

## **2005 HALE Dissertation Abstracts**

### **WORK AND LIFE BALANCE: A STUDY OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE OCCUPATIONAL DEANS**

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Committee Chair: Marilyn J. Amey

Work/life is a topic that increasingly appears in literature and conversation in our society today. As people work longer hours and work harder to do more with less in order to beat competition to the goal, it becomes more difficult for workers to manage both their work lives and their personal lives.

This study investigated work/life issues faced by community college occupational deans. The goal of the study was to understand how occupational deans in a Midwestern state manage both their work and personal lives. In addition, the study revealed strategies, support structures, and coping mechanisms used as well as provided insight into the nature of the responsibilities of occupational deans and the multiple roles they play both at and away from work.

### **SUCCESS IN GRADUATE SCHOOL: HOW EXEMPLARY ADVISORS GUIDE THEIR DOCTORAL ADVISEES**

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Doctoral advisors play a critical role in guiding their doctoral advisees. Previous research has identified the many influences that advisors have in the professional development and success of their doctoral advisees. However, virtually no studies have been conducted in an effort to look at advising from the perspective of the advisor. The purpose of this study was to investigate how exemplary advisors (those who have a good track record for graduating their advisees) successfully guide their doctoral advisees through the doctoral degree process. Four bodies of literature informed this study: (1) Advising/mentoring literature laid the foundation for understanding the multiple ways that faculty impact student success; (2) The doctoral student socialization literature clearly identified ways in which advisors can help their advisees be successful; (3) The faculty workload literature provided a framework for understanding the tensions that may exist between various faculty responsibilities; (4) The literature on academic disciplines suggested ways to categorize the disciplines/professions being studied.

Twenty-five advisors from education, social sciences, natural sciences, and the humanities participated in this qualitative study. Findings from this study suggest that

exemplary advisors guide their doctoral advisees through the doctoral degree process in four ways. First, they develop a partnership with their advisees. This partnership allows both the advisor and the advisee to be mutually responsible for the success of the relationship. Second, they employ an ethic of care. Their ability to care about advisees provides a basis from which all other aspects of the relationship can be built and sustained. Third, they make advising a "personal practice." That is, advising is not a perfunctory activity, but rather a personally engaging one through which advisors are interested in leaving their thumbprints on their advisees and consequently on their professions. Fourth, they are reflective practitioners. Being reflective in their advising practices serves as a barometer through which they can continuously reflect on and learn how to be even better advisors.

The study concludes with implications for doctoral students, faculty advisors, department chairs, and graduate deans, as well as recommendations for future research.

## **THE NURSING CLASSROOM CLIMATE: COOLER FOR TRADITIONAL-AGE STUDENTS WHO ARE MALE**

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Committee Chair: Kristen Renn

The purpose of this study was to describe the nursing classroom climate and the perceptions and experiences of traditional-age student nurses who are male as they relate to the nursing classroom. A qualitative research procedure in the form of a case study was used to answer the descriptive research questions: (a) What is the classroom climate for traditional-age students who are male? (b) If an inequitable or sex-biased classroom environment is found to exist for traditional-age student nurses who are male, what are the nursing faculty behaviors that contributed to this environment? (c) If an inequitable or sex-biased classroom environment is found to exist for traditional-age student nurses who are male, what are the student behaviors that contributed to this environment?

A purposeful sample included eight traditional-age nursing students, four who were male and four who were female. I interviewed these eight students to obtain their perceptions and experiences. Five themes emerged from the analysis of the data: faculty characteristics and behaviors, the students' learning experiences, other students' characteristics and behaviors, additional inside classroom factors, and outside classroom factors. Additional findings from interviews with faculty, classroom observations, and a review of the textbooks were added to provide breadth and depth to these descriptions. Findings from this study support a nursing classroom climate that is cool to traditional-age male students and warm to traditional-age female students. Coolness in the classroom for men was caused by unsupportive faculty behaviors and characteristics, unsupportive male learning experiences, and additional inside classroom factors. There were also unsupportive factors described outside the classroom that contributed indirectly to an uncomfortable experience for the male students.

The findings of this study of differential treatment to men in nursing classrooms may result in a feeling of uneasiness, reduced student motivation and participation, and perhaps a change of major or withdrawal from the program by male students. Thus, nurse educators need to take measures to identify and eliminate bias from their classrooms.

**CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT AND INTERCOLLEGIATE  
ATHLETICS: AN ANALYSIS OF THE PERCEPTIONS, ROLES,  
VALUES AND BEHAVIORS OF COLLEGIATE COACHES,  
ATHLETIC DIRECTORS, AND PRESIDENTS AS RELATED TO  
STUDENT-ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT**

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Committee Chair: James Fairweather

One of the primary reasons for maintaining collegiate athletics hundreds of campuses is because "athletics builds character." The primary purpose for conducting this study was to explore and assess the perceptions held by head coaches, athletic directors and presidents regarding their roles and responsibilities as related to student-athlete character development. In particular, the research examines perceptions concerning individual impact upon the development of character by student-athletes. Two Division I and two Division III NCAA schools were selected in order to compare and contrast "big time" Division I athletics to the Division III "love of the game" perception. Traditional revenue sports of football and men's basketball were targeted with the addition of four non-revenue sports. Interviews were conducted for this qualitative research and the information each institution was. Topic areas for this study were character development, leadership, environment, socialization, and mission. Institutional case studies were developed with results of the interviews and a within institution and between divisional level analysis was conducted. Assessment of character development found that most respondents stated that athletic participation does build character and others believed that there was potential for athletics to build character. However, most participants could identify only one of the three key elements necessary for building character. Each institution lacked agreement in definitions of "character." Examination of external factors displayed that most institutions lacked consensus in articulation of the institutional and athletic mission. Other points of interest were found as well. Overall, each institution lacked internal consensus on a variety of topics. This research provides greater insight about the role and relationship between those most intimately involved with intercollegiate athletics and student-athletes, and how they directly or indirectly impact student-athlete character development. This study also takes into consideration the external environmental factors presented by both the institution and the athletic department, and the potential influence of such factors on perceptions and behaviors.

# **THE PROCESS OF ETHNIC IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT OF THE LATINA 1.5 GENERATION OF FOREIGN-BORN IMMIGRANT COLLEGE STUDENTS**

*Sonia Jacqueline Garcia*

Committee Chair: Kristen Renn

The purpose of this research study was to examine the identity and acculturation experiences of the Latina 1.5 generation of foreign-born immigrant college students. This study explored the acculturation process of these college women and how their experiences influenced their identity development. This research study had two primary purposes. The first purpose was to understand the process by which Latina 1.5 generation immigrant college women cope, customize, and adapt their sense of self to acculturate to the U.S. culture, society, and academe. The second purpose was to explore how the women's adaptation and/or acculturation to the U.S. influenced their college experiences.

This study employed a qualitative research design which consisted of a series of individual, semi-structured, tape-recorded, face-to-face, one-on-one interviews of 20 1.5 Latina immigrant college students. This study examined these participant's identity development and acculturation experiences during different transitional periods of their life in the United States. From their stories emerged six themes: Meaning of Ethnic Identity and Ethnicity, Understanding and Embracing Ethnic Identity, Ethnic Identification, Practices and Behavioral Ties to Cultural Background, Adapting to a New Culture, and Ethnic Identity Effects on College Students.

Current literature on college student development frequently ignores race, class, gender, and other variables. The literature and scholarship on identity development has presupposed that identity development is the same for all students regardless of their ethnicity, race, gender, language, and social class background (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). College is a daunting process for all individuals. Students must adapt to their university environment and surroundings in order to succeed both personally and academically (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). While adjustment issues pertain to all students, the concerns and issues of Latina immigrant college students are intricate and complex. Latina immigrant college students not only confront the typical student adjustment concerns, they also grapple with issues pertaining to language, immigration status, acculturation, social acceptance, socioeconomic status, and ethnic identity.

According to the U.S. Bureau of the Census Current Population Report (2000), approximately one in eight people in the United States are of Hispanic or Latin American origin. The Census reported that 32.4 million Latinos resided in the United States in the year 2000, representing 12 % of the total U.S. population. Additionally, the Census reported that the total U.S. foreign-born population reached 28.4 million, which represents 10% of the entire U.S. population. These statistics show the reality of the demographic changes currently taking place in the United States. By the year 2050, it is predicted that Latin Americans will constitute the largest minority group, as they will

account for almost 25% of the entire population of the United States (Census 2000). This increase in the foreign-born population will have a tremendous impact on the American system of higher education, creating even more diverse campus communities.

## **HOW INNOVATION ATTRIBUTE PERCEPTIONS INFLUENCE COMMUNITY COLLEGE ADOPTION OF PROGRAMS PROMOTED BY AN EXTERNAL AGENCY**

*Sandra M. Harley*

Committee Chair: Marilyn J. Amey

This research found that the perception of Relative Advantage is most significant to an organization's adoption decision through answering the question: Do innovation attribute perceptions influence community college adoption of programs promoted by an external agency? The influence of the other four attributes on community college organizational decisions is less clear. This study explored how an educational institution weighs various novel curricular programs for institutionalization to meet organizational goals and how organizational perception of the characteristics of an innovation, or attributes, influenced the adoption decision. In particular, the innovations under study were promoted by an external agency formed as an interorganizational relationship made up of two- and four-year colleges. To study the influence, quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques were employed in a multiple case study comprising three community colleges. The case study was guided by six propositions developed from previous studies reported in the literature. In addition, the study recognized the importance that various organizational levels within a college, academic vice presidents, coordinators of international programs and faculty, might have on the adoption decision.

The case findings were analyzed and reported out by the six propositions. Proposition 1, the influence of innovation attribute perceptions on community college adoption decisions will mirror the findings in the literature supporting the theory, was partially confirmed. The perception of an innovation's Relative Advantage was most important in forming a community college's adoption decision. Proposition 2, the faculty member or administrator with the strongest link to the promoting agency will function as the change agent for promoting innovations, was not confirmed. What emerged from the data was that the perceived value of the interorganization relationship to each international program coordinator framed how the individual continued to promote the international module innovation on his or her campus. Proposition 3, the coordinator will use interpersonal communication channels to strengthen the attribute perceptions of relative advantage, compatibility, trialability, and observability while decreasing the perceptions of complexity to increase the likelihood of innovation adoption, was confirmed. Proposition 4, individual change agents will define an innovation to serve differing purposes at each college studied, was confirmed. Proposition 5, the way an organization institutionalizes an innovation will influence organizational communication structures and consequently impact productivity, was confirmed. The community

colleges modified their organizational communication structures to support the innovation adoption decision made that provided the greatest relative advantage for their institution. Proposition 6, faculty and administrators will view the purposes of the innovations differently, was confirmed. Members of each organization level perceived the innovation as serving different organizational ends.

## **STRANGERS IN A STRANGE LAND: CAREER EDUCATION FACULTY FINDINGS THEIR PLACES IN COMMUNITY COLLEGES**

*Lynne Denise Hensel*

Committee Chair: John Dirkx

Career and technical education is an important part of the mission of the comprehensive community college, yet the work and perspectives of career education faculty are not well understood. This study examines what the career education faculty come to understand as their roles within the community college. It specifically focuses on how these faculty develop their understanding of their roles as teachers; what events, actions, and interactions influence the sense-making process as they find their places within their colleges; and what particular issues and challenges the faculty face in understanding and enacting their roles.

The study utilizes a phenomenological approach. Data was collected from extended, unstructured interviews with ten career education faculty. The participants, who were drawn from two midwestern community colleges, had been full-time faculty at their schools for two to six years and represented a variety of disciplines. Socialization theory and Giddens's structuration theory serve as theoretical lenses with which to interpret the results.

The image that emerges from this study is a group of career education faculty who are engaged in multiple activities—curriculum development and revision, student recruiting and advising, clinical or lab maintenance and supervision, cultivating and sustaining links to the workplace, and, of course, teaching. These activities are performed against a backdrop of changing technologies and externally mandated directives. The career education faculty have been thrust into an academic setting with little or no preparation for the role and of necessity maintain a pragmatic and outwardly directed perspective on their work.

The structural organization issues faced by the faculty in this study—external curricular demands, limited formal educational background, multiple responsibilities, and potential isolation as a group—suggest a variety of institutional responses that would support the career education faculty in their work and strengthen the education offered at community colleges. Orientation programs and formal mentoring would assist new teachers with their initial adjustment to their colleges, and on-going professional development programs that introduce faculty to different pedagogical strategies and promote reflection about matters of teaching and learning would help to reshape

instructional paradigms. Institutional inducements, such as incentives built into the reward system, appear to be important if the faculty are to view continued professional development and organizational involvement as part of their role definition. Finally, most of the participants initially worked as adjunct instructors. Better support and integration of adjunct faculty would not only bolster the instruction offered by these teachers, but also help to prepare future full-time faculty.

Understanding the challenges that the career education faculty face and the perspectives they hold can help institutions support their work and thereby strengthen this crucial aspect of the community college mission.

## **SEAMLESS TRANSITION IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY: PARTNERING TO SURVIVE AND THRIVE**

*Gail L. Hoffman-Johnson*

Committee Chair: John Dirx

This study examines the collaborative process by which a premier engineering university sought to establish strategic partnerships with a select group of community colleges. Specifically, it focuses on the development and implementation of one strategic partnership in particular in which both the espoused and enacted common goal is to improve transition of students from the two-year to the four-year institution. Another important dimension involves ties not only between the institutions but also with business and industry largely due to the unique nature of the co-operative education component of the engineering university. Both institutions reside in the same economically ravaged city. Yet another dimension of the strategic partnership involves heightened levels of interaction with the surrounding community.

Although the literature speaks of the promise, as well as the challenges, of collaborative undertakings, it is virtually silent on clear definitions of the various forms. It is hoped that this study has provided at least the beginnings of a working definition of "strategic partnership."

The study relies on case study methodology to examine the collaborative process. Interviews, direct observation, and document analysis yielded important insights into the nuances and intricacies of working together. In addition, the study utilizes negotiated order theory and Kanter's model of innovation as theoretical frameworks for understanding how the strategic partnership came about and how it might transfer to other contexts.

The key findings suggest that several factors contributed to the success of the collaborative effort: a significant environmental motive, shared perception about a common goal, the capacity to develop infrastructure through negotiation, the ability to create interdependence among stakeholders, the transformation of faculty as they began to develop a cosmopolitan attitude, and the centrality of a champion. Although the development and implementation of the collaborative model presents challenges, it also offers higher education faculty, administrators, and policymakers the means by which to

improve institutional effectiveness. By working together, institutions can better respond to the complex problems now facing higher education. The era of independence and institutional autonomy has passed. The collaborative model described within is built on interdependence and integration. It is hoped that lessons learned from one collaborative undertaking would be applied to others, thus creating an increasingly successful model for responding to the issues and challenges inherent in the current environment of higher education.

## **PERSISTENCE IN THE FACE OF SELF DOUBT: THE EXPERIENCES OF AFRICAN AMERICAN AND HISPANIC WOMEN IN SELECTIVE HEALTHCARE PROGRAMS**

*Elaine Marion Murphy*

Chair: Marilyn J. Amey

Increasing diversity and growing numbers of minority populations in the United States have led to the need for a more diverse healthcare workforce. Diversity is especially important in healthcare where patient outcomes or recovery can be affected by the patient-caregiver relationship. In spite of the growing need for diverse employees, the literature reports a long history of low minority student completion rates as compared to white students in selective healthcare programs.

The purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of the experiences of eight African American and Hispanic women who persisted in selective programs at two campuses of a Midwestern career college. The initial framework for this study was multiculturalism but as the study evolved, it became clear that the findings were situated in the literature on support networks of kith and kin, connected knowing, and the importance of caring relationships.

The subjects in this study were enrolled in the caring professions of nursing, occupational therapy, orthotics and prosthetics, physical therapist assistant, and surgical technology programs. To qualify for their programs, the women had to successfully complete prerequisite coursework and apply for selection. If seats were limited in any of the programs, competition was based on grade point averages.

This study has a qualitative framework and is a phenomenology, which uses a psychological approach. The method of data collection was multiple semi-structured interviews of individual students. The interviews were audiotape-recorded and transcribed following the interviews.

The major themes that emerged from the women's stories told of complex lives that revolved around family, high levels of stress, the importance of support networks, and motivation in spite of self-doubt. The women's perceptions that they were neglecting their roles as women and "good" wives and mothers lead to self-doubt. However, relationships of kith and kin appeared to provide the women with the support they needed and motivated them to persist.



Conclusions of this study demonstrated a strong connection between the women's support networks and their ability to persist; relationships based on care empowered the women as well as motivated them; and the women's strong connections to their helping professions made it possible for them to visualize future benefits for themselves and their families.

Although colleges would prefer clear and inexpensive solutions to increase student retention rates and graduation, this study demonstrates that persistence is a complex problem. The reason retention is complex is secondary to the fact that students are complex. Colleges must understand their students from the time of admission and provide support throughout their college experiences. This support should come in the form of nurturing, which the students experience through caring relationships.

## **LEADERSHIP PRACTICE INFLUENCED BY CHRISTIAN FAITH: A PORTRAIT OF THREE CHRISTIAN COLLEGE PRESIDENTS**

*Douglas Richard Newberry, Jr.*

Committee Chair: Steve Kaagan

The purpose of this study is to investigate the influence of faith on the leadership practice of Christian college leaders. Through the examination of three Christian college presidents, this study creates a portrait of their leadership practice influenced by faith. The question that is asked in the research is this: *In what ways does Christian faith influence the leadership practice of selected Presidents in Christian higher education?*

To answer this question the methodology of portraiture was used to paint a portrait of three different Christian college presidents (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1997). Through extensive interviews on the campuses of Bethsaida College, Capernaum University, and Galilee University, individual portraits were created using Kouzes and Posner's (2003) five leadership practices as a framework for viewing leadership.

Christian Colleges have played a significant role in higher education over the years. However, many of these colleges have drifted from their original faith and historic church commitment (Marsden, 1994). Today, there is a segment of Christian colleges that are part of the Coalition of Christian Colleges and Universities. These colleges are committed to the systematic model which expresses a specific faith commitment in their mission as well as in the hiring of faculty and staff. As these colleges espouse the importance of the integration of faith and learning, it is assumed that this integration also takes place in the leadership practice of the presidents, as well as other leaders at the institution. What resulted from the research are several themes that emerged to create one portrait of the ways in which faith influences the leadership practice of three Christian college presidents.

First, their faith-based leadership practice was seen as a partnership with God. Secondly, there was a commitment to maintaining, preserving and promoting the mission of the institution. Each president was involved in the interview process to ensure that the

mission of the college. Third, these presidents conversed with God in their leadership practice. These conversations occurred in their prayers to God. Fourth, their leadership practices were shaped by pastoral action and demonstrated a heart of a pastor. They presidencies could be best described as a "president-as-pastor" leadership model. Fifth, their leadership rhetoric featured "God-talk" in their conversations with people and with groups. They often included spiritualized talk and acknowledged God and His work with others. Sixth, their vision was seen as a joint vision between them and God and focused on the growth of the college. While not God-given, their visions were ordained and inspired by Him. Seventh, their leadership practice promoted a spiritual agenda which was rooted in their commitment to chapel. This emphasis was of primary importance at these Christian Colleges.

The leadership practices that were most influenced by the faith of these presidents were "model the way," "inspire a shared vision," and "encourage the heart." Through these leadership practices, the three presidents displayed leadership that was highly symbolic as an expression of their own personal faith as well as the faith commitment of the college.

## **ACADEMIC SUCCESS IN COLLEGE GENERAL CHEMISTRY**

*Steven P. Poullos*

Committee Chair: James Fairweather

Research on the link between student learning and success in higher education is extensive and includes many perspectives, most of them highly focused and pertinent to the researcher's field. However, few, if any, studies have been performed from a more 'holistic' or well-rounded approach, that is, incorporating both cognitive and non-cognitive factors in examining academic success.

Six factors leading up to and continuing through general chemistry courses in college are likely to affect academic success. These factors include a variety of cognitive and non-cognitive variables (Astin, 1968, Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991, Tinto, 1986, Weidman, 1989): pre-college characteristics and experiences, college experiences in the classroom, college experiences out of the classroom, instructional resources, student-focused variables, and instructor-focused variables. These factors, ordered sequentially from high school through college, form the components in the development of a student-learning model (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991).

Data from 2,247 students enrolled in general chemistry at Michigan State University during the 2002-2003 academic year were analyzed using standard multiple regression analysis. The model significantly predicted that in-class experiences and pre-college factors explained a large portion of shared variability with the final grade in the course ( $R^2 = .398$ ).

## **EXPLORING THE DEVELOPMENTAL MANAGER PHENOMENON WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

*Tina Marie Riley*

Committee Chair: John Dirkx

The growth of the workplace as a site of learning, the increasing importance of informal learning at work, and the resulting changes in the roles of management have led to a significant body of literature, predominately prescriptive, on managers' possible roles in workplace learning. Little is known, however, about how managers perceive this role, and the events leading them to hold the view that employee learning, growth, and development is an integral part of their supervisory role.

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the lived experiences of staff managers within the context of higher education, focusing particularly on their relationship with employees and employee learning, growth, and development. The research question guiding this study was "How do staff managers in the context of higher education come to understand and construe their managerial role?" To find answers to this question, in-depth interviews were conducted with five managers in a large research university in the Midwest. The focus on staff managers was intentional, as this important group of individuals has been largely ignored in research on the academy.

The findings indicate that the participants hold an alternative conceptualization of management wherein employee development is a defining characteristic of the management role rather than a separate role or function. Three elements set this conceptualization apart from other management models: (a) employee development is integrated into the supervisory role and the lifelong learning needs of employees is a fundamental consideration; (b) because employee learning, growth and development is integrated into the supervisory role, role conflict is not experienced; and (c) there is a substantial use of and reliance on reflection.

The participants in this study experience developmental management as reflective practice and perceive that their past experiences have led them to a developmental conceptualization of their supervisory roles. The lessons, values, assumptions, and principles that they learned in childhood form the basis of their working philosophy. Added to these early experiences are life experiences as adults, including family and past work experiences. Together these experiences are perceived as having a substantial influence on how they understand their roles. These experiences are reflected upon and inform the course of action the participants choose when they are faced with non-routine employee interactions or situations.

This study has added to our understanding of the ways in which managers influence employee learning, growth, and development. It has also provided insight into the ways in which individual managers come to hold the view that fostering such learning, growth, and development is a defining characteristic of management. This insight has implications for both theory and practice as the workplace continues to be an important site of adult learning.

**A RETROSPECTIVE VIEW OF ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE  
AMONG FIRST YEAR STUDENTS AT LAKE SUPERIOR STATE  
UNIVERSITY WHO SELECTED MICHIGAN'S DUAL  
ENROLLMENT PROGRAM AS THEIR POSTSECONDARY  
PREPARATORY STRATEGY IN HIGH SCHOOL  
(1996-2003)**

*MaryAnne Pietraniec Shannon*

Committee Chair: James Fairweather

Michigan's Public Act 160 provides incentive to secondary students for part-time participation in Dual Enrollment (DE) as a postsecondary preparatory strategy. Under the framework of anticipatory socialization, this Act allows eligible students in Michigan to earn postsecondary credit hours while simultaneously earning a high school diploma. Although this strategy has been utilized in Michigan since 1996, it has yet to be formally evaluated, creating a void of understanding between educational policy and practice.

To investigate the impact of dual enrollment participation on academic performance after high school, a seven-year retrospective case study was conducted at Lake Superior State University, a small, rural, public, baccalaureate-focused Michigan university that has fully participated in PA since 1996. Records in the University's computerized Student Information System were reviewed for the population of 180 Dual Enrollment participants admitted to LSSU from fall 1996 through fall 2002. First year academic and graduation data for dual enrollees were compared to others who entered LSSU at the same time; a population group of 38 Advanced Placement participants and a randomly selected Control group of 227 first year students who entered LSSU without postsecondary academic credits.

Key findings revealed postsecondary preparatory program students demonstrated significant positive differences on the following measures when compared to Control students: 1) High School GPA; 2) High School Class Rank; 3) ACT Composite Score; 4) first-semester LSSU credit hours earned; 5) first-semester LSSU GPA; and 6) second-semester LSSU GPA. In the short-term, participation in postsecondary preparatory programming was found to be a significantly positive predictor for first-semester LSSU GPA ( $p \leq .05$ ), but not for second-semester LSSU GPA. In the long-term, postsecondary preparatory students earned their LSSU Bachelor's Degree at significantly higher five-year graduation rates ( $p \leq .05$ ). Dual Enrollees earned that credential in significantly less time when compared to all other groups ( $p \leq .05$ ), providing policy implications for the study site, the State of Michigan and similar types of institutions nationwide.

# **FACTORS INFLUENCING STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE ENVIRONMENT REGARDING ACADEMIC DISHONESTY**

*Angela Lynn Todaro*

Committee Chair: Mary Lee Davis

Fifteen first-year students participated in a qualitative study to determine if their academic experiences prior to and since arriving at college and their relationships with peers, family, and instructors influenced their perception of the Lyman Briggs School environment regarding academic dishonesty. The methodology utilized selected theories from the student development literature and the Bronfenbrenner human ecology model (1979) as a theoretical framework for expanding the current understanding of the problem of academic dishonesty.

Students participated in individual interviews examining their definition of academic dishonesty, academic experiences prior to college, first-year college experiences, and relationships with family, peers, and instructors as they related to shaping their perception of the environment regarding academic dishonesty. The study population consisted of first-year students enrolled in the Lyman Briggs School at Michigan State University. These students were selected because they participated in a competitive application process and preparing for careers in natural science fields.

The study found that students perceived that their current environment was not prevalent for academic dishonesty. Evidence indicated that relationships with family, peers, or instructors did not influence their perception of the environment regarding academic dishonesty. However, some evidence from the student interviews indicated that students' prior academic experiences have influenced their perceptions of the Lyman Briggs School environment in some ways. Additionally, the study found that although parent and sibling relationships did not influence students' perceptions of their environment, they did influence their moral development and moral decision making regarding academic dishonesty.