

SENSEMAKING IN HONORS SCHEDULING

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts
in the Nicholson School of Communication
in the College of Sciences
at the University of Central Florida
Orlando, Florida

Spring Term
2017

ABSTRACT

Honors courses offer students unique opportunities such as smaller class sizes, applied application of knowledge, and a closer mentorship with the faculty member. Through observation, there are some cases where courses have regularly been cancelled every term due to low enrollment. When these courses are often canceled, it can impact the honors program ability to continue to offer courses to the students. Using Weick's work on Sensemaking and principles of analyzing organizational culture, the study addressed how honors students are impacted by course cancellations and how they communicate about the impact. Through two focus groups with a total of eleven participants, information was gathered on how they constructed and communicated about their identity as honors students; their individual campus environments, and how those environments help to shape the communication culture they were part of; how they make scheduling decisions by extracting plausible cues from the communication they receive about course scheduling; and the impact of course cancellations on their honors experience.

In defining honors and its incorporation into their identity, the students described how being in honors was a challenge to make themselves the best that they can be which included being part of an engaging community of scholars and of use to the community around. The two focus groups noted differences on how each campus provided a slightly different organizational culture: one more familiar and inviting, the other massive and resource filled, and with diversity in the type of students encountered. Course scheduling messages often were extracted from the course scheduling website, with little communication about what would be offered into the future beyond the immediate term. Students had to gather additional data from their fellow students, faculty, and the honors office. Students often searched for cues regarding time and location of the class, the impact to the degree program, and if the class will push the student in new and

innovative ways to provide a deeper engagement with the material. Students were often impacted by course cancellations and the added stress of having to find replacement courses to avoid extending the time to complete the degree or risk financial repercussions with the loss of financial aid. These stressors do provide cues that can influence the degree of challenge a student is willing to accept or even degree completion.

Dedicated to the memory of James E Rowland SR (1950-2015).

Without his support, none of this would have been possible.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Special thanks and acknowledgments to:

Stephanie Rowland

Dr. George Musambira

Dr. James Katt

Dr. Sally Hastings

Dr. Valerie Burks

Marcella Montesinos

Megan Burke

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

A trend for undergraduates in higher education that has been seriously elevated as part of the space race is the incorporation of honors programs/colleges into the degree path (National Collegiate Honors Council, 2015). The goal of such measures is to attract and challenge intellectually gifted students and offer them a range of focused opportunities that will sharpen their intellectual gifts, and promote excellence that can have an impact in the classroom and beyond. Just in Florida, a total of 53 institutions, public and private, have some form of honors program offered as part of their degree path, whether this is a shorter program that would last primarily for the lower division of a student's undergraduate course work, or a longer one with options to continue honors coursework through the upper division in their field of study. The form to address these issues and the culture that develops is unique to each institution and its respective needs. However, some institutions may develop a standard set of challenges associated with the delivery of honors education. For example, I had the chance as a student and volunteer to observe two institutions that both had course enrollment issues well documented by their published annual reports and enrollment histories. In every term, it was found that, a significant number of sections [20-40%] offered as honors were canceled due to insufficient enrollment, aside from the efforts the office put out to let the students know that there were courses to take (Palm Beach State College, 2015; Valencia College James M. and Dayle L. Seneff Honors College, 2014a, 2014b, 2015).

There are some potential advantages to choosing to take a course as an honors section, which often includes a smaller and more Socratic classroom, a greater chance to develop an interactive relationship with the professor and peers, and the ability to explore the course material in greater depth including applications of the material. These benefits raise the question

of why students who have already selected to be part of the honors community at the institution, would not sign up in sufficient numbers to take honors courses. Where is the failure in the communication system that leads to insufficient enrollment? Is there not enough communication and feedback among the stakeholders?

As a basic concept, course scheduling seems straightforward among the three key stakeholders (administration, faculty, and students). The administration plans and offers classes according to faculty availability to teach classes and student demand for classes. In a perfect scenario, communication and culture that develops at the institution would result in all of the courses offered running in the original time and format they were scheduled. The reality is often far from this perfect scenario, however, with the organization's culture and politics factoring into the decision-making process of what is offered; and then potentially marginalizing some stakeholders and leading to a communication breakdown. The consequences of courses being canceled to the student can include a longer time to complete the degree, scrambling to find classes to fill their schedule, and hardships including a longer commute or realigning their work schedules for classes. For the program, repeated course cancellations could result in a point of contention when attempting to justify funding for supporting co-curricular activities such as conference travel, lecture series, student leadership and awards, and opportunities to apply knowledge learned in the classroom in the field that is fundamental to fulfilling its mission.

A potentially interesting and often overlooked perspective would involve the input of the students on course scheduling. Some may assess students as merely consumers or customers, rather than stakeholders or co-creators of the program and its potential success. However, students are the ones who respond to messages regarding classes offered and make a final decision on what classes to register for. Their interactions with faculty and administration could

provide insight to address the larger problem of course cancellations. Since students qualify and then self-select to be involved with honors, their role in the interactions and enactment of the culture, constructs, and practices would provide an interesting insight into the sense-making process involved in how students define being an honors student and its impact on the curricular and co-curricular aspects of the program. Indeed, course cancellations may and do impact the student's involvement in the organization.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

As a foundation for the study, it is necessary to establish several contextual frameworks for the discussion. First, an overview of what honors constitutes is given; since beyond an overlap in the goals reflected in a typical college degree path, honors is still a limited access program with unique educational outcomes. Second, Karl Weick's work on sensemaking is explored in terms of how some of its elements apply to honors programs. Third, a commentary on the interplay between individual and organizational identities, and how organizational values are communicated is given.

What is Honors?

Frank Aydelotte and honors. Reviewing the past and early movements in Honors Education in the United States, it would be remiss not to touch on the work of Frank Aydelotte, an Oxford scholar, academic excellence advocate, and President of Swarthmore College from 1921 to 1940 (Wood, 2012). Speaking of the higher educational system as a whole in 1925, Aydelotte felt that it served passably for the average college student, but hampered and held back those students who were intellectually gifted. He averred that "it is a very bad thing for any young person in the course of his [sic] education not to be pushed to the limit of his abilities; it is only by working as hard as he can that he learns how hard he can work" (Aydelotte, 1925, p. 6). To challenge these students, often there would be two paths: the first where independent study options were added on top of traditional coursework, and the second where a more independent course of study or seminar system superseded the general educational system. The values and structure at Swarthmore that Aydelotte worked toward building would fit the second type, where normal courses were replaced by other coursework. Sophomores had the option of applying to the honors program, and they were accepted into the program based on their first two years of

work. If accepted, they were required to attend regular seminars with a faculty member and their peers, which would replace their normal courses. The aim of these programs brings together complementary departments, so the honors curriculum did not rest solely in one area (Aydelotte, 1925, p. 91-93; Wood, 2012, p. 44). Depending on the institution today, the exact structure of what honors looks like can vary. Some of the elements that Aydelotte instituted in his college, and advocated for, are more uncommon (e.g., deemphasizing competitive athletics and Greek life as potential stumbling blocks to academic excellence, use of external examiners to grade students [Wood, 2012]), but the overall notion and problem of challenging a student intellectually and promoting academic excellence is a theme that can still be found in the more contemporary views of what is honors.

National Collegiate Honors Council's view. Honors today, like honors in the past, can take many different shapes, even though there is more of a trend to divide the idea along the lines of programs for completion in student's freshman and sophomore years, then moving on to course work in their respective majors. There are programs or colleges that focus specifically on developing an honors thesis within the major in the student's junior and senior years, and programs that aim to be a complete suite of honors coursework over the course of the undergraduate degree from freshman to senior years. The National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC) as an organization has 780 member institutions of various academic structures across the United States (NCHC, 2013). They engage in a mission of supporting and promoting honors and those involved. In addition to facilitating a community of scholars for academic excellence, and offering support for those organizing honors on their respective campuses (through providing outlines of what comprises a program or a college), they define what Honors Education involves. An essential segment of that definition is how "the honors college or

program provides opportunities for measurably broader, deeper, and more complex learning-centered and learner-directed experiences than are available elsewhere in the institution; [which] opportunities are appropriately tailored to fit the institution's culture and mission, and frequently occur within a close community of students and faculty" (NCHC Board of Directors, 2013, p. 1). The underlying idea of what NCHC recognizes as an academic unit and a more in-depth notion of the methods by which honor program goals would be achieved can be found in common throughout the programs regardless of form. It also tends to be close to the ideas and goals Aydelotte aimed to address in the early days, even though his approach to reach those learning-centered and learner-directed outcomes could have varied.

Sensemaking

Members of multi-layered organizations are in a constant process of creating their identities and participating on a larger scale in establishing the identity of the organization. Individuals take in the new inputs about situations around them and focus on how to explain those events within their already existing perspectives. One framework to address how those new inputs are resolved is Karl Weick's work on sensemaking. The major goal is that sensemaking serves to reduce uncertainty in the process of decision making, resulting in choices that are acceptable to both the individual and the organization. The actual model has some spark, or event, which needs to be resolved, the member analyzing the event comparing it to past experiences and identity, enacting the solution, and then depending on the successfulness, retaining that potential solution as part of the new framework moving forward (Weick, 1979). This cyclical process requires interactions among all the possible individuals involved for clarification and uncertainty reduction.

Weick outlined seven key characteristics that have an impact on the sensemaking

process. First, it is grounded in the various aspects of what they consider their identity and its continued construction. Second, it is based on retrospection both at the time of the event and afterward. Third, it is enactive of sensible environments, moving beyond the individuals simply acting to or being confined by their environment, to recognizing their role in the process of co-creating that environment. Fourth, as with most communication processes, it takes place through the social interaction with others. Fifth, this is a process that is ongoing. Sixth, it is based on extracted cues rather than the entire picture. Seventh, in line with the last aspect, the solutions and sense derived, are driven by the need for results to seem plausible, rather than being necessarily one hundred percent accurate (Weick, 1995, p.17).

While these principles are not a model in and of themselves, they provide a prism to view events through. A few of the aspects are relatively straightforward, such as the idea that sensemaking is retrospective, social, and ongoing. All of these aspects complement the notion of identity construction and demonstrate how it is in a continuous cycle of development. For this literature review, it is worth delving deeper into a few fundamental aspects of this sensemaking process: the notion of identity construction, that it involves enacting the environment, that it is based on extracted cues, and a focus on things being more plausible than necessarily accurate.

Identity construction. The idea that sensemaking and identity construction work together in lockstep is a logical one. Their definitions focus on reflexivity, and an emphasis on the role of discourse are similar to those in previous models of organizing found throughout the literature in the communication field (Kuhn, 2006; Meisenbach & Kramer, 2014; Ybema et al., 2006). Ashforth, Harrison, and Corey (2008) propose an interaction between the organization and individual identity construction. The individual alters and adapts his/her identity, based on actions taken by the organization, as well as his/her actions forming the overall identity of the

organization he/she is involved in. (p. 341). This cycle is ongoing, repeating throughout the organization's and individual's lives. Applying this cycle to the scenario of course scheduling, an individual's identity and attachment to the organization can drive what aspects they prioritize in when and how they complete their degree, and what opportunities he/she chooses to pursue in the course of completing the degree.

Enactive of sensible environments. Sensemaking is enactive of the environment around us; the environment is not a static outside force that strictly constrains the participants who are entirely at its mercy but is in a constant state of being produced by the members. Members of organizations are part of the ongoing system of actions in the environment that impacts and changes it (Weick, 1995). This could be in the form of participants' resistance to perceived changes or in the course of action decided upon, and taken by the members to address perceived shifts in the environment. The fundamental idea is that actions taken create and constrain the environment, a notion also is known as duality of structure. This duality allows for not only the social level of integration imparted by the current members present but interaction with the system forming a storied history that continues the cycle over time and space (Giddens, 1984). The interplay, even if it is just as simple as courses being dropped from the rotation in future terms, or added by expressed interest of the Stakeholders, would be an example of the participants being enactive on the environment.

Focused by extracted cues rather than the full picture. Individuals rarely have the entire picture while making sense of a situation. That level of information may not even be desirable, as it could lead to information paralysis. Individuals tend to focus on, and extract smaller specific elements, or cues, from the situation. These factors help an individual to decipher inductively what is going on in the environment as a whole, and work to make sense of

the potential situation. The extracted cues are easier to manage rather than trying to take in the entire picture at once (Weick, 1995). For example, if you were shopping for a vehicle, how you view your identity and the cues you extract can alter the type of car you would choose. If you are focusing in on cues that would lead to a practical vehicle with plenty of room, you might choose a minivan, SUV, or truck. The cues that you extract and how they correlate with how you view your identity contribute to the final decision, shaping how you interact with your environment, and what you take home. The interpretation of the cues depends on the specific context and an individual's history. Within a scheduling context, it is easy to see where cues could include who the instructor is, what time is the course offered, the syllabus (if available), what campus is the class based on, and what is needed to complete the program. These extracted cues do not provide a full picture of the class experience when making decisions, but they are often part of the driving force in the decision-making process.

Driven by plausibility rather than accuracy. Given that sensemaking is based on extracted cues, the notion that the results of the environment need to be plausible rather than one hundred percent accurate is a logical conclusion. If the end goal was perfect accuracy, the time needed to collect and analyze data would be never ending, resulting in the common idea of analysis paralysis. While avoiding that pitfall with making sense of a situation, the desire is to have enough information, and being able to provide an adequate rationale to make it sound reasonable to reach a coherent explanation that would align with the context of past knowledge, and how we perceive the situation (Weick, 1995).

Communicating Organizational Values

When looking at the environment and interactions between the individuals and the organization, one needs to take into account the culture of the organization. From a systems perspective, the organization's identity as a whole is enacted through the interplay of constructs, facts, vocabularies, storytelling, and metaphors, rather than based strictly on the individual elements of the system. Honors is no different from any other organization in the way it uses these elements to communicate its message and provide feedback to the members on how to make sense of a situation. To continue to build a foundation and supply context for the study, it is worth exploring the interplay mentioned above in more detail.

Constructs are a similar concept to cues discussed earlier, and so the relevant constructs would be persons, procedures, and activities that punctuate the daily activities of the organization's members (Mumby, 2013; Pacanowsky & O'Donnell-Trujillo, 1982). An example of this at a higher level in honors would be Spurrier's (2008) listing of key characteristics that provide expectations on what to find in an honors program/college. These expectations can provide example constructs that would reflect the honors' culture and the typical cues that would be extracted by those involved in the program. Other constructs that help to define and constrain how the honors culture can express itself include: what to expect in the classroom, the role of student leadership, and the balance of faculty/staff leadership.

Facts would be shared common knowledge among an organization's members; they can adapt and change over time (Mumby, 2013; O'Donnell-Trujillo, 1982). For example, an honors classroom can provide an example to those outside the program, or to newly initiated members into the program, how honors classes are comparatively harder, and involve more work overall. However, those who have been involved in honors programs for a longer period, including the

author, would tend to view honors classes as not necessarily harder, but just different and characterized by a higher level of depth. This idea has frequently been expressed by students, faculty, and staff involved with honors throughout the larger community. As a form of common knowledge held to be true, but which can shift over time, this notion of facts relates well to the concept of sensemaking regarding an idea seeming plausible to the individual and the culture as a whole. Thus, it constitutes grounds for it being accepted, even if it is not one hundred percent accurate in every single case.

Academia as a whole employs an extensive organizational vocabulary, often using specific jargon, acronyms, and word choices to set the organization apart from other institutions in and outside the field (Mumby, 2013; Pacanowsky & O'Donnell-Trujillo, 1982). The development of the specific vocabulary can provide cues to the larger picture of what is important to the organization as a whole. This includes acronyms for various everyday activities, the choice of what learning management system is used, what sort of student services system is used, how certain documents such as forms are described, and what type of vocabulary is used to describe various hierarchies. For example, depending on the organizational culture, some institutions that encourage student input into their programs would call their bodies different things: some more similar such as the Honors Student Advisory Council, the Honors Student Advisory Committee. Other programs would go in an entirely different route with names such as the Honors Student Council, dropping advisory from the discussion entirely. These vocabulary choices serve to help construct and deliver facts about the organization both to reinforce the culture of the organization of those already involved and to help enculturate future members.

Badenhausen (2012) discussed how when constructing vocabularies, honors education as a whole tends to avoid vocabularies of economy, such as, the income benefits of being involved

in honors, or even how they refer to the students in the admission process as prospects, admits, deposits, and enrollees depending on their stage in the process (p. 17). Instead, there is a preference for using a vocabulary strongly rooted in the quest for an intrinsically motivated academy where the reward for seeking knowledge would be a greater understanding of the world around us. That quest alone would be a valuable and worthy reason to embark on the educational endeavor.

Even within the overall culture, there can be radical differences for similar works, and one possible example of this would be the notion of scholarship. A common association with the word today is the extrinsic motivation of free money, which tends to be the major marketing drive of some of the various honors societies, such as Phi Theta Kappa or the National Society of Collegiate Scholars. Within the academy itself, I have tended to find a different meaning where the word “scholarship” has a more intrinsic goal of furthering the knowledge and development of the field as discussed in Badenhausen (2012). Both meanings would be accurate from a dictionary perspective, but the major driving context would be different depending on the particular organization and situation.

Storytelling and metaphors also have a significant role in communicating an organization’s values in an easily accessible form. They help to provide and reinforce what being a member of that organization means. In some cases, metaphors are rooted locally in the sector of their home organization. However, it is also possible for metaphors to originate elsewhere, find their way into an organization, and teach organizational lessons. Communicating through sports metaphors can serve as one example of these cross-sector metaphors. Another example referenced by Weick (1996) is the idea of administrators in academia having to put out fires that arise. Specifically, he studied how the academic use of putting out fires aligned with his studies

of the Mann Gulch Disaster. One of his propositions that drew a comparison between the daily office work in academia and fighting forest fires emphasized that being aware of your environment was key. In fighting fires, recognizing the smallest potential signs of a fire that could turn into a wildfire can be found in cues like smell, or slight smoldering. Similar to that, potentially small cues in a person's actions could be signaling that there is trouble smoldering that may become a bigger issue (p. 568). Another example would be applying the idea of the fire triangle to organizational conflict situations, where you can squelch potential conflict by removing an element of that triangle. A typical case he lists would be assuming that "anger (heat) plus docile associates (fuel) plus taunting (oxygen)" (p. 570) lead to conflict. Removing or reducing one of those legs would minimize the chance for conflict situations to spiral out of control. I personally in my experience within honors, I have seen and heard the notion of putting out fires often used from a student leader perspective. Whether it is student leaders, that can be instrumental in co-curricular aspects of the programs, not meshing, or instances of trying to encourage unique curricular/co-curricular programs, there will always be troubles that arise. Scheduling wise, how to promote classes, and when to make decisions to cancel a course, can easily result in fires to be put out on a daily basis. Within honors programs, interactions between the various Stakeholders for curricular and co-curricular activities can run into organizational conflict and the use of metaphors to help deal with them. In a broader honors context, you can find metaphors that deal with the structured experiential goals of exposing and building students, with the ideas of coursework being stepping stone, or scaffolding to work into research, or providing the chance for students to dip their toes in the water of various subjects, and find their path forward (Manathunga, Kiley, Boud, & Cantwell, 2012, p. 144).

Research Questions

One of the key aspects of the NCHC's basic characteristics of developing an honors program is an emphasis on having a well-established student committee to provide feedback and interact with the administration (Spurrier, 2008, p. 194) as needed. Currently, there are some nuts and bolts programming examples looking at potential outcomes and benefits of involvement (Clauss, 2011; Kelly, 2013; Slavin, Coladarci, & Pratt, 2008), like the need for student participation and feedback throughout the program (Vile, 2011), and surveying students to see what they look for in faculty (Wolfensberger & Offringa, 2012). At various conferences within the field, there are many presentations given on different best practices in and outside the classroom at a number of institutions. Where there tends to be a shortfall is specifically looking at how messages and organizational culture impact course scheduling. Since honors programs serve as a lab that can be set apart from the larger organizational culture, individual cultural aspects can have an impact on honors course scheduling.

Therefore, this study sought to investigate the extent to which students are impacted by honors course cancellations and what sort of communication is associated with those impacts, and to what extent course cancellations have an effect on students' involvement in the program. The guiding research questions were:

RQ1: How do course cancellations affect honor students,

RQ2: How do they communicate to cope with this impact?

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Site Description

The site for the research was Palm Beach State College (PBSC) in Palm Beach County Florida. PBSC was founded in 1933, and in the 2012-2013 academic year had an annual unduplicated headcount of just under 48,000 students (Florida Department of Education, 2014). As an institution, PBSC has a total of four existing campuses, with a fifth currently under construction, with most of the campuses situated along the I-95 corridor in Boca Raton, Lake Worth, and Palm Beach Gardens. Outside of those three campuses, they have a campus out in Belle Glade and are currently building another one in Loxahatchee Groves. The Floyd F. Koch Honors College has activities college-wide, with most of their curricular and co-curricular activities focused on the campuses along the I-95 corridor, with primary offices based out of the Lake Worth Campus. In the last annual report, they reported about 700 students enrolled in the program (Montesinos, 2012, p.2), with some variance in that number as students could be inactivated due to graduation, inactivity, or poor academic performance.

The typical honors course would be capped at a maximum of fifteen students and have a minimum of eight students for the section to run. Variations on these numbers would have to be approved by the deans on the respective campus. In Spring 2015, PBSC planned to offer a total of twenty-eight courses that were designated as honors, but over the course of the registration process ten of those courses were canceled, likely due to low enrollment. The enrollment numbers also showed that some sections were allowed to run with less than the typical minimum number of students (Palm Beach State College, 2015).

Primary Data Collection

The primary data for the study were gathered via focus groups of students representing

the major campuses of PBSC. The data as a whole looked at PBSC as a case. The sampling method was criterion sampling (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011). Student participants were recent graduates from the Honors program. The researcher worked closely with the program to coordinate recruiting of the participants.

Focus groups. Two focus groups were conducted representing Palm Beach Gardens and Lake Worth Campuses. A third focus group was attempted aiming to find students from the Boca Raton campus, but no students volunteered to participate. All the students were recent graduates from the Honors College constituting a total of eleven participants, four in the first session and seven in the second session. The goal for conducting these focus groups was to stimulate communication about the scheduling process. Focus groups allowed students to add on or note agreement in a topic area, and allow for additional probing. One question posed by Morgan (1997) to test fit using focus groups in a qualitative research setting is to “ask how actively and easily the participants would discuss the topic of interest” (p. 17). Based on being a former student, and having seen various survey instruments asking students to respond about honors course scheduling, this answer would be a resounding yes to their willingness and ability to discuss the topic of interest. The first focus group was exactly forty-five minutes of content; the second focus group ran longer, about an hour and a half of content. Both sessions were recorded via video and transcribed for analysis (raw transcripts in Appendix D).

Secondary Data Collection

Secondary data analyzed included annual reports, class registration data, internal student surveys, and course registration promotional materials. Annual reports are compiled at the end of the academic year, offering key accomplishments, and current student enrollment trends. Class registration data provides an exact picture of how many seats were filled in the various honors

sections, the number of sections that ran, and the number of sections that were canceled over a period. Internal student surveys offer a mix of quantitative and qualitative data with some student feedback about course scheduling and other aspects of the program's culture and areas. Lastly, the course registration promotional materials offer insight into how messages are currently being shared through advertising the sections that are open to the students.

Methods of Analysis

The data were analyzed for connecting themes by using sensemaking and organizational culture as a framework to help build overarching categories applied to the specific research questions. The goal was to build a description of the culture and system that is in play. Themes are ideas that are demonstrated by reoccurrence and repetition (Owen, 1984). Reoccurrence is defined as similar ideas repeated throughout the narratives by the participants. Repetition is the use of the same word choices to describe those ideas. To help build and fill these themes, the data were coded structurally; It was looked over holistically for themes that might stand out, both with using the framework built by the literature review and for any other ideas that are often repeated. The concepts derived from the literature review provided a good starting point for potential themes to look for within this style of coding as it tends to excel at matching a specific phrase or concept, and gathering data under that umbrella (Saldaña, 2013, p.84).

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

To delve into an exploration of how honors students are impacted by course cancellations, within the framework of organizational sensemaking, I addressed four key areas. First is how students define honors and build their identities through constructs, vocabularies, facts, and storytelling relative to and via the program. Second is how they perceive the program's environment on their individual campuses, which provides the context for making decisions about the class process, and its potential impact on the students have to take into account. Third is a discussion of how the student perceptions of the above two factors affected students' actual decision-making processes when it comes to selecting what courses to take. Fourth is an exploration of the scale of course cancellations, their impact on the participants, and how the participants reacted to them.

Student Definitions of Honors

While the structure of the programs is different from what Frank Adyette would have originally proposed for his institution, the notion that honors is a place to push students to their limits and see what they could achieve holds true with the gathered data. A great example would be from Tanisha drawing the contrast between non-honors and honors coursework:

Like, when you're intelligent individual you just put some work into it and you do it. But when you're in the Honors College, it's like you're pushing yourself more, more, and more cause you're surrounded by all these people who are just as intelligent and who want just as much as you want.

In these remarks, the construct that the honors community is a community where members push each other to excellence in the words of Alex "helps you become the person you can be. The best you can be" along the lines of the metaphor of a polishing a diamond in the rough, or iron

sharpening iron. This is the case for students who would otherwise just sail along, or for those who not necessarily recognize their unchallenged potential until later on, let alone those who see all the potential paths available to them.

Also found throughout the data is the notion that the class sizes and format shift allow delving into greater depth of the material, something which takes building the relationships between students and faculty. It could be that honors provides more of a structure for mentorship, allowing some classes to be honorized, and within those contexts, help to build a community. Carl, for example, recounts how in a class he honorized there was a partnership relationship between the teacher and him working toward the mutual goal of excellence, or an “A.” Summarizing the story, he ends with “I think that your professor just cares so much more about you because you do have a goal. And they see that you want to excel in the things that you do. So they provide the time and the resources to help you achieve that goal.” These mentoring relationships are still possible at a state college outside of honors, but there is much less structure and preparation to build the students’ identity to seek these relationships, as they would coasting along, in non-honors classes.

Expanding the definition of what it means to be an honors student; beyond the idea of someone who is intelligent, seeking excellence, and determined to meet his/her goals may involve eventually reaching out to the community as a whole beyond the immediate program. A few participants started to touch on the idea that being an honors student to them would include traits such as being effective communicators, trustworthy, and servants in addition to doing their

course work. David provides a good example of this notion that was often repeated, and still touched back on the ideas of drive and dedication as well that have been already mentioned.

An honor student, well for me an honor student would first start by someone who communicates efficiently as well as someone who has this character does not lie.

Someone whose word you can count on. An individual that you can put your trust in and will not let you down as well as someone who would finish his homework. A student who would take on the responsibilities that are required as a student on campus.

The notion of communicating and additional responsibilities (which another student expanded to include service) is corroborated by the annual reports of the Floyd F. Koch Honors College, which includes honors on all of the campuses. Accordingly, in the 2014-2015 academic year, students volunteered almost 1,600 hours in the community.

To wrap up the discussion on the student perspective on the meaning of “Honors”, and loop back to the potential aspects it can contribute to students’ overall identity and decision-making, there is the trend of aiming for excellence and figuring out how far he/she can actually go and what he/she can accomplish. This involves finding a community of fellow minded students to help him/her reach his/her goals and improving his/her communication and leadership skills. Through these aspects, students prepare themselves to be the best version of themselves that they can be at the given time.

Student Descriptions of the Environment

An everyday construct the students deal with and which can influence how they make their decisions and how communities evolve is the physical campus or campuses they attend. As mentioned in the methodology, Palm Beach State College has four campuses currently, with a fifth under construction, and focus groups were from two of the major campuses. Lake Worth

tends to provide a diverse environment according to Megan: “You have everybody here. You have people who have been stay at home moms for the last ten years coming back to get their education. You have people who come just fresh out of high school who don’t know what they’re doing.” I know from personal experience that the Boca Raton campus is similar in that regard. This diversity can provide a unique set of inputs when it comes to dealing with a sensible environment. For example, it would be a breeding ground for potential cross-generational friendships, which can affect student identity and decision making as they see a wider world, from both sides of the relationship.

Another factor that came up often is the size of the Lake Worth campus, which has both its positive and negative impacts on the decision-making environment. On the positive side, the large campus provides greater opportunities to the students and higher chances for the students to enrich their own experiences. For example, David recounts in comparing Anatomy labs between Lake Worth and Boca Raton campuses that the Lake Worth sections had access to sharks and more aquatic lifeforms for dissection whereas Boca Raton was more tightly controlled and limited to just having cats, a difference mainly attributed to the larger size of the Lake Worth campus. Yet, remarks repeated by two participants paints more mixed perceptions of the opportunities the Lake Worth larger size afford the students: “I think it’s just fairly large campus and it doesn’t do much to create a familiar environment” and “People are helpful but like when you go to the writing and reading labs they are not really familiar.” The space and arrangement of the Lake Worth campus tend to demand a more concerted effort if one were to take advantage of the potential opportunities it provides and exploit them fully.

In contrast, many of the terms and descriptions of the Palm Beach Gardens campus tended to be positive and focused on the space to build community through having a well-

landscaped physical environment with sitting areas spread throughout the campus. A common chorus from the participants is reflected in Megan's words: "And you find like time to like just unwind from your classes, digest what you heard in your lecture, and like write notes down, take some time to just like relax." Carl emphasizes this feeling of the campus bringing people together into a metaphorical campus family in a call for dorms on campus, to keep the relationships going:

"I work in the student activities department and to see these kids come and to make the Gardens campus their home is what we like to say about the Gardens campus that it's like a home. You know it's so small and so compact that we all kinda just know each other. We see each other all the time and to see them do that makes it you. It gives you the feeling that you are home."

This would help set the stage for relationships and more inputs for potential decisions to be made as the students work together and learn from each other. Andrew gives a good example of how this campus environment can spark interactions: "Some kid just walked up to me one day and asked if I wanted to talk and the next thing you know we're in some kind of very strange abstract intellectual rattle tattle in front of the library that is probably something I would never forget." These interactions help build a sensible environment and expand the constructs the students have to use as they interact with the culture of the institution at large when it comes to making decisions and dealing with class cancellations. In some cases, these relationships may save a class from being canceled, as students can network and encourage their fellow students to pursue unique opportunities.

Student Extracted Cues for Course Selection

So far, we have discussed a few aspects of what the participants considered part of their honors identity and the effects of the physical campus on a sensible environment. Both build into the ideas behind sensemaking of how students make decisions within their environment. In order to make sense of how students make basic scheduling decisions, it is imperative to examine what cues they tend to look for or prioritize when reviewing a list of courses provided to them to build their schedules, and what sources they tend to go to for the necessary information.

Commonly, when it comes to communication about course scheduling, there is a drive for the student to be proactive. Alex relates: “You don’t really get a lot of communications you are kinda on your own for picking classes. You have to rely on professors sometimes to see who is a good professor.” The common feeling among the participants was that there was not a great usefulness in the advising office, as a matter of course when it came to honors courses. They found information that helped to plan their schedules: through coordination with their peers, reviewing the course schedules posted on their campus website, or other websites, to learn about professors and to discuss educational plans with the staff in the Honors office. Since class scheduling is done at the individual campus dean’s office, promotional efforts are not always consistent. In my time at Palm Beach State, because of the Provost on the Boca Campus, we usually had posters up during registration listing the honors courses in addition to some mailings from the honors college listing the courses for the term. However, Lake Worth, where I also took some classes, did not have the public posting advertising honors courses.

The need to proactively communicate and hunt down information on course scheduling can be hampered by the slow release of information to places like the online course schedule. This idea resonated with the focus group from Lake Worth where a common complaint was how

often TBAs were used, and not knowing when the system would be populated to start planning ahead what classes to take and figuring things out beyond awareness of the priority registration date. Before the faculty member being announced, students cannot gather much in the way of actual cues beyond the potential room, campus, and timeslot for the class, if they are posted to the schedule. Besides the need for better communication in order to be proactive is the desire for a programming wheel detailing what course is offered, since when a course is offered in a series, it is not always an easy find or publicly announced information. This also can reduce the potential cues students can tap when making course scheduling decisions.

The discussion of what cues students use to make decisions about which courses to take should also encompass the constructs characterizing the system in question, at least for some of the cues. Some constructs within a multi-campus state college system are obvious, with students prioritizing the time slot and the location of the class, in how it relates to work and home. Since many of the students also hold jobs, there is the need to have that balance of finding a time that works for them when choosing classes. After that, many students do tend to look at the professor and the constructs that would be covered within the course syllabus, to determine what the course actually will entail. Megan offers a few of the things she looks for in addition to time including the professor's credentials or background, how many seats are taken in the course, and the subject matter of the class. Furthermore, Carl would focus more strictly on the professor with regard to addressing student learning styles, and work that would tend to engage him "so that I don't only pass the class but I can learn something new." Other participants also echoed that idea of wanting to make sure that the class would broaden their horizons with more additional intrinsic rewards of self-improvement, or at least rewards viewed in a longer-term perspective. These broader horizons also tend to add a construct that the honors courses provide

novel approaches that pose both an intellectual and application challenge to the students as they learn the material. A few students referenced their experiences with Math and Science Institute (MSI), that takes place over the summer. It is heavily oriented to the STEM fields and gives the students the opportunity to take honors courses that become part of their degree program, such as honors calculus, chemistry, or engineering. MSI provides the students a chance to visit and see actual local businesses where the lessons learned are applied through various community partnerships. This choice is made rather than simply settling for the comfort of a non-honors variety of the same base course material.

An aspect ties back to the discussion of location is the perceived constructs of what resources are available on a specific campus. According to Josh, “The first thing I will be looking at the campuses just because for some campuses their resources are different, especially what the professors have and what you are studying.” He is primarily based out of the Gardens campus, which he adds has “a lot of resources for engineering students and they have whole science and technology building.” With this driving the decision on where to take courses, it tends to help build the campus culture, and also provides structure to the sensible environments within which the students are making decisions, and in turn contributing to create.

Practically, additional cues students use when choosing classes tend to focus on how a class fits into their overall degree path, and if financial aid would assist in covering it if it is elective. Throughout the sessions, there was a strong desire among the students to move forward with improving themselves, to be better-rounded students, but money and additional time was also a concern when choosing what courses to take, or not to take.

Student Experiences with Course Cancellations

Course cancellations impact students emotionally and potentially financially: Megan provided an extreme example with the story of her first term at Palm Beach State where her schedule included three honors courses that did not make:

Yeah. How about being a first year student and having a panic attack? So I had to take um I think three honors courses the first semester I was here um on the way toward the campus because I was like, what do I do now? [Laughter] All of them are gone and they're not gonna make at all so I had to completely change my schedule and it really affected me. I mean, obviously I got it together like a new student should. But you know it's throwing you a loop when that happens. ... My whole schedule were like crumbled before my eyes over a day but I don't think at least for me, I didn't see it as a reflection on honors college more of just probably stay as a whole. I think that when in class, is that close to dropping. I really be should probably send out something to the students who you know like let them know like as of you know, were we stand now in this class may or may not may because reduced of number or lack of students registered for this course because I receive no notification. I receive no warning. I did as a first year student, I didn't know the rules of getting seven students to make the class so it was a shock. And like you know I would have want anybody else to have to go through that again because I know for me, I put a lot of stress on myself as a first year student who didn't know what they were doing in the first place. And then you finally get everything in order, and have your classes set out and then like a week before the school starts, that all crumbles away in your level like literally nothing. So I know I wouldn't want somebody to go through that again and I wish there was something in place to kind of help guide students to

understand what happened to the class cancellation, you know, what you should do in case your class is cancelled or to have a backup so.

Her story shows the added stress that major course cancellations bring to a potentially already stressful and new experience that can be complex to navigate as students start the program. Her example is an extreme one. However, a number of participants were not directly impacted by course cancellations later, or at all. Solomon summarized the impact of course cancellations in a great metaphor by describing the scramble to find new courses as “making you jump through flaming hoops while you’re covered in kerosene.” It is easy to extend that to the bar of what is expected of you as a student: that you have to think on your feet and adapt quickly.

Another potential major impact on the students that was brought up by course cancellations is financial. In many cases, courses are canceled one to two weeks out from the start of term; students may not be able to get into other classes due to their being full or not fitting into the timeslot. If this drops them below their previous enrollment threshold, it would have a direct impact on their financial aid eligibility; and interfere with their degree completion timeframe; since the courses they were taking, if not pure electives, would still have to be taken in some future term. This may, of itself, conflict with other potential courses that they need to take. While the participants still completed their programs, for some students the additional stressors could dissuade them from taking risks to challenge and push their own growth beyond the comfort zones, or even potentially make them decide not to complete their degree.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

The two research questions guiding this study focused on how course cancellations affect honor students and the way they communicated to cope with this impact, respectively. I have covered the feedback from honors students, overall, in response to these matters. To build a platform for that, I explored how the students defined what honors is, what the decision-making environment was, and how they generally make scheduling decisions. In defining honors, the participants say those who are attracted to the program are students who want to challenge themselves to be the best they can be, seek to be part of a community of fellow like-minded faculty and students, and reach out and help those around them.

Building the community among the honor students can be a challenge when dealing with a multi-campus institution for a program like honors that covers the three major campuses at Palm Beach State College. Each campus has evolved to meet the needs of the surrounding areas within the space and resources available. The participants in both sessions pointed out differences in what the Lake Worth and Palm Beach Gardens campuses offer, and that in turn, these different offerings affected the cultures that developed at each campus. Lake Worth with its massive resources of being the central campus, where the district offices were based, offers a number of opportunities including the main honors office. However, on the flip side, is less familiar due to its large size and lack of welcoming gathering places throughout. Students on the Palm Beach Gardens campus focused on how all the gathering places provided more of an opportunity to turn a commuter campus into a place where students would want to stay and be involved beyond showing up for class.

The notion of how students make scheduling decisions starts to show some of the potential flags that have led to some terms having class cancellations. This touches on the

concept that there could be a lack of communication about what classes are offered and when. The participants are students who have figured out how to make the system work for them. They do this by building a network within the community and, in some cases, contacting faculty directly to determine (1) if the class would be a good fit for their (students) academic programs, (2) whether the time slot aligns with their needs, and (3) where the course is in relation to where they live. A common complaint is still that the advising department is not entirely well trained or useful when it comes to helping students navigate planning honors and non-honors courses. The other side of the coin would be that, at times, there is a lack of potential information including TBAs, and whether or when the course would be offered. Knowing ahead of time what courses are likely to be offered assists the students with planning out the opportunities for the term and future terms.

With the foundation of students perceptions of honors, the environment, and some idea of how they make course scheduling decisions; a platform is built to address the first research question of how course cancellations affect honors students. The data did find that while not all the participants were directly affected by course cancellations, those that were noted the added stress from scrambling to find replacement courses, or from the possibility of a class being canceled factoring into how they picked their courses from the beginning. The scramble to rearrange one's schedule afterward to find another section and the potential financial aid impact of a reduced course load can sabotage their ability to complete the program in a timely manner. For the participants, the end effect was that they did overcome the challenges presented by

course cancellations, even with the added stress and other affects even though it did influence how they made sense of future course selection.

The second research question dealt with how students communicate to cope with the impact of course cancellations. One change in their communication behavior was to interact more with the honors office, and to acquire more information about courses in order to avoid scrambling for a replacement course. I have seen in the past that this can include recruiting fellow students to take a course together for the sake of having the course make or registering for the course until after the decision to let the course run is made. Indirectly, it did lead to more consumption of viewing the course scheduling system and the messages put out about student registration numbers, to avoid unpleasant surprises of having a course canceled. Some of the coping, or at least communicating about the stressors that result from course cancellations did align with the literature review. The most colorful metaphor from the sessions was Solomon's description of scrambling to find new courses being akin to jumping through flaming hoops while you were covered in kerosene. This is close to the example of Weick's firefighting triangle, in conflict situations, where steps are taken to avoid or reduce the amount of times you have to jump through those flaming hoops. Other common ideas and metaphors engaged by the student would be similar to the image of polishing the diamond in the rough and iron sharpening iron by binding together in a community working toward common excellence.

Potential Solutions

While course cancellations can help students think on their feet and adapt, the added stress is not necessarily preferable. A common theme that the panels suggest when thinking about how to reduce course cancellations, and assist in building a stronger community within the program would be to increase communication. Within the honors programs as organizational

cultures, there will still be course cancellations, but some base complaints which included not necessarily having an idea of the program wheel further out for honors courses (for example, not knowing the spring honors courses in the fall, or just seeing courses with a number of TBAs) can still be addressed. Some of these anomalies could be dealt with by collecting survey data of program majors, and what courses the students will be needing for the future terms, then providing that to the provosts and deans to try to create more cohorts on the specific campuses. This would involve communicating the typical program wheel for the rotation of when honors courses are offered on each of the campuses, or moving forward with creating one. From my observations some tend to exist, such as a English Composition 1 in the Fall, English Composition 2 in the Spring, or applying that to Chemistry or Biology as well, even though classes outside of the sequence system tend to be more hit or miss on if they are going to be offered.

There is a need to expand the advising department to make it more useful to honors students. This could include student/faculty outreaches to the staff to educate them on what honors is and what honors is not. Adding honors advisors within the office, or even more, of an honors ambassadors program to talk to students in orientation should help. Some of these steps have been taken to some extent, and just need more institutional support to take them to the next level. Educating the faculty throughout the college about what honors is, can also be a useful step for encouraging engaging courses. These steps would aim overall to increase communication between the Stakeholders, and through that input and dialogue build a stronger institutional culture and potentially reduce course cancellations.

Directions for Future Research

Overall, this study serves as a useful starting pilot study for a deeper investigation into the honors culture, how it is affected by course cancellations, and how stakeholders could potentially find additional ways to address the issue moving forward. Looking at the site of the present study, several other steps to gather more information could be taken. First, conducting more focus groups with a wider audience of students is needed. Given the summer timeframe for the data collection aspects of the study, a reasonable amount of participation was garnered and data gathered. However, I was not able to drum up any interest from students on the Boca Raton campus, which under-represented one of the major campuses in terms of self-indicated primary attendance. Nevertheless, a few students in the other focus groups attended the Boca Raton campus at one point in their academic career.

Another potential area of future research would be adding students who have fallen off the honors program rolls, after registering for at least one cancelled honors course. The focus group participants were willing members, and most reported at least some impact of course cancellations. However, they were also overcomers of that challenge who were successful in completing a track that led to honors graduation. Additional avenues, would be exploring the culture and context in other institutions in the state college system, since an informal email survey I conducted of the various board members of the Florida Collegiate Honors Council (representing administrators from state colleges and public and private universities within the state) suggests that this issue might be rarer within the state of Florida than my personal

observations would suggest. It might be that certain cultures and leadership structures within the college, potentially lead to increased course cancellations.

Yet another avenue that would provide more data and round out the picture is broadening the focus to interview the faculty and administrators that have been involved with honors courses that successfully ran versus courses eventually cancelled. Also interesting to focus, would be communication from the perspective of faculty and staff (with the students and each other), and their views on honors and the honors culture at their organization.

APPENDIX A: IRB APPROVAL



University of Central Florida Institutional Review Board
Office of Research & Commercialization
12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501
Orlando, Florida 32826-3246
Telephone: 407-823-2901 or 407-882-2276
www.research.ucf.edu/compliance/irb.html

Approval of Exempt Human Research

From: **UCF Institutional Review Board #1
FWA00000351, IRB00001138**

To: **James E. Rowland**

Date: **March 15, 2016**

Dear Researcher:

On 03/15/2016, the IRB approved the following activity as human participant research that is exempt from regulation:

Type of Review: Exempt Determination
Project Title: Sensemaking in Honors Scheduling
Investigator: James E Rowland
IRB Number: SBE-15-11220
Funding Agency:
Grant Title:
Research ID: N/A

This determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are made and there are questions about whether these changes affect the exempt status of the human research, please contact the IRB. When you have completed your research, please submit a Study Closure request in iRIS so that IRB records will be accurate.

In the conduct of this research, you are responsible to follow the requirements of the [Investigator Manual](#).

On behalf of Sophia Dziegielewski, Ph.D., L.C.S.W., UCF IRB Chair, this letter is signed by:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joanne Muratori".

Signature applied by Joanne Muratori on 03/15/2016 11:26:03 AM EDT

IRB Manager



**PALM BEACH STATE
COLLEGE**

IRB

4200 Congress Avenue
Lake Worth, FL 33461

Date: 05/10/2016

PI Name: James Roland

Application type (Initial, Modification, Continuing): Initial

Review Level (Exempt, Expedited, Full Board): Exempt

Study Title: Sense Making in Honors Scheduling

Dear Mr. Rowland:

The purpose of this letter is to inform you that your IRB application has been determined to be exempt from IRB review. Your responsibilities include the following:

1. Please provide a copy of this approval to your College sponsor (if applicable)
2. Follow the protocol as exempted. If you need to make changes, please submit a new application noting any changes before you make them.
3. If there is a consent process in your research, you must use the consent form approved with your application. Please make sure that all participants receive a copy of the consent form. Regardless of consent form use, be sure that participants understand their participation in the research is voluntary.
4. If there are any injuries, problem or complaints from participants, you must notify the IRB at irb@palmbeach.state.edu within 24 hours.

Best wishes as you conduct your research,

Donald Taylor, PhD
Executive Director, Institutional Research & Effectiveness
IRB Co-Chair



APPENDIX B: FOCUS GROUP SCHEDULE

Introduction

Hello, my name is _____, and I am from the University of Central Florida. I am looking into the impact of course cancelations on honor students. As part of our case study our goal is to investigate the culture and communication messages from the student perspective when dealing with honors course cancelations. The end result of this research should help provide potential insights on the communication messages surrounding course cancelations and if the message they send has an impact to culture of the program. This Focus Group should take about 45 to 60 minutes, and with your permission [Sign wavier] we would like to record it for later transcription. Any use of the data would be used either with a pseudonym, of your choice, or just labeled as 'a student'.

Questions

How would you describe the honors college?

What does being an honors student mean to you?

How would you describe your home campus?

Do you attend classes or are involved across multiple campuses?

What sort of differences do you notice between campuses if any?

What sort of communication currently exists when discussing class scheduling

From the district level? From the campus level? From Faculty?

How would you perceive that classes are currently scheduled?

What do you look for when you are selecting classes?

What drives you to choose between honors and non-honors sections of courses?

Have you been impacted by honors course cancelations?

What sort of message do you feel course cancelations send?

APPENDIX C: FOCUS GROUP CONSENT FORM SAMPLE



Sensemaking in Honors Scheduling

Informed Consent

Principal Investigator: *James Rowland, Masters Candidate .*

Faculty Advisor: *George Musambira, PhD*

Investigational Site(s): *Palm Beach State College*

Introduction: Researchers at the University of Central Florida (UCF) study many topics. To do this we need the help of people who agree to take part in a research study. You are being invited to take part in a research study which will include about 25 people at Palm Beach State College. You have been asked to take part in this research study because you are at least as second term student that is part of Floyd F. Koch Honors College at Palm Beach State College. You must be 18 years of age or older to be included in the research study.

The person doing this research is James Rowland of Nicholson School of Communication at University of Central Florida. Because the researcher is a masters student he is being guided by Doctor George Musambira, a UCF faculty advisor in Nicholson School of Communication at University of Central Florida.

What you should know about a research study:

- Someone will explain this research study to you.
- A research study is something you volunteer for.
- Whether or not you take part is up to you.
- You should take part in this study only because you want to.

- You can choose not to take part in the research study.
- You can agree to take part now and later change your mind.
- Whatever you decide it will not be held against you.
- Feel free to ask all the questions you want before you decide.

Purpose of the research study: The purpose of this study is to look into the impact of course cancelations on honor students. Investigating the culture and communication messages as they deal with course cancelations, looking for insights on the communication messages that surround course cancelations and the potential impact to the culture of the program.

What you will be asked to do in the study: Members of the focus group will be asked to discuss their experiences in the program with questions about course cancelations and course cancelations. You do not have to answer every question or complete every task. You will not lose any benefits if you skip questions or tasks.

Location: CBP301, Palm Beach State College, Lake Worth Campus, 4200 Congress Avenue, Lake Worth, Florida 33461

Time required: We expect that you will be in this research study for 45-50 minutes .

Video taping:

You will be video taped during this study. If you do not want to be video taped, you will *not* be able to be in the study. Discuss this with the researcher or a research team member. If you are video taped, the tape will be kept in a locked, safe place. The digital video files will be stored indenfintely on a secured server.

Risks:

There are no reasonably foreseeable risks or discomforts involved in taking part in this study

Compensation or payment:

There is no compensation or other payment to you for taking part in this study.

Confidentiality: We will limit your personal data collected in this study to people who have a need to review this information. We cannot promise complete secrecy. Data reported within the study would be represented by a pseuydonym of your choice, or labeled as a student.

Study contact for questions about the study or to report a problem: If you have questions, concerns, or complaints, or think the research has hurt you, talk to James Rowland, Graduate Student,

Nicholson School of Communication, College of Sciences, 561-706-4451 or by e-mail at james.rowland@ucf.edu or Dr. George Musambira, Faculty Supervisor, Nicholson School of Communication, at (407) 823-5594 or by email at George.musambira@ucf.edu .

IRB contact about your rights in the study or to report a complaint: Research at the University of Central Florida involving human participants is carried out under the oversight of the Institutional Review Board (UCF IRB). This research has been reviewed and approved by the IRB. For information about the rights of people who take part in research, please contact: Institutional Review Board, University of Central Florida, Office of Research & Commercialization, 12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501, Orlando, FL 32826-3246 or by telephone at (407) 823-2901. You may also talk to them for any of the following:

- Your questions, concerns, or complaints are not being answered by the research team.
- You cannot reach the research team.
- You want to talk to someone besides the research team.
- You want to get information or provide input about this research.

Results of the research:

The results of the research will be used for the purpose of completing a masters thesis, and shared with the host institution. Copies of the final document would be available upon request.

Your signature below indicates your permission to take part in this research.

Name of participant

Signature of participant

Date

Signature of person obtaining consent

Date

James Rowland

Printed name of person obtaining consent

APPENDIX D: FOCUS GROUP TRANSCRIPTS

Session 1

(0:00:00) Host: We're good. I guess. We will start. Ms. Meghan, I'll probably go from left to right a little bit. How would you describe the Honors College?

Meghan: Honors college is something rare I would say in Palm Beach State. I never seen anything. For instance, I only been in college once. So but it is something different than the culture you would Normally See in Palm Beach State. Um. It provides so much opportunity for students who are looking to get more out of their education than their first AA Degree whether they chose to stay here for a bachelor or transfer elsewhere. It gives us a really good base as to start out on what we really want to do. And it gives us the opportunity to make friends and connections through networking through all these different students who have all different types of backgrounds and cultures. You know.

Host: What would you say if you were like key words that would describe the culture?

Meghan: Um, diverse. Um, exceptional. Very intelligent. Um, unique.

Host: Alex.

Alex: Um. What was the question?

Host: How would you describe the Honors College?

Alex: Okay. The Honors College I think is a good opportunity to um to kinda go one step further than what the average student goes and it actually helps you build more um towards your AA um your Bachelor's degree because it makes you one step.

It makes you look like a different person(2:02) than a normal student so. So I think it helps you to become the person that you can be. The best you can be. And also, it can help you by just meeting a lot of students that are in the same position as you that are trying to get more out your education. Um, they give you that motivation because you want to challenge yourself even more cause you're surrounded various different people so.

Host: Tanisha.

Tanisha: Um, I was I would say because I did one year out of Honors college and one year's. And one year in Honors College. It was definitely like total different like opposite sides of the spectrum kinda of thing. Like, when you are in regular classes you're kinda like it's kinda like easy sailing road and you know if you're intelligent individual you just put some work into it and you do it. But when you're in the Honors College, it's like you're pushing yourself more, more, and more cause you're surrounded by all these people who are just as intelligent and who want just as much as you want. So it's like you have more of a want and a passion to excel and do the best that you actually can. So I thought, I think it's a great experience to be in because it definitely prepares you for that university style that you are about to get into. And the smaller

classes are like awesome [laughter]. You know like eight to like twelve kids in your class and it's like yes. You can make relationships with the people in your class. I think it's awesome opportunity.

Host: Carl.

Carl: I have to agree with all what my peers have said. Um. It is a great opportunity for me. I had never been academically in tone before. This is one of the very first time that I'm taking my education seriously. So coming into the Honors College, I would have to say that it is very challenging. Not in a bad way. Um. Last semester I took three courses. I honorarized two of my courses and one of my teachers was nagging me about that "A." I wanted that "A." (4:02) . And they were working with me you know every step of the way to make sure that I achieved that goal. I think that your professor just cares so much more about you because you do have a goal. And they see that you want to excel in the things that you do. So they provide the time and the resources to help you achieve that goal. You know. And I appreciate that a lot about the Honors College. I've been exposed to much um activities at the university so far. And so many opportunities. So many doors have opened for me and I've only been in the Honors College for about three, almost two semesters. Just two. So and I know that you know it doesn't end here. There is so much more to accomplish. And so much more success to come.

Host: [inaudible]. Moving on to the next step. Carl. What does an Honor student mean to you?

Carl I: Being an honor student is to be determined and dedicated. I say that all the time because I don't consider myself to be the most intelligent one in the room. You know. I think that what drives me is, is the fact that I want to succeed. It's not that I want to show people how smart I am or you know that I can win the Nobel Peace Prize. But that I am somebody who wants a future, to secure a future. And if that's what being an honor student is all about. As long as you have the drive you know you're, you're an honor student. As long you have the heart for it you're an honor student. If you care about your education you're an honor student. And this doors should be open to everyone. And everyone should have that desire to want succeed in life.

Host: Tanisha.

Tanisha: I think being an honor student is being set apart because it's really easy to go in college and just take your regular classes and do what you want to do whatever. But when you join an Honors College that means you are trying to take extra step. And you're putting in the work to be, to be a little bit above you know to be higher and, and if you want to do things such as like (6:03) , law school, medical school and such and such like you look awesome. You did that step. You became an honor student cause it's not easy. It's not an easy process. And it's a long road and it's definitely rewarding so.

Host: Alex

Alex: Um. Being an honor student means that you don't want to settle for just the basic stuff. You want to excel. And you make your academic life more impressive and actually more challenging. I think that it's all of the students who are here are very motivated and very

passionate about what they do. And I think that that's something that you're don't really find in your regular classes here. And that's one of the qualities of an honor student that they don't settle for less or just enough. I think its the best thing.

Host: And Meghan

Meghan: Yeah. They kinda took all the words out of my mouth [laughter] possibly that is. But I just do have to agree that being an honor student is being exceptional and not in the I'm Albert Einstein kinda of way. I'm the best of the best or anything. It's just to show that you're taking an extra step to help yourself. You know? That's the first thing you can do in your education is help yourself so others can help you. And if you don't put in that effort you're not gonna necessarily go as high as you can achieve. And the Honor College kinda gives you that little push that you need to help yourself to become a better student and eventually better professional or whatever you plan on doing with your education here. But, Um and.

[Phone ring].

Tanisha: [laughter] Sorry Meghan.

Host: [inaudible] Meghan. How would you describe the home campus?

Meghan: I love the Lake Worth campus actually. Um. You know a lot of people say that out of all of the campuses (8:03) it's one that is unique in the sense that there are, there is a large diverse group here on this campus from young to old, all different ethnicities, and racial backgrounds. It's the most diverse campus. You have everybody here. You have people who have been stay at home moms for the last ten years who's coming back to get their education. You have people who come just fresh out of high school who don't know what they're doing. I mean those people. Both of those people don't know what they're doing. [laughter]. But, Um. You know. It's all a learning experience for all ages. You know. Um. I think the campus is beautiful. It's spread out evenly. Um. It's. I'm. Compared to other campuses. Oh, my God, the Palm Beach Garden is an exception. [laughter].

Host: No, worries.

Meghan: I am so sorry.

Host: No, worries.

Meghan: I'm so sorry. I'm like sitting here. I'm just like wait a second. [laughter]. No. I love the [inaudible].

Host: That's fine.

Meghan: But Palm State Garden I love as well besides this campus. Um. I've been there numerous times. I love that campus actually because of how beautiful it is in regards to the multitude of plants. And they have so many different kinda sections for students to take part in

like studying by themselves. Like they have like a little garden, little sections, and benches everywhere throughout the campus. And you find like time to like just unwind from your classes, digest what you just heard in your lecture, and like write notes down, take some time to just like relax and um. That one is a little bit more cramped in style as far as having everything together. But I do believe it's one of the most beautiful campus' that we do have here at the Palm Beach State College. So, Yeah.

Host: Alex.

Alex: Um. I love the Garden's Campus because it's so peaceful like that's one of the things. So, um, there's students just studying everywhere pretty much. And (10:01) I think that you can easily find a spot by the tree and just enjoy what you have to while wait for a class, for the next class or just for a nice place to relax while you wait for another class or um, other stuff. I think we have a lot of resources there and available for like the math lab or [inaudible] lab or whatever. And you have lunch right there too. So pretty much have everything.

Tanisha: I kinda agree with Meghan and Alex. Um. The Gardens campus is beautiful and like it's really nice. It's peaceful. Very peaceful. So when you're they're just. There's so many places for you to just like okay I need to unwind and like chill real quick. And like if you have like um have like a stressful class or something, it's very nice. Just look around and see nature around you and just. I've been going there. I've been going there since the beginning of my college state career. It's been. It's been the nicest to me. I love it.

Host: Carl.

Carl: I'd like to say that there's only one thing missing on the Garden Campus and that is dorms. [laughter]. We need dorms. I work in the student's activities department and to see these kids come and to make the Garden campus their home is what we like to say about the Garden Campus that it's like a home. You know it's so small and so compact that we all kinda just know each other. We see each other all the time and to see them do that it makes you. It gives you a feeling that you are home. You know. Sometimes my favorite spot to walk on the Garden's campus is that green meadow in front of the amphitheater. I just walk through the stage while everybody is kinda just going on the sidewalk. I just slowly walk through that green grass. You know like I love walking on this grass. And like I say the only thing that I need right now if I could live on the Garden Campus, [laughter] that would be awesome. You know I try. I'm always kicked out of the Garden's campus. [laughter]. I'm there until like 9, 10 o'clock at night. And these people are like, "okay, you need to go home." [laughter]. But it is (12:02) one of the best campuses on beach college that has to offer.

Host: Okay, a little bit of building on that from school. Do you attend classes who are involved with across multiple campuses or just primarily on the one campus?

Paul: I'm sorry what was the question?

Host: Do you attend classes who are involved with activities across multiple campuses and which campuses or just on the one campus?

Carl: So the classes that I attend are they involved all over?

Host: Yeah, like are you a hundred percent of the career or classes where activities are involved with Long Beach Gardens or higher percentage Palm Beach Gardens? Or is it like you mix 30 percent, 40 percent Gardens, 30 percent Lake Worth or 30 percent of?

Carl: Mostly a lot more of my time is spent on the college I mean on the Garden Campus because I do work there and I do other things as well. But Um, I try to branch out. You know, sometimes I come up over here on the Gardens at the Lake Worth Campus. But Um. Most of my time is spent out there. I spend most of my time at the Gardens campus because there is always activities. There is always something to do and that is our job. Our job is to come up with ways that we can keep our peers and our friends interested in just being on campus and having fun in making those friendships. And and having a blast on campus you know. So yeah. Most of my time is um my class I do have are involved in just being at that specific campus.

Host: Yeah. Okay.

Tanisha: Yeah, I only, I do all my classes at Garden. I did one semester, one summer semester here at Lake Worth campus last summer. But other than that I've been at Gardens, like, I love the teachers there. So I've been there like forever. [laughter].

Alex: Um. I actually have to go, go to um many different campuses because of my classes. Like, um, normally I wanted to just stick with Gardens because it's closer to home. Um. I love it here. And, um, (14:01) I feel comfortable there. But, um, one my honors classes got cancelled so I had to come here, um, to Lake Worth which is okay but it's a little bit of a drive here. So, I think. I do love this campus because that also expose me to more activities here for the honors college, Um. And um, I have to switch back and forth. But um, overall I mostly pick all my classes from Gardens because of the teachers are good. They're nice and I like it because it's closer to home.

Meghan: Um. I'm a commuter so either way I would go to Palms so they are like equal distance campuses mostly except for Boca. So I'm all over the place. Um. I've spent more time probably on the other campus than Gardens but I do spend a lot of time on Gardens because of the activities because that is part of the [inaudible]. So for me going from Boca meetings to Gardens to Lake Worth campus to. I am evenly spread out through all campuses.

Host: Let's see this next one is for Meghan. What kind of communication currently exist when discussing class scheduling either from the District level, campus level from Faculty?

Meghan: Um. I would say that as far as advising those to help kids sign up for classes there is not a lot of knowledge on the Honors College. Um, because I work here at the Honors College I do have a lot of people that come to us for help as far as their classes go even though we're not advisers because they feel their advisers or their educational planners that they start out with, um, when they do their college planning session for their first time in college, um, didn't provide them enough background information on the honors program.(16:01) They feel like they didn't even know necessarily what honors was and they didn't receive that help. So after they picked

their classes they usually come to us and ask us to help them pick the classes for honors because they feel like nobody else knows better than we do. What they should do as far as the honors classes. So I definitely believe that our faculty can do a better job in understanding in what honors is, what honors stand for, what honors needs to complete certain tracks and you know help incorporate that into whatever the, whatever educational track that student is on, IE engineering, biology or whatever they plan to continue their education, or um, because honors is more of a supplement than necessarily just this one track that you do while you're here at Palm Beach State. You know. This is the topic on top of whatever you're doing. You know. If you're doing biology you want honors, sciences course. But you're still taking sciences courses. You just want that extra step that extra class that extra excellent professor. You know what I mean? So, I definitely believe our faculty need to do a better job in understanding what honors is to further help our students.

Host: Alex.

Alex: Um. Could you [inaudible].

Host: Let's see. On certain communications currently exist in discussing class schedule. So say what communication do you get from the district or communication you get when you're on a campus level or what communication from faculty?

Alex: Okay, um from. You don't really get a lot of communications you are kinda on your own for that for picking your classes. Um. You have to rely on like professors sometimes to see who is a good professor. Um. Also, Um, the advisers are not fully aware of what the classes are. They don't know what the requirements are and sometimes it's better if they were informed. And also the teachers to they are willing to help you for (18:01) what, what honor's courses you should take that will be beneficial for your career and. But I think overall. It's. You're kinda in college so you do kinda have to figure it out on your own. But um, it would be nice to have more faculty to know more about the honors college.

Tanisha: I didn't really know what the honors college was until I gotten an email inviting me into it. So, I don't think the communication for was very well, was very good. Um, you basically have to look it all up on your own on the Honors College website that we have or a lot of my good information I got was either from honors professors or other honor students. So Um. I basically choose all of my classes and stuff on my own and my own research for it.

Host: Carl.

Paul: I think that the honors college does a great job at self-advertisement. But like she said, if they have not sent me the email I would have never really known anything about the Honors College or have that interest to find out more. But I do think that they should because its its own departments you know. Every department works according to their schedule or according to their ways and mannerisms. But I think that if something can be done as far as making the Honors College and faculty maybe we can come up with the way that we can have our own class scheduling advisers or something to help us, the honor students because we can't roll out a faculty. I love my career advisers, my academic advisers but I can't blame them for not knowing

anything about the Honors College because they're not in the Honors College if that makes sense. Um, but communication can definitely be better.

Host: How do you perceive the classes are currently scheduled in this case schedules like sided

(20:01) or How the scheduling systems on with the exceptions on that?

Carl: Scheduling classes for the Honors College?

Host: Uh, huh.

Carl: That's a big issue for me. It really is. Honors college. Honors classes are close to non-existence for the honors college, especially, during the summer time. I love Palm Beach State College, but I want to get out of here you know I have plans.[laughter] I want to graduate. And it's hard because they don't really offer the honors classes that we can take to get those credits and graduate. You know at the time you that would like to. I probably have to prolong my graduation a semester more in order to take those classes than leave. It's fine you know I get to work at the pace that I can to make sure those grades right and my course work done. But at the same time I do wish that there were more classes offered to the honor students. So that they can do what they need to and also graduate and you know attack their future plans.

Tanisha: And I agree with Carl. Its, there's barely any classes so we have to, we have to take route of honoring the class.

Carl: Yeah.

Tanisha: which is a total different. The atmosphere is different. You're just in a regular class. But you're working on the side with your professor doing a project every day. And I think it's better as an honor student to be in an actual honors class. And it's harder because, especially, I think, um, not even on my campus but even throughout we have a page of classes that and a lot of them. It's like I'm a science major. I'm a bio major and there's not that many um honors classes for um any of my sciences classes. So honoring a chemistry class last semester was extremely hard for me. So I just think they should definitely look into like putting more classes up or getting more professors involved because the professors that are involved are awesome, and, but they can only do so much.

Carl: Right.

Tanisha: So, yeah. (22:00)

Alex: Um. I did. Like I said before, one of my classes, my honors classes got cancelled and this is my second semester in the honors college here. And I had to come here, um, which was okay but I mean I would of preferred to stay in Gardens campus. [laughter.]

Host: Okay. Let's me just double check.

Meghan: The power went out. There you go.

Host: I got it.

Meghan: It's, its the school.

Host: It's the school.

Female: Hey, that was just me. Just kidding.

Host: That was the power.

Meghan: It's like the power. Yeah.

[background noise]

Meghan: Yeah. I get a phone call and text like your school is really big like you know the power's out. I'm not here.

Host: No, really?

Meghan: Yeah [Laughter]

Host: That does make it interesting [Laughter]

Alex: But um. Yeah. But um, I would love to take all of my classes as honors. I love the environment and having meeting people there. And again more interaction with the professor and again more knowledge from them. But um, unfortunately there's not the availability of classes. But um, I would like my main um classes like bio and, um, anatomy all those to be honorized but unfortunately their not. I mean honored, honors class, but unfortunately, they don't have it as an honors class so I have to honorize them.

Meghan: Yeah, I have to agree that the honors, the class system is an enigma, right? [Laughter] Because honestly it's the boat under the spectrum for some, for a community that has so little class options like it was only a page on our class scheduling system but yet so many of those classes are dropped because we don't make enough people per class because you need at least seven people per class so that it keeps. And we have over five hundred and thirty something students registered in honors granting (24:00) some of those are no longer active but those who are registered, generally take classes but yet either the classes is in so high demand that as soon as registration opens for us, it's taken completely or people start trickling in over time and it hits like six students and then the class drops and that's six people who have to rearrange their schedule and try to find another class that now fits their schedule. And it's difficult for people when I first schedule ever, like my first time to college, I was all over Garden's campus and every single one of my class was dropped.

Host: Oh.

Meghan: Yeah. How about being a first year student and having a panic attack? So I had to take um I think three honors courses the first semester I was here um on the way toward the campus because I was like, what do I do now? [Laughter] All of them are gone and they're not gonna make at all so I had to completely change my schedule and it really affected me. I mean, obviously I got it together like a new student should. But you know it's throwing you a loop when that happens. So I definitely do believe that we need to create more classes at diverse times because a lot of these classes are common times and they have lots of conflicts with other classes here that are offered on different campuses. And I also liked to see other variety of disciplines throughout the honor support courses because I also am a Biology student and I take it all to my classes regularly because they don't have any, if they do, they're on the Garden's campus like which sometimes is out of the way for me depending on where I'm going. I have work. I work here at Lake Worth campus so it's difficult sometimes scheduling between regular life and regular classes and honors classes so it could be improved.

Alex: I want to say to her comments. Um I think it goes hand in hand with the communication. um (26:00) To get more honor students to sign up for classes kind of comes in hand with the communication to reach out to other students who qualified to be in honors college and that way if there's a better communication, you can kind of fulfill those classes and be able to make everybody happy, pretty much.

Host : First is Meghan, a simple one, what do you guys in selecting classes?

Meghan : Pretty simple yeah, I look for times obviously. I work always five hours a day or more so I have to make sure I have time to go to work and make those five hours and also make my classes and look for professors you know which one is the best, which ones provide the most thorough knowledge of the subject that you're taking. What is their background, what is their class like? I look obviously for what kind of classes that science, that math. I look at how many seats are taken because I like to know how big that class is going to be. Is it going to be a full class? You know, are people going to probably drop throughout you know the first half of the semester? The campus, that's pretty much it.

Alex: Um I look for the time, the campus, the professor like what they teach like I look at their syllabus and see what content they have. I also look like in this case, in the summer time. I went to take six week classes so those session which there in because I didn't want to take the whole semester so I wanted to look at that and just in turn the professor on. You can only tell by the seats taken.

Tanisha: Yeah, um time location. And ah (28:00) I look to the syllabus, the syllabi [Laughter] and um trying to see like if it's like a teacher that's going to like bury me or if it's like a nice- it's a classes duo but um I definitely I think my go to is like my professor because I don't want to get a teacher that's not good at teaching or they just drowned you with like twenty five test and never even teach or- but yeah, I look to the syllabus as it my professor probably the most to take my classes and obviously my major. So yeah.

Carl: I only tend to look at one thing. And I tend to focus on just the professor because I take my learning style into consideration. I have a, I think that I have a very interesting learning style you know and the professor needs to work with me in a way that I can not only pass my class but I can learn something new. You know, I can have fun, have a great time and not being completely stressed out about it. If I know for sure that the professor is great, you know, good ratings, I don't usually rate my professor. I actually use few evaluations. This is by the college [inaudible]. Yeah, that's what the academic adviser send me to. And I look at the ratings, you know I look at what's going on. They have every category for every single thing. And if I feel like I can have some sort of the connection with the professor, I am not worried. I know for sure that I will have a blast in that professors class. Now just the ratings about that specific professor won't tell me everything else so that's what I tend to do when I'm picking out my classes.

Host: So what part do you- or I guess I [inaudible] assuming that it's basically have a post lesson to course offered what part (30:00) do you choose between an honors and non-honor sections of courses?

Carl: If I were to offer a non-honors and an honor schools?

Host: Uh huh

Carl: What drive me to choose

Host: The honors.

Carl: The honors, because it's something new. I like the idea of being exposed to new things. Um It's all about you know making new experiences. Not like Alex said earlier, we don't sell honor students who don't like settling for things. Um For example when it came to choosing whether I was, I wanted to be in the MSI program or not. You know, those are honors courses compared to taking regular courses during the summer and I'm like, "Well Carl do you want to be expose to new things this summer? Do you want to learn something new? Do you want to go you know to new places, new faces? Well definitely settle for, go for the MSI program because it's going to push you. You know It's going to expose you to new things. Don't be so um what's the word?

Female: Comfortable

Carl: Comfortable you know with your regular classes on settle because that's really not going to do anything for you. So I think that's what it does for me. If I feel like I had to learn something new, if I can get something great that would be, it's great, so I'm definitely choose the honors program or course over the regular course.

Tanisha: It's definitely the challenge I believe. Um I had the same situation with Carl. I have to choose between choosing from an MSI honors calculus and regular calculus. And I chose MSI because I thought it's going to push me and I'm going to learn. I don't want to be in a class where I can just get by, get the easy A. I could rather learn and take the knowledge that I gained

and move forward with it rather than just learn in our class and leaving in our class and get my goal. So it's all about the future and being challenged and working harder is better I think.

Alex: I would depend on the honors classes because they, (32:00) because of the professors, the students, the content of the class and volunteering and also because I don't want to just settle for the average class. I want to do more. I feel like I can get that at the honors class and also it's more with. The difference between an honors class and a regular class is that a regular class is more feasible. It's not um, it's not just like getting the things that you know. It's just like just getting here to just to visit where in you don't really learn as much as you would hope for and be in honors class is more like um implementing what you know to what the professor wants. And you get to do that with projects. It's more interactive. It's more fun. And I think that's why wouldn't I take that? It's more fun.

Meghan: Yeah, hands down to that, I definitely would take an honors course. She basically said what I wanted to say. I think with regular courses you know, a lot of people coming into the honors college you know, they'll ask you, oh the honors is that much harder you know, you need a high GPA to get it, you know? You need all these things, you know? Is it hard? It's really not. I think regular classes are more exhausting. [Laughter] than honors course because they have so much busy work. I mean, I spend 75% of my classes were actually regular classes. I mean, don't get me wrong, I still took my seven or [inaudible] twenty one credits of honors where that's required but it's so much easier to take an honors class. You know, you know the people in there. You get to maybe call your friends. I mean, most of those part. um You know, you guys work a little community, a little family, you get to know each other, you know where you come from, what they represent, what they stand for. And you guys have like goals and ambitions whereas (34:00) half the people in regular course don't want to be there. They're there because they have to or because their parents are making that or they don't know, they want to choose to just stay in class to just take something. You know, half the time they don't even know what they wanted to be doing. And with honors professors they know exactly what they're doing. They know their subject. They know what needs to be taught to make sure that you succeed to whatever field that you are going into and how to apply that subject to that field. um You know, they're not there to waste your time and you're not there to waste their time. You know it's a mutual understanding that you're both going to put in your maximum effort to help sustain and achieve your goals that they set up for you in that class. So I would definitely say honors classes are the best kind of class that you can take and I wish they were offered to most students.

Host: I have it in mind too but right now it's kind of intense right here before we come down to this one [Laughter] but let's see. How are you going to be impacted by honors course cancellation and what sort of message do you feel that these course cancellations send about the culture of the program about the program itself?

Meghan: um Like I said that my first semester get all of my class were cancelled. My whole schedule were like crumbled before my eyes over a day but I don't think at least for me, I didn't see it as a reflection on honors college more of just probably stay as a whole. I think that when in class, is that close to dropping. I really be should probably send out something to the students who you know like let them know like as of you know, were we stand now in this class may or may not may because reduced of number or lack of students registered for this course because I

receive no notification. I receive no warning. I did as a first year student, I didn't know the rules of getting seven students to make the class so it was a shock. And like you know I would have want anybody else to have to go through that again because I know for me, I put a lot of stress on myself (36:00) as a first year student who didn't know what they were doing in the first place. And then you finally get everything in order, and have your classes set out and then like a week before the school starts, that all crumbles away in your level like literally nothing. So I know I wouldn't want somebody to go through that again and I wish there was something in place to kind of help guide students to understand what happened to the class cancellation, you know, what you should do in case your class is cancelled or to have a backup so.

Alex: Um when one of my account classes got cancelled I actually receive a phone call from, I don't know who it was but they told me your honors class is about to cancel because they weren't enough students. So um they offer me like they told me like, pick another class that you would probably like or just save it for the next semester but it turn out part of, overall, like it turned out to be okay in my case but I know that others must be like maybe we're affected by the very harshly. And I don't think that's fair. And I think that should be um kind of like predicted in a way by the faculty or the people who run the schedules. But I think it's something that can be improved.

Tanisha: I think for someone like Meghan, Where your class or honors classes has been canceled? Okay so for someone that like that happen to her like, that could really make them just tackle back to it. Go back to taking honors class because you're going to be afraid like, "Oh, if I chose this class it's going to cancel on me, what's the point of picking it? It's going to be cancelled anyway." You know? So we can turn someone away from it and not even continue moving towards the honors because it's like "Oh, this class are always going to be cancelled anyway." So it's kind of I guess it can, it's never affected me. I have never got in a class cancelled on me before luckily. But I think it could like really affect someone especially because in (38:00) Meghan's case no one even let her know. She was geared enough to go to school in a week and then everything was gone. So I think they should implement more of a way to fix it and not keep let the kids just kind of fall on their face. And there should be a lot more um cushion then to be able to have a backup class just in case or put it kind of like as a notification like these class, this kind of cancels sometimes so be aware and choose a backup class just in case or just give them warn and alert. And I think it would be better.

Carl: I think that it all goes back to interest. As far as honors course is, why are these courses being intend to work because not enough people are signing up for them and they'd be go outside [inaudible] because the interest to be in the honors course or to be in the honors program is minimum. And I think that what we should try to do is reach out to those students and let them know that, "Hey, we have these courses, you know they're not going to kill you. You know the professors don't bite. Push yourselves and try and take them." And that the entire, the only reason provided they drop is because they feel as if they're not adequate or good enough to be part of the program or you know that they won't succeed. And that's definitely a myth that we need to get rid of when it comes to the honors program and honors courses.

Tanisha: We come back to the [inaudible].

Carl: Yeah.

Host: Oh, that's it. That's how, just to almost spent to [inaudible]. What would be or the final catch last, if you could enter into communication strategy, prevents some of the cancellation as usual what would it be? Or having more students then put it into schedule. What would it be?

Class: I'm not, I'm not- I'm sorry could you please repeat the question?

Host: I meant, okay. This work I'm going (40:00) [inaudible] that's just um

Carl: Okay. That's all right. I can work with that.

Host: What was that? Basically, I think it needs to be [inaudible]. Has communication issue, lack of interest what ways or what sort of could we possibly do to help about that? Fix the problem.

Carl: How can we fix the problem? You know it's a good question. It's a good idea. I think we do enough reaching out. I get the emails all the time you know? My invites or all these apology and you know, we get the emails. We, I just think we need to talk to the students. Maybe find out what they want, find out if an honors program or honors probably something they might find beneficial. But not just um find out what they want or also talk to them. Let them know why it would be beneficial to them. I think that we're figuring it out for them but we should let them figure it out for themselves. You know do you want this or do you not? What are their interest and maybe if we are able to find that out, we can probably fix those problems, primaries that we have as we go on than the honors in college. So speak with our students.

Tanisha: I think the class cancellations, everything kind of just zooms all right back to the communication. So I know I've had friends who were like, why are you joining honors college? You're gonna put yourself in a position where you're like fail your class. It's going to be too hard. And people get, like constant, they get like freaked out taking that and we have to pass these classes and these is going to be so hard. And I think they just need to tell that was to reach out more to hit like have an honors kids speak at the orientation like the mandatory orientation that we have or no one came to speak about it. I don't know if they do it now but no one came to mine and even the virtual orientation that they made because it goes through you know, throw in some stuffs about the honors college and let people know more about it because there's the misconceptions (42:01) about it already in people's head. It's like it's too hard and too much work but in reality, yeah, you're challenged and it's not more work but you are learning in such a fun environment. In such a different way, and it's an interactive way where it may be hard but you need to realize it because you're in a group of people that you're like twelve kids and you're having so much fun and you made relationships with these people and everything. It doesn't even feel like you're in this rigorous course. It just feels like you're learning, you know? And I think it just needs to be more communication, definitely. Communication is key in like everything.

Alex: Um I for, when I wanted to join the honors college I knew that we have honors. The honors program at high school so I knew that it was going to be something in college. But it had to really date through the website to actually find it so I think it would have been. It would be

awesome if you sound like a little something you know um in that's kind of screams out at you as soon as you are logging into honors state website. So I think that's one of the main things that rather than just put it under and not that blends in with the rest of the stuff. We should pop out and also the students should be like success. um Be informed about it during orientation because when I was in orientation, they just briefly mention it and they not have any of the answers that I was looking for. So just somebody who is knowledgeable about that and also um I just think that they should target the students who do qualify because that's the ones who can actually join um so just make it more obvious. The place is where you see like internet and orientation.

Meghan: I think all of these back down to the faculty. Both Alex and I were involved with (44:00) HSAC which is the student advisory council and honor in college. And one of our goals for that group is to make us more available and known on campuses or like. We did start the program called the ambassador's program which we have most important person other volunteer goes to SLS or introduction to college success classes and speak to those students and talk about the honors college. And the majority of the students did not know that honors was it. They didn't either hear it or they briefly heard about it at orientation so I definitely do believe we need more information at orientation. President Harper did promise us a video or advertisement that can be placed out just like the rest of the college state college commercial that you see on TV, you know, on YouTube and other kinds of airings for advertisement. So I Definitely do think if we get the ball rolling on that or obviously the registration is safe because the more the people we have, the less classes cancellation, more class is available it's kind of like a domino effect from there. But we also need to train our faculty and tell them about the honors college and they need to know about it just like any other program here. You know, even put in an adviser and ask them about the engineering program or any of the technical programs like what is it called like, that you would do like the light weight maintenance. You know, they all know what the kind of program, new programs that people don't even know about like lawn services. But they don't know about honors and all it is is just an academic organization within their own college that offers extra classes. You know what I mean? Like if they know about all these other programs, what makes it so hard to know about honors when literally we have staff here, myself and Marcella included were available for further information to at least get them started on that track you know. So I definitely think we need to take the time to train (46:00) our faculty in regards to what know what the honors college is, what our requirements are, and where to find that work relation and to include more advertisement whether it's on the college state homepage or just regular advertisement feed on YouTube or TV commercials. I think with regular college take commercials so.

Host: All right. Any final thoughts? Any questions for me?

Carl: This was fun.

Tanisha: Yeah. [Laughter]

Host: Okay. Counting, make sure to feel free, help yourself to any of the food left back there, the bottle on it.

Meghan: Okay, thanks.

Female: Thank you.

Host: And thank you for being my getting takes of the day.

Female: Yehey!

Session 2

(00:00) Host: Program back in 2010. I'm currently working on finishing my Masters at the University [inaudible] communication. Our goal today is what is the impact of course cancellation on honor students? To kind of us follow the case study or investigate the culture and communication messages from student perspective when dealing with honors course cancellation. The end result of this research should help provide the insight into- on communication messages around the course cancellation and then to message those course cancellation then have an impact on the culture requirement that and hope to make my community happy whenever is said and done so we go ahead and take side. Yes, so here is your big piece of paper and get Master's degree out of the way. So it will go probably about 45 minutes. In front of you, you'd find basically a consent form which is also pretty much make the [inaudible] happy. The first three pages will have kind of the introduction, a little bit of what's purpose of the study, where you ask to location. The fourth page, in the front one which will be basically and I mean [inaudible] which is name, signature and date signed, you got it, you agree to participate and so on. You know, just that. Yeah, like the first student in a week that you got to be participating on the research. You're going to put that on that page. If don't put it all- what I'll do is do like student A, student B Student C when referring to person on the transcript and also the [inaudible] put transcription first purposes this session will be videotaped. Does anyone have any questions or follow up with that?

(01:35) Speaker 3: I'm good.

(01:38) Host: Okay.

(01:39) Speaker 3: Clear response.

(01:42) Host: Not so. Let's go ahead and we start it. We'll start with Andrew and go around. First, how would you describe the honors college?

(01:55) Andrew: I liked it. I like the class which is a lot better because of the work that you have to do with other student's co-curricular work and working in groups and not spending so much time of busy work and actually being able to delve into discussion.

(02:15) Speaker 3: I would describe it as a community within the college and aside from being a community, its students who take upon themselves some more academic order and an alternative style of learning. Very dialogue driven classes. Classes that incorporate research and presenting that research and that show curricular component to it which is the activities and the scholarly extra-curriculars and engaging in community service so there's certainly an entire student like component that is different as being an honor student.

(02:57) Speaker 4: I really enjoy the honors college. I like the community that we had. I like the small classes. I like how you are able to discuss more the extra-curricular and the activities and volunteering that we are able to do is great. It was just all that really good.

(03:23) Speaker 5: I'll add into all three of them, yeah. I liked it too. Basically I really like the opportunities the more networking opportunities we had because it was like a small community and so we had better opportunities to connect with different people like we use to have tables and team events and stuff so we got to meet a lot of new people. And I was great to know people in the field you are going in.

(03:50) Speaker 6: I would describe the honor college is the place that you could be able to get more challenge and create your own personal goals so the simplicity of this round is somewhat people who have better- more expectations of themselves and if you get a little bit further or had without having like [inaudible] so much busy work and something that's a little bit more in depth. Something that you would be able to discuss in a different point of view. Something that will challenge your way of thinking.

(04:18) Host: [Inaudible] please?

(04:21) David: David.

(04:21) Host: David. Thank you very much.

(04:22) David: Everybody has name except for me.

(04:24) Host: No, you see because everyone else has a name tag.

(04:28) David: Oh.

[Inaudible]

(04:32) Host: It's not that I'm reminding you.

(00:00) David: Okay. I'm always [inaudible].

(04:35) Speaker 3: Here we go.

(04:38) David: Thanks. Well I see the honors college as a place to grow if not enhance your serving leadership as well as scholarly abilities. A place to connect, a place to introduce yourself in a community of light minded individuals who were bound to make a difference in the future of this world. And also a place to open up your mind to different sets of ideas. To step outside of the box.

(05:13) Host: Starting with David, what does being an honor student mean to you?

(05:18) David: An honor student, well for me an honor student would first start by someone who communicates efficiently as well as someone who has this [inaudible] character does not lie. Someone whose word you can count on. An individual that you can put your trust in and will not let you down as well as someone who would finish his homework. A student who would take on the responsibilities that are required as a student on campus.

(06:01) Speaker 6: If I were to describe an honor student, I would say someone who will just not only take responsibility for themselves but also for the community that really is involved and wanting to push others to become better. Not only because they want other to surround themselves with people who are successful but because they actually want to have- see other people being successful.

(06:23) Speaker 5: I see someone- an honor student would be someone who's a leader of the people in the community, better at communication than most of the regular kids on the campus and he/she could be one like that spots different qualities in different people like testing all start of it and not and more on- it's more about giving back to the community and making sure that everyone is coming up and you're not the only one that's stepping up while others are just going down.

(06:58) Speaker 4: I see an honor student as someone who is responsible for their work and for the community for helping others and being on time to classes stuff like that.

(07:20) Speaker 3: I guess for me, the honor student is a person that exemplifies intellectual curiosity and wants to fully embrace the community college experience both in the classroom and outside in the ways that they've described and that includes being involved in leadership and in service and all these opportunities that you can have at college if you want to embrace them and the honor students I think exemplify that they want to have the entirety of the community college experience.

(07:55) Andrew: Well since everyone else thinks that honor students are so selfless so bring in the selfish perspective, I think to be an honor student is someone who wants the university rigor in their courses and the state college price tag.

(08:13) Speaker 3: That's fair.

(08:17) Host: Okay I understand. How would you describe your own campus?

(08:22) Andrew: Oh, Gardens campus? I really like Gardens campus. I've been to all the campuses even [inaudible] ones and Gardens campus is definitely my favorite. It's really relaxed. The layout is nice, the greenery is nice. Students are really good. I mean you can stop and talk to any student and have a pretty good discussion. Some kid just walked up to me one day and asked if I wanted to talk and the next thing you know we're in some kind of very strange abstract intellectual rattle tattle in front of the library that is probably something I would never forget. I really like Gardens campus. There's not really much as far as the campus goes that I can complain about.

(09:14) Speaker 3: This is strictly in terms of how it impacts let's say the honors experience or just general?

(09:19) Host: At this point, I'll probably say.

(09:22) Speaker 3: Sorry.

(09:23) Host: Yeah, I know. It's a fair question. Is that what I say probably one in general.

(09:28) Speaker 3: Okay.

(09:29) Host: It's kind of because it's something beyond his experience should be part of it but it's also that picking to tap on like the culture on your own campus.

(09:37) Speaker 3: Okay. So I supposed that- I mean, I didn't spend time on all three campuses and I did switch my own campus from [inaudible] to [Lake Worth]. I think like what was the improvement but aesthetically and the facility is very, I think on this campus, they can be pretty dismal in some areas. I think the [audio] facilities are pretty good. I think it's just a fairly large campus and it doesn't do much to create a familiar environment. It's a very hard to- you know you have to make an effort to be part of the community at [Lake Worth] I think and I think it's hard for administrators to be more attentive to see what's on its campus because it's so large as opposed to Gardens where, you know, speaking to a dean is very easy or someone financially can be very helpful because they just are able to be more attentive.

(10:32) Speaker 4: Gardens is my home campus and I really enjoy the gardens probably my favorite. I like the environment a lot. If you feel like there is more of the community at the Gardens campus and I was able to know more of the advisers and [inaudible] and stuff like that on the campus.

(10:51) Andrew: Can I add to mine?

(10:52) Host: Okay. Yeah.

(10:54) Andrew: Okay collegiate at Gardens is one of the coolest things that we have. Because of the way Gardens is set up, everyone always has to cross campus whether it's administrators are in this side of the campus and advisers are in the complete opposite side of the campus, they're always walking back and forth. So the cool thing like, so I'm only saying that you don't run into administrators here. You are always running into your adviser or administrator or professor on Gardens campus or classmates. So I'm going to change the coolest thing I think about Gardens campus is the collegiate between students and faculty and people are always crossing each other.

(11:32) Speaker 3: Collegiate has a pretty harsh qualification though.

(11:35) Speaker 6: Probably because the parking lot is around the campus as supposed to here where it surrounds the campus.

(11:41) Host: Yeah.

(11:46) Speaker 5: So I had mine in Lake Worth campus too but I've been to the Palm Beach Gardens. So I've been a full times so. I've been to both campuses. The thing I like about Lake Worth campus is it's huge, the library is good. People are helpful but like when you go to the writing lab and the reading labs they are not really familiar. They wouldn't help you because that's a huge volume of people coming into them. But as compared to the Gardens campus, you

walk into a writing lab and you are without an appointment, they will come and help you straight away and that was kind of an experience as an honors kid. You always want someone to help you out of this like not getting the day because it's kind of challenging so you need second thoughts on it and so being on Gardens campus would be a great thing like you get out instantly but over a year, if your home campus is Lake Worth, you have to wait like couple of days to get an appointment so that's the only down side.

(12:48) Speaker 6: Well aesthetically, I feel Lake Worth campus, my campus, I feel like you could use a little bit of I don't know something more fun? [Laughs] As if we'll like to put it because I feel like it's [other blunt] campus. There's a huge grass space right in the middle of it with absolutely no trees and then here in Florida it's been super-hot. There's not even a [inaudible] out there. It's just a fountain as supposed to like Gardens campus, they have trees and you can sit on the ground and just like lay about, campus there's a lot of shade areas. You know that feels more homey over there as supposed to here and the sky is like so large. But when it comes to the faculty at the school itself like the essence of the school, I would say that it is so big that there's just so much to do that you can't really get around to it but at the same time, that could be a good and a bad thing because we have so many resources here at the Lake Worth campus that aren't offered in other campuses. A lot of students come over here complaining that, oh there's [contact] club here and we got in to [inaudible] where they don't have this or that and it's so hard to get in contact with this person because they are in charge of so many things or they just don't have that there but in Lake Worth they do have it and then you guys are so lucky and I always hear that often. Now they have a lot more resources because we were like the main campus. So I do appreciate that we have so many resources even though like you guys mentioned that it can be like a negative evident situation because it get so many people are trying to get that to these resources probably for so many of them in my campuses that it gets like work overload like when I went to the writing club at the Gardens campus, I was amazed that I could just sit there and somebody would help you as supposed to here like I have to be like time schedule that I'd be going within thirty minutes and there's so many restrictions and I'm like, okay, where do I sign up? And they're like, no you could just stay where I were and I was just like, what? I was amazed. Yeah, so that was an experience

(14:58) Speaker 3: I'd like to agree with that sentiment especially when it comes the honors college. I think you can always rely one Lake Worth in having the greatest abundance of honors classes. And aside from that, yeah, there's like the benefit of being the main campus, it means that if you need to speak to someone in the foundation office or in the institutional scholarship office and it's arm your own campuses a lot more convenient than when I was at [inaudible] I have to make special trips if I needed to speak to those people and that's certainly convenient that it is the main hub but also to that same point you would hope that for the main campus you know, it would be aesthetically pleasing and their facilities would be up to date. Their library and the main campus is really dismal.

(15:43) Speaker 6: Oh, and Campus Gardens is absolutely beautiful.

(15:45) Speaker 3: Yeah.

(15:45) Speaker 6: I went like a week ago, I was like-

(15:46) Speaker 3: Yeah.

(15:48) Andrew: We have the newest one though.

(15:49) Speaker 3: And most college universities people like will use their libraries to work on homework and all these other things and aside from trying to solve- where would it? It's on third floor, right? It's not exactly suited for- in people's way. You know, you have to make exert effort to go there to meet people and to work there. This also just doesn't satisfy the volume of students here and it's just to view it on aesthetically pleasing place to work and it's important to make the place that is conducive to learning and studying and it is not a very satisfactory library.

(16:28) Speaker 4: Yeah, I agree.

(16:28) Andrew: Especially because there's no internal stairwell. There is an internal stairwell but we kind of they kind of bring them together but it's so chunked up into each floor.

(16:37) Speaker 3: Yeah, the second and the first floor, you don't identify it as being part of the library because it's a study point. Now, the second floor is not bad but the third floor which is the main part of the library is pretty terrible there.

(16:47) Speaker 6: The bookshelves are all the way at the back end and you didn't even know that was a library back there and I was see some rumors out there yeah.

(16:56) Speaker 3: David, you're up.

(17:02) David: So I definitely do agree but we shall send [inaudible] resources. We do, Lake Worth campus does receive plenty of resources for example I graduate from the Boca campus and in here, my first semester before I enter the nursing program, finishing on my perquisites and [inaudible] here and I took the anatomy two class whereas I take another one at Boca and they were dissecting a shark. I mean, how do you even get a shark in here? Like they don't have that at the Boca campus they had tons of cats to dissect. You can even- they could give you a free cat you can take home. They give you your cat. I mean I don't know but they give you a cat and you can work on it on your free time but no. At the Boca campus they have specifically like, I think it's a twelve cats and you could only come during the class time and look at it [inaudible] and you can never walk back in and look at it again until you hit your midterm or final. Whereas here, you know, they got starfish. I mean I worked over there for a whole semester and so I got to see the many resources that they have over many of the campuses. Is it a good thing? Absolutely. Are students using it efficiently? Absolutely not. You would think when they set back [inaudible] thing were like when you don't have enough, you want more but then when you have more, you sort of lose track and then you don't really use it at full advantage sort of like you know when you really want something really bad and then you just leave it there or after because you are bored of it out of it. So that sort of like what I know is here that have leave the campus and I don't really think it's the students fault. Faculty is playing a part in that and given the last one interesting what we are doing is we're taking about budget and stuff and one of the main things is you know, faculty members. They can't be as symbolic as they used to back in the day. Things are really more expensive. They're getting older. They need to care for themselves

and their family and had to go get different jobs. They have to Uber for God sake. Now, do you need more money? Which takes time for them being here with student's act- student activities or just any of the students on campus. Participating in any event. And that sort of a detrimental factor that happens. It's a great campus. I would admit that. That sounds- I go visit the foundation office, Marcela you know, visit everybody here most of the time but in regards of assistance like the reading lab or financially, if I get a dollar for every time that students came to me and told me that I identify as their adviser then and an adviser steer them wrong and they wasted a whole year, I would probably create an ecstatic fund, scholarship fund. [Inaudible].

(19:56) Speaker 3: You know what? I tell you-

(19:57) David: I would have created one by now.

(19:59) Speaker 3: I think advising is consistently mediocre across the campuses.

(20:03) Speaker 6: Yeah.

(20:04) Andrew: Yeah.

(20:05) Speaker 3: I don't think that that's a campus specific issue.

(20:07) David: Right, but I have heard from the organ- I mean now I'm in Lake Worth then differently I haven't seen Gardens yet.

(20:12) Speaker 3: I think some of the ministry of departments are better on other campuses like financially, Lake Worth's way better at Gardens. They're more competent, they're more aware but at career center might be better on campus but I think academic adviser is mediocre and consistent across all of the campuses.

(20:27) Andrew: Yeah. They know about it too.

(20:29) Speaker 6: I think I would advise some of these to do that.

(20:30) Speaker 3: Yes. I agree.

(20:32) Andrew: If we ever have a good adviser though, we lose them because we pay our advisers and this is not you know? This is a [inaudible] problem nothing we can do about it. But we pay our advisers dirt because that's all we can afford to. So like any of our good advisers we would lose to FAU or another University or somewhere else.

(20:51) David: Of course and then we would come to a point where like we are not even looking at the students we're not even assessing the students. We're looking at the paper and saying and-

(20:58) Speaker 3: What are you doing?

(21:00) David: Yeah, this is what you need, this is what you need, this is what you need, go do that and goodbye next.

(21:05) Speaker 6: And then it ties it to like the whole honors student that they don't even know about the honors college until they hear it from another student which is a lot of the students have told me that, oh they have an honor school? What is that about?

(21:17) Andrew: I didn't know that either. I was a 4.0 student. I never knew about it until my sophomore year. And that's why I had to do so much track. I've really done-

(21:23) Speaker 6: That means that you really worry about.

(21:25) Andrew: I would have done honor school track if I knew about it earlier but I didn't have enough time to do go track when I finally learned about it.

(21:32) Speaker 3: I feel like we'll be probably addressed it in a lot of your future questions?

(21:35) Host: Yeah I know.

(21:35) Speaker 3: Let's probably starts-

(21:37) Host: Yeah, it's more of you guys-

(21:38) David: We're here debating that matter.

(21:40) Host: It's most likely just letting you go on. [Inaudible]

(21:43) Andrew: Very organic free club [inaudible].

(21:45) Host: [Inaudible] almost like yeah, all I need is all your answer. The system is probably the ten classes you are involved multiple campuses. Yes. It's getting a nice conversation compare it. You know these differences between the campuses daily ?

(21:58) Speakers : Yes.

(22:01) Host: Okay, then let's see going on to the next. What sort of communication currently exist that you could currently exist when discussing class scheduling like from a district level, the campus level, the faculty starting like probably up with David, put it back on that way?

(22:15) David: So your question is in regard like you're talking about a vertical line from district down to-?

(22:21) Host: Well no. In this case like if you can when class scheduling is- when you are getting messages about class scheduling. What sort of communication would you get, say from a district level? What sort of communication would you get from a campus? Would you get communication from faculty?

(22:39) Speaker 3: Or where do you get your communication from?

(22:40) Host: Yes.

(22:41) David: Right. Well, I don't think we are getting communication from district, we don't. That I can tell you right now. But we do get from I believe our campus where I believe they send email with a little flyer saying registration ends here but they send it like once. It's a flyer that says this is a day for registration, this is the day for withdrawals. They send an email the last day for withdrawals. The last thing for final clearing.

(23:04) Speaker 6: They have a calendar on panther web too.

(23:06) David: Yeah. And you have a calendar on the panther web that they and you get that when you first join like the little book that they give you with stamps, who keeps that after like you lose and-

(23:16) Speaker 3: They would give you and you sign here.

(23:18) David: Yeah. Yeah.

[Inaudible]

(23:20) David: You hear that? That's the whole point. You know, we sort of like communication and begins to lack as you are moving on to the education at the actual college.

(23:30) Host: And also this is one being probably specifically in regards to communication about honors courses?

(23:37) Speaker 3: Okay. That's a little bit different.

(23:39) David: Oh, yeah. Honors courses, that that's for sure. We- Marcela and the team, the board, they do their best to definitely get those courses out there. Communication amongst the team and amongst my peers is there for me of importance and they definitely do a great job at it. Our students taken advantage of it as much as they could or they should that makes it harder because most of the honors class that they do are on- they are honors don't qualify for the piece of paper that the advisers are throwing on our face. And then we'll probably end up having to pay out of our pocket and so the first few, yeah we qualified then we get to honor list program, that's perfectly fine. We state- you know, Marcela and the team will walk you through it. But in regards to batch of honors courses for us to take, there's many of the honors courses that I love to have taken in the past and I added it and all of a sudden financial would be back to me and say, sorry you have to pay for that out of your pocket and that's where were we.

(24:40) Host: Interesting.

(24:40) Speaker 6: Where do I hear about honors college classes? I think I had to pretty much look them up myself. Just trying to keep on top of it. I don't really hear much about which class

is going to be offer until it opens up like the semester opens up and you can go on whether choose classes.

(25:00) Speaker 3: Yeah, with the honors.

(25:02) Speaker 6: Yeah and click honors and what semester and in the initial semester well you're just going to have to wait until it shows up. Eventually it shows up. You don't really know when it shows up because they tell you when the classes is open for you to register but they don't tell you when the classes are shown for you to look at them so how in advance?

(25:24) Speaker 3: Yeah, it's like a month or two in advance but you don't know.

(25:28) Speaker 6: They don't announce it.

(25:29) Speaker 3: Yeah. Exactly.

(25:30) David: So just they have no professor on you know just to say-

(25:33) Speaker 3: A lot of the TBA's

(25:34) David: TBA's, to be announced.

(25:35) Speaker 6: Oh my god yeah. And then you don't know whether or not to stick around so.

(25:41) Speaker 5: Oh, the only part of communication for the honors class would I say is they don't tell us when the honors class will be offered, spring or fall. So we can't plan it out before. We just have to go with the flow and the registration.

(25:57) Speaker 6: Yeah, there's so no assistance they offer.

(25:59) Andrew: They don't know either.

(26:00) Speaker 3: Yeah. Yeah. [Inaudible]

(26:02) Andrew: They don't know- they don't have the information to tell us. They don't know.

(26:05) Speaker 5: The district level too. Like you don't know what class are you going to take or you just got away down there and then just like wait look it up, wait, look it up until you- Oh, there you go. But you are taking the class involved taking that they will not credit it right too.

(26:19) Speaker 3: Right

(26:20) Speaker 5: So it's kind of like that.

(26:22) Speaker 4: I heard when I talked to Dr. Piccolino who's there with we ran on the Gardens campus. He let us know I had a mess on my [inaudible] class and he would let us know what classes are going to be offered for the next semester so that was really helpful other than that I had to look them up and find do the honors.

(26:44) Speaker 3: So I guess my first semester I independently voted out, make sure and generally speaking, that I kind of allotted myself to know in advance what was been offered on each campus but a little biased because I made it by the mission statement when I was part of the student advisory council to let the students know what meanings so I mean, does not helped either to better but I thought that that was working on because certainly for you guys, I didn't hear that that was how you heard about the classes. But I would definitely, let the students know at our monthly meetings. I know that both for example because they have such a bad track record of sustaining honors spots. They're very aggressive about informing students in advance. They put out a lot of emails to anyone who Boca was their main campus. You get and receive email, lots of emails from the honors professor who is on and from Marcela. And sometimes would be signs on campus. I see that add Boca and at Gardens, you'll see signs about upcoming honors classes. You don't really see that at Lake Worth and then sometimes word of mouth from professors especially if you have one honors professors will let you know or he'll let you know if they have an upcoming one. So that's sort of my observation.

(28:00) Andrew: I learned about it all by my classes just the old fashion way. Just checking and checking. It was nice that we got kind of first picks. We got to go in early to register for classes which did help as far as planning them out because then like my spring semester, I had my honors literature class dropped it like the last minute and I had to completely revamp my whole schedule including taking classes down night classes one time a week night classes which I don't really prefer but I have to come down here at Lake Worth and I live all the way in Juno so that's like normally from rush hour because I have the common rush hour from the other campus, it can take anywhere from forty five minutes to an hour and a half to get down here. And that was just because I have perfect schedule and then at the last minute one class got dropped and then it was my graduating semester so I needed that literature course and I needed the honors credit so I had no other option. I almost had to take class from Boca.

(29:12) Speaker 3: I don't know what honor students would do if we didn't get priority registration.

(29:16) Andrew: Yeah.

(29:17) Speaker 3: And when that happens, it really puts a whole wrench in your semester planning.

(29:21) Andrew: Yeah. Yeah. That was rough.

(29:25) Speaker 6: Yeah even up to delay a semester they could not read that.

(29:28) Andrew: Yeah, I know that they keep trying new things every semester, every year as far as how to make these schedules but I think it would be good to have at least for like the main

classes that a lot of people take but that aren't offered every single semester, to have this class always offered in the fall and that these classes always offered in the spring so people can have so many kind of structure to plan out their two years because when you are trying to finish in four semesters or five if you take a summer like I was then you have really have to have everything structured so that would help.

(30:10) Host: How do you perceive that honors classes are kind of like schedule like just how they applied it with the system? In depth perception.

(30:24) Andrew: I'm kind of trying to understand what you are asking.

(30:29) Speaker 3: I think like time, the time of the day.

(30:32) Andrew: Okay.

(30:32) Speaker 3: So the way I see this it's very campus driven, the way I perceive it like it seems to me like for example the Gardens campus. Professor Piccolino works with the administration and the deans to take that one honors math class and one honors humanity class like there is like a mission on the campus so at least at Gardens and I see the same thing at Boca but at Boca it's more of a failing effort like they were just trying to get honors off the ground and they're really just looking to make partnership with professors on campus who want to keep contributing to it. So I think it's really- it's a more like a campus concerted effort to schedule classes especially classes they find work on their campus like would be able to schedule more night honors classes because they know that their campus is utilized more at night and I know Piccolino says that doesn't work so well them at the Gardens campus so I think the campuses kind of utilize what they see their demographics been.

(31:33) Speaker 4: I think the campus ways on the professor ways on do a good job with scheduling the times and dates they correlate with each other and work for the students.

(31:45) Speaker 5: Yeah. I like the college would as far as the honors classes, let's say you are taking four honors classes that would be like sufficient time to travel from one campus to another so you won't be overlapping stuff. I like the reasons like communicate within each other and make sure that kids sign up for the honors classes.

(32:07) Speaker 6: Yeah, I generally do like time frames. I appreciate that they have actually classes because I do work all day and it's kind of difficult to manage our schedule in that way and very early morning you have classes at 8 am. I don't appreciate the middle of the day ones. It's like right between lunch. It kind of cuts you would be in half unless you have absolutely like no job or like really nothing else to do or you're going to be in the campus the whole day, I notice that they offer the knowledge to the [inaudible] courses almost always at twelve or twelve thirty like consistently, the past three semesters that I tried to sign up, it was like twelve or twelve thirty and then then switch it up for those three semesters until I finally found [inaudible] at 6pm which was like a miracle, I was like praying to like God, that like I couldn't believe it, I was like- and then I was afraid that they are going to drop because it was at night and no one, got a lot of people have signed up and I was like crossing my fingers like please don't drop this class

because it was like the only one that was in the afternoon and it was required from the honors track or [inaudible] track, right? [inaudible]

(33:16) Speaker 3: You know that was becoming mandatory but until now, it wasn't yet.

(33:22) Speaker 6: Okay. And it was only at twelve noon so I've done it [inaudible] the translation and have a little variation in times for a class that is mandatory in the honors course.

(33:31) Speaker 3: Yeah. They should but I am that full time student that prefers classes from nine to five.

(33:36) Speaker 6: Yeah.

(33:37) Speaker 3: I don't- I can't take the amount of honors classes that I have taken that were super- I had an eight am twice a week class. That was fun and then I had a bunch of night classes for honors and you have to take them because there's like what is it? Twenty five on a good semester so you have to really take times that don't necessarily work well with your lifestyle. Whether you are full time or part time. You are going to take a class it's inconvenient.

(34:03) Speaker 6: That's true.

(34:06) Host: David?

(34:06) David: Inconveniences of the times to be on these honors classes?

(34:10) Speaker 6: Yeah.

(34:11) David: Well I agree with some of you. There will be those courses it has happened and it happens to all of us. I'm sure somewhere down the road one of us has to take that course that starts at 8 am or goes from-

(34:25) Speaker 3: Double period at night.

(34:26) David: Yes. Yes. Yes. It was pretty bad. Well, one of the things that I did find though that although I did have to make that sacrifice for me personally I can't speak for the entire student body it was worth it because of the classes themselves.

(34:44) Speaker 3: Yeah. Absolutely.

(34:45) David: Yeah. For me it was worth it. I mean for me although I have to make that sacrifice to wake up super early, you know, make it there in break- make breakfast at 6 am or something or even stay until class. Go to 7 to like 10-10:30. It was worthy because the environment that I found myself in and it was enjoyable and that's what honors classes should be. Like for me, it was like no other class. I'll walk into the class and I would just forget that even time exist. I wouldn't even look at the clock. Because we're intuitively and scholarly having these conversations that are very interesting for everybody. I mean the engagement

discussions that are enjoyable for most of us and so for me it was- although it was serve in the communities at times. I felt that the waited out.

(35:37) Speaker 3: And because we commute- sorry.

(35:39) David: Yeah. No, your turn.

(35:40) Speaker 3: And because we commute to any of these crazy schedule, I think when we transfer. I mean certainly I'm looking forward to do it on campus and I'll take any time and effort because there's that struggles suddenly go on and doing an 8 am class when you live fifteen minutes you know, and so a walk from your door is going to be a breeze so I think it certainly prepares you for if you're going to be like living on campus sort of going to be a full time student for four year course or afterwards.

(36:09) Andrew: I think most people know in the beginning of fall semester what spring semester courses that are going to be so if I got a Google survey email that said what classes are you going to need next semester. What honors classes are you going to need, and I can just check those boxes and if they could get that out to everyone instead of having a guess, they would have, okay, most of these students being this. Most of these students need this.

(36:38) Speaker 6: Knowing what campus too like a survey monkey or something like that.

(36:41) Speaker 3: Yeah.

(36:41) Speaker 6: That would be good.

(36:42) David: The main struggle. Nobody replies and nobody takes that on your end.

(36:46) Andrew: I think honors students are a little better.

(36:48) Speaker 3: I think there is fraction called for honor students that are also-

(36:52) David: Fraction. Yeah of course absolutely. I think it's best like if you do that like not just at the end of the year but throughout the fall semester so that way you can engage with them during the meetings. I think that would definitely [inaudible].

(37:07) Speaker 3: You know how the course evaluations are free with extra credit. Honors classes should compel our students to take some sort of survey monkey which will help them schedule classes.

(37:18) Andrew: Honors-

(37:19) Speaker 5: Yeah, you could get it in honors point.

(37:22) Andrew: I mean besides Marcela, an honors specific adviser in each campus would be great. Not like a new adviser that that's all they do. But have adviser that on each campus it's

also like the honors college liaison like the honors college adviser liaison for each campus. That would be really good for scheduling because that's one person is hearing from all the honor students on that campus and they can kind of help pull it off rather.

(37:50) Speaker 3: Professor Piccolino does it to some extent like he will let you know like what administration is talking about for the subsequent semesters. And I think to some degree that is part of the expectations from the honors professor's liaisons.

(38:04) Andrew: I also forgot what you said five minutes later.

(38:06) Speakers : Yeah.

(38:09) Host: Your name?

(38:10) Speaker 8: Rubino.

(38:11) Host: Rubino? And I guess we'll start on to the next. Rubino what do you look for when you are selecting classes?

(38:21) Speaker 8: Well, first things first, if I need it and [inaudible] a lot of times there are class that are available that you don't need it so you just have to- you know, browse and see if you need that class but after that, I would say professor for sharing our [inaudible] professor. Many of the times that there aren't a lot of choices of you know, or there's two or three or five honor student professor is teaching the same course. Usually there's only like two. Like a max so it's like fifty, fifty when you take your chances so well most of the time you know, when I pick on honors course, I don't really- that's a regular course you barely have professors. Honors courses, I just know it's going to be a good experience. So I just look for the time. Like does the time works for me? For my said schedule then I just go from there because like you guys are saying earlier, I haven't really put a whole about of what time work best for me until like the later part of my academic career here at [inaudible] because before I had to pick any class that I know that I need it. I don't care what time it was but I just know I needed that class and do what we had to get there. It was eight, it was six, I have taken classes all the time of the day I just got classes that are so it's just- this is how it is.

(39:49) David: You just got to do what you got to do.

(39:50) David: Yeah. That's it. It's just my mentality about it. You need to go to.

(39:57) Host: David?

(39:57) David: Well on top of being in the state with regards to definitely selecting classes that you need and which all requires well some of this let's see this aspect of like getting it out has been growing lately at [inaudible] college where I tried to get this involve in many things that there aren't focus and just getting in, getting out, taking just the required courses and then find that again which is understandable but they sort of have this perspective that [inaudible] college is this place of where you just immediately took a route which you'd never going to be anything

if you stay here. And that and so, with that being said selecting courses for me and wish I always portray those students is like what are you going to gain out of it. You know, what type of learning would you get out of it? And how is it going to make you better? You know, is taking this course is going to make you a better student or a better leader? I took the leadership development course and that's the course that I took before I even joined [inaudible] before I joined the honors college. I didn't need it. I have taken already all my electives but I saw how beneficial it would have been for me. Analyzing class and obviously you start pursuing. I went for it and I tell you I'd probably wouldn't be here if it wasn't for that class. That simple.

(41:32) Speaker 8: I would like to add that looking at the syllabus is also very important. Anytime I pick a course I always look at the syllabus for the student. Although like maybe a great teacher but I want to see what I am getting myself into.

(41:47) Speaker 3: Yeah. Absolutely. So.

(41:49) David: Have you found that sometimes those syllabus are not-

(41:49) Andrew: Like the economics class that I have three grades [inaudible].

(41:52) David: You found that sometimes the syllabus are not correct though?

(41:55) Speaker 8: But if they are not, there's a room and there's an email to that professor which I visit. I say hey, I would be in your course well or whatever. Can you just like give me some of the overview of what you're-

(42:10) David: Because a lot of times you get in a class and then he gives you a different syllabus.

(42:13) Speakers : Yeah.

(42:13) Speaker 8: Wait. I thought it was the contract that we had and I'm paying for this course now it's not.

(42:18) Speaker 3: You see that in adjunct's that they kind of just have the generics.

Chris: So it gets pass that very little -- a lot of them won't tell you the grading criteria.

David: They don't.

Chris: Yeah, right.

Female 1: They don't tell you a lot of stuff

(42:31) Speaker 3 : So for me if I see that, it tells me that, oh, first of all, I should have realized before this is probable for an adjunct. And some professors that can bad, but knowing they're an

adjunct is, you know, something that'll form my decision. And also, not knowing how that class is going to unfold for me is something that needs to be cautious.

David: Yeah, as a measure.

Chris: Yeah. Exactly. And I rather look for a professor who[inaudible] syllabus and preferably one that I still like.

David: Yeah. Yeah.

(43:02) Speaker 6: Um, when I take classes, I-- I'm really a lot about professor's experience. I really like to talk to my fellow peers about how that professor treated them? What they gained from that professor? Um, what they heard about that professor? How's they're teaching style kinda works with 'em their learning style. Um, because, I wanna -- I wanna like, find people along the way that are going to make an impact in my life, and I can make an impact in their life. So that's one of the main things I look at which professor it is. Um, generally, like the Orange Professors are really that great. I don't -- I kinda of keep an open mind, um, about what I'm going to experience. Um, I guess I'm not as much concerned about the syllabus because I, I like the surprise element or like the challenge of it. I kinda really, um, like to be flexible and not, uh, I can do that. That's like my thing. That's like, I don't care what it is cause a lot of people try like to scare you. "Oh, don't take that professor. He's so hard, and, oh my gosh, he's so boring." And then you get there and it's like well if maybe you would've seen it in a different way or the reason why that professor was that way you could actually get through the course just fine by trying to like build a relationship with that professor. And then times. I look at times a lot I really like to keep um a very um business schedule and it just keeps you going one thing after another. You meet a lot of people. Um, it makes a difference along the way and its time is important.

(44:40) Josh: For me it's, um, the first thing I will be looking at the campuses just because for some the campuses their resources are different, especially, what the professors have and what you are studying. For me as an engineering major, I found it I really want to get the Gardens campus because they have lot of resources for engineering students and they have whole science and technology building. So, I kinda looked at into peers are like I find people [inaudible] um, regular general kids at the Gardens campus are tend to be more motivated towards their goals than at Lake Worth campus. We're - because this is a huge campus most of the people that come in there are like, "oh, I'm done with my classes get out" and not coming back until the next class starts. And on the Garden's campus there's definitely it's like a whole different experience where people are kinda of like a close community and they are part of groups where you can do research and do like[?] similar stuff up there. And they have resources out there too, so.

(45:56) Speaker 6: Um, I pick my classes based on the time schedule because I work. Um, I also do it based on how it's going to benefit me in the future. Um, not so much an honors classes because the professors are great. But I also look for the other classes. I look to see how many kids are in the seat or how many seats are still available because if there's 27 seats left I know it's not so much of good class. So I pick one that um more students choose. And that is about it.

(46:30) Chris: Definitely, one of the biggest things that I look for is what people say about the professors. So, yeah, I immediately like start ranking the professors based on what it says on rate my professor and sometimes I use the course evaluations that the school provides. Um, and the only other thing that I can think, I make my decision is that um usually when you taking honors courses you're usually not taking them for your major. You're usually taking honors that satisfy your curriculum because their spread through the social science, humanities, and you know the other criteria you need to meet. Um, so I mean occasionally, there will be like an elective honors class. But 'em, so I usually, try and make sure that 'em the classes that I'm taking don't repeat the classes that I need for my major. You know, if there is a certain math class that I know I want to take with the professor and that one for my major and this is a great honors class, but it will conflict with that I'll- I'll take a different honors class that will satisfy my majors. So, I mean, the honors classes are definitely important but I make sure that I will work them around my major. So, I'll take a worse time for an honors class hopefully with the very professor- as a full-time student I have the luxury of being able to take the electives three times. But of them, I'll definitely take crazy time so that it doesn't impact the class for my major.

(47:50) Solomon: Ideally. It would, my, I rank it: professor, um, need, time, location, but how it works out is: need, time, professor, location, So.

(48:14) Host: Okay, that makes sense. Let's see this what I have. Assuming it's a choice equal class what makes you choose between honors section and non-honors section of a course?

Solomon: Um, if those are offered I'll always pick the honors.

Host: Okay.

(48:30) Chris: Um, I would usually take honors, but you know what eh, usually it will come down to the professor. If the professor that teaches the non-honors is higher rated I will pick -- and that happen to me for chemistry everyone recommended a certain professor at the Lake Worth campus and it was being offered at Gardens um, and I was considering it but people just raved about the style that this non-honors professor taught. And it worked out really well because I was able to take that professor a second semester and continued taking that professor for chemistry. But it will still come down to what people will say about the professor the general rating of that professor.

Female 2: What Solomon said. Usually, the professor, but if I would see the honors course I will take the honors course rather than the regular.

(49:14) Josh: Yeah, I would take the honors course sometimes, not always but um just because of the critical thinking and we usually have discussions. But while in the regular courses you just walk in people are like doing their stuff. I don't even know who's seating next to me. We don't even talk in the regular class they just like sit and do their work and go off. In honors class you have like this a lot of topics and discuss a lot of stuff. Kinda intellectual and it helps you a lot.

(49:47) Speaker 6: Yeah, I agree both with Josh and Solomon, the professor is definitely very important. Um, I usually chose the honors professor because they are a bit better because of the

[inaudible] class and um the student uh, they are just more intellectually-- how would I say it -- stimulating. They stimulate you more. A person can have totally different impact in the way that you see it from a class until you experience a class. And, um, I totally agree with Josh, you will seat next to a person in a regular class, I always make it a deal for myself to introduce myself to whomever is seating next to me in front of me behind me in a regular class. And I always get the same response. "Oh, like hi, like you're saying hello to me like what that's strange but nice to meet you," and I'm like it's something that you don't get in the honors class. In an honors class you're like "oh, yeah, thank you like we should share numbers and information and do you have free time to study and we should get together and study together." It's a lot -- It's a lot more, um, stimulating for sure.

(50:57) David: Um, yeah. I-I do agree. Um, after taking many honors courses over like we're all honor students like to go over a beyond and take honor courses, um, that does not apply in the sense, but, um, I have at times chose the regular course, um, mainly because the professor was challenging. Um, also because it gave the ability to communicate to you a different side of the Student Body. It wasn't always the same, um, for me going into the classroom, this honor student I was able to bring the honors college with me. So there I feel that I'm making much more of an impact than I am in an actual regular honors class. So, for literature I taught an actual session of the class. I went up there and taught literatures like that never has happened to me. Um, so, the instructor having taught literature. We will do study sessions right after. The students were very interested, in fact, that I was bringing up the honors college, um. I was sharing with them many ideas about their educational future and success and stuff and they sort of looked up to that fact. And, um, they did a lot better in class and I personally felt they would've. So it's just that that idea.

(52:30) Speaker 8: Um, for me I think it depends where I am in my track. Just being fully honors I think my first and second semester I would have said, "yeah, I've honors course I'm taking that course so I need that to keep me on track. So, at this point is I'll be more selective. For example, um, I was—I was—I prepared myself to take US History course it was the only honors course, um, open but then there was non-honors professor and after talking to some students and hearing just like the extra stuff that was added on it, but it wasn't it wasn't challenging you I just felt like it was redundant work that you usually find in a regular class that you just do stuff that's just repetitive. It doesn't really challenge you. You just do the same stuff over and over again. So you know at that point it was strange. I had chemistry and all these other courses I didn't even really want that so I decided to go with a non-honors professor. So, I would say at the end of the day it depends on the track for me because later on in my tracking career I am going to be more selective than I was when I first started.

(53:47) Chris: Yeah, I would like to echo that. It's something that we forget about but when you are in a large college you go but with each subsequent semester, you don't have the luxury to say you know what um, I can take the non-honors if I want I mean because you know that with each semester you're losing the availability of classes that you still haven't yet taken. You know that you are running out of honors opportunities so you really might have to settle for a class that doesn't necessarily fall into your field area of interest, you know. Um, like I ended taking a wool lint class. It was interesting, but it wasn't a class that I would've gone for, um, because you know you have to get a certain amount of classes.

Host: Yeah.

(54:32) Solomon: Um, I think the reason is that I'll always would take the honors class if it gives me the option specifically because of the small class size. Because I've had--I had environmental science, regular class, not honors and there was only eight people in the class. Um, how that class got pushed through I don't really know but it was um there's only eight people in the class and then felt like an honors class. It was discussion based, it was more interactive, um, it wasn't so much busy work which another reason I love the honors college and professors trust you to do your work so instead of wasting a lot time with the professors quizzing you to see if you did the work, there's an honor system in the honors college that if you are an honor student you're gonna do the work. So, they don't have to spend all of their time making sure you get it in. You can spend more time in discussion or in my honors classes we covered more stuff than the regular, um, merit class would.

(55:37)Speaker 8: In the honors course you're graded on quality, not quantity. That's what you see in the regular courses. You're graded on quantity. How many things can I squeeze in through a semester to get you to do. What. That does help me. Help me by coming to me where I messed up. That's why I find out in EOC 1101, when I took Professor Diane Burk EOC 1101 and 2 and that really helped me in writing skills, but I don't think would've gotten that in a regular course because I talk with friends they tell me that get an essay every week or every two weeks. It's just like what. I'm like they don't sit down and talk to you, explain to you where you messed up. I've always got that. Every time I got my essay back from Professor Diane Burk she always explained to me this what you did, this what you need to go back and fix. She sat down with me. You don't get that.

(56:30) Chris: Yeah, I think that comes back to class size like they're able to be attentive because it's a smaller class because the classes is designed for that professor's student interaction.

(56:40) Speaker 6: Yeah. My first EOC 1101 level classes are the first classes that took. I kinda went back to go complain to my foundation scholarship adviser because I was like I had better classes in high school than here in college like English I told her this is a creative writing class. This is not English that you learn about grammar and what, how to write, and how to, I think that write in this class. I was like so upset because I had paid – I'm an out of state student so I had to pay like a thousand dollars for basically what I will call like a [inaudible]. I was so upset and I was complaining to her so she was like you need to go write it to the Dean. She said that is all I can do for you. So, yeah.

(57:25) David: Also I like the environment in the honors classes like when you take a regular class I'm sure we've all at this point most of us can agree with that we've taken that group project we're there like four or five or two of them that don't do the work or they throw their level of work at you and now the presentation will be hurting and then again, yeah, it's based on quantity so when you go and presented it the quality is not there so everybody gets affected in a sense, but when you do an honors class they can see the level of work that everybody did because everyone would take responsibility for not only their actions but their um their work by themselves.

Speaker 6: Yeah. The dynamics is different.

David: So that's the best thing.

Chris: I have to go pick up a sibling.

Host: Okay, Chris.

Host: We'll be wrapping this all up. Thanks Chris. We have a few last questions and you guys can go.

Chris: Thank you.

Host: [inaudible].

Speaker 4: Thank you.

Host: This is about the impact of having course cancellations and what sort of messages do you feel course cancellation says about the program.

Speaker 8: Have I been impacted by course cancellations?

Host: Yeah like the honors course didn't make afterwards.

(58:59) Speaker 8: Mm. I'm trying to think because usually if I see a class I know that there's suppose to be fifteen in there and I believe with honors course there is eight in there the student can still continue, but what I'll do is I'll just sit there like watch it day after day and if it's not filling up, I drop it before it gets too late. I just don't want to put myself in that predicament. So, I have never been affected by it, but I have heard student who have.

Host: David.

(59:32) David: Yeah, it sucks. It sucks pretty bad. Um, one of the things you because you have high expectations, especially, for your semester that you built yourself up when you think about the class every student, most of your friends have already talked about it, and they are like, "it's an amazing class you're going to do so great. You're going to love the professor" and then you like, "yeah" and then it drops. Now, you're stuck with three classes that sucks completely with nothing to weigh the others out. And-- and it's a detrimental factor of course, also um to financial aid as well because um because that brings you down to like three quarters whereas to oppose to full time you have four classes which can lower financial aid. Um, and also of your availability from work, you submit it, and now I dropped, now you have to go back to your boss-- and things are schedule in months in advance. So for most people, which it is for me and so it really affects the world around you. Sometimes in big ways or sometimes in small ways.

(60:39) Speaker 6: Yeah, I-I agree I'm like sitting at my computer or on my phone checking everyday did it drop, did it drop? I'm, um, refreshing the page over and over to see if it made it through or not, um, and as time keeps passing by, it's like Solomon mentioned earlier you get more afraid that you're not gonna really fit in everything. Um, in the time that you have. And um

like, I said I'm um, um, out of state student I pay over a thousand dollars for each class so I can only afford two classes at a time so if one class drops I'm short like six credits because its um use that for what I can get because you have to have at least six credits so now I have to pick something out of random or last minute. And it's definitely difficult to pick something that you thought was going be available and wasn't and then. Another thing that I had a problem with that class wasn't cancelled particularly because I heard the professor was amazing, but they changed the time last minute. And then the professor emailed me. She's like, "oh, you know I hope this time works for you." I was like I'm in the morning class midday and its caught my day right down middle. So it was really inconvenient and I ended up having to take a research process, which is not required, but I, it was the only thing that I can fit there. Like, that I need uh class a to fill in the spot and I feel like I lost a spot or an elective that I could've used for something a little more useful because I won't consider myself a very strong writer, and I'm proficient in research and I don't feel like I necessarily needed that class. Well, because it was the last option that I had at that moment I had to take it. So I find it super inconvenient for me as the time comes by I feel like I have to keep rearranging my schedule to kinda fit everything you know for me to graduate. And when it comes to my major, I want to do marketing but I had to actually drop of couple of my classes so I can fit in with other classes that, um, that had to do with my major to fill in the wholes, um, for it to be honors, the time, the teachers and it's its um inconvenient very inconvenient.

(63:00) Josh: I never had the chance like that none of my class got cancelled or about to be cancelled. But I heard one of these stories from other honors students like they went to classes and go to their regular professor and say, "oh, I want to honorize this course, and the professor would be, "oh, that is an Honors College." They don't really even know like what Honors College is and how like they can honorize the course. So it's kinda like more worry about the students at the last minute when a course cancels. And it kinda makes it tough because not everyone is a full time student. Like there are full time students but most of us have jobs and things to do so kinda makes it like unorganized.

Host: Solomon.

(63:53) Solomon: I've already touched on this. So, I'll be brief but, um, course cancellations trump the honors courses can make you have to jump through flaming hoops while you're covered in Kerosene. Quote that.

[laughter]

Um, that's what happen this past spring semester. Is I had one course cancelled at the very last minute, and then I got news, not to mention, we have enough, especially as honors students with jobs, trying to finish in two years, um, you know, trying to keep a 4.0 or as close to as we humanly can. Having that extra little bit of stress or angst of having to check if your classes is cancelled everyday, that stress builds up and like if we could somehow you know make a better system, we don't have that stress, that would be huge. Because I know it's just as much stress if not more if not more on the um on the administrators who on the academic affairs who are scheduling these courses, but, um, it's it's hard. Course cancellations can be like the worse thing of the honors college.

(65:11) Host: Let's kinda of build off of that. What would you recommend intentionally to fix these issues?

Host: Solomon..

Solomon: The course cancellations?

Host: Um, huh.

(65:25) Solomon: The course cancellations? Um, I guess like we said before maybe having something so that --something to help-- something to let us to help academic affairs figure out what they're going to do the next semester. So whether it is them getting a survey from us, whether it's when you enter the college you um fill out like this is the list of honors courses that we currently offer. We may add more. We may take some off, but this is what we currently offer. Check the ones that you're plan on taking during your duration of getting the AA. So then they can have that. I think, that academic affairs or whoever does the scheduling for the honors classes needs more data to be able to make better decisions, so that we don't have so many courses cancelled, um, later on. Or whether that's having a liaison adviser for the honors college at every campus. I-I think; I know they are moving to a system where you'll have an assigned adviser. So they're changing that. They're moving toward to where you're having an assigned adviser. Maybe while they are doing this change, we can recommend to them, at the same time, that all of the honors students at each campus get the specific adviser. So then, there's the honors adviser who then will talk to all the honors students will know about it will be able to recommend better courses for them. We will know that these students are reaching out above and beyond because my first freshman year like I said, I had a 4.0. I went to advising all the time, but I never had someone to say, "oh wow look, you're an over achieving student maybe you should try this." Maybe you should join the honors college, maybe you should apply for this scholarship. I never had an adviser to do that so I think it's the honors college could have an honors liaison adviser at each campus that will be that will be phenomenal.

(67:25) Josh: I think maybe a plan while whoever coming in is um a freshman in the college and especially us at the Honors college trying to get the AA stuff and getting the credits like some of the classes that are usually assembled there. So if they take a survey and have a map of all the incoming freshman for two years that will kinda make the class of 27 or 28 people stick together, and they will be taking the same honors classes. So the chances of honors classes getting cancelled will be really low because they know which classes are offered and they have the opportunity to take it with their peers too.

Speaker 8: That is kinda what we did in EMT 101.

Josh: Yeah. [laugh]

Speaker 8: And class and took the same professor again.

Josh: We had one [inaudible].

Speaker 8: One guy dropped out.

(68:25) Speaker 6: I suggest, um, probably create more awareness of the honors college. Josh actually touched on this a little bit ago when he said that some professors don't know about the honors college that's, uh, really something else, tah, realize that we're some of the top students in this whole school college, and the college focuses so much on college completion, and we are the ones that lead in the in that aspect in college completion. And um, we are not recognized enough. Um, overall I think if we were to have a bigger student body that would focus more on the honors college. [inaudible]Think about that, you know that's hard to get 3.5 G.P.A. considering a lot of the students here work really hard. Um, a lot of students generally I think would like to come to community college because they have job and they have a lot of things going on and it's a second chance for them, so some of them want to achieve more and being part of honors college is something that will to push them. So, I guess more supply and demand. If there were more demand for these classes, we would possibly get more - less cancellations. Also, doing the surveys maybe like the course evaluations at the end of the semester, um, we can get like survey or some other time of survey that professors specifically administer within that class, and they that information or data back to the honors college manager. Um, and lastly, um, maybe uh, kinda uh, on the uh, profile of the professors, none honors college professors to put like, uh, if they are familiar with honors college and what it is their class is able to honor. So, you don't have to be like oh, um, this professor, um, can you do honors college um something of that sort and definitely more help in the honors college office. I mean, we have Global Education Sector. She has a secretary and a student aid. We have ICC, which they have like five student aids, a secretary as well, um, an ICC assistant manager like they have so much help. So much employment. Um and then, we also have so many different departments in this campus so much demand on this campus that have enough help, and then we have like honors college, and like I said before honors college completion is so important and we lead in that and we only have a manager for four campuses. Like, that's ridiculous. She doesn't even have a consistent secretary and she has two student aids that get involved year after year. Cause I recommended, I always recommend, I'm always talking about honors college with other students. And I actually told a friend go to the office and they will inform you which part you have need and which part is your goal, and she felt like, you know, there was a student there that students weren't as informed or would have educated her as well as somebody that would have been there full time um cause as a student assistance we graduate and we move on. We only stay a year. There is only so much that you could learn within a year. I feel they should have somebody there that's consistent. I know I kinda- kinda went off topic but-

Host: No worries.

(71:42) Speaker 6: I'm kind of really passionate about some of the things that needs to be fix. But overall, I think that all those things tied together we can really improve um whether we keep the courses or course cancellations.

Host: That actually does tie in. Okay.

(71:58) David: Well, she really covered everything. [laughter]. But again it goes back to what I had mentioned earlier. Um, if I had a dollar for every time an adviser starting off [inaudible]for a

whole year, then I would deliberately I would create a scholarship fund. It's-it's that bad. It has been so many students- and the soon that Honors College many of the student leaders who are here today to advise other students and always look back and never to help others as others have helped you. And we have come across many of that where we were like what classes are you taking and it's funny that you mentioned the whole sticking to the one adviser thing now you go to that one adviser. Now, if a student and this happened, I was doing my shadowing, um, at VI of Lakeside for nursing uh, there was just this ah- ah worker, she was a cook and she is seating in the back, and I see her reading. She had her book-- what's that book called. The em – the common [inaudible] reader from last year.

Female 1: Breaking Night.

(73:20) David: Breaking Night. I said you go to Palm Beach State College and she said yeah. I asked what classes are you taking, and she's telling me about her classes and the classes she need to take to get into the nursing program. That's an interesting program because I am in it. And she's taking all these courses and I'm like what are doing you don't need that. And I'm like what is your plan for your future? What do you want to do? She's like I just want to get my nursing degree, and I just want then just that's it. I don't want to get the bachelor. That's it. I'm older. I have a son. I just wanna get that sort of out of the way and improve my life a little better. This adviser had her on a AA plan when she could have been on an AS plan, which means that she could have entered the nursing program if she followed an AS plan would be starting in January because she is following the AA plan means at this point she has not taken any of the AS course that are prerequisite for the nursing program which means that she's going to be taking courses for a whole year and by the time she's able to enter the nursing program it's going to 2017 Fall when she could have started a year ago.

0=(74:28) Solomon: Yeah I can add on to that and say that advising single out non-traditional student I dropped out of high school junior year, started a business, um, came back a few years later. Um, so I didn't come like a lot of students, I didn't come straight out of high school. So you really those students really rely on advising to make a plan with them. Every single class I took in the first semester were useless and these were all classes that the adviser told me to take. And I took those classes and they were useless. Um, they didn't even realize that I was registered for a different semester where they had different requirements. I registered during the summer um even though I didn't take any classes they still had me registered for that. People who registered that summer they changed requirements for people who registered in the Fall. So, I really wanted to take a Philosophy course and before that counted in the summer I registered that counted as a Humanities and in the Fall it did not. They did not tell me that so I took Art Appreciation when I could have taken a Philosophy course that I really wanted to take but they didn't tell me that. I was--I was before I was exempt from having to take the Intro experience class. I did not need that class I did not learn anything in that class. I can see how some students would need that class, but again, I'm an achieving student I did all that stuff by myself. I didn't need that class they told me I did just because they're so used to saying it. They didn't actually look at my file, look when I was registered, and help me with any of that they completely tore apart my first semester. I finished in two years which means for two semesters I had to take six classes and during the summer I had to take three classes. So I had to catch up because I wasted that whole

first semester and it was specifically because advising was so terrible, and like David said, I should be getting paid as an adviser here. When I became.

Female 1: [inaudible].

(76:31) Solomon: When I became the student government president and the student body president at the Gardens campus everyone started flooding me with questions, which is fine that was my job. But people were literally, I got to say, at least two dozen people were literally using me as an adviser, because I could give them way better information or more accurate information, information about scholarships. I could sit there and talk with them for a few minutes, see what their goals were, and they said, they seen different advisers trying to find a good one and not one adviser ever asked them, what are your goals? What kind of student are you? Um, you know, are you planning on going to a state school? or you planning going out of state? Because those are completely different. They gave me a whole track for going to FAU but I told them originally I'm applying to Georgetown now I'm applying to Cornell and they put me on a track to FAU and it- it hurt me so much. And I've seen advising hurt so many other people and I know some community colleges don't even have advisers because they don't have the financing for it. But if we want to get more funding from the State by raising our matrix and our worse matrix is completion, is retention our retention rate is so low that it drops us in that matrix scale to now we are in the center of the state when we should be towards the top with Santa Fe and Tallahassee CC and I can say the biggest thing though that will help is investing in our advising system.

Female 1: I have to agree.

(78:13) Solomon: So advising is the number one thing that has to be revamped because I would love the advisers personally. I am friends with the advisers I work with Henry Ponciano who is our Dean of Advising at the Gardens campus and I certainly using him as my adviser, but I don't mean to sound so terrible about it but I need to sound very firm in the fact that they're terrible and the advising system is terrible. So that's in my opinion by far more than anything else advising needs to be completely revamped.

(78:46) Speaker 6: That goes for everything even in the honors college like that totally plays a part into the Honors College like so much. We need ah personally adviser at the Honors College because we're also at a different level at that point. So not only do we need restructure in the advising within our school, but in the Honors College itself, so.

(79:06) David: And it you know too and I appreciate that. Thank you very much for that. You know, it's good to hear from a different perspective because um it's things like this that require, uh, you know, uh, for you to uh, a different step [inaudible] It's sort of like how many more students are making the sacrifice before something happens? That's really the question. And so it when-every time I bring this up people sort of laugh or they sort of look at it oh yeah, that's the way we feel and then I ask well in we're we are still considered a community college. We serve our community, which means that, we are generally, the college is generally run by students, but yet we are yet to have a student body that speaks up. And that's one of the main issues that I've

always brought up to the student government or to the Honors College whether to the Board of Trustee to the Student Trustee. Why aren't our students speaking up?

Female 1: Well-

David: This happens.

Solomon: It has to go beyond this room.

David: Right.

Female 1: Yeah.

(80:22) David: I know what you mean. It's-it's sort of that mentality, but to, um, finish up, um, it's- I find it very sad that students also have to in a sense beg, um, instructors just so they can get their honors classes. And use the whole ideal of incentive because they do get paid, the instructors um, in order, for an instructor to say, okay I'll do the honors college project with you and so you can get the honors credit and you might not have heard it outside of this room but I have heard from many faculty instructors as well your students because again classes drop. Um, and, faculty-faculty are just not as involved or again advising which is the main loop hole[inaudible].

(81:19) Female 1: I was actually talking to my professor with the class I had this morning. We're talking about that exactly and she is was like very involved in the um um the laws that are incorporated for the students and she said um a lot of the leaders that we have um all around just kinda don't really focus on what the student needs or wants more what's politically convenient and overall that's kinda like what I've seen throughout. They are excited to hear what the student thinks and what the opinion of what the student is and what the student wants and the student needs, but it's kinda just like, okay, I've heard it. I heard your opinion. It's great but this is ultimately what we want or what is convenient for us, so that's what we're going to go with.

Solomon: Did you take that to the board? No seriously if any of you have [inaudible].

David: Student Trustee?

Solomon: No, no, the trustees. The actual Trustee Board.

(82:18) Solomon: No, see there is a completely disconnect from the Administration Building and the Board of Trustee's Hall. And the forty-five thousand students that we have. There's, I mean, thank the Lord for President Parker because she is breaking down that barrier between the administration but just with advising there's a huge disconnect between the students and administration and what administration thinks the students want and will use and what students actually wants and will use.

David: Yeah.

Speaker 6: I agree.

Host: [inaudible]. Wrap it up.

Speaker 8: Um, I think we've exhausted most of it. We covered it all.

Host: So with that any final thoughts or questions for me?

David: Is this going to be like a paper that we can sort of use for resource for like [laughter]. No, no. I'm talking about-

(83:25) Host: [inaudible]. If you will email me, you can email me the final paper but it will be useful to take to the board when things come together that's hard to say but with the final paper and everything it will be published as part of UCF Library available from the UCF Library, so it should be eventually available in all the thesis data bases in the long term or in the short term.

Speaker 6: What is your topic? Where do you go after this?

(83:59) Host: After this. Oh, starting [inaudible] program application coming this Fall and looking very high likely that FAU lower case but potentially um looking at a few others. I wanted to stay in the area I would have considered FAU program, but I don't know if I want to.

Speaker 6: Well, good luck.

Host: Okay. Please feel free grab some snacks on your way out and thank you for coming.

Speaker 8: Thank you. Man he left too soon. You're gonna be at the next Board, June 14th?

Solomon: Oh, no

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