

Project Title: Individual and Familial Factors as Predictors of College Adjustment and Achievement: A Longitudinal Assessment
Investigators: Toews, Michelle; Yazedjian, Ani

Department: Family and Consumer Sciences

Project summary: The purpose of this longitudinal study was to assess individual and familial factors as predictors of college success. Specifically, we examined the extent to which self-esteem, ethnic identity, acculturation, parental education, parental support, and peer support predicted adjustment and academic achievement during the sophomore year of college. During the first phase of data collection, the Office of Institutional Research Department: OIR) sent an e-mail to the freshman class of 2004 asking them to participate in our study. A total of 945 students responded; 794 provided complete responses. One year later, OIR sent an e-mail to the students who completed the survey at Time 1 and were still enrolled at the university Department: n=671). A total of 329 students provided complete responses. The total sample for year two was comprised of 76.3% females, ranging in age from 18 to 20. The sample was 74.8% White, 20.7% Hispanic, and 4.6% Black, consistent with the ethnic distribution of the university. Regarding parental education, 44 students were considered first-generation college students, 82 students had at least one parent who had some college experience but no degree, and 203 students had at least one parent who had earned a minimum of a bachelor's degree.

In spring 2007, we collected a third wave of data. Again, OIR sent an e-mail to the students who completed the survey at Time 1 and were still enrolled at the university during Time 3. A total of 165 students responded to the survey and 58 students participated in qualitative interviews conducted via the TRACS chat room. This allowed us to further explore how individual and familial variables were related to adjustment and achievement over time. It also allowed us to determine which variables predicted retention.