IMPACT OF THE HARTEL FELLOWS PROGRAM
ON FIRST YEAR STUDENTS AT MARIETTA COLLEGE

A Thesis
Presented in Fulfillment of the Requirements for
The Degree of Masters of Education in the
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Abstract

This report is an in-depth analysis of freshman retention program called the Hartel Fellows program at Marietta College in Marietta, Ohio; the benefits, obstacles and the need to establish such a program. Marietta has 376 freshmen in this years program (2004-2005) of which this research project is focused on. This research targets the procedures and purpose of the Hartel Fellows project. The Hartel Fellows program is funded by Marietta College as a means of getting to know first year students and help them make the adjustment to college easier through programs and attendance at various activities. It discovers the effects of having a first year student program in place for first year students.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Institutional History

Marietta College is one of the oldest independent colleges in the State of Ohio. Chartered in 1835, the college traces its educational roots to the Muskingum Academy, which opened in 1797 as the first institute of higher education in the Old Northwest Territory. The town of Marietta was founded in 1788 by members of the Ohio Company, a group of Revolutionary War veterans. It was the first organized, permanent settlement in the Northwest Territory, a huge tract of land, which encompassed Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin and part of Minnesota. From its earliest beginnings, the college was non-sectarian and was established, according to its charter, for the education of youth in the various branches of useful knowledge.

Marietta College was awarded its Phi Beta Kappa chapter in 1860, the third chapter in Ohio and the sixteenth in the nation. The College admitted women on an equal footing with men in 1897 after having supported a “Women’s Department” since 1893. In 1913, Marietta College became one of the charter members of the newly organized North Central Association of colleges and Secondary Schools, and has been certified continuously by that body ever since.

Throughout much of its long history, Marietta College has offered a traditional mix of traditional liberal arts courses with those practical and/or per-professional course dictated by the needs of its students. Its degree in Education has been offered since 1921.
Since 1945, the College has offered a degree in Petroleum engineering, the only liberal arts college in the nation to do so.

From its inception also, the College has recognized an obligation to make its educational offerings available to students without regard for the economic or social status. In 1937, when higher education was much more than today the province of the elite, nearly half of the total enrollment was receiving some kind of financial help; today that figure is close to ninety percent.

The College Today

Marietta College is a co-educational, predominantly residential, non-sectarian, undergraduate institution with a full-time enrollment of approximately 1100 students. Although the College currently numbers among its student’s men and women from 34 states and 8 foreign countries, more that half of the College’s students come from Ohio. The balance comes primarily from Pennsylvania, West Virginia, other Midwestern states, and the eastern seaboard states. More than 50% of the College’s students fall into the category of first-generation college students and more than 90% receive financial aid of some kind – scholarships, loans, work-study assignments, and so forth.

Academically, Marietta College is committed to a strong liberal arts – based education. The College’s general education requirements attempt to ensure that students acquire communications skills, embrace an integrated, multidisciplinary approach to critical analysis and problem solving, and gain an understanding of the leadership skills required to translate what they learn into effective action. The College’s mission statement, revised and refocused in 1990, reflects those goals.
Additionally, the College believes that their students’ education is the responsibility of all members of the College community – the students themselves, the faculty, the administration, and the staff – and that this education takes place not only in the classroom, but also in the residence halls, on the playing fields, in co-curricular activities, and in the larger community of which the College is a part.

The college offers a wide range of majors and courses in the traditional liberal arts areas of humanities, arts, social sciences and natural sciences. Additionally, in direct response to student needs, the College offers such career-orientated majors as education, accounting/management, sports medicine, mass media, physician assistance, and petroleum engineering (this is directly related to the College’s location in one of the nation’s first petroleum – and natural gas-producing regions).

Marietta College is fully accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. The College grants eight degrees: associate of arts, Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Fine Arts, Bachelor of Science, Bachelor of Science, Bachelor of Science in Petroleum Engineering, Master of Arts in Liberal Learning, Master of Arts in Education, Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies, and Master of Arts in Corporate Media.

A cultural and intellectual oasis at the time that it was created, Marietta College remains so today. The College’s “small town” location, while offering many advantages for students, also presents a particular challenge: Marietta, Ohio, is located in southeastern Ohio at the junction of the Ohio and Muskingum rivers. Despite the town’s place in history as the first organized settlement in the Northwest Territory, the area
remains basically rural and relatively isolated; the area’s minority/multicultural population compromises only about 2% of the total population.

Because the community lacks the multiple resources of a larger city, the College must provide, through both curricular and co-curricular activities, most of the cultural enrichment necessary to foster a rich learning environment as well as the exposure to other cultures necessary to ready their students to take their places in a global society. In a time of cutbacks and dwindling resources for higher education in general, and for private higher education in particular, this is sometimes a difficult assignment to fill. Additionally, the southeastern Ohio area is apart of the region designated by the Federal government as “Appalachia” and shares some of the economic problems commonly attributed to that region, such as low income, lack of education background, etc…

As one step toward partial alleviation of the complex of problems caused by its location, Marietta College has, for the last several years, focused on building a stronger international studies program. Realizing that it cannot give equal attention to all areas of the globe, the College has concentrated on building a strong “China Studies” program, with the intention of learning from the process and eventually expanding the focus to include several additional areas (expansion in currently underway in Brazil and Hungary).

Marietta College is also home to the nationally recognized McDonough Leadership Program, established in 1986, which has become one of the national models for leadership programs and represents what is probably one of the two most comprehensive undergraduate leadership programs in the country. Approximately one-
quarter to one-third of entering freshmen, regardless of intended major, elect to take part in the Leadership Program. The Program promotes the concept of civic responsibility and the necessity for acquiring the critical thinking skills necessary to make responsible, informed decisions about civic life. It also emphasizes active participation in the life of various communities – academic, civic, work – of which a person may be a part. Leadership Studies can be taken as a minor coupled with any major (21 hours of coursework plus community service); students can also choose to receive a certificate in Leadership (16 hours of course work plus the community service).

The College’s Sports Medicine Program, established in 1978, was the first fully accredited program in the nation to be located at a small college. Marietta College also offers an Allied Health major for students with interests in Pre-Medicine and pre-physical therapy. These majors account for about 6% of each graduating class. The college has recently established a Master’s Level Physician Assistant Program, now in its second year, a natural progression from the Sports Medicine Program. The program accepted 16 applicants in its first year and intends to accept 20 – 25 each year thereafter.

The Economics, Management, and Accounting (EMA) attracts a large number of students and, for the last decade, has accounted for about 25% to 27% of Marietta College’s graduates each year. The EMA department offers majors in accounting, economics, human resource management, management, and marketing. These majors are often combined with minors in arts, humanities or science fields and EMA graduates go on to careers in many different areas.
Majors in the sciences (biology, biochemistry, chemistry, geology, physics) account for almost 15% of the College’s majors, history/political science another 10%, and psychology between 8 and 9%. Elementary education graduates comprise about 10%. (With a relatively large number of the College’s graduates becoming secondary school teachers, their majors are in academic departments.) Fine arts graduates (studio art, graphic design, theater, music) account for approximately 6% of the graduating class. English and modern languages comprise another 5%, while the various mass media majors (advertising, public relations, business/corporate communication/journalism/ and radio/television) comprise about 6.5%.

Marietta College has with in the past two years also constructed and completed two new buildings. The Dyson Baudo Recreation Center, housing an indoor track, fitness/wellness center, etc., and the Rickey Science Center, housing laboratories for all the sciences/ both built through gifts received during the soon-to-close Comprehensive Campaign.

Institutional Goals

Marietta College’s Mission Statement promises that they will “provide students with an integrated, multidisciplinary approach to critical analysis, problem-solving, and the leadership skills required to translate what is learned into effective action.” In the “Nine Core Values” which underscore the College’s view of itself and its role. Marietta College affirms that their education will be based on a liberal arts foundation; that they still offer in-depth programs of study; that they will remain a primarily residential college: that they will prepare their students to utilize technology; that they will outfit
their students to enter the world of work; that they will institute sound financial planning, that they will recognize out responsibility to their Mid – Ohio Valley region; that they will familiarize their students with principles of leadership and responsible citizenship; and that they prepare their students to thrive in a diverse, global society.

Like many other institutions, Marietta College continually looks for ways to improve the education it offers. This quest, however, is hampered by the need, also, to find the funds for improvement. Marietta College, like many small liberal arts colleges, faces increasing competition from public colleges and universities for a finite group of students. However, without public subsidies and often with only modest endowments, private colleges require higher tuitions that their public counterparts, since tuition revenues are the largest source of funds for operating budgets. Today’s students are comparison shoppers; they place what each institution offers on a kind of balance sheet – and they are certainly not averse to leaving an institution if it does not satisfy. Small colleges have always had answers for the question, “Why should I choose a small private college?” Today, more than ever before, small colleges must convince prospective students of the value of their kind of undergraduate education. The College’s ability to plan for future growth and vitality, which inevitably require spending – is directly related to the College’s ability to attract and retain students. Accordingly, attracting and retaining students becomes a very important, albeit preliminary, institutional goal which allows them to work toward a second goal, continuously improving their education offerings.
Traditionally, one of the unique offerings of small liberal arts colleges has been the opportunity for students to form mentoring relationships with professors. Indeed, when Marietta College alumni are polled on what about their college experience has most influenced them, most will cite a personal relationship with one or more professors as having had profound influence. One major institutional goal, then, of necessity both philosophically and practically, is to reinforce and strengthen the areas where such relationships occur, and to add the opportunities for such relationships to occur. In 1992, Marietta College received a McGregor Fund grant related to this same goal; that grant was used for faculty development to support projects leading to increased in excellence in teaching. In the classroom, in undergraduate research programs, in internship and service-learning programs mentored by faculty, this kind of faculty/student relationship happens often.

But the majority of students’ hours are not spent in the classroom. As a primarily residential college, Marietta College still has another unique opportunity to conduct programs and activities that help their students form good mentoring relationships, learn skills, and internalize particular habits and attitudes that have been proven to enhance students’ educational experience – and to promote student persistence to graduation. Further, they can help students realize that learning is a life-long activity that can take place in settings other that the classroom. The College’s residence halls should function as living/learning centers, forming a natural bridge between learning that takes place in the classroom and learning that takes place everywhere else in a student’s life. Though they have long utilized residence hall programs, Marietta College feels these programs
have lacked the deliberate and specific focus necessary to promote the lessons and values that they need to promote. It is to construct more deliberately this bridge between the academic and the co-curricular, between “in-class” and “out-of-class” learning, that Marietta College requested McGregor funding for the “Hartel Fellows Program,” as residence hall program for first-year students.

Purpose of the Program

Hartel Fellows is designed with a couple of results in mind. Despite all professors know about making the education they offer relevant, the separation of the academics and the personal relationship with students persists in higher education. The findings of the National Survey of Student Engagement, undertaken by Professor George Kuh of Indiana University, indicates that this separation persists as a serious problem in colleges and universities across the country, and that it is a more serious problem among first-year students than among seniors.

The problem is not, however, without solution. Two survey instruments developed by the Policy center on the First Year of College – the National Survey of First-Year Co-Curricular Programs and Your First Year of College – provide data that suggest solutions that can fairly easily be implemented by a residential college that houses 90% of its students, as does Marietta College. For example, three of the “Seven Principals of Good Practice in Undergraduate Education,” codified by Arthur Chickering & Zelda Gamson (1987) are relevant:

1. Encouraging contact between students and faculty
2. Developing reciprocity and cooperation among students
3. Encouraging active learning
While the “Principles” were constructed to apply primarily to the classroom, Marietta College believes that they can be used by their Residence Life/Hartel Fellows Program in a cooperative and constructive effort to enhance student engagement and reduce the distance between the academic and the personal. In addition to enhancing the personal growth of first-year students, such a program could have the additional benefit of increasing the success and retention of these students, since they know that an ongoing relationship with a faculty member is a significant factor in both student success and student retention. The Hartel Fellows Program will create a new, out-of-class venue for the establishment of formal relationships among first-year student and faculty members, who will be meeting students not just in an academic setting, but meeting them, literally, where they live. This altered dynamic will, they hope, facilitate another, and different, avenue of conversation among students and faculty, and will effectively close the gap between classroom learning and “living learning,” therefore leading to greater retention of first-year students. Faculty will meet regularly, students will work together, and learning will be active.

Retroactive Findings

Marietta College articulated four goals for the 2003 – 2004 school year. Research was completed, compiled and reported as follows;

Purpose I: Provide an additional adult mentor for the first year students during their most vulnerable adjustment period, their freshman year.

The Hartel Fellows committed themselves to spending a minimum of three hours each week in the residence hall to which they were assigned. In doing this the Fellows
became identified as persons consistently available to whom students could come for a variety of issues. Most of the time the Fellows found themselves as a valuable resource, particularly as it related to academic needs of freshman. Students reported that having a Hartel present and available in their residence hall was much more convenient and comfortable than having to seek out their academic advisor.

Purpose II: Increases relevant freshman program offerings in a setting most conducive to freshman attendance, in their residence halls.

Originally the Fellows felt that the best way to get to know the students in their residence halls was to focus their programming efforts in the social arena. Later, once they had established a relationship with the students, they could then move to programs that were educationally and culturally enriching. The programming efforts had several tangible results. The most noticeable change is that the common areas in residence halls became alive again as places to socialize. More importantly students were drawn out of their rooms, thus enhancing the opportunity to build a better sense of community.

Purpose III: Provide an informal forum for discussion of freshman concerns which do not get attention elsewhere.

The Fellows provided an invaluable service in that they became the funnel through which any number of issues came to light that were of particular concern to freshman. Once again a number of these revolved around general college information, policies, procedures, general education majors, etc. Additionally, suggestions were picked up that helped with getting a handle on student’s perceptions of the college in general, its attention to and support for student concerns. Many ideas come through the Fellows with regards to general campus wide programming.
Purpose IV: Give students an opportunity to practice the kind of self-governing in residence halls that will serve them well as they move beyond the freshman year.

One of the goals of the residence life program this year was to establish individual Hall Councils, governing bodies made of the residents. The Fellows were most helpful; given their experience, they were able to help students conceptualize and organize what they wanted, why it was valuable and eventually draft a constitution. Some Fellows, along with the Residence Hall Directors, ended up serving as “faculty” advisors to the Hall Councils. Once Hall Councils were established, the next thing that emerged and was instituted was the establishment of the Inter-Residence Hall Council.

Goals

With the previous year done and evaluations completed Marietta College came up with the following goals for the 2004 – 2005 school year:

Purpose I

1. Every student who is identified by a statement of concern will be followed-up by a Hartel. (non-academic)

2. Every student identified by the early alert team will be followed-up by a Hartel. (academic)

3. Hartel Fellows will serve as advocated for students in helping them make the transition to Marietta College.

Purpose II

1. Hartels will make a concerted effort to increase the number of educational and cultural programs in the residence halls by sponsoring three (3) programs per semester in each hall.
Purpose III

1. Hartels will identify relevant issues/concerns of freshman and then follow-up with informal discussions. Issues will be identified utilizing the following: observations, listening, paper/pencil surveys, personal experience, and links to FYSE 101/102.

Purpose IV

1. Hartel Fellows will work with the Hall Councils and R.A.’s in identifying issues relevant to purpose #3.

2. Hartel Fellows will serve along with the R.D.’s as informal advisors to the Hall Council in creating community in the residence halls.

Challenges/Limitations

Many challenges are present when starting a new program. While these challenges are not insurmountable, they will create some level of stress for Marietta College and the Hartel Fellows program.

The first challenge will be in selecting who exactly the Fellows will be. Given the fact that there are many professors on campus selecting who to be Fellows will be challenging. After selecting Fellows, Marietta College will then have to follow up with several meeting to review the goals and begin to plan for the opening of the school year. How serious the Fellows take on their role will be the most important piece of the program. Professor will have to take the role serious and follow the plan and not just see it as another way to make extra income.
Evaluation will also be an integral part of such a program and getting students and R.A.’s to cooperate in a timely fashion and be completely honest will be an important part of the program if they want it to be a success.

Moving social activities to activities that are more educational and culturally could also present a problem to Marietta College and the program, student will want the activities to be fun and exciting. The tab of educational is somewhat of a red flag for students, thus making them interesting, fun and enriching in an educational and cultural aspect will present a challenge.

From a diversity standpoint, Marietta College is located in a region (Appalachia) that is not known for its presence of a strong minority population. The area’s minority/multicultural population comprise only about 2% of the total population. Thus having students open up to the thought of cultural diversity and difference may be somewhat of a struggle given the location and population of the college and area.

Demographics

Marietta College is located in Southeastern Ohio. Marietta College students area drawn from: Ohio (57%); states contiguous to Ohio, other Midwestern states (23%); New England and the eastern seaboard states (13%); other areas of the United States (2%); Foreign countries (5%). The college’s student population is primarily traditional college aged students (i.e., 18 – 22 year old).
**Definition of Terms**

ALLEVIATION: relieve, lessen, to partially remove or correct

CO-CURRICULAR: being outside of but usually complementing the regular curriculum

CONTIGUOUS: next or near in time or sequence

LIBERAL ARTS: the studies (as language, philosophy, history, literature, abstract science) in a college or university intended to provide chiefly general knowledge and to develop the general intellectual capacities (as reason and judgment) as opposed to professional or vocational skills

MENTOR: a trusted counselor or guide

MULTIDISCIPLINARY: more than one field of study

NON-SECTARIAN: not having a sectarian character: not affiliated with or restricted to a particular religious group

RESIDENTIAL COLLEGE: providing living accommodations for students

RETENTION: to hold secure or intact

UNDERGRADUATE: a student at a college or university who has not taken a first and especially a bachelor's degree
CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Freshman Learning Communities

This researcher reviewed literature by collecting articles related to first year student retention. Higher education research related to retention can be traced back over 70 years (Braxton, 2000), with many emergent research developments within the last 10 years. Many factors need to be taken into account when studying student retention; age, gender, race, parents’ education background, socioeconomic background, etc…

Researchers have identified eight major causes of student withdrawal:

• Academic Difficulty
• Adjustment Difficulties
• Goals
• Commitments
• Finances
• Fit
• Involvement
• Learning

Academic difficulty, students are unable to or are unwilling to meet the academic standards. Adjustment difficulties, the transition from high school to college no matter how academically gifted. Goals, many students begin college with only a vague notion of why they have entered college. Commitments’, earning a degree over four years requires a high level of commitment, not all students have this commitment. Finances,
some students leave because they just can’t afford it. Fit, students may feel as though they to not “fit” or “belong” socially or academically. Involvement, other students may fell lonely, isolated or unable to connect with other classmates. Learning, students who find value in their learning usually stay those who don’t leave (Tinto, 1987). These problems have led researchers to suggest that change in retention rates is largely due to a change in what is being called learning communities. Based on the research of Dr. Tinto researchers are suggesting that students will learn best when they are placed in supportive settings that encourage involvement. This is the kind of environment that experts are calling “Learning Communities.” (Butler, 1998)

Learning communities have a common bind; faculty attempting to intertwine academic courses or disciplines and attempting common groups of students to these courses for support and involvement. There are a variety of learning communities such as linked courses, interest groups, cluster learning, and coordinated study. Linked courses are those that students enroll in courses that have content overlap. Interest group learning communities are those in which a student may be assigned to a discussion group on top of the common classes. Cluster learning communities are those in which all Students in the community take the exact same classes. Learning communities that are coordinated study are those which have longer courses, team taught by professors. It was found that there is a significant correlation between factors that determine Freshman Learning Communities (FLC) participation and Grade Point Average; students who are likely to perform worse that average are more likely to participate in a FLC. Belonging to a FLC increases a students’ GPA from about three quarters to one full letter grade,
depending on the student’s race and gender except white females who experience no boost from FLC participation (Hotchkiss, Moore, Pitts 2003).

Tinto (1975) developed a theory that incorporated a student’s commitment to an institution, aspirations for a degree and integration in the academic and social life of a campus. According to Tinto’s (1975, 1987) theory, high levels of integration into academic life of an institution led to greater commitment to the institution. A greater commitment and integration led to a greater likelihood that the students would be retained (Braxton, 2000; Braxton & Lien, 2000; Tinto, 1975, 1987).

A feature of learning communities that has made them easy to install is the fact that they require very little from faculty and staff. Faculty and staff have to change what they do and how they teach very little, allowing them to teach in the fashion that they always have. Therefore faculty involvement is very low, and trying to bridge the gap between academics and the personal still persists.

**Budget Spending**

Mitchell (2003) suggests that schools with low attrition spend more of their budgets on those aspects of school operations that directly enhance student learning and experiences, particularly instructional support, athletics and technology. They also allocate a slightly higher percentage of their budgets to professional development.

When schools consider whether their school should hire a director of diversity to advance the mission more strategically, create a financial aid director position to take some of the burden away from the admission staff, or to upgrade the psychologist from part-time to full-time to better serve the needs of the students, the attrition study shows
that these positions are much more commonly found in schools with low attrition (Mitchell 2003). The research in these studies reveals that making the students at these schools feel more comfortable with in the college community have a lower attrition rate. Bridging the gap from the academic to the more personal through the allocation of funds has had a positive effect on attrition rates. Schools should consider the allocation of funds as an integral part of student attrition.

**Diversity and Mentoring**

The increasing diversity of colleges today is also a variable that warrants some research. Race has been found to be a significant predictor of the retention of undergraduate students (Astin, 1997; Murtaugh et al., 1999; Peltier et al., 1999). Further studies concluded that different variable significantly predict retention from different racial groups (Allen, 1999; Hall; 1999). Various racial groups likely have different experiences related to education, which affect how variable impact their retention rates. Therefore, race may be both a predictor and a mediator of other variable related to retention (Reason, 2003). As colleges advance their academic programs and broaden their horizons, diversity has become an important factor in what type of academic majors are offered and the variables that affect retention. The researcher feels that understanding a student’s educational background along with the student’s personal background will undoubtedly become an important factor in the retention of first-year college students.

It is clear that mentoring programs positively influence student retention and success, and research has suggested that there is a positive relationship between participation in mentoring programs and that “persistence rates” of minority students
At the University of Tennessee, the Minority Advisors Program (MAP), this provides personal academic support and assistance, social guidance and positive campus survival skills to first-year and transfer minority students. MAP, has been a great asset to the students at the University of Tennessee. Mentoring programs have become another avenue in which colleges can help keep student attrition rates low. The major problem encountered when using a mentoring program is, who are the ideal candidates to serve as mentors? The Arranged Mentor for Instructional Guidance and Organizational Support (AMIGOS) model is probably the most popular mentoring model used today (Hurte, 2002). After matching a protégé with a mentor on the basis of a careful assessment of both the prospective mentor and protégé, the conclusion has been made that the best mentors are either faculty members or other professionals on campus.

Mentoring programs have proven to be successful as a way of raising student retention and helping students adapt and adjust to the transition from high school to college.

_Institutional Actions_

Research shows that institutional actions are an important part of the success of a retention program. According to Cook and Haynes (2002) these actions are best described in the following six principles:

1. Institutions should ensure that new students enter with or have the opportunity to acquire the skills needed for academic success.
2. Institutions should reach out to make personal contact with students beyond the formal domains of academic life.
3. Institutional retention actions should be systematic in character.
4. Institutions should start as early as possible to retain students.

5. The primary commitment of institutions should be to their students.

6. Education, not retention, should be the goal of the institutional retention programs.

Not only do all of these steps need to be implemented for a program to be successful, but they need to be maintained and monitored consistently. The researcher feels that having a program of guidelines and checks and balances in place is crucial to any retention program.

It is the researchers feeling that there going to be continued success within first year retention programs. With an institutions commitment to first year student retention and the proper implementation of the program picked specific to each institution, the researcher believes that retention of students will continually get better and better.
CHAPTER 3

METHOD

Study Design

Evaluation of the Hartel Fellows program at Marietta College was done using quantitative methods. This was accomplished by using a survey with questions being answered on a Likert scale. These surveys were completed by all of the first year students at Marietta College who reside on campus. They were handed out and gather by the floor advisors during the last week of January 2005.

The advantage of using a Likert style survey is that it can effectively measure if the intended goals and purpose of the Hartel Fellows program are having any success. The disadvantage would be that there is a tendency to rely solely on the numbers in the results and not the observations or interactions within the program.

The Procedures

The central database that the researcher used was all students, excluding residence hall advisors, who live in first year student housing. These dorms included, Marietta Hall, Mary Beach, Russell Hall, and Dorothy Webster Hall. Once the researcher compiled the number of surveys needed, the researcher distributed the surveys to each residence hall floor advisor on Monday. These surveys were colored coded according to the dorm which a student lives in. The researcher then collected all of the surveys on the Friday of the week that they were handed out. A thank you note was sent to each of the hall advisors after the completion of the survey.
**Instruments**

The study was conducted by administering a Likert scale style survey. The survey contained questions pertaining to the specific purpose and goals set forth for the Hartel Fellows program by Marietta College. Each student was asked to fill out one survey each. Each student reported which dorm they are also in. By using this step the researcher hoped to eliminate, along with the color coding, any potential problem of just fudging the survey.

**Reliability**

The following steps were taken by the researcher to ensure that the survey is reliable:

1. The researcher had the surveys approved by experts involved with Hartel Fellows program to assure that the questions are clear and understandable.
2. The researcher set the alpha level at .05.

**Validity**

The following steps will be taken by the researcher to ensure that the survey is valid:

1. Content validity was examined by asking experts if the questions are equally representative of all the areas of the Hartel Fellows program. These experts were, Dr. William Bauer, Hartel Fellow; Dr. Lon Vickers, Dean of Student Life.
Data Analysis Procedure

The data was organized, reviewed and coded. Manual tabulation was conducted by the researcher before the data is run through SPSS. The quantitative data was entered into a database and subjected to a set of analysis by SPSS.

Potential Ethical Issues

The researcher obtained permission from the head of the Hartel Fellows program prior to administering the survey. The anonymity of the individuals was protected by the assigning of color coded sheets to each dorm and not specific to the individual. The identity of each individual who wishes to choose and put their name on the survey was kept private and confidential.

Timeline

January 1  Design questions and survey
10  Have survey validated by Dr. Bauer and Dr. Vickers
24  Administer survey to 1st year students
February 1  Collect surveys
7  Enter data into SPSS
14  Interpret results / write chapter 4
21  Draw conclusions / write chapter 5
28  Turn in paper to revision committee
March 7  Make final revisions and additions
14  Hand in paper to advisor
CHAPTER FOUR
DATA ANALYSIS

Interpretation of the Findings

The findings of the Hartel Fellows survey were collected via researcher pick up and Marietta College campus mail. The results were tabulated using the SPSS version 11.5. Of the 376 surveys distributed 202 were returned. The response rate was 54 percent.

The survey was designed using a five point Likert scale with the categories of strongly disagree, disagree, neither, agree, and strongly agree. For data analysis reasons an ascending scale was used with strongly disagree assigned as one and strongly agree assigned as five. The survey also included one question that was answered as yes or no. Yes was assigned as one and no was assigned as two. The students also had the opportunity to add comments in response to each question.

The questions in the survey were aligned with the goals of the Hartel Fellows program and were divided into a total of eight questions. Below are the results of the survey, each question is separate and the results of each individual question discussed.
**I Know Who My Hartel Fellow Is**

The researcher found that in all freshman halls that freshman did know who their Hartel Fellow was. The exception was in Russell Hall where the mean score of the question was 1.95 with 2.0 being the answer no.

**My Hartel Fellow Helped Me Make an Easier Transition to Marietta College**

Once again Russell Hall was the exception with a mean score of 2.2 which would fall on the scale very close to disagree. All other halls fell on or near neither or agree. The reoccurring theme that I found in Russell Hall is that the students were not even sure what or who the Hartel Fellows were. This was in the comments column after this question.

**If I was Identified as an Early Alert Student My Hartel Fellow Followed Up on My Academic Concern**

This question was answered by all halls the same way. Pioneer, Marietta, Elsie Newton, and Mary Beach all had a mean that fell on or near 3.0 or neither. The following halls all answered at or near 2.0 or disagree, Dorothy Webster and Russell. The reoccurring theme in all the halls was that first year students were not aware of what the Early Alert program was.
The Hartel Fellows Held Programs in My Residence Hall That Were Educational and Beneficial

All first year student halls responded to this question with a mean score above 3.0 with most of the halls closer to 3.5 and one closer to 4.0. The exception to this question was once again was Russell Hall. Their hall had a mean of 2.0 or disagrees.

The Educational Programs Were Very Well Publicized and I Knew When and Where They Were

Russell Hall was again the black sheep in the group. The mean score of all students in Russell was 2.2. Dorothy Webster was also below 3.0 with a mean of 2.6. All other halls checked in with a mean score ranging from 3.0 to 3.5. This question was answered by all halls as neither or disagrees.

The Hartel Fellows Held Programs in My Residence Hall That Were Culturally Diverse and Beneficial

When first year students answer this question most students answered closer to 4.0 than any other number on the Likert scale. Russell Hall again skewed the overall mean of this question by having a mean score of 2.2. All other hall answered that they agreed with the statement except Russell.
The Cultural Programs Were Very Well Publicized and I Knew When and Where They Were

The mean of the above question hovered closer to 3.0 or neither. The only hall that was really off was Russell Hall who weighed in with a mean score of 2.2 once again. The reoccurring theme found in the comments section of this question is that most students felt that the programs were very well publicized around the hall. They stated that most every program was well publicized by flyers and posters, but that word of mouth or Hartel Fellows coming to the hall and spreading the word.

The Hartel Fellows Program Identified Relevant Concerns/Issues That I Had as a First Year Student and Were Followed Up With In-Formal Discussions

Again Russell Hall weighed in with the lowest mean of any first year student hall with a score of 2.2 or disagrees. Every other hall averaged between 2.8 and 3.3 or near or at neither. One common theme was that Hartel Fellows did come by halls and find out what was going on. They explained that this happened on a certain day each week.

Overall Findings

The researcher found that all questions asked were relevant according to the SPSS program. All questions had relevance under .05 except the early alert program question. This would seem correct according to the common theme found in the comments under the question.
Figure 1

Mean Responses to All Questions
CHAPTER FIVE
SUMMARY, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The aim of this study was to find out whether or not the Hartel Fellows program was being successful in its goals set forth by the committee. After compiling the data the researcher believes that overall the program is being successful and should be continued.

The survey questions were broken into eight different areas that correlated with the goals set forth by the Hartel Fellows committee (see Appendix). Each question was handed out to each of the first year students housing directors, who in return handed out and collected the surveys. Each of the surveys collected were numbered by the researcher and tabulated using SPSS.

Discussion

It was interesting to note that all halls reporting were generally impressed with and were in favor of the Hartel Fellows program, except Russell Hall. The researcher was intrigued by these findings and felt there could be a couple of reasons for such results. First the researcher thought maybe it was because of the age of the college students and that the students just took the survey for granted and filled it out real quick and tried to be funny while doing so. That theory was ruled out because of the number of students who responded to the survey from Russell. The researcher felt that it was nearly impossible that all of the students could not possibly have gotten together and purposely spoil the survey. Instead the researcher came to the conclusion that the Hartel Fellows did not do a great job in Russell Hall. This was one of the problems the researcher felt
could be a possible hang up in the program. The researcher felt that each one of the questions that students answered in the survey was successful in finding out the aim of the research. The goals of the program were well thought out by the Hartel Fellows and the researcher based their survey off these goals. Each hall brought a different view to each questions, this was expected as each hall has a different Hartel. What the researcher found will help the Hartel Fellows program make an assessment of the program and help them in the selection processes of the Hartels. Each question was found to valid by using the SPSS program except the question relating to the early alert program at Marietta College. The researcher had a sneaking suspicion that this question was going to be a problem. The early alert program at Marietta College is a program designed to catch any student who is struggling in their academics early in the semester before it is too late. A couple of factors played in to confusion of this question. The faculty at Marietta College sometimes forgets to do this, puts it on the backburner as something that can be done later, or just flat out refuses to participate. Because of this students may not understand the question or may be confused. Second, not all students are identified as early alert students, thus making those who were not identified unfamiliar with the program, thus not knowing how to answer. Overall the goals of the program were well constructed, so designing the survey was easy for the researcher to formulate and distribute.

Not only did the researcher feel that this survey was successful but felt that overall the Hartel Fellows are doing their job and that was reflected in the results of the survey.
**Further Research**

This study has only begun to look in depth at the possibilities that first year student programs can accomplish. This research did not attempt to compare any of the residential colleges programs and any similarities or differences. Unfortunately the literature review out there on this particular subject is not great. Further research into first year student programs and their successes and failures needs to be completed by a future researcher. Further researcher also needs to be completed at Marietta College year after year by Residential Life to make sure that the program is meeting its goals and expectations.

**Recommendations**

The researcher would recommend that Marietta College continue to use the Hartel Fellows program. The overall benefit of the program is great with the potential of the program to be outstanding. Selection of the actual Hartel Fellows needs to be rethought and reexamined. When the panel is selecting each of the Fellows it is important to understand the overall results the program is trying to accomplish. Each Fellow should understand the goals of the program and should be checked up on by the person/people in charge of the program. Unfortunately this has to be done in order for the program to become totally successful, as seen by the results from Russell Hall.

Using the First Year Seminar (FYSE) lab section by each of the Fellows as an avenue of getting to know the students and the students getting to know the Hartels is another suggestion made by the researcher. Each of the fellows could take two of the first hours and introduce themselves to each of the classes. Last year there were around 20 sections which would take around two hours, spending five minutes in each class.
Better yet the FYSE labs sections could meet in two different days and go over to the McDonough leadership building and use the auditorium to let the Hartel Fellows come over, use the hour of lab, and explain the goals of the program and introduce themselves.

The last recommendation to be made is that the program develops and implements consistent goals and student evaluation of the program to be used year after year. This would eliminate any confusion and/or questions about what effect the program is having on the first year students in the designated goals set forth by the programs committee.

By following these few recommendations the researcher feels that the Hartel Fellows program would be tremendously successful and a first year program to be modeled and duplicated by many residential, liberal arts colleges or universities.
REFERENCES


Tinto, V. (2003). Rethinking the First Year of College (pp. 1 – 8). Syracuse University

Tinto, V. (2003). Taking Student Retention Seriously (pp. 1 – 8). Syracuse University
APPENDIX

Survey
Please answer each question honestly and to the best of your ability. This survey is being conducted as part of ongoing research for the Hartel Fellows program at Marietta College. Please check the appropriate box or circle the appropriate response. Thanks in advance for your cooperation.

I know who my Hartel Fellow is.  Yes______  No_______

My Hartel Fellow helped me make an easier transition to Marietta College.

Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Neither  Agree  Strongly Agree
1  2  3  4  5

Comments:

If I was identified as an early alert student my Hartel Fellow followed up on my academic concern.

Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Neither  Agree  Strongly Agree
1  2  3  4  5

Comments:

The Hartel Fellows program held programs in my residence hall that were educational and beneficial.

Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Neither  Agree  Strongly Agree
1  2  3  4  5

Comments:

The educational programs were very well publicized and I knew when and where they were.

Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Neither  Agree  Strongly Agree
1  2  3  4  5

Comments:
The Hartel Fellows held programs in my residence hall that were culturally diverse and beneficial.

Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Neither  Agree  Strongly Agree
1  2  3  4  5

Comments:

The cultural programs were very well publicized and I knew when and where they were.

Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Neither  Agree  Strongly Agree
1  2  3  4  5

Comments:

The Hartel Fellows program identified relevant concerns/issues that I had as a first year student and were followed up with informal discussions.

Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Neither  Agree  Strongly Agree
1  2  3  4  5

Comments: