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Cultivating Philanthropy in Community Colleges: A Dual-Model Approach

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Cultivating Philanthropy in Community Colleges:

A Dual-Model Approach

by

Rachel Pleasant

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
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Dedication

To my husband, John, and children, Claire-Ann and Alexander. Without their sacrifices, support, and patience, I would have given up long ago.

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Abstract

This study tests a model that combines relationship management theory and the theory of reasoned action. Through the collection of quantitative and qualitative data, this study provides deeper understanding of the relationship between community college students and the institution, and identifies aspects of the relationship that most influence behavioral intention to give to the institution. Using this information, public relations practitioners will be able to strategically improve areas of deficiency in the community college-student relationship, thereby increasing the likelihood that today's students will become tomorrow's philanthropic alumni.

Chapter 1: Introduction

In the American higher education landscape, the community college serves as the primary gateway for millions of students. Since their creation at the turn of the 20th century, these institutions have provided affordable and accessible pathways to initial degrees, university study, and the workforce. Yet, these institutions struggle to capture even the smallest fraction of annual alumni giving; less than 1% of annual alumni giving goes to the benefit of community colleges (Skari, 2014). Any upward tick in alumni giving would expand the ability of these institutions to serve their student bodies.

The field of public relations is uniquely positioned to address this problem. Prior research has shown that community college students who felt they had positive relationships with their institutions were more likely to give than those who felt otherwise. Public relations, as the practice has evolved, has made the building of organization-public relationships its central focus. Center and Jackson (1995) described the centrality of relationships to public relations as such: "The proper term for the desired outcomes of public relations practice is public relationships. An organization with effective public relations will attain positive public relationships" (p. 2).

While public relations has come to define itself as a relationship-building field, less attention has been given to how organization-public relationships influence behavior (Ki & Hon, 2007). Public relations practitioners launch campaigns and initiate other strategies aimed at improving the organization-public relationship — but to what end? What are the behavioral outcomes of their efforts?

These questions are at the heart of the current study. The study utilizes a model that combines the relational aspects of relationship management theory (Hon & Grunig, 1999) with the behavior-prediction power of the theory of reasoned action (Fishbein, 1979). Through this model, public relations practitioners will gain new insight into the student-community college relationship and will pinpoint relational aspects that most influence future intention to give financial support. With that knowledge, public relations practitioners will be able to launch efforts strategically designed to move the philanthropy needle in the direction of community colleges.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

American Community Colleges and Alumni Giving

The American community college was invented at the turn of the 20th century to offer affordable two-year general education and workforce-based degrees. By 1989, nearly 50% of all students started their postsecondary education at community colleges (Beach, 2011, p. 7).

Today, there are more than 1,100 community colleges in America (American Association of Community Colleges, 2015). In Florida, where the current research is being conducted, recent years have seen most of the former "community colleges" rebranded as "state colleges" to reflect the addition of bachelor's degrees (Florida College System, 2013) designed to meet specific employer needs.

In fall 2013, America's community colleges served 12.4 million students (American Association of Community Colleges, 2015). Of those students served, 40% were first-generation college students, meaning neither of their parents had attained a bachelor's degree; 35% were African-American or Hispanic; and 72% were the recipients of financial aid (American Association of Community Colleges, 2015). During the 2012-13 academic year, these institutions bestowed 1.2 million degrees and certificates (American Association of Community Colleges, 2015).

Yet, despite serving millions of students each year, community colleges receive only a small fraction of overall annual alumni giving. Skari cited the 2011 Council for Aid to Education's Annual Voluntary Support of Education survey that found colleges and universities, public and private combined, received $30.3 billion in private giving (Skari, 2014). Of that $30.3 billion, $6.8 billion came from alumni (Skari, 2014). Community colleges received only $9.5 million, according to the 2011 report, accounting for less than 1% of the $6.8 billion in total alumni giving (Skari, 2014).

This low level of alumni giving has been a persistent problem for community colleges, but it is one that takes on newfound importance in an era of tightened budgets and evaporating funding. Phelan wrote of a "funding crisis" in community colleges brought on by fluctuating enrollments tied to economic recovery, reductions in state aid, short-lived fiscal initiatives and mandates issued without the requisite

financial backing, rising operational costs and other factors. This "funding crisis" threatens the ability of community colleges to deliver on their mission of affordable, accessible higher education. It also threatens the ability of students, many of whom are minorities or lack the financial means to pursue degrees at universities, to achieve higher education. Phelan wrote:

> Democracy's College stands in peril; its promise and hope for the masses are at risk. Indeed community colleges, now feeling the full effects of improving, post-Great Recession economy, combined with lopsided sources of revenue and increasing demands for efficiency, are forced to make difficult decisions to keep their financial house in order, not all of them in the best interest of the students they are charged with serving. (Bers et al, 2014, p. 8)

It stands to reason that if community colleges were able to capture a bigger piece of the alumni-giving pie, their "funding crisis" would be at least slightly less dire.

Theoretical Framework

In her survey of 7,330 community college alumni, Skari (2014) found that students who felt that they had positive relationships with faculty and staff members were more likely to give financial support.:

> The student experience, defined by levels of satisfaction, involvement, and relationships with faculty and staff, is a strong predictor of future alumni giving. The more satisfied alumni are with their alma mater, the more likely they are to give. (Skari, 2014, p. 25).

The question, then, from an academic and practical perspective, becomes how community colleges can improve their relationships with current students, thereby increasing the likelihood they will donate money after they graduate. This study seeks to answer that very question, through a merging relationship management theory and the theory of reasoned action.

Relationship Management Theory

The field of public relations has long suffered from a sort of identity crisis, struggling to differentiate itself from advertising, marketing, or even "journalism with a business orientation" (Bruning & Ledingham, 1999, p. 158). In 1984, Ferguson refined the role of public relations, emphasizing public relations' influence on the relationships that form between organizations and their various publics

(Ledingham & Bruning, 1998). Working with new and narrowed focus, scholars have since explored what constitutes an organization-public relationship (hereafter OPR), what attributes of such a relationship make it mutually beneficial, and how to assess OPRs. The result has been the development of relationship management theory.

Broom, Casey, and Ritchey (1997) found that OPRs form when "parties have perceptions and expectations of each other, when one or both parties need resources from the other, when one or both parties perceive mutual threats from an uncertain environment, and when there is either a legal or voluntary necessity to associate" (p. 95). The "voluntary association" element of Broom et. al's definition of "relationship" is crucial to relationship management theory. In practically any situation, publics — be they consumers, college students, or charitable contributors — have more than one organization with which they could voluntarily associate. Relationship management theory puts the organization-public relationship at the critical intersection of buy-don't buy, enroll-don't enroll, donate-don't donate. That is, in a world full of choices, it is the relationships that organizations foster with their publics that can set them apart from the competition.

Borrowing from the realm of interpersonal communication, public relations scholars have identified recognition as the first step in building OPRs. According to Bruning and Ledingham (1999):

> Scholars from interpersonal communication have argued that in order for an interpersonal relationship to exist, both parties in the relationship must be aware of the other, and be cognizant that both parties can influence one another. In taking a similar approach, it has been argued that in order for an organization-public relationship to exist, both the organization and the members of the public must be aware that the actions of one party may influence the lives and experiences of the other. (p. 159)

Once an OPR exists, it is only natural to wonder how an organization can sustain — and maximize — the relationship. Public relations scholars have explored this query. Grunig and Grunig (1992) suggested that effective, relationship-building public relations practices are not one-directional, but rather two-way symmetrical, in that the organization and its publics engage in dialogue, with both exerting some influence over the other. In the relational approach, public relations practitioners must accept their

publics as active participants in a conversation, and must "make information available in a user-friendly way, rather than shoving it down their throats" (Bruning & Ralston, 2001, p. 338).

But what good is two-way symmetrical dialogue, and any number of public relations practices, if there is no method for assessing the quality of the relationship and the outcomes of efforts to improve it? Hon and Grunig in 1999 narrowed the key attributes of healthy OPRs to four dimensions, including control mutuality, trust, satisfaction, and commitment (p. 3). *Control mutuality* refers to the degree to which parties agree on who has rightful power to influence one another. *Trust* is one party's level of confidence in and willingness to open oneself to the other party. *Satisfaction* is the extent to which one party feels favorably toward the other because positive expectations about the relationship are reinforced. *Commitment* is the extent to which one party believes and feels that the relationship is worth spending energy to maintain and promote. Hon and Grunig devised a series of survey questions to measure each attribute that can be adapted to the specific organization and public. See appendix for Hon and Grunig's scales. Hon and Grunig (1999) also developed scales for measuring the types of relationships public relations practitioners have with their publics: exchange or communal (p. 20-21). Because the current research is interested in assessing the community college-student relationship, which has been formed through students' personal dealings with departments across the college, rather than the efficacy of public relations efforts, this study will utilize only the measures of quality.

Relationship management theory has linked OPRs to behavioral outcomes in a variety of settings and scenarios, including retaining and satisfying customers in the telecommunications industry (Ledingham and Bruning, 1998) (Bruning and Ledingham, 1998), and retaining students at a university (Bruning, 2002). However, relationship management theory in and of itself was not designed to predict future behaviors. As such, the current research integrates relationship management theory with the theory of reasoned action, in order to identify areas of the relationship that most directly influence behavioral intention to give to the community college.

Theory of Reasoned Action

Fishbein and Ajzen developed the theory of reasoned action as a boiled-down and versatile method for understanding, and ultimately foretelling, people's actions in virtually any situation. The theory

is built on the "assumption that humans are rational animals that systematically utilize or process the information that is available to them" (Fishbein, 1979).

The information humans utilize and process, according to Fishbein and Ajzen, is comprised of the following: their own personal attitudes toward a given behavior, and the attitudes of their family members, friends, colleagues, and even society as a whole toward the given behavior. These two factors, combined with the motivation to comply with others' expectations, produce behavioral intention, and "a person's intention to perform (or not to perform) the behavior" is the immediate determinant of that behavior (Fishbein, 1979).

Fishbein described these factors as such:

The personal factor is the individual's positive or negative evaluation of performing the behavior; this factor may be termed *attitude toward the behavior.* The second determinant is the person's perception of the social pressures put on him or her to perform or not perform the behavior in question. Since it deals with perceived prescriptions, this factor will be termed *subjective norm.* Generally speaking, people will intend to perform a behavior when they evaluate it positively and when they believe that important others think they should perform it. (Fishbein, 1979, p. 67)

According to the theory of reasoned action, human behavior begins at the belief level, when human beings learn to associate an object with certain attributes or a behavior with certain consequences (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975). From beliefs, humans form attitudes. Fishbein and Ajzen define "attitude" as a person's general feeling of favorableness or unfavorableness toward some stimulus object (1975) or behavior (Fishbein, 1979). Whereas, during the belief-formation phase, people link objects and behaviors to attributes, during the attitude-formation phase, people evaluate those attributes. Typically, attitudes do not stray far from beliefs: "At the most general level, then, we learn to like (or have favorable attitudes toward) objects we associate with 'good' things, and we acquire unfavorable feelings toward objects we associate with 'bad' things" (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975, p. 217). The same can be said of behaviors (Fishbein, 1979).

According to the theory of reasoned action, after a person has formed beliefs about an object or behavior, and after he or she has evaluated those beliefs to establish an attitude, the subjective norm comes into play. The subjective norm is an individual's perceived social pressure to perform or not

perform a behavior (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975). "Social pressure" does not necessarily refer to the expectations of society in general. In any given behavioral situation, individuals will consider the opinions of certain "reference groups" (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975). Often, an individual's friends and family members will be his or her go-to reference group, but in some situations, the expectations of his or her employer, professor, doctor, to name just a few examples, may be more relevant (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975).

An individual evaluates both his or her attitude and his or her subjective norm to arrive at behavioral intention; that is, they consider what they want to do and what others want them to do, and then they decide what to do. During this stage, according to the theory of reasoned action, the individual assigns "weights" to both attitude and subjective norm (Fishbein, 1979), which explains why two people with the same attitudes and similar subjective norms may choose to engage in different behaviors; for one individual, his or her personal attitude may outweigh the expectations of friends and family, while the other puts more weight on the subjective norm (Fishbein, 1979). Here it should be noted that the weight assigned to subjective norm is partially determined by an individual's motivation to comply. Put simply, just because a person knows what others expect doesn't mean that he or she feels compelled to fulfill those expectations (Fishbein, 1979).

Whereas beliefs, attitudes, subjective norms and motivation to comply are useful in understanding behavior, Fishbein and Ajzen argue that it is behavioral intention that best predicts behavior: "In a sense, then, we are suggesting that behaviors are not really difficult to predict. For example, to predict whether an individual will buy Crest toothpaste, the simplest and probably most efficient thing to do is to ask whether he or she intends to do so" (Fishbein, 1979, p. 67).

The theory of reasoned action has often been applied to health-related issues, including the use of condoms (Albarracin, Johnson, Fishbein, and Muellerleile, 2001) and cholesterol-lowering prescription medications (Schwartz, Bleakley, Kydd, and Fishbein, 2011), but not to the area of community college alumni fundraising.

Merging of Relationship Management Theory and the Theory of Reasoned Action

   The current research positions the OPR dimensions of control mutuality, trust, commitment, and satisfaction as a student's beliefs about his or her community college. The current research holds that beliefs about the community college will inform beliefs about donating money to the institution. From there, attitudes will form that, combined with perceived societal pressure in regard to philanthropy, will result in the students' intention to give money after they graduate — or not. Figure 1 depicts the merged theories of relationship management and reasoned action used in this study. In addition relational aspects provided in relationship management theory, each of which act as dependent variables, this study also incorporates the dependent variable of goal compatibility, or "an attribute of publics that represents the degree to which members of a public perceive their goals to be similar and coincide with the goals of an organization," (Werder, 2005), as previous studies have shown goal compatibility is integral to the success of public relations' strategies.
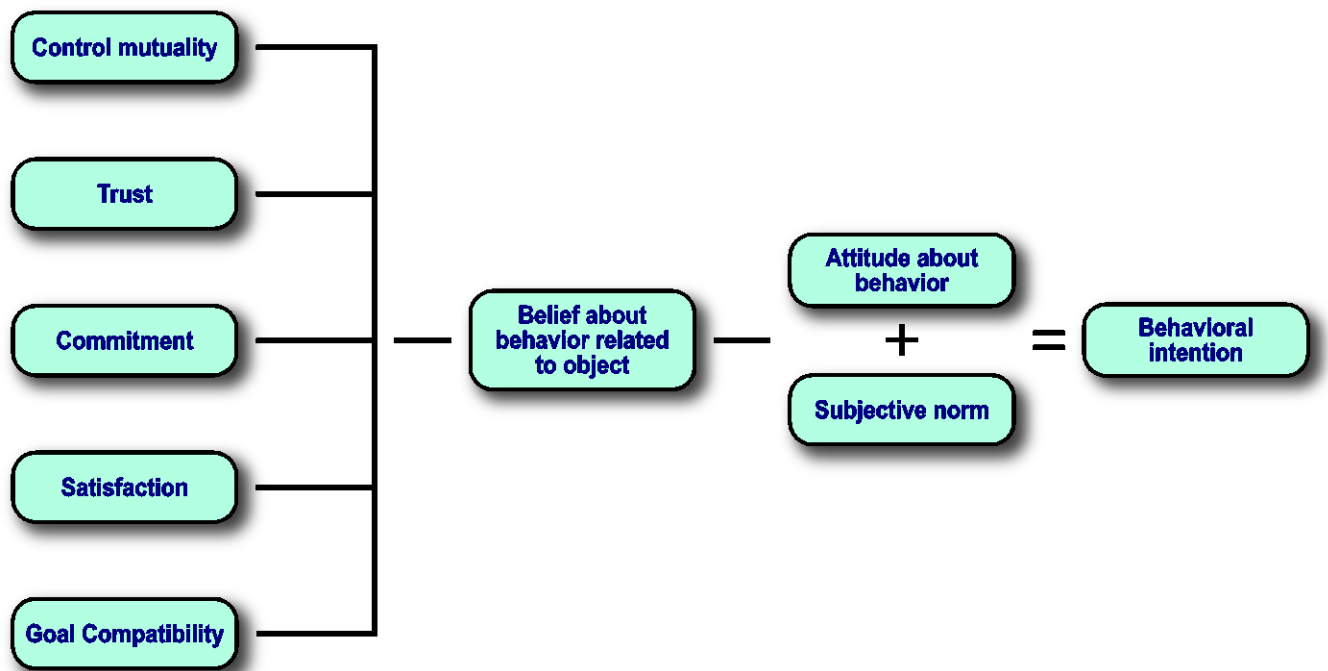
Figure 1: Merged Theoretical Framework

Hypotheses and Research Questions

As stated earlier, this research aims to answer the question: How can community colleges improve relationships with current students, thereby increasing the likelihood that they will become donors after they graduate? This research approaches this question from a public relations perspective, positing that the relational factors of control mutuality, trust, commitment, satisfaction, and goal compatibility will influence the perceived student-community college relationship and behavioral intention to give.

According to the theory of reasoned action, beliefs are the first step toward the formation of attitudes and, ultimately, behavioral intention (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975). Fishbein (1979) explained: "Since a person's beliefs represent the information one has about one's world, it follows that a person's behavior is ultimately determined by this information" (p. 69). The model utilized in this study positions that the relational factors identified by Hon and Grunig (1999) — control mutuality, trust, commitment, and satisfaction — as well as the added aspect of goal compatibility — as a student's beliefs about his or her community college.

The theory of reasoned action holds that from beliefs, human beings form attitudes about a behavior (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975). Again from Fishbein (1979): "Attitudes are a function of beliefs. Generally speaking, a person who believes that performing a given behavior will lead to mostly positive outcomes will hold a favorable attitude toward performing that behavior" (p. 68). Therefore, the current research hypothesizes that:

H1: Positive feelings of trust, satisfaction, control mutuality, commitment, as well as goal compatibility, will positively influence students' attitudes toward the college.

The theory of reasoned action further holds that attitudes closely align with behavioral intention. Therefore:

H2: Students who hold positive attitudes toward the college will report higher behavioral intention to give after they graduate.

The theory of reasoned action also holds that attitudes combine with subjective norm to form behavioral intention, and that behavioral intention is the best predictor of actual behavior (Fishbein, 1979). Therefore, this research hypothesizes that:

H3: Participants who have subjective norms that favor philanthropy will report higher behavioral intention to give to the community college.

Additionally, the research aims to answer the following questions:

R1: How do community college students perceive the quality of their relationship with the institution?

R2: What dimensions of the community college-student relationship are strongest and weakest?

R3: What attributes of organization-public relationships most influence intention to give future financial support?

R4: Do other intervening factors, such as the number of credits earned, the student's status as a first-generation college student, or students' transfer intentions, influence future intention to give?

Chapter 3: Methodology

A mixed methods research design employed at a mid-sized community college in central Florida was used to examine the research questions and hypotheses of this study. Variables of interest were the variables of relationship management theory and the theory of reasoned action, which include: control mutuality, trust, commitment, satisfaction, subjective norm, attitude, and behavioral intention, as well as the added variable of goal compatibility. Additionally, this study took into account various demographic factors, such as first-generation-in-college status, intentions to transfer to a university for degree completion, and length of study at the community college institution.

The institution hosting the study was established in 1964 and serves a geographical area nearly twice the size of the state of Rhode Island. The study body is largely non-traditional; the average age of students is 26 years, and 61% students are first-generation college students (FGIC is defined as a student with neither parent having a bachelor's degree) (Polk State College, 2015). Approximately half of the institution's students enroll to pursue the Associate in Arts degree; the remainder pursue Associate in Science degrees. A smaller fraction of students pursue one of four bachelor's degrees, including the Bachelor of Applied Science in Supervision and Management, Bachelor of Science in Nursing, Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice, and Bachelor of Science in Aerospace Sciences (Polk State College, 2015). The institution operates seven physical locations, and several online degree programs (Polk State College, 2015). At the time of the study, fall 2015, headcount at the institution was approximately 12,157 (Polk State College, 2015).

Instrumentation

Quantitative Data

An online survey was used to measure students' feelings of control mutuality, trust, commitment, satisfaction toward their community college. Hon and Grunig's (1999) relationship scales questionnaire was used as the basis for the questionnaire. The wording of items was slightly altered for appropriateness

for this study. For example, the satisfaction measure "I am happy with this organization" (Hon and Grunig, 1999) became "I am happy with this college." In addition to 21 items adapted from Hon and Grunig's instrument, seven items were added to assess students' feelings of goal compatibility with the college's mission; attitude toward giving money to the community college; students' perceived social pressure to give money to the college; and students' intention to give money to the community college after they graduate. Responses to these 28 questions were recorded on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree)

Additionally, students were asked a series of demographic questions, including gender, age, ethnicity, residency inside the institution's service area, full- or part-time status, and status as a first-generation college student, as well as questions regarding the number of years they have studied at the institution (1 year or less, between 1 and 2, or more than 2), degree goals (to obtain an associate's or bachelor's degree), and plans to transfer to a university. One question asked whether a student pursuing a bachelor's degree also obtained an associate's degree from the institution. The objective of these questions is to compare collected data with the demographics of the institution, as well as to assess whether perception of the college-student relationship is dependent on students' educational progress, goals, or familiarity with higher education and the institution specifically. See appendix for the complete questionnaire.

Qualitative Data

The researcher developed a focus group instrument that aimed to ascertain what the relational factors of control mutuality, trust, commitment, satisfaction mean from the perspective of community college students in their interactions with the institution. Additionally, the focus group instrument included questions regarding students' intention to give to the institution after they graduate and what, if anything, the institution could do to increase their likelihood of giving financial support in the future. See appendix for the focus group instrument.

Sampling Procedures

Following the recommendation of the Institutional Research Board of the community college hosting this study, the researcher contacted professors of general education courses and asked them to electronically distribute the online survey link to their students. This procedure was recommended for two reasons: general education courses are required of all students, no matter their field of study; and the IRB anticipated a higher response rate if the request came directly from the students' professors rather than an outside source. Twelve professors agreed to distribute the survey, as well as a basketball coach and the director of student activities, for a total sample size of the sample size 613.

To collect qualitative data, three focus groups, each comprised of six students enrolled at the same community college, were conducted in fall 2015 to provide deeper insight into the student-institution relationship, its areas of weakness, and how it can be improved. Guest, Namey, and Mitchell advice, "carrying out at least three focus groups per population or subpopulation" (Guest, Namey, and Mitchell, 2013, p. 64). Because this study is examining just one population, students at a single mid-sized community college in central Florida, conducting three focus groups is consistent with Guest, Namey, and Mitchell's recommendation.

Focus group participants were recruited through snowballing. The researcher contacted student organizations on campus to ask for volunteers. Initial contacts were then asked to suggest additional participants, and so on (Guest, Namey, and Mitchell, 2013, p. 69).

Of the total 18 participants, 10 were female and eight were male; 10 were white, six were African-American and two were Hispanic. The participants included recent high-school graduates, one student who had previously attended a private university and was enrolled at the community college to complete his degree, and two working mothers, including one who has seven children. One of the students was finishing his first semester at the college, while one was completing her final semester before graduating. The majority of the participants, however, fell somewhere in between in terms of their educational progress.

Data Collection Procedures

The survey was built using the online survey tool, SurveyMonkey. This tool generates a customizable link that can be distributed electronically. The researcher provided the link as well as a brief explanation of the study and a request for participation to the professors who agreed to share the information with their classes. The professors posted the notification of the survey through the college's online course management system, PAL. To ensure respondents' confidentiality, their emails addresses were not linked to their survey responses. A copy of the notification can be found in the appendix.

The survey notification was sent to 613 students. One-hundred surveys were completed for data analysis, resulting in return rate of 16.3%.

During the focus groups, the researcher recorded the conversations on her password-protected smartphone. To supplement the recording, written notes were also taken.

Data Analysis Procedures

Data analyses for this study was performed using SPSS 22 for PC. A $p < .05$ significance level was used for all statistical tests performed. Reliability scales were tested via Cronbach's alpha, with an alpha of .70 considered reliable (Stacks, 2002). Multi-step regression analysis was used in hypothesis testing. Figure 2 depicts the regression analysis used for this study.
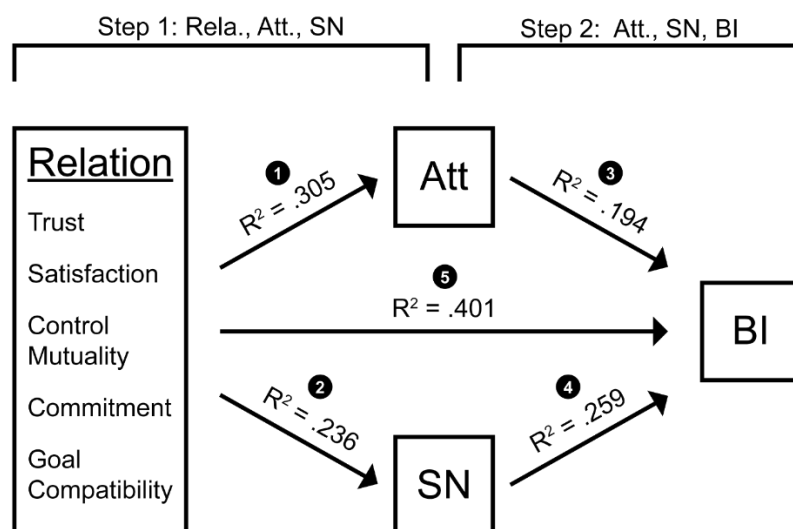
Figure 2: Regression Analysis

Chapter 4: Results

        The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between variables identified in two theories: relationship management theory and the theory of reasoned action. This study also seeks to illuminate areas of the community college-student relationship that, if improved, would increase the likelihood that students will give financial support to the institution after they graduate. The study utilized a model that combines the variables of relationship management theory and the theory of reasoned action. Three hypotheses were tested. Results are provided below.

Frequencies

        Of the 100 respondents (n=100), the majority of those surveyed (64.9%) were pursuing their Associate in Arts Degree, the degree path that traditionally leads to transfer from a community college to a four-year university. This was higher than the number of Associate in Arts seekers reported by the college for the 2014-15 term, the most recent data available; approximately 43% of the college's headcount was enrolled to pursue an Associate in Arts (Polk State College, 2015). See Table 1. Relatedly, the majority of respondents (80.4%) stated that they intended to transfer to a university to continue their education. See Table 2.

        The majority of the respondents (62.9%) also identified as first-generation-in-college students. An overall percentage of first-generation students attending the college was not available. See Table 3.

        In terms of ethnicity, 46% of respondents identified as white; 19% identified as Hispanic; and 18% identified as black. This was in line with the college's 2014-15 data, which showed 53% of students were white, 18% were Hispanic, and 18% were black (Polk State College, 2015). See Table 4.

Table 1: Frequencies Degree Goal

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	4	4.0	4.1	4.1
	Associate in Arts	63	63.0	64.9	69.1
	Associate in Science	12	12.0	12.4	81.4
	Bachelor's degree	15	15.0	15.5	96.9
	I'm not sure	3	3.0	3.1	100.0
	Total	97	97.0	100.0	
Missing	System	3	3.0		
Total		100	100.0		

Table 2: Frequencies Transfer Intentions

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	78	78.0	80.4	80.4
	No	14	14.0	14.4	94.8
	Does not apply to me	5	5.0	5.2	100.0
	Total	97	97.0	100.0	
Missing	System	3	3.0		
Total		100	100.0		

Table 3: Frequencies First-Generation Status

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	61	61.0	62.9	62.9
	No	36	36.0	37.1	100.0
	Total	97	97.0	100.0	
Missing	System	3	3.0		
Total		100	100.0		

Table 4: Frequencies Ethnicity

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Black	18	18.0	18.8	18.8
	American Indian/Alaskan Native	1	1.0	1.0	19.8
	Asian	4	4.0	4.2	24.0
	Pacific Islander	1	1.0	1.0	25.0
	Hispanic	19	19.0	19.8	44.8
	Multi	2	2.0	2.1	46.9
	White	46	46.0	47.9	94.8
	Other	5	5.0	5.2	100.0
	Total	96	96.0	100.0	
Missing	System	4	4.0		
Total		100	100.0		

Respondents' attendance status, whether part- or full-time, was nearly opposite that of the college's 2014-15 data. Respondents attending full-time were 78%, part-time 20%. In 2014-15, the college reported 24% of students were full-time and 71% were part-time (Polk State College, 2015). See Table 5.

In terms of gender, the respondents were reflective of the college's data. Of respondents, 67% were female and 33% were male. In 2014-15, the college reported 62% of students were female and 35% were male, with the remainder not reporting their gender (Polk State College, 2015). See Table 6.

Table 5: Frequencies Enrollment Status					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	2	2.0	2.1	2.1
	Part-time	19	19.0	19.8	21.9
	Full-time	75	75.0	78.1	100.0
	Total	96	96.0	100.0	
Missing	System	4	4.0		
Total		100	100.0		

Table 6: Frequencies Gender					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	31	31.0	32.6	32.6
	Female	64	64.0	67.4	100.0
	Total	95	95.0	100.0	
Missing	System	5	5.0		
Total		100	100.0		

As for associate degree attainment, only 36% of those pursuing their bachelors' degrees had also completed an associate's degree at the institution. See Table 7. Forty-three percent of respondents had attended for between one and two years. See Table 8.

Table 7: Frequencies Associate's Degree Completion

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	36	36.0	40.4	40.4
	No	53	53.0	59.6	100.0
	Total	89	89.0	100.0	
Missing	System	11	11.0		
Total		100	100.0		

Table 8: Frequencies Length of Study at the Institution

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 year or less	26	26.0	27.1	27.1
	Between 1 and 2 years	43	43.0	44.8	71.9
	More than 2 years	27	27.0	28.1	100.0
	Total	96	96.0	100.0	
Missing	System	4	4.0		
Total		100	100.0		

Descriptive Statistics

The online survey included questions adapted from Hon and Grunig's relationship scales (1999) to test each of the relational aspects identified in relationship management theory: control mutuality, trust, commitment, satisfaction, as well as goal compatibility. Respondents rated their level of agreement with each of the statements on a five-point Likert scale from one *(strongly disagree)* to five (*strongly agree*).

Six of the survey's items were related to trust. Of these items, the statement, "The college treats me fairly and justly," received the highest level of agreement ($M = 4.01$, StDev. = .851), while the statement, "I believe that this college takes the opinions of people like me into account when making decisions," received the lowest level of agreement ($M = 3.58$, StDev. = .919). See Table 9.

Four items measured students' sense of commitment to and from the college. Of those items, the statement, "I can see that the college wants to maintain a relationship with students like me," had the highest level of agreement ($M = 3.80$, StDev. = .964). See Table 10.

Four items measured students' sense of satisfaction with the college and their college experience. Of those items, the statement, "I am happy with this college," received the highest level of agreement ($M = 3.98$, StDev. = .869), while the statement, "Most students like me are happy in their interactions with this college," received the lowest level of agreement ($M = 3.76$, StDev. = .867). See Table 11.

Table 9: Descriptive Statistics Trust

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation.
T1-This college treats me fairly and justly.	99	2	5	4.01	.851
T2-Whenever this college makes an important decision, I know it will be concerned with students like me.	99	1	5	3.64	.994
T3-This college can be relied upon to keep its promises.	99	1	5	3.62	1.095
T4-I believe that this college takes the opinions of people like me into account when making decisions.	98	1	5	3.58	.919
T5-I feel very confident about this college's ability to fulfill its mission.	99	1	5	3.97	.839
T6-This college has the ability to accomplish what it says it will do.	96	2	5	3.92	.842

Table 10: Descriptive Statistics Commitment

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
C1: I feel that this college is trying to maintain a long-term commitment to students like me.	100	1	5	3.74	1.050
C2: I can see that this college wants to maintain a relationship with students like me.	97	1	5	3.80	.964
C3: There is a long-lasting bond between this college and students like me.	99	1	5	3.56	1.052
C4: Compared to other organizations, I value my relationship with this college more.	99	1	5	3.64	.963

Table 11: Descriptive Statistics Satisfaction

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
S1: I am happy with this college.	99	1	5	3.98	.869
S2: Both this college and students like me benefit from the relationship.	99	2	5	3.88	.799
S3: Most students like me are happy in their interactions with this college.	96	2	5	3.76	.867
S4: Generally speaking, I am pleased with the relationship this college has established with me.	99	1	5	3.88	.993

Four items tested control mutuality. Of those, the statement "This college and students like me are attentive to what each other say" received the highest level of agreement (M = 3.81, StDev. = .916), while the reversed statement, "In dealing with students like me, this college doesn't care what I have to say," received the lowest level of agreement (M = 2.63, StDev = 1.22).

Table 12: Descriptive Statistics Control Mutuality

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
CM1: This college and students like me are attentive to what each other say.	98	1	5	3.81	.916
CM2: This college believes the opinions of students like me are legitimate.	99	1	5	3.72	1.011
CM3 REV: In dealing with students like me, this college doesn't care what I have to say.	98	1	5	2.63	1.22
CM4: This college really listens to what people like me have to say.	97	1	5	3.54	1.051

Three items tested respondents' attitudes toward the college's mission, or goal compatibility. Of these, the statement, "I support this college's mission," received the highest level of agreement (M = 4.18, StDev = .691), while the statement, "The mission of this college is compatible with my goals," received the lowest level of agreement (M =3.95, StDev = .808).

Table 13: Descriptive Statistics Attitude Toward College

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
GC1: I support this college's mission.	99	2	5	4.18	.691
GC2: I believe this college supports my goals.	99	1	5	3.96	.891
GC3: The mission of this college is compatible with my goals.	97	1	5	3.95	.808

Table 14: Descriptive Statistics Attitude Toward Giving

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation.
ATT1: I think giving money to nonprofits and charities to support social causes is a good thing to do.	97	2	5	4.40	.672
ATT2: I think giving money to this college will have a positive impact.	96	1	5	3.96	.951

Table 15: Descriptive Statistics Subjective Norm

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
SUBNORM1: My friends think giving money to this college is a good thing.	98	1	5	3.66	1.045
SUBNORM2: My family members think giving money to this college is a good thing.	95	1	5	3.58	1.058
SUBNORM3: When making decisions, I try to please my friends and family members.	97	1	5	3.57	1.189
SUBNORM4: The opinions of my friends and family members will matter to me when I am deciding whether or not to give money to this college.	98	1	5	3.24	1.219

Two items tested respondents' attitudes toward giving money to nonprofit/charitable organizations and to the college specifically. The statement "I think giving money to this college will have a positive impact" received lower levels of agreement ($M = 3.96$, StDev = .951) than the statement about general charitable giving. See Table 14.

Four items tested respondents' subjective norms toward charitable giving in general and to the college specifically. Of these times, the statement, "My friends think giving money to this college is a good thing," received the highest level of agreement ($M = 3.66$, StDev = 1.045). See Table 15.

The final item of the online survey tested students' behavioral intention to give money to the college after graduation.

Table 16: Descriptive Statistics Behavioral Intention

	N	**Minimum**	**Maximum**	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**
BEHINT1: I intend to give money to this college after I graduate.	98	1	5	3.01	1.117

Reliability Testing

As stated earlier, to test the reliability of the scales, Cronbach's alpha was performed on each set of questions measuring each relational variable. A Cronbach alpha of .70 was considered acceptable (Stacks, 2002). Each set of questions reached this level of acceptability, except for those questions related to subjective norm.

Table 17: Reliability Scale Satisfaction

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.885	4

Item Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
SAT1-I am happy with this college.	3.96	.870	96
SAT2-Both this college and students like me benefit from the relationship.	3.86	.803	96
SAT3-Most students like me are happy in their interactions with this college.	3.76	.867	96
SAT4-Generally speaking, I am pleased with the relationship this college has established with me.	3.86	1.001	96

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
SAT1-I am happy with this college.	11.49	5.474	.776	.842
SAT2-Both this college and students like me benefit from the relationship.	11.58	5.761	.773	.846
SAT3-Most students like me are happy in their interactions with this college.	11.69	5.628	.730	.859
SAT4-Generally speaking, I am pleased with the relationship this college has established with me.	11.58	5.067	.736	.863

Scale Statistics

Mean	Variance	Std. Deviation	N of Items
15.45	9.387	3.064	4

Table 18: Reliability Scale Control Mutuality

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.760	4

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.788	3

Item Statistics			
	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
CM1-This college and students like me are attentive to what each other say.	3.81	.926	95
CM2-This college believes the opinions of students like me are legitimate.	3.71	1.020	95
CM3 REV-In dealing with students like me, this college doesn't care what I have to say.	3.34	1.217	95
CM4-This college really listens to what people like me have to say.	3.54	1.060	95

Item-Total Statistics				
	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
CM1-This college and students like me are attentive to what each other say.	10.58	7.119	.506	.732
CM2-This college believes the opinions of students like me are legitimate.	10.68	5.729	.759	.594
CM3 REV-In dealing with students like me, this college doesn't care what I have to say.	11.05	6.731	.358	.827
CM4-This college really listens to what people like me have to say.	10.85	5.872	.677	.637

Table 19: Reliability Scale Goal Compatibility

Item Statistics			
	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
GC1-I support this college's mission.	4.18	.692	97
GC2-I believe this college supports my goals.	3.96	.900	97
GC3-The mission of this college is compatible with my goals.	3.95	.808	97

Item-Total Statistics				
	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
GC1-I support this college's mission.	7.91	2.314	.619	.734
GC2-I believe this college supports my goals.	8.12	1.755	.642	.709
GC3-The mission of this college is compatible with my goals.	8.13	1.971	.649	.691

Scale Statistics			
Mean	Variance	Std. Deviation	N of Items
12.08	4.097	2.024	3

Table 20: Reliability Scale Trust

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.900	6

Item Statistics			
	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
T1-This college treats me fairly and justly.	4.00	.863	95
T2-Whenever this college makes an important decision, I know it will be concerned with students like me.	3.64	.967	95
T3-This college can be relied on to keep its promises.	3.60	1.115	95
T4-I believe that this college takes the opinions of people like me into account when making decisions.	3.57	.930	95
T5- feel very confident about this college's ability to fulfill its mission.	3.96	.849	95
T6-This college has the ability to accomplish what it says it will do.	3.92	.846	95

Table 20: Reliability Trust (Continued)

	Item-Total Statistics			
	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
T1-This college treats me fairly and justly.	18.68	15.006	.773	.877
T2-Whenever this college makes an important decision, I know it will be concerned with students like me.	19.04	15.381	.607	.901
T3-This college can be relied on to keep its promises.	19.08	13.184	.802	.872
T4-I believe that this college takes the opinions of people like me into account when making decisions.	19.12	14.635	.762	.878
T5- feel very confident about this college's ability to fulfill its mission.	18.73	15.243	.747	.881
T6-This college has the ability to accomplish what it says it will do.	18.77	15.456	.713	.885

Scale Statistics			
Mean	Variance	Std. Deviation	N of Items
22.68	20.920	4.574	6

Table 21: Reliability Scale Commitment

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.885	4

Item Statistics			
	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
COMMIT1-I feel that this college is trying to maintain a long-term commitment to students like me.	3.74	1.063	97
COMMIT2-I can see that this college wants to maintain a relationship with students like me.	3.80	.964	97
COMMIT3-There is a long-lasting bond between this college and students like me.	3.54	1.051	97
COMMT4-Compared to other organizations, I value my relationship with this college more.	3.62	.962	97

Table 21: Reliability Scale Commitment (Continued)

	Item-Total Statistics			
	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
COMMIT1-I feel that this college is trying to maintain a long-term commitment to students like me.	10.96	7.227	.667	.885
COMMIT2-I can see that this college wants to maintain a relationship with students like me.	10.90	7.177	.786	.839
COMMIT3-There is a long-lasting bond between this college and students like me.	11.16	6.577	.832	.819
COMMT4-Compared to other organizations, I value my relationship with this college more.	11.08	7.451	.722	.863

Scale Statistics			
Mean	Variance	Std. Deviation	N of Items
14.70	12.170	3.489	4

Table 22: Reliability Scale Subjective Norm

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.671	4

Item Statistics			
	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
SUBNORM1-My friends think giving money to this college is a good thing to do.	3.64	1.051	95
SUBNORM2-My family members think giving money to this college is a good thing.	3.58	1.058	95
SUBNORM3-When making decisions, I try to please my friends and family members.	3.58	1.190	95
SUBNORM4-The opinions of my friends and family members will matter to me when I am deciding whether or not to give money to this college.	3.24	1.227	95

Table 22: Reliability Scale Subjective Norm (Continued)

Item-Total Statistics				
	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
SUBNORM1-My friends think giving money to this college is a good thing to do.	10.40	6.774	.453	.605
SUBNORM2-My family members think giving money to this college is a good thing.	10.46	6.145	.590	.517
SUBNORM3-When making decisions, I try to please my friends and family members.	10.46	6.273	.448	.609
SUBNORM4-The opinions of my friends and family members will matter to me when I am deciding whether or not to give money to this college.	10.80	6.672	.344	.682

Scale Statistics			
Mean	Variance	Std. Deviation	N of Items
14.04	10.360	3.219	4

Table 23: Attitude Correlations

Correlations		ATT1-I think giving money to nonprofits and charities to support social causes is a good thing to do.	ATT2-I think giving money to this college will have a positive impact.
ATT1-I think giving money to nonprofits and charities to support social causes is a good thing to do.	Pearson Correlation	1	.349**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001
	N	97	95
ATT2-I think giving money to this college will have a positive impact.	Pearson Correlation	.349**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	
	N	95	96

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Hypothesis Testing

Multi-step regression analysis was performed to first establish a relationship between the relational variables and attitude and subjective norm and then to establish a relationship between attitude and subjective norm. Figure 2 depicts regression analysis performed in this study.

Although no individual relational variable reached statistical significance, together, they explained 30.5% of variance on attitude (F=6.921, p< 001). Therefore, **H1:** Positive feelings of trust, satisfaction, control mutuality, commitment, as well as goal compatibility, will positively influence students' attitudes toward the college, is supported.

Table 24: Regression Testing Attitude

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.552[a]	.305	.261	.58294
a. Predictors: (Constant), GOALCOMP, CONTROLMUT, SAT, COMMIT, TRUST				

ANOVA[a]						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	11.760	5	2.352	6.921	.000[b]
	Residual	26.846	79	.340		
	Total	38.606	84			
a. Dependent Variable: ATTITUDE						
b. Predictors: (Constant), GOALCOMP, CONTROLMUT, SAT, COMMIT, TRUST						

Coefficients[a]						
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
1	(Constant)	2.035	.396		5.139	.000
	TRUST	-.145	.197	-.165	-.739	.462
	SAT	.294	.169	.343	1.739	.086
	COMMIT	.005	.140	.007	.037	.970
	CONTROLMUT	.028	.128	.033	.217	.828
	GOALCOMP	.357	.186	.357	1.919	.059
a. Dependent Variable: ATTITUDE						

Attitude explained 19.4% of variance in behavioral intention (F=22.329, p<.001). Therefore, **H2: Students who hold positive attitudes toward the college will report higher behavioral intention to give after they graduate, is supported.**

Table 25: Regression Testing Attitude on Behavioral Intention

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.440[a]	.194	.185	1.003
a. Predictors: (Constant), ATTITUDE				

ANOVA[a]						
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
5	Regression	22.451	1	22.451	22.329	.000[b]
	Residual	93.507	93	1.005		
	Total	115.958	94			
a. Dependent Variable: BEHINT1- intend to give money to this college after I graduate.						
b. Predictors: (Constant), ATTITUDE						

Coefficients[a]						
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	-.059	.651		-.090	.928
	ATTITUDE	.728	.154	.440	4.725	.000
a. Dependent Variable: BEHINT1- intend to give money to this college after I graduate.						

Subjective norm explained 25.9% of variance in behavioral intention (F=32.52, p<001). Therefore, **H3:** Participants who have subjective norms that favor philanthropy will report higher behavioral intention to give to the community college, was supported.

Table 26: Regression Testing Subjective Norm on Behavioral Intention

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.509[a]	.259	.251	.978
a. Predictors: (Constant), SUBJECTIVENORM				

ANOVA[a]						
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	31.090	1	31.090	32.520	.000[b]
	Residual	88.910	93	.956		
	Total	120.000	94			
a. Dependent Variable: BEHINT1- intend to give money to this college after I graduate.						
b. Predictors: (Constant), SUBJECTIVENORM						

Coefficients[a]						
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
1	(Constant)	.491	.451		1.088	.279
	SUBJECTIVENORM	.715	.125	.509	5.703	.000
a. Dependent Variable: BEHINT1- intend to give money to this college after I graduate.						

Further statistical analysis revealed that all five of the relational variables explain 40.1% of variance in behavioral intention (F=10.83), p,.001).

Table 27: Regression Testing of Relational Variables on Behavioral Intention

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.633[a]	.401	.364	.910
a. Predictors: (Constant), GOALCOMP, CONTROLMUT, SAT, COMMIT, TRUST				

ANOVA[a]						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	44.883	5	8.977	10.833	.000[b]
	Residual	67.117	81	.829		
	Total	112.000	86			
a. Dependent Variable: BEHINT1- intend to give money to this college after I graduate.						
b. Predictors: (Constant), GOALCOMP, CONTROLMUT, SAT, COMMIT, TRUST						

Coefficients[a]						
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
1	(Constant)	-.265	.609		-.435	.664
	TRUST	.642	.299	.436	2.146	.035
	SAT	-.408	.264	-.283	-1.546	.126
	COMMIT	.498	.218	.394	2.286	.025
	CONTROLMUT	-.277	.199	-.198	-1.393	.167
	GOALCOMP	.398	.279	.239	1.426	.158
a. Dependent Variable: BEHINT1- intend to give money to this college after I graduate.						

Together, the relational variables also accounted for 23.6% of variance in subjective norm (F=4.944, p<.01).

Table 28: Regression Testing of Behavioral Variables on Subjective Norm

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.486[a]	.236	.188	.72798
a. Predictors: (Constant), GOALCOMP, CONTROLMUT, SAT, COMMIT, TRUST				

ANOVA[a]						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	13.101	5	2.620	4.944	.001[b]
	Residual	42.397	80	.530		
	Total	55.497	85			
a. Dependent Variable: SUBJECTIVENORM						
b. Predictors: (Constant), GOALCOMP, CONTROLMUT, SAT, COMMIT, TRUST						

Coefficients[a]						
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
1	(Constant)	1.285	.487		2.639	.010
	TRUST	.010	.243	.009	.040	.968
	SAT	.220	.212	.217	1.040	.302
	COMMIT	.017	.175	.019	.095	.924
	CONTROLMUT	-.044	.159	-.045	-.275	.784
	GOALCOMP	.358	.224	.306	1.594	.115
a. Dependent Variable: SUBJECTIVENORM						

Qualitative Data Analysis

The researcher transcribed the focus group recordings. After transcription, the researcher coded the resulting transcripts to identify themes and responses that satisfied the research questions.

R1: How do community college students perceive the quality of their relationship with the institution?

Across the focus groups, students agreed that their relationship with the community college, while satisfactory in some aspects, could be greatly improved. One of the themes that arose during the three focus group conversations is that students feel the college is run like a business, and as such, the college is primarily interested in filling classes and collecting tuition, not supporting and assisting students. As one participant said:

"I feel like they are herding cattle. They want to get you in and get you out…They're not really looking out for you, they just want you to spend money."

Another participant agreed:

"College is a business. So they're herding you in because they get a paycheck. If you take the classes, even if you don't need them, they make more money. It's like 'sorry, you weren't smart enough to catch what we just did to you.'"

Another participant expressed that he felt both lost and helpless in navigating the college process:

"I'm taking random classes because my advisor didn't help me."

However, while students are often frustrated by the sense that they are merely sources of income for the college, many agreed that there are employees at the college who will listen to their problems and offer guidance. The difficult part, the students agreed, is locating the people who will take an interest in helping them.

As one participant said:

"Some people here really do care about individuals."

Another participant said the library was her main source of information and help, so much so that she feels other departments should emulate the library:

"I go straight to the library for information, books, research, tutoring, anything. In the library, they really know what they're doing and what they're talking about. The librarians know so much and are so involved with the college. That's how it should be."

The participant continued that in the library, she is treated as a person with unique qualities and needs:

"In the library, they get to know you on a personal level. They tell you their names and they ask you for yours. In other places, it's just your student ID."

In addition to the library, the students were in general agreement that their professors, with whom they have the most day-to-day contact, are committed to helping them navigate the college and achieve their educational goals:

"It's not like high school, because it is totally different, but the professors get to know you on a personal level …When I graduate from here, I will look at my diploma and know that there were so many people behind me here, trying to help me make it."

Students were also pleased with the quality of their professors' knowledge, credentials and professional experience. Students said they felt they were getting a high-quality education mostly because of the quality of the faculty.

Several participants expressed a sense of resignation about their relationship with the college. The relationship has points of strength and weakness, but in the end, it is temporary, as the students aim to transfer to a university to complete their education.

"Community college is a stepping stone. You graduate from here and you move on to a university and that becomes your alma mater."

R2: What dimensions of the community college-student relationship — trust, commitment, control mutuality, satisfaction — are strongest and weakest?

During data analysis, trust emerged as an area of concern in the college-student relationship. Students expressed frustration over miscommunication at the college. These frustrations were expressed in relation to the college's financial aid and advising office. Students felt that employees in these two departments did not communicate with one another and therefore would dispense conflicting advice.

"I had a bad experience with some of the advisors. After I had already enrolled for classes, I learned that I didn't need those classes for my degree. I was about to spend $4,500 on classes I didn't

need. I was able to drop them and get the ones I needed, but still, it feels like some of the advisors aren't really looking out for you, they just want you to spend money."

Added another participant:

"You get the runaround. I had been calling the school for three days trying to sign up for classes and no one ever called me back."

In both departments, service to students could be improved simply through better coordination among employees, the participants agreed.

"They just need to get together and get on the same page."

Participants agreed that their perceptions of the college-student relationship would be more positive if they had better experiences in advising and financial aid.

Students expressed a sense of commitment through their determination to graduate from the college:

"I want to finish what I started. This is my school. I represent it," said one participant who attended the focus group wearing a sweatshirt printed with the college logo.

Several of the participants said they felt the college was committed to them as well, but on a less meaningful level:

"Yes, even if their intentions are bad. The intentions being that they want you to finish so they get their money."

In terms of satisfaction, students said they are most satisfied by the quality of their education and their interactions with their professors:

"This is overall a good school. The professors are willing to work with you on a one-to-one basis. I had a specific professor who was teaching online. He told me he would come in on his off day if I needed help."

Another participant said that the college fulfills her need for education and that, if it offered a baccalaureate degree in her field of interest, she feels satisfied enough to continue at the institution:

"I would stay here for my bachelor's degree. My goal keeps me going. People might have a bad day or just don't want to help you, but I'm going to stay focused."

As for control mutuality, students did not express strong feelings either positively or negatively. In keeping with the theme of advising and financial aid, many said they did not feel they had any control over those situations. However, several of the participants acknowledged that even the highest-level members of the administration had made themselves visible to students. The students felt that they could go to a dean, vice president or president for help.

R3: What attributes of organization-public relationships most influence intention to give future financial support?

Again, trust was an area of concern in the college-student relationship, and the lack of trust was most acutely felt in financial aid and advising. Students acknowledged that if they had better experiences in these areas, it would positively influence their overall opinions and perceptions of the college.

One participant said that while she understands not every student will be pleased with the outcome of their interactions with financial aid and advising, every student should be pleased with the interaction itself. She explained that during a recent meeting with a financial aid advisor, she was told that she would be receiving less financial assistance than she had the year prior because her overall financial situation had improved. While the student was disappointed with this outcome, she appreciated the way in which the employee had handled the meeting:

"She listened. She explained. I felt her sympathy, like she was really listening to me. She explained it to me. I felt like that was the first time I was really heard. Because of that, I had a better understanding of the issue, and I realized it wasn't something the college was doing to me, that it was a bigger issue that was out of their control."

R4: Do other intervening factors, such as the number of credits earned, the student's status as a first-generation college student, or students' transfer intentions, influence future intention to give?

Many of the participants agreed that they believe it is important to give money to nonprofits or other good causes. Specifically, one student said a portion of her paycheck is automatically withdrawn to benefit cancer research. Others named medical research and animal rescue organizations as the causes they do or would be most likely to support. As for supporting the community college, the intervening factors pondered in this research question did not have significant bearing on participants' intentions to give to the institution. Instead, participants identified a general lack of prestige associated with the college as the reason why alumni would be unlikely to give to the college:

"It is what it is. It doesn't have a real legacy. Other schools have had multiple generations of the same family attend. Here, there isn't that legacy."

Others agreed, saying that there is a sense of pride associated with contributing to universities. However, the participants said there are steps the college could take to build the aforementioned legacy. Specifically, the participants said the college should be hosting events for high school students, and even younger students, in order to position itself as the hometown school:

"That would build the legacy. You need to get the kids to grow up wanting to come to your school."

Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to integrate the relational aspects identified in relationship management theory with the behavior-prediction power of the theory of reasoned action. Applied in a community college setting this study further aimed to identify aspects of the college-student relationship that influenced future intention to give to the institution.

Beginning with relationship management theory, this study failed to identify any single relational aspect that was statistically significant to resulting attitude. Likewise, the added variable of goal compatibility also failed to reach statistical significance. However, when combined, trust, commitment, satisfaction, control mutuality, and goal compatibility proved powerful, explaining 30.5% of variance in attitude. This suggests that the relational aspects are so closely intertwined that public relations practitioners must address all five rather than any one in isolation in order to build healthy, mutually beneficial relationships and positively influence attitudes. However, certainly nuances exist. Trust is not the same as control mutuality. Commitment is not the same as goal compatibility. While all may be equally important, further research is needed to better understand the various shades of grey that exist within the community college-student relationship. It is also worth considering that the the scales employed in this study (Hon and Grunig, 1999), while easily adaptable to a variety of settings and scenarios, need further refinement to effectively gauge the community college-student relationship. One can easily think of several reasons why the scales might need to be customized for the community college audience: generational differences, varying levels of educational attainment, perhaps even a lack of life experience. Does an 18-year-old comprehend control mutuality? This study assumed the scales were self-explanatory, but future research could employ the aid of community college students in crafting survey questions that might better resonate with their peers.

Turning now to the theory of reasoned action, as posited by the theory, attitude and subjective norm did indeed influence behavioral intention, but to differing degrees. Attitude, accounted for 19.4% of variance, while subjective norm accounted for 25.9% of variance on behavioral intention. This suggests,

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perhaps not surprisingly, that college students care more about what others think than about their own opinions. College students, as so many can attest from personal experience, are often searching for acceptance. From a practical perspective, this could be useful information. Public relations practitioners might consider creating campaigns that leverage students' reference groups, such as student leaders or prominent alumni, who choose to give financial support. Such messages would, based on the data gathered in this study, garner the attention of those who aspire for acceptance from said reference groups, helping to cultivate a culture of philanthropy among current students.

Continuing with subjective norm, further statistical analysis also showed that the relational variables accounted for 23.6% of variance in subjective norm. This would suggest that those with higher degrees of trust, satisfaction, commitment, control mutuality, and goal compatibility as related to the community college tend to associate with those who feel likewise, and together they share and reinforce one another's feelings of philanthropy toward the college. Again from a practical standpoint, students with favorable feelings toward the college and philanthropy, if they were able to be identified, could be valuable resources from practitioners. For instance, these students may comprise reference groups that could influence other students.

In terms of qualitative research, this study identified trust as an area of concern in the community college-student relationship. Students expressed a sense of being misinformed and helpless, particularly in the college's financial aid and advising offices. However, the qualitative findings contrasted with quantitative results; even the lowest-ranked trust statement included in the quantitative survey, "I believe that this college takes the opinions of people like me into account when making decisions," still achieved a mean of 3.58. The interactions of focus group participants may be the cause of the quantitative-qualitative trust disparity. In a group setting, when one participant shared a negative experience with financial aid and advising, it seemed to trigger negative comments and recollections from other participants. The result, perhaps, was an exaggerated sense of distrust, especially when compared with the feelings students expressed quantitatively.

Nonetheless, public relations professionals would be well advised to work more closely with financial aid and advising departments to help these departments more effectively listen and speak to students.

This study is not without its limitations. The sample size was small and research was conducted at a single institution, making the results far from generalizable. However, it is hoped that this study is at least a first step in using public relations to confront the problem of alumni giving to community colleges.

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Appendix

Hon and Grunig's Relationship Scales

Trust
1. This organization treats people like me fairly and justly.
2. Whenever this organization makes an important decision, I know it will be concerned about people like me.
3. This organization can be relied upon to keep its promises.
4. I believe that this organization takes the opinions of people like me into account when making decisions.
5. I feel very confident about this organization's skills.
6. This organization has the ability to accomplish what it says it will do.

Control Mutuality
1. This organization and people like me are attentive to what each other say.
2. This organization believes the opinions of people like me are legitimate.
3. In dealing with people like me, this organization has a tendency to throw its weight around.
4. This organization really listens to what people like me have to say.

Commitment
1. I feel that this organization is trying to maintain a long-term commitment to people like me.
2. I can see that this organization wants to maintain a relationship with people like me.
3. There is a long-lasting bond between this organization and people like me.
4. Compared to other organizations, I value my relationship with this organization more.

Satisfaction
1. I am happy with this organization.
2. Both the organization and people like me benefit from the relationship.
3. Most people like me are happy in their interactions with this organization.
4. Generally speaking, I am pleased with the relationship this organization has established with people like me.

Student Survey Notification

Dear Polk State College student,

Researchers at the University of South Florida are interested in learning more about your relationship with Polk State College. Specifically, they want to know more about your college experience, and your opinions and attitudes toward Polk State. The attached form explains more about the study and why your participation is needed.

At the bottom of this email, you will find a link to a quick, 10-minute survey. Your participation in this survey is voluntary and unrelated to this class. However, if you can spare a few minutes of your time, your responses will help the researchers gain valuable insight into the student-college relationship, and that information could be useful in improving the relationship and assuring students like you have the best college experience they possibly can. Please take the survey by Feb. 1.

Thanks for your time!

LINK TO THE SURVEY: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/8XC8TFK

Survey Instrument

1. About This Survey
This survey will help us better understand the relationship between this college and its students. This survey is completely anonymous and totally voluntary, but your participation is very important! Your feedback will help us better understand the student-college relationship and how it can be improved. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements by selecting the appropriate response. Thank you for your help!

2. The Student-College Relationship

1. I feel that this college is trying to maintain a long-term commitment to students like me.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
○	○	○	○	○

2. Whenever this college makes an important decision, I know it will be concerned with students like me.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
○	○	○	○	○

3. Generally speaking, I am pleased with the relationship this college has established with me.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
○	○	○	○	○

4. This college can be relied on to keep its promises.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
○	○	○	○	○

5. This college treats me fairly and justly.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
○	○	○	○	○

6. This college and students like me are attentive to what each other say.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
○	○	○	○	○

7. I feel very confident about this college's ability to fulfill its mission.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
○	○	○	○	○

8. I support this college's mission.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
○	○	○	○	○

9. This college really listens to what people like me have to say.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
○	○	○	○	○

10. I believe this college supports my goals.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
○	○	○	○	○

11. This college believes the opinions of students like me are legitimate.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
○	○	○	○	○

12. Compared to other organizations, I value my relationship with this college more.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
○	○	○	○	○

13. This college has the ability to accomplish what it says it will do.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
○	○	○	○	○

14. I can see that this college wants to maintain a relationship with students like me.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
○	○	○	○	○

15. I believe that this college takes the opinions of people like me into account when making decisions.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
○	○	○	○	○

16. There is a long-lasting bond between this college and students like me.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
○	○	○	○	○

17. I am happy with this college.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
○	○	○	○	○

18. In dealing with students like me, this college doesn't care what I have to say.

| Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly agree |
| O | O | O | O | O |

19. Both this college and students like me benefit from the relationship.

| Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly agree |
| O | O | O | O | O |

20. The mission of this college is compatible with my goals.

| Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly agree |
| O | O | O | O | O |

21. Most students like me are happy in their interactions with this college.

| Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly agree |
| O | O | O | O | O |

22. I think giving money to nonprofits and charities to support social causes is a good thing to do.

| Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly agree |
| O | O | O | O | O |

23. I think giving money to this college will have a positive impact.

| Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly agree |
| O | O | O | O | O |

24. My friends think giving money to this college is a good thing to do.

| Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly agree |
| O | O | O | O | O |

25. My family members think giving money to this college is a good thing.

| Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly agree |
| O | O | O | O | O |

26. When making decisions, I try to please my friends and family members.

| Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly agree |
| O | O | O | O | O |

27. The opinions of my friends and family members will matter to me when I am deciding whether or not to give money to this college.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
○	○	○	○	○

28. I intend to give money to this college after I graduate.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
○	○	○	○	○

3. Tell Us A Little About Yourself

29. What is your degree goal at this college?

○ Associate in Arts

○ Associate in Science

○ Bachelor's degree

○ I'm not sure

○ Other (please specify)

[   ]

30. Do you plan to transfer to a university after attending this institution?

○ Yes

○ No

○ Does not apply to me

31. Are you a first-generation college student? (Neither of your parents has a bachelor's degree)

○ Yes

○ No

32. What is your ethnicity?

○ Black

○ American Indian/Alaskan Native

○ Asian

○ Pacific Isle

○ Hispanic

○ Multi

○ White

○ Unknown/other

33. My enrollment status is

◯ Part-time

◯ Full-time

◯ Other (please specify)

[   ]

34. What is your gender?

◯ Male

◯ Female

35. What is your age? (in years)

[   ]

36. If you are pursuing a bachelor's degree, did you also complete an associate's degree at this institution?

◯ Yes

◯ No

37. How many years have you studied at this institution?

◯ 1 year or less

◯ Between 1 and 2 years

◯ More than 2 years

38. What is your ZIP code?

[   ]

4. Thank You!

Thank you for participating in this survey. We appreciate your time and feedback. Have a great day!

Focus Group Instrument

Each focus group was asked the following list of questions. Any deviations from this list were merely

rephrases or requests for participants to provide additional details.

1) As students, what does it mean for you to "trust" your college?

2) What do you trust about this college?

3) What do you not trust about this college?

4) In what ways could the college violate your trust? Give me an example or scenario.

5) In a "good" or "healthy" relationship, it is implied that all parties involved have say-so in decisions being made. Think about your relationship with our college for a moment. If you were to have a "good" relationship with your college, it would mean that the college takes your opinions into consideration when making decisions and that you have the ability to influence those decisions. Do you think you have a "good relationship" with the college, considering your ability to influence decisions? Why or why not?

6) Do you think the college cares about how you feel and what you think when it is making decisions? Why or why not?

7) Can you give me an example of when the college listened to you before making a decision?

8) What about an example of a time when the college either didn't listen to you or didn't care about what you had to say?

9) Are you satisfied with your experience here at the college? By that, I mean are you happy?

10) Do you think the college is doing everything it can for you? Do you think you'll leave here feeling that you had a complete and enjoyable college experience?
What more could the college do for you?

11) If you have friends who attend other colleges, do you think they are more or less satisfied by their college experience than you are? Why?

12) Do you feel committed to the college? Do you feel like it matters that you stay here, finish the degree program you started, and graduate? Why or why not?

13) Do you think the college is committed to you? Do you think it cares whether or not you graduate from here?

14) Do your family members and friends believe that giving money to charities and nonprofits is a good thing?

15) What about society in general? Do you feel any sort of pressure or expectation to give money to organizations that need financial support?

16) Is there anything the college could do now, while you're still in school, to make you more likely to give after you graduate?

POLK STATE
C O L L E G E

October 7, 2015

Rachel Pleasant
Polk State College
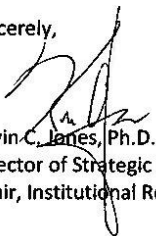999 Avenue H, N.E.
Station 28
Winter Haven, FL 33881

Dear Ms. Pleasant,

On behalf of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Polk State College I am pleased to inform you that your study protocol, titled *Increasing Alumni Support to Community Colleges: Using Relationship Management and the Theory of Reasoned Action to Cultivate Future Philanthropy*, has been approved. You have been approved to conduct your study at Polk State College using the methods outlined in your protocol document. Please note that your approval is effective October 7, 2015 and will expire by October 7, 2016.

You are reminded that you are responsible for adhering to the method and protocol of obtaining informed consent as approved by Polk State College. You must submit any future changes to the study protocol to the IRB for review and approval prior to implementation. You are also responsible for adhering to the Investigator Responsibilities as outlined in the Polk State College Human Research Protection Procedure.

If you have any questions regarding this approval please call 863-297-1009.

Sincerely,

Kevin C. Jones, Ph.D.
Director of Strategic Planning and Assessment
Chair, Institutional Review Board

999 Avenue H, N.E. • Winter Haven, FL • 33881-2945

USF
UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTH FLORIDA

October 27, 2015

Rachel Pleasant
School of Advertising and Mass Communications
Tampa, FL 33612

RE: **Expedited Approval for Initial Review**
IRB#: Pro00024078
Title: Increasing Alumni Support to Community Colleges: Using Relationship Management
       Theory and the Theory of Reasoned Action to Cultivate Future Philanthropy

Study Approval Period: 10/27/2015 to 10/27/2016

Dear Ms. Pleasant:

On 10/27/2015, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviewed and **APPROVED** the above
application and all documents contained within, including those outlined below.

Approved Item(s):
Protocol Document(s):
relationshipmanagement (3).docx

Consent/Assent Document(s)*:
adultminimalriskversion1102015.docx.pdf
onlineconsentform ** granted a waiver

*Please use only the official IRB stamped informed consent/assent document(s) found under the
"Attachments" tab. Please note, these consent/assent document(s) are only valid during the
approval period indicated at the top of the form(s). **Waivers are not stamped.

It was the determination of the IRB that your study qualified for expedited review which
includes activities that (1) present no more than minimal risk to human subjects, and (2) involve
only procedures listed in one or more of the categories outlined below. The IRB may review
research through the expedited review procedure authorized by 45CFR46.110 and 21 CFR
56.110. The research proposed in this study is categorized under the following expedited review

category:

(6) Collection of data from voice, video, digital, or image recordings made for research purposes.

(7) Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

Your study qualifies for a waiver of the requirements for the documentation of informed consent as outlined in the federal regulations at 45CFR46.117(c) which states that an IRB may waive the requirement for the investigator to obtain a signed consent form for some or all subjects if it finds either: (1) That the only record linking the subject and the research would be the consent document and the principal risk would be potential harm resulting from a breach of confidentiality. Each subject will be asked whether the subject wants documentation linking the subject with the research, and the subject's wishes will govern; or (2) That the research presents no more than minimal risk of harm to subjects and involves no procedures for which written consent is normally required outside of the research context.

As the principal investigator of this study, it is your responsibility to conduct this study in accordance with IRB policies and procedures and as approved by the IRB. Any changes to the approved research must be submitted to the IRB for review and approval via an amendment. Additionally, all unanticipated problems must be reported to the USF IRB within five (5) calendar days.

We appreciate your dedication to the ethical conduct of human subject research at the University of South Florida and your continued commitment to human research protections. If you have any questions regarding this matter, please call 813-974-5638.

Sincerely,

Kristen Salomon, Ph.D., Vice Chairperson
USF Institutional Review Board