not joining the military because he was in the navy and stuff, he was like, mistake, don’t do it. What I did the usual, donate blood, volunteered a little bit. I did what I could. (interview, October 1, 2002)

Another related question regarding 9/11 that I asked was whether students had seen any anti-Arab or Muslim sentiment at FIU or Miami.

After 9/11, Sofy says how she became suspicious of people who wore the “tunic in their hair:” “I think it depends on the person up to what level you’re going to take. You always look at, I’m not going to say “those” people, because they are people, but you look at the student that is dressed like that or wearing that, and you’re like oh man, maybe, who knows if he’s going to do something” (interview, April 9, 2003).

Graciela similarly describes her suspicions: “I think the only thing that changed, and I was ashamed of myself, when I took a flight recently after 9/11, I was looking around to see if anyone looked suspicious. Well, of course, I was typecasting, but I got over it” (interview, October 26, 2002). Graciela also explains how 9/11 impacted the perceptions of Muslims among her own elementary students and her family:

No not on campus and in the community…well, when you watch the news and you hear a lot of the hate crimes that were going on regarding Muslims that was…and unfortunately, a lot of my students when it first happened when I was teaching last year, reacted negatively toward Muslims and why did they do this. So I talk a lot of class time to explain to them that it’s not everybody and to explain to them why even some of the ones who act in that way feel that they are justified in doing what they did. But the worse things I’ve heard are from friends and family things that people say that are out of line.
Inteviewer: How do you react when they make comments like that? Graciela: Well, my brother is probably the most venomous and vitriolic of all, but he’s always been like that of any given issue. So I just reiterate that you cannot make carpet assumptions about people…my favorite example is the time when I said well, imagine if it had been Cubans who had done that and everybody went around pointing the finger at Cubans, how would you feel then, you wouldn’t like it. I can’t think of any other way to make people realize how wrong it is to stereotype like that or even make it relevant to them what if it were you or your group. (interview, October 26, 2002)

Devyn describes an altercation that occurred between a Jewish and Muslim student group at FIU:

The only thing that went on was…we have a Jewish student organization who has a leader who is very…I don’t know what to call him cause I worked with him several times and he’s very persistent I guess…that’s a good word…and he they had some conflict with the Muslim Student Association for a while, but it was fixed and ironed out. (interview, October 25, 2002)

Xavier states how his Muslim friends felt after 9/11: “I have a couple of Muslim friends; they were scared. They started walking to school and now they’re walking to…they didn’t feel comfortable anymore because they felt that they were eyes on them and there were” (interview, February 25, 2003).

While there was no blatant anti-Arab and/or Muslim sentiment at FIU during my research, I did notice that the Muslim faith was not acknowledged during a specific event. During my observation and participation of the 9/11 commemoration event at FIU on September 11, 2002, religious speakers gave brief and somber invocations, prayers, and blessings. Those that participated were from the Catholic, Jewish, and Christian denominational faiths. However,
no Muslim cleric spoke. There were approximately 300 to 400 people watching the proceedings and most were wearing red, white, and blue colors and/or American flag t-shirts and pins. The commemoration took place in front of the GC and behind the fountain outside. The procession included Police officers from the surrounding communities, Army ROTC and Marine ROTC at FIU, and faculty and administrators.

**Political Influence and Involvement**

...the person I talk about it the most is my grandmother.

(Mario, Cuban American)

Colby et al (2003) state that political engagement is a crucial component of civic engagement (p. 18). They define political engagement as:

- working informally with others to solve a community problem; serving in neighborhood organizations, political interest groups, or political organizations; participating in public forums on social issues, discussing political issues with family and friends, and trying to influence others’ political opinions; working on a campaign for a candidate or issue;
- writing letters, signing petitions, and participating in other forms of political advocacy and lobbying; raising public awareness about social issues and mobilizing others to get involved or take action; attending rallies and protests and participating in boycotts; and of course voting in local or national elections” (pp. 18-19).

However, students in the Student Wingspread Declaration state that while “disillusioned with conventional politics,” they are still politically involved, but not how college student civic engagement researchers would like:

we are deeply involved in civic issues through non-traditional forms of engagement. We are neither apathetic or disengaged. In fact, what many perceive as disengagement may
actually be conscious choice; for example, a few of us at Wingspread actively avoided voting, not wanting to participate in what some of us perceive to be a deeply flawed electoral process. Others chose to vote solely on local referendums and initiatives. (p. 1).

Moreover, for these students an “alternative politics” constitutes concern for their communities and service as a solution to traditional politics and concerns for local and global issues (pp. 2-3).

Thus, one of the questions I asked both Cuban Americans and non-Hispanic Whites was whether or not they were politically engaged and compared them to Colby et al’s (2003) and the Student Wingspread Declaration’s (2002) conceptions of political engagement. Many Cuban Americans said that they discussed politics with their grandparents. For Mario, discussing politics is important:

At work we sometimes talk about it; at home, the person I talk about it the most is my grandmother. Interviewer: Do you think discussing politics is important? Mario: Yeah, cause a lot of people they just say this is like this cause it’s what I feel, but if you don’t discuss it, you don’t get to hear other people’s point of views, or you’re not aware, you might think you heard the candidate say this and this is what they mean and they mean this and you wouldn’t know unless you discuss it with someone. (interview, February 6, 2003)

Faye explains how her grandfather influences her political ideas:

...the way my grandfather he’s very politically oriented, he came from Cuba, he was in the Batista [the president of Cuba before being overthrown by Fidel Castro] movement and so he raised us with get involved in your politics, do this and do that. And my mom, raised us with values and beliefs; she never told me I was Republican and she said, that’s
great, that’s what I am too. I guess self-consciously it does intertwine what you do believe. (interview, March 3, 2003)

Jay describes his grandfather’s penchant for Cuban history and politics:

My grandfather, he is very much into history; he’s listens to the radio stations and constantly is talking about Cuban history and activism and Cuban American stuff. So I’m very aware of it. I just don’t participate in any of it. He’s also a member here of an organization that donates money, and organization that, I forgot the name of the organization right now, for political activism. (interview, April 4, 2003)

Grandparents are important for Cuban American college students because they pass down “a collective memory, vision or myth of the homeland, including its physical location, history and achievements” (Alvarez et al, 2001, p. 8).

Also, Cuban Americans’ party affiliations are not monolithic as many surveys, like Moreno and Hill (1998) in Chapter 2 suggest. Some were not strictly Republican in their views and most Republican affiliated students stated that they vote according to the issue and not necessarily the party line. Most students stated they voted in primarily national elections and sometimes in local elections. Devyn, a Republican, describes her party choice: “And I think within the last couple of years I’ve actually seen the differences between Democrats and Republicans...A lot of times I don’t agree with what Republicans say...but not enough to say I’m a liberal one. So I think the more you learn the more you come to an understanding where you lie” (interview, February 10, 2003) Judy describes how her political choices are sometimes chastised by others:

My parents are both Cuban...they pretty much left it up to me; they would vote Republican if they could. As a political science major taking classes in political parties,
and honestly, they’re pretty similar, so either way I think there’s good and bad people in both parties...I would call myself a moderate Republican cause I believe in some things Democrats say but in the end they are very close to each other, and it’s the truth. They intertwine in a lot of things. There are billions of parties out there but the two major ones are very similar in a lot of ways. I have friends that say, oh you’re a Democrat, oh my God, I’m like please, it doesn’t really matter; many times you’re fighting for the same things and you don’t even know it. You’re just standing on opposite sides of it. It’s just a coalition that you get enough people to vote in Congress, that’s all it is, it’s not even competition. (interview, February 10, 2003)

Jason rather not belong to any specific party: “I’m Republican because my parents told me to be...I really wouldn’t care for party affiliation, I rather look for who is qualified whether you are a Democrat or Republican or whoever you may be. That’s what I try to look for. Last time I voted for Bush” (interview, October 1, 2002). Sofy, however, is a die-hard Republican:

My political party affiliation is Republican. I feel that their beliefs and morals are the same as mine. Also, I feel that when it comes to certain situations and issues concerning the world and its people, the Republicans tend to act in a way that is most favorable to everyone. I have grown up with friends that their parents have been important congress people for the Republicans. The too, have had a significant role in making my view of the Republican party a positive one. (interview, April 9, 2003)

Ian chooses not to affiliate with any party because his views are complex: “I’m Independent if only because I just don’t want to conform to one side; I think in anything in life you have to pick and choose what you like, it’s very hard to say I’m this or I’m that even with religion or politics it’s just very hard to say I’m this” (interview, October 29, 2002). Graciela is a
registered Independent because she thinks that there should be a multiparty electoral system in the U.S.:

Well, for me, various reasons…I don’t entirely believe in the Republican ideology likewise with the Democratic ideology; I agree they both have good points and both have negative points. And, for me, it was also my way for saying I don’t approve of a two-party system, I think there should be multiple parties, so this is my way of saying buck the system. (interview, October 26, 2002)

All of the Cuban American students were active in national politics in the form of voting and or advocacy, and thus, would be classified as traditionally politically engaged using Colby et al’s (2003) conception.

**Student Civic Engagement:**
**News, Current Events, and Non-Hispanic Whites**

I don’t think I’m very partisan you know for my political issues.
(Paul, non-Hispanic White)

Some non-Hispanic Whites like some Cuban Americans are critical of news outlets. Anne describes how she chooses her news sources:

NPR. Financial Times and BBC news. Interviewer: Why those specifically? Anne:
They’re more reputable. They’re less prone to sway…Interviewer: What do you mean by sway? Ann: Well, it’s a publication; it’s very easy to sway people’s opinions based on how you write a story; certain inflections of words, wording, things like that…at least through reputable ones, you’re going to draw conclusions based on reality. (interview, October 1, 2002)

Greg explains why he enjoys watching the BBC (British Broadcasting Company):
I read the Miami Herald everyday. That’s my main source for news. I used to listen to
NPR more when it’s not football season now I listen to A.M. talk radio.
And when football season over, I’ll go back to listening to NPR a little more often. But I
haven’t had cable t.v. for 6 months and I find myself watching BBC news and other
international news and it’s very interesting their takes on some things. And I don’t want
to say whether their right or we’re wrong, but it’s nice…like I try and provide the other
point of view for some other people, now I have the other point of view. (interview,
October 26, 2002)

Rico similarly says he likes watching *BBC*, *Canadian television*, and *Deutsche Welle* (the
international German television news station) because they are “broader” focused than “the
American stations” which “are very narrow” (interview, April 4, 2003). By the time Paul gets
home late at night, all he has time to watch is *Larry King Live* (interview, October 2, 2002).

Non-Hispanic Whites were aware of a variety of issues, and like Cuban Americans, they
were aware of the North Korea and Iraq conflicts. Unlike Cuban Americans, however, non-
Hispanic Whites did not mention Cuba when asked about which current events they were aware
of.

After September 11, 2001, John brings up current events frequently in conversation. One
of these issues he describes is (at the time of this study) the impending war with Iraq:

I’m questioning the war a lot now too. Interviewer: The Iraq conflict? John: That
and…Interviewer: Just war in general? John: I asked one of these…one man’s terrorist is
one man’s freedom fighter…and so I’m thinking a lot more of human rights now and
how our standard of living and how our foreign politics affects other people’s human
rights and other people’s standard of living. You know when we go in and use…and drop
leaflets with cross hairs over people, and calling people terrorist that’s pretty terrifying; or a B-52 in the air…that’s pretty terrifying…why aren’t we terrorists? I question war in politics a lot more now; definitely taken a renewed interest in that. (interview, February 10, 2003)

Danielle nevertheless supports both the war against Iraq and on terror:

I hate that man…Saddam Hussein…Interviewer: What do you think about North Korea? Danielle: That’s my problem; I think that Bush should be more worried about the nuclear weapons North Korea…I think after…this is going to be a long process…Iraq, then Iran…Iraq, then North Korea. Interviewer: What do you think about the war on terror? Danielle: Well, I mean I’m totally for it…I support Bush…it’s such a big job…they’re working on it so I’m not worried…Interviewer: Any other global conflicts that you’re aware of that you look into frequently? Danielle: Uh, well, a lot here maybe not globally…Israel because of my parents. (interview, April 4, 2003)

Some students also stated that when they heard about news that made them passionate, they would write letters to the editor, call a radio station, etc. Anne, for instance, frequently writes letters about the environment to her congressional representatives: “So things along those lines things that have to do with issues of being unfair or environmental issues that are going to [degrade] the planet are issues I usually feel passionate about” (interview, October 1, 2002). Paul and many other students including the Spring 2003 Student Honors Mentor Group started a letter writing campaign to save the Bright Futures Scholarship in the state of Florida:

We’re…writing letters…I’ve been manning tables here, other people are writing letters…Mainly the reason I don’t take action is we don’t have time. Interviewer: And what’s the issue on Bright Futures Scholarship? Well, to increase classroom sizes in
lower education, they’re thinking about our education fund and including that is Bright Futures Scholarship which is a scholarship provided to all Florida residents who make over a 3.0. And there’s such a huge amount of students on this scholarship, it doesn’t make sense to be to hurt one to benefit the other. As a college student I…believe that we need this…more. (interview, February 10, 2003)

Greg believes that the opinion section of the newspaper is the most important because it is representative of the local community:

I have written letters to the Herald on numerous occasions, and had about half of them published so I know they publish them for real. Actually, when I read the paper, that’s my favorite part of the paper, is the opinion section, the back of section B, the local…because to me those are the people in my community, that’s the real people’s voices not these other voices like I said that don’t really affect my life these politicians and what not. (interview, October 26, 2002)

In the Spring semester of 2003 at FIU, one of the groups that I observed was the Student Honors Mentor Group. Dr. Dalrymple was the staff facilitator. A total of 7 students were part of the initial group during the semester and they included students from different majors, ages, and ethnicities including two Cuban Americans and three non-Hispanic Whites. Melissa, who was part of the Fall 2002 semester cohort “The Miami Coalition on Poverty,” returned again to participate in the Spring cohort. At the outset of the semester, the Group’s main goal was to decide which social policy issue to work on. They finally decided to work on the Bright Futures Scholarship that Paul mentioned above which I also explained above was a point of conflict for me. But, throughout the process, students hard a very hard time deciding on which social issue to work on.
On February 24, 2003, the Spring Student Honors Mentor Group had its 5th meeting and they still had not decided on which issue to work on. Throughout these meetings, Dr. Dalrymple would open and end the discussions by doing an activity about democracy and civic engagement. On this day, she opened up the discussion focusing on the importance of consensus democracy and decision-making (personal notes, February 24, 2003). For example, Dr. Dalrymple handed out a sheet titled “Social change model of leadership development.” The sheet then articulates how research on effective leadership “emphasizes collective action and shared power rather than ‘command and control.’” After having the students read the rest of the sheet, she handed out a “Self-Awareness Guide” that asked the following: “1) List five words that describe you, 2) What did you dream of becoming when you were a child and why?, 3) List three things you are passionate about, 4) What are the top three attributes you look for in your friends?, and 5) What are your strengths?” Dr. Dalrymple then asked all the students to share their answers with each other and focus on similar themes and commonalities. By the end of the meeting, students had finally decided on a topic.

Students, not the facilitator of the Mentor Groups, agreed on which social issue to focus on. Students reviewed the list of choices they had proffered in earlier meetings: immigration rights, Miami-Dade school board policies, FIU parking fee and shuttle bus, domestic animal abuse, recycling, the Florida Comprehensive Aptitude Test (FCAT), poverty and food, blood drive, housing prices in Miami, and transportation services in Miami (personal notes, February 24, 2003).

By the middle of the meeting, Dr. Dalrymple emphasized that they had to make a joint decision before the end of the meeting since it was already the second month of the semester. I think the most fascinating issue during my observation of this Mentor Group was the difficulty
they had in making a consensus decision. By the end of the semester there were only 3 of 7 students stayed and saw the project through. All students wanted to work on their stated ideas and all students had a hard time making a choice. While observing the class go through the process, there were long periods of silence and a sense of frustration coming from the students. While some students mentioned some issues, others bristled at the ideas or did not say anything at all. It felt that students were uncomfortable agreeing with each other. As meetings progressed throughout the semesters, many students stopped attending. Perhaps the students’ expectations were that the instructor would organize and delineate a topic to work on. It could also be that students were dead set on their specific topics because they strongly believed in them.

Nevertheless, it is clear that consensus building among the students that left was difficult. Student government leaders earlier had stated that they were “recycled” because other students did not want to be part of the student leadership base at FIU. In this Student Honors Mentor Group, the majority of students could not agree and could not together lead a joint effort. Nevertheless, Dr. Dalrymple did a superb job facilitating students away from majority democratic decision-making and instead, made students truly own their decisions. The Mentor Group decided to work on the Bright Futures Scholarship project.

The result of the Mentor Group work on the Bright Futures Scholarship project was an information and a letter writing campaign. On April 14, 2003, the Mentor Group gathered in the GC in front of the cashier’s office and perpendicular to the DJ square where there was loud music (personal notes). The Mentor Group set up two computers where students could easily log on and sign the petition to save the Bright Futures Scholarship in Florida. On top of the table was a big poster showing the proposed budget cuts for the Scholarship program. The Mentor Group students would walk around the GC and hand out small flyers indicating how the Florida
legislature was considering eliminating the Scholarship program. They then would lead students to the computer and had them fill out the petition. They started at 11:30 a.m. and finished at 5:00 p.m. However, they ended up with only a few students signing the petition letter. I observed many students walk by and when approached by members of the Student Honors Group to sign the petition, they would say they were busy, going to class, or that they did not have time.

On April 21, 2003, the Mentor Group had their “wrap-up” meeting. Only three students out of seven that started the project were left. One of the students stated that the project “started way too late.” Another student expected the process to have “clearer answers and divisions.” Another student noted that many students left the project perhaps because they “disagreed” with the topic. Dr. Dalrymple then asked the students, “What kept you three going?” One student stated that they wanted to be part of “more leadership and to see the process.” One of the other students commented that she “wanted to see the project completed and to help others.” Similarly, another student said they “wanted to see the project finished” since they had “invested time.” The Bright Futures Scholarship has not been eliminated, as of yet.

9/11/01

I watched more news...and paid attention a little bit more.
(Eva, non-Hispanic White)

Like Cuban Americans, non-Hispanic Whites donated blood after 9/11. Some also exhibited forms of patriotism.

Paul describes how before 9/11 he was he was already patriotic because he was doing a bike ride across America for charity: “I would probably say it’s hard to tell…yes, but also because what I did this summer, that increased my patriotism. Riding bike across America, I mean everything we did was patriotic. You know we were considered heroes. Yes, I can’t say
it’s all because of September 11 it’s a lot because of the bike riding…” (interview, October 2, 2002).

John wears a flag on his tie to gauge pre- and post-9/11 reactions from other students:

Sort of…I always wear, whenever I put on my suit, especially after I just got a brand new American flag tie, which I wear with my suit, now I have sort of a loud American flag tie. And I wear it every time I’m suited up. The main thing is that I always bring it up in conversation. It’s not really a visual symbol that I’m always wearing, but I’m always bringing it up in conversation cause I’m intrigued by the way people were the day before what did they did September 10 and how they woke up September 11 and how they reacted that day. (interview, February 10, 2003)

Danielle thought that waving the flag after 9/11 was “hypocritical” because “all of a sudden everyone is waving flags” (interview, April 4, 2003). Eva, one of the few students unable to be involved in activities at FIU states that 9/11 helped her because it made her “more interested in what was going on in the world;” eventually, she “watched more news” (interview, October 1, 2002).

Victoria was critical of the post-9/11 activities going on at FIU:

I felt the reaction and the activities that were being brought forth were ignorant I guess. They were done without true knowledge of what was really going on. And I did not feel I should support that. Interviewer: Give me an example. Victoria: Well, I mean I understand why people did it, like the lighting of the candles and all that stuff. Like I understand that people’s lives were lost and we should remember that most definitely, it was terrible. But I feel that there was more than needed to be read into it rather than just someone coming and killing people and I felt that that was lost because of the death and
the reflection of it. Interviewer: So what would you have added? Victoria: Empathy towards other, the other…understanding, trying to understand the others actions…rather than only being concerned about what’s in our own back yard. (interview, November 10, 2002)

Non-Hispanic Whites reactions to anti-Arab and/or Muslim sentiment were remarkably different than some of the “suspicious” Cuban American comments. Greg describes how his views changed after 9/11 regarding Muslims: “My views changed more sympathetically; I have friends that are Islamic. I just felt right away that it’s such an injustice the way people jump to conclusions that I felt to obligated to take the other extreme and try to work people back to their senses” (interview, October 26, 2002).

John explains how 9/11 focuses attention on Muslim negative stereotypes:

I don’t think they get the same sympathy as would the Jewish student population here; people don’t see the hunger and the starvation as much as they see the killing the suicide bombing…people are quick to talk about a suicide bombing than an Israeli invasion of Ramallah. I think it’s affected I think the Muslim Student Association the Muslims on campus, they’re less likely to talk about them, they seem more quiet and more kept to themselves, you really need to pry a little bit to find out what’s going on with them. (interview, February 10, 2003)

**Political Influence and Involvement**

I only really get active in things that immediately affect me.

Greg, non-Hispanic White

Most non-Hispanic Whites stated that they had political discussions mainly with the people they were dating and with friends. Even though Melissa is not civically engaged at FIU, she believes political discussions are important:
I have major political discussions with my roommate, brother, and mom since feel closer to them. Interviewer: Do you think it’s important? Melissa: Yes. You get different opinions and views and someone could perhaps change your mind on an issue.

Interviewer: What issues do you discuss? Education for sure, religion, death penalty, abortion, these are the most important for me. (interview, April 11, 2003)

Greg details how he engages in politics with his friend:

I speak politics on some occasions not too often. But every time I get together with my friend who’s a Fort Lauderdale policeman, our conversations revolve around politics exclusively. I don’t care where we’ll start, we’ll be at a football game, we’ll start talking about politics after that. And one of the main reasons is, he’s very one-sided towards whatever he believes; he’ll make a blanket statement anybody. He tried to continuously label me and I’m not even sure what these labels mean. He can call me a liberal, but I’ve never looked at what liberalist view are and I feel I’m flip-flopping everywhere and he keeps trying to nail people down to one thing, which is the one thing that I hate people do. So we go at it pretty good in a friendly way on every meeting. (interview, October 26, 2002)

Melissa thinks it is important to discuss politics because “you get different opinions and views and someone could perhaps change your mind on an issue” (interview, April 11, 2003)

Like Cuban Americans, most non-Hispanic Whites are traditionally politically engaged (Colby et al, 2003, p. 19) because they vote in national and local elections and considered the voting debacle of 2000 and the local September 10, 2002 voting day debacle a failure that needed to be fixed immediately. During local elections in Miami on September 10, 2002, issues of chads, butterfly ballots, and voter confusion once again dominated the Miami headlines. Non-
Hispanic Whites were also not monolithic, party-line voters. For example, depending on the issue, Danielle sometimes votes Republican or Democrat:

> I have views on both sides. In terms of education, social services, and women's rights, I am definitely a Democrat. However, I am Republican in the ways of justice. I am very, very, very pro-death penalty. I want the harshest punishments for all criminals. I think lethal injection is too lax and which we still practiced the hanging of people in town square. I am pro-military, and agree completely in going to war with Iraq. (interview, April 4, 2003)

Paul votes for both Republicans and Democrats depending on the issues:

> To be completely honest with you, I’m not even totally confident about that. I don’t think I’m very partisan you know for my political…issues…I support a Republican governor, I’ve supported a Democratic person for U.S. Congress, I usually judge them…A lot of my decisions are based on how they react to students. I voted for the governor predominantly because I’ve met him and he shows concerns for student issues, etc., etc., same as the other person I’m supporting for Congress. (interview, February 10, 2003)

Victoria also states she votes on the issues: “No, I’m Democratic cause I don’t want it to happen again, but I don’t like to be pigeon holed. So you vote on the issues not necessarily on the people? V: Yes, I vote for the lesser of the evils…because I think Republicans and Democrats are pretty similar if you look at them” (interview, November 20, 2002). Gary, however, is a registered Independent: “I voted for Nader more to legitimize the party to give it some recognition than for any of the beliefs of any of the politicians. But I didn’t register as a Republican or Democrat; not only because I don’t agree with their views exclusively, but even
the people in those parties don’t always uphold the same views…it’s just a way of keeping my freedom (interview, October 26, 2002).
Chapter Six

Conclusions:

Civic Engagement at FIU

In this chapter, FIU’s civic engagement practices are compared with successful civic engagement practices at other colleges and universities. Also, recommendations are proffered regarding FIU’s civic engagement practices and what students there actually do. Additionally, recommendations for future research needed within college student civic engagement research and policy are given.

Institutional Civic Engagement:
FIU Programs and Centers

Institutional civic engagement practices at FIU when compared to Colby et al’s (2003), Meeropol et al’s (2003), the AAHE’s (1998) studies and the Student Declaration (2002) are inconsistent and concentrated in specific locations. For example, the College of Business and the Honors College are the only colleges that make civic engagement part of the curriculum, a practice that the above studies found in civically committed institutions. Funding for these practices differed considerably between each civic engagement program. Another issue that Colby et al (2003) and the Student Declaration (2002) agree on is that college/university presidents need to be committed to civic engagement on campus for such activities to work at all. For financial or other reasons, the president of FIU is not willing to sign up with *Campus Compact*, the national organization that promotes civic engagement on colleges and universities in the U.S. Finally, the *Civic Engagement Implementation Task Force’s* recommendations do not include student opinions about civic engagement activities are not included.
Successful and Non-Successful Civic Engagement Practices at FIU and Recommendations

One of the most successful civic engagement practices I observed at FIU was students themselves setting up information tables about their many activities in the GC (the student union at the time) during the first few weeks of class each semester. According to the “recycled leaders,” “snowball effects,” or student peer networks that lead to other types of civic engagement practices at FIU were essential in giving them the opportunity to commit and remain committed to different and varied civic engagement practices. Other civic engagement practices were located in the Honors College and the College of Business. However, the Honors College offers opportunities for civic engagement, but no comprehensive and/or compulsory civic engagement curriculum. On the other hand, the College of Business has a compulsory civic engagement curriculum. According to Dr. Hogner in the College of Business, students at first become apprehensive about civic engagement, but afterwards enjoy the different civic projects they must do in both of the colleges. When it comes to opportunities for civic leaders, the Center for Civic Responsibility and Leadership offers several options for students and clubs regarding civic engagement including tailor-made workshops, but these are not compulsory. Additionally, the Volunteer Action Center serves as the central organizing unit for service-learning for all students, staff, and faculty. Nevertheless, students, staff, and faculty volunteer to either participate in or provide service-learning opportunities.

After September 11, 2001, there was a momentum by students to become civically engaged by becoming more involved in service-learning and community projects. Students, faculty, and administrators after 9/11 incorporated several awareness sessions geared towards examining the events of 9/11 as well as the Islamic world. While I was at FIU, I saw one 9/11
symposium and memorial, and heard from one of my interviewees about a discussion about Muslims held by FIU Muslim students that involved many students at FIU. These kind of current events information awareness activities involve students because according to my interviews, students want to be informed about their surroundings and the world.

One unsuccessful practice which is now being addressed in the recent recommendations by the Civic Engagement Implementation Task Force is the lack of civic engagement commitment by the entire university through its funding practices and curricular programming. According to Colby et al (2003), Meeropol et al (2003), the AAHE (1998), and the Student Declaration (2002), civically successful and committed colleges and universities include those that establish long-last funding resources and college-wide curricular incorporation of civic engagement practices such as service-learning. For example, the Center for Civic Responsibility and Leadership is funded on a yearly basis through Student Government and thus, funding could change dramatically or be cut altogether.

Because of a lack of university-wide commitment to civic engagement at FIU, there seems to be a lack of coordination between current student activities and needs, administrative units such as VAC, and faculty. There also appears to be little coordination between these groups regarding data collection. Each of these groups individually incorporate surveys and other data collection methods to identify if their civic engagement activities are successful or not. However, these groups do not share this information which would be important in order to identify similarities, differences, and problems regarding successful civic engagement practices at FIU.

Finally, the Civic Engagement Implementation Task Force does not address students or students’ civic engagement needs. Several students stated that FIU does not offer specific activities based on their needs and desires. The Task Force needs to do a survey of all FIU
students with follow-up, individual interviews (to disaggregate the data) to identify what their civic engagement needs are. According to the Student Declaration (2002) researchers, faculty, and administrators tend to ignore students when it comes to civic activities. Additionally, according to this study, the process of how students become civically engaged in the first place is important. Moreover, identifying why students do not participate is just as important. Without knowing how students become civically engaged or why they do not, faculty, staff, and others can provide a plethora of activities and still see low enrollment in such activities.

**Future College Student Civic Engagement Research and Policy Needed**

When compared to Colby et al (2003), Meeropol et al (2003), and the AAHE study (1998), and the Student Declaration (2002), FIU needs to make a university-wide commitment to civic engagement exemplified through: 1) stating in their mission that they are committed to civic engagement and acting on that mission, 2) civic engagement programming across the curriculum, 3) faculty involvement with civic engagement teaching and learning, 4) administrative leadership in civic engagement, 5) adequate funding for civic engagement programming, 6) involvement with the surrounding community, and 7) student involvement in civic engagement programming. While FIU has several two centers that focus on civic engagement, these are strictly voluntary. Civic engagement at FIU is only compulsory in two of its colleges. Thus, when compared to other colleges and universities in the U.S., according to the aforementioned studies on successful civic engagement practices, FIU’s practices are inconsistent and concentrated.

Thus, when it comes to the college student civic engagement literature, several recommendations are proffered. First, because the democratic literature states the importance of political and non-political involvement and because of the higher education literature evidence of
short- and long-term effects of civic engagement which includes political and non-political engagement such as voluntary, community, etc., quantitative and qualitative studies on college student civic engagement should not define civic engagement solely in limited terms such as political engagement. According to this dissertation study, both ethnic groups identified several non-political activities that constituted civic engagement practices that focused on helping their communities and society in general. Second, college student civic engagement researchers and policy and practice centers like Campus Compact need to examine how and why college students civically participate; the civic engagement literature and Campus Compact currently focuses on the quantity of political and non-political activities college students participate instead of determining the actual processes that will help college students commit to long-term civic activities. According to this dissertation study, “snowball effects” are tantamount to long-term civic engagement while in college for FIU students. Thus, civic engagement researchers and policy institutions need to focus on how to get college students civically engaged in the first place. Also, while institutional funding is needed to develop and maintain basic civic engagement programming such as service-learning, volunteer centers, etc., funding to strengthen student peer networks is just as important. At FIU, most students stated that they participated in several and long-term civic engagement activities because they established bonds with other students through an initial civic engagement activity. Therefore, students should be given funding for outreach to other students for civic engagement information, mentoring, connecting, etc. Thirdly, since this is an ethnographic, dissertation study, it is limited by time and place and thus, civic engagement researchers and policy institutions need to focus their studies, programming, and funding according to each college’s institutional characteristics based on student population, location, and organizational as well as ethnic cultural contexts. Fourthly,
college student civic engagement research focuses exclusively on first-year and traditional college students. Most of the students I interviewed at FIU were non-traditional, non-residential students who delineated that work and other time commitments affected their ability to civically engage. Nevertheless, most of these students worked either part- or full-time. Finally, FIU is also unique university because it is primarily an urban, Hispanic Serving Institution with an overwhelmingly commuter and older student population. Even though FIU’s civic engagement practices are inconsistent and concentrated, many of these students at FIU are committed to civic engagement. Moreover, Stepick et al (2003) argue that Miami is unique because up until the 1980s, non-Hispanic Whites held most of the political power over the majority Hispanic population (p.144). After the 1980s, however, Stepick et al argue that non-Hispanic Whites started a process of “reverse acculturation” in which they started sharing power with Miami Cubans because they saw their ties with Latin America as an economic opportunity (p.144). Subsequently, both Hispanics and non-Hispanic Whites in Miami are undergoing a state of “transculturation” where both ethnic groups adapt to each other “rather than degenerate[e] into “impenetrable, culturally antagonistic ethic enclaves” (p.144). The outcome then would be a “hybridity” of cultures (p.144). In this study, both Cuban Americans and non-Hispanic Whites participated in similar civic engagement activities. Both ethnic groups stated that there were no Cuban American or non-Hispanic White civic engagement enclaves at FIU and during my observations, I saw none either. Thus, it could be that Stepick et al’s theory of transculturation and hybridity has manifested itself regarding Cuban American and non-Hispanic White students at FIU.
References


http://www.fiu.edu/~morenod/scholar/young.htm


APPENDIX A

Suggested Elements in an Ethnographic Interview

Adopted from Spradley

I. Greetings
II. Giving ethnographic explanations
   a. Giving project explanation
   b. Giving question explanations
   c. Giving recorded explanations
   d. Giving native language explanations
   e. Giving interview explanations
III. Asking ethnographic questions
   a. Asking descriptive questions
   b. Asking structural questions
   c. Asking contrast questions
IV. Assymetrical turn taking
V. Expressing interest
VI. Expressing cultural ignorance
VII. Repeating
VIII. Restating informant’s terms
IX. Incorporating informant’s terms
X. Creating hypothetical situations
XI. Asking friendly questions
XII. Farewells
APPENDIX B

Unstructured and Semistructured Questions for Individual,
Evaluation Pilot Study Interviews: Interview Protocol to Determine How
a University Civically Engages College Students Modeled after
Spradley (1979), Creswell (1998), and Colby et al’s Research (2000)

Interview Protocol

Project: Students’ Personal Experiences with University Dis/Engagement

Time of Interview:

Date:

Place:

Interviewer:

Interviewee:

Position of interviewee:

I. Greetings

II. Ethnographic explanations
   1. Project explanation
   2. Question explanation (throughout interview as needed)
   3. Recorded explanations (throughout interview as needed)
   4. Native language explanations (throughout interview as needed)
   5. Interview explanations (throughout interview as needed)

III. Ethnographic questions
   A. Unstructured questions
2. Unstructured descriptive questions
   a. What kind of civic (explain civic) issues do you learn about in your classes?
   b. Are diversity and multicultural issues taught throughout FIU courses?

3. Unstructured structural questions
   a. What kind of extracurricular activities do you participate in at FIU?

4. Unstructured contrast questions
   a. Does FIU focus more on teaching or learning?

B. Semistructured questions
1. Semistructured descriptive questions
   a. What kind of civic issues are you involved in at FIU?
   b. What do you think of diversity and multicultural issues?

2. Semistructured structural questions
   a. What kinds of organizational activities are popular at FIU?
   b. Which leadership and/or volunteer programs are popular at FIU?

3. Semistructured contrast questions
   a. Do you enjoy sports or clubs more?
   b. Why do you participate in these activities instead of others (mention specific ones)?
   c. Do your classes require you to volunteer?

IV. Throughout Interview

1. Assymetrical turn taking
2. Expressing interest

3. Expressing cultural ignorance

4. Repeating

5. Restating interviewee’s terms

6. Incorporating interviewee’s terms

7. Creating hypothetical situations

8. Asking friendly questions

V. Farewells
APPENDIX C


Interview Protocol

Project: Students’ Personal Experiences with University Dis/Engagement

Time of Interview:

Date:

Place:

Interviewer:

Interviewee:

Position of interviewee:

I. Greetings

II. Ethnographic explanations
   a. Project explanation
   b. Question explanation (throughout interview as needed)
   c. Recorded explanations (throughout interview as needed)
   d. Native language explanations (throughout interview as needed)
   e. Interview explanations (throughout interview as needed)

III. Ethnographic questions
A. Unstructured questions

1. Unstructured descriptive questions
   a. What kind of civic (explain civic) issues do all of you learn about in your classes?

   ii. Are diversity and multicultural issues taught throughout FIU courses?

b. Unstructured structural questions
   i. What kind of extracurricular activities do you participate in at FIU?

c. Unstructured contrast questions
   i. Does FIU focus more on teaching or learning?

B. Semistructured questions

IV. Semistructured descriptive questions

   a. What kind of civic issues are you involved in at FIU?

   i. What do you think of diversity and multicultural issues?

V. Semistructured structural questions

   a. What kinds of organizational activities are popular for Cuban-Americans and non-Hispanic Whites at FIU?

   b. Which leadership and/or volunteer programs are popular at FIU?

VI. Semistructured contrast questions

   a. Do you enjoy sports or clubs more?

   b. Why do you participate in these activities instead of others (mention specific ones)? Do Cuban-American or non-Hispanic Whites participate in activities according to their ethnicity?

   c. Do your classes require you to volunteer?

VII. Throughout Interview
1. Assymetrical turn taking

2. Expressing interest

3. Expressing cultural ignorance

4. Repeating

5. Restating interviewee’s terms

6. Incorporating interviewee’s terms

7. Creating hypothetical situations

8. Asking friendly questions

V. Farewells
APPENDIX D

Unstructured and Semistructured Questions for Administrative and Faculty Interviews: Interview Protocol to Determine How a University Civically Engages College Students Modeled after Spradley (1979), Creswell (1998), and Colby et al’s Research (2000), and Student Responses

Time of Interview:
Date:
Place:
Interviewer:
Interviewee:
Position of interviewee:

I. Greetings

II. Ethnographic explanations
   a. Project explanation
   b. Question explanation (throughout interview as needed)
   c. Recorded explanations (throughout interview as needed)
   d. Native language explanations (throughout interview as needed)
   e. Interview explanations (throughout interview as needed)

III. Ethnographic questions
   A. Unstructured questions
      I. Unstructured descriptive questions
         a. Which college and department do you work for? What is your position here?
How long have been in this position? Have you held a different position at FIU?

How long? How long at FIU? How long has the department been here at FIU?

With which professional associations are you affiliated? Do you do related work outside FIU?

b. What is the mission of your college/department? Who funds/supports this office? How many faculty members are there? How many support staff?

c. How does this college/department inform students of the programs it offers?

How does it recruit students? Do you actively recruit students?

d. What programs does this office offer to the student body? Are these programs tailored to a specific type of student? Why?

Do you incorporate civic engagement activities in your classes such as service-learning or other? Does your college/department require you to? Why do you incorporate it/do not incorporate it? How long have you incorporated them?

f. What do students think of civic engagement/service learning? Do students in your program/classes work? How many hours?

2. Unstructured structural questions

a. What kind of students participate in these programs?

b. Are they mainly commuters or residential students?

c. Are these students from different backgrounds/ethnicities? Or, are they predominantly Hispanic/Latina/o?

d. What kind of parental/socioeconomic background do these students come from?

e. Are most of the students that participate in these programs already part of other
organizations on campus? If so, which ones?

f. Do you provide service learning activities for your students?

3. Unstructured contrast questions

a. Does the college/department track who participates in its programs? If so, how; if not why not?

b. Does the university belong to any civic engagement organizations like Campus Compact? If yes, which ones; if not, why not?

c. Do you think that students that participate in your programs overall graduate, drop out, stop out, or other?

B. Semistructured questions

1. Semistructured descriptive questions

a. Do you think FIU is doing a good job supporting your college/department?

b. What is a distinctive characteristic of this college/department as opposed to other offices at FIU?

c. How aware of this office and its programs are FIU faculty, administration, staff, students, and others?

d. When it comes to retention, attrition, recruitment matters, is this office consulted by other units at FIU or does it work with other units at FIU?

2. Semistructured structural questions

a. Did September 11, 2001 increase/decrease the number of students that participate in your program?

b. Did the student population changer after 9/11?

c. Did you office deal with the 9/11 subject?
d. What do students think about Iraq/Cuba?

e. Does your office deal with diversity/multicultural issues?

3. Semistructured contrast questions

a. Why do students participate in your programs?

b. Do they have specific goals or are they trying out activities on campus?

c. If you had more money or an unlimited budget, would you change or add programs here?
APPENDIX E

Observational Protocol for Specific Individual and/or Group Activities to Determine How a Universities Civically Engages College Students adapted from Creswell (1998)

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Length of Activity:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Descriptive Notes</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Time of Activity:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actors:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Type of Activity:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SKETCH OF ...
CURRICULUM VITAE

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