

# In Their Own Words



## *Student Reflections on Transition Issues and Institutional Practice*

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# Acknowledgements



**NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER**

FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE® AND STUDENTS IN TRANSITION

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

# Acknowledgements

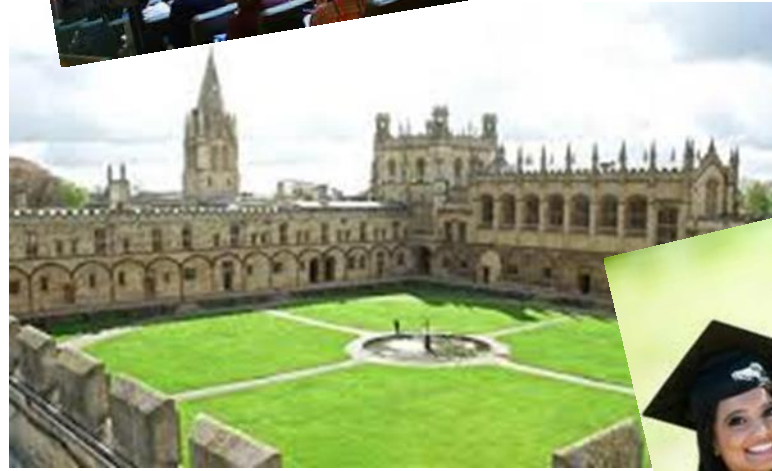
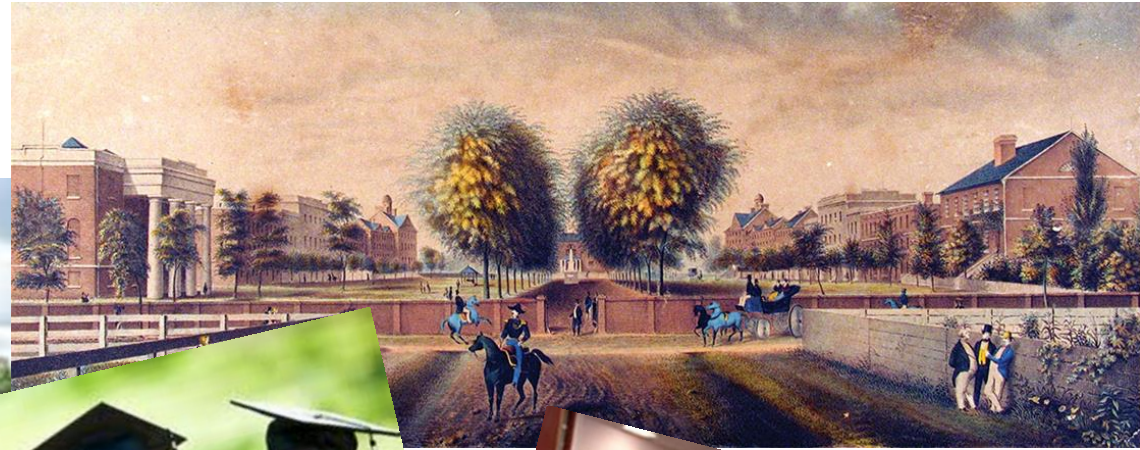
Sarah McClanahan  
*HESA class of 2014*



Brittany White  
*HESA class of 2015*



# Higher education's approach to students over time



**Education for the Elite**

**Survival of the Fittest**

**Student Survival**

**Retention**

**Student Success**



Give students the  
**information & support**  
they need....

**at the time they need it ....**

and **when they are ready** to  
receive it.



# Meet our 'experts'

Madison Mikhail, *Canada*



Matsepo Ramaboli, *Lesotho*





Camila Sobarzo



Daniela Estrada



*all from Chile*

Constanza Pinela



Bader Almandeel, *Saudi Arabia*



Carol DeCarvalho, *Brazil*



Sultan Al Masroori, *Oman*



Lujaina Al Maskari, *Oman*



Tino Dinh, *Vietman*



Juliette Thevenin, *Belgium*





# Institutional Fit

(Tinto and others)

- Congruence between student and institutional goals and values.
- Can students needs be met at the institution?
- Can fit be cultivated?



# Expectations

*“I didn’t have expectations from high school to university, I was open-minded. But to come here, the reference that we had of American life, university life is from movies. We have these ideas, so when you arrive here, you realize of course it’s not only like that. I think in that way, my expectations changed. Not in a bad way, actually in a good way. The transition to here, is what changed my expectations a little.*”



-- Constanza Pinela

# Social & Academic Integration

(Tinto, Pascarella & Terenzini, Light, others)



- Academic integration *and* social integration
- Learning and persistence increase when what students learn outside the classroom is incorporated inside the classroom
- Relevance and integration





*“So for me, I had to take  
have time to adjust. And  
that made the level of my  
studies drop and I kind  
of found myself as the  
average student in the  
classes that I was taking,  
yet I thought I was better.*

*So it took me a long time to adjust to the standard of my  
performance, to that high, good, excellent performance. So  
that was, I think, the major transition I had to do to make  
sure I fit in and to make sure I have friends and to learn  
how to choose what is good and what is not good for me.  
Making all those choices, try to be relevant, and so those  
are the major transitions.”*

*-- Matsepo Ramaboli*

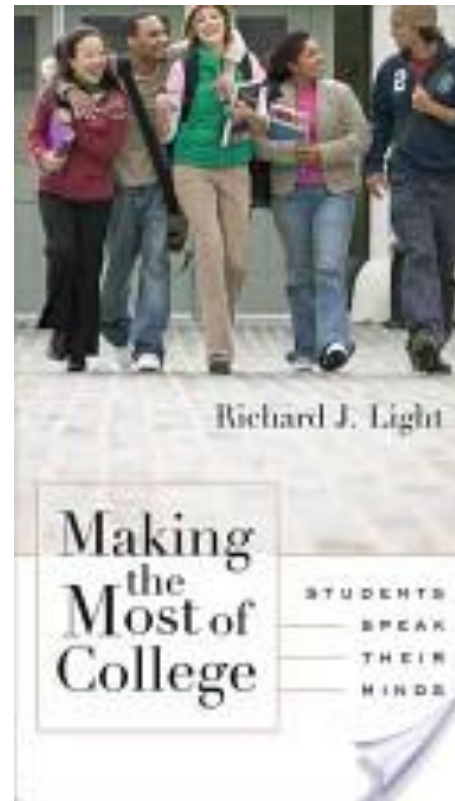
*“I came from a little class in high school. I think here you have different classes and you change your classmates. In Chile, you don’t; you have the same classmates. And then you get to university and you meet a lot of new people and you have a lot of new information, a lot of stories. For me, the difficult part was being used to a group of people and suddenly a lot of new things. It was hard to know, you kind of lose yourself and you start to feel like ‘Where do you fit or who do you fit with?’ That was the hardest part for me.”*

-- Daniela Estrada



“Those students who make connections between what goes on inside and outside the classroom report a more satisfying college experience.”

--Light, 2001



**Employability outcomes**

## Jessica Bailey

Chose a major in Biological Sciences after numerous hours in various hospitals around the state.



Volunteered in the operation rooms and emergency rooms of local Columbia Hospitals.



Helped others on campus as a teaching assistant for Astronomy and a Peer Leader for University 101.

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Possesses the communication and problem solving skills to make a difference as a Physician's Assistant.



[www.sc.edu/usconnect](http://www.sc.edu/usconnect)

**USC**CONNECT

Integrating learning within  
and beyond the classroom



UNIVERSITY OF  
SOUTH CAROLINA

# Involvement and Community

(Astin, Kuh, Sanford, Light)



- Time on task
- Link between quality and quantity of involvement and student performance
- Positive interaction with peers creates sense of belonging and increased satisfaction

*“I think I know in my fraternity in the business school we call it a cubby, but it’s an area where we all hang out between classes, and whenever you have a free hour during the day you just go and sit there and talk to other members.”*

-- Sultan Al Maroori



*“I know ISS helps a lot, but mainly with immigration issues and legal issues, but what helped me transition the most was previous students from my home country and talking to them. Because they know what is important to me and what problems I am facing. So, just talking to them and getting help from them was the best.”*

-- Lujaina Al Maskari





*“It was very difficult to make relationships and make friends because you’re trying to understand. Whenever I met Saudis it was easy to make friends. Even when I met Sultan it was really easy because we were both Middle Eastern, but when you meet Americans you’re still trying to understand and understand their relationships.”*

**-- Bader Almandeel**



# Engagement

(Kuh et al)

- An extension of the work on involvement and community
- Purposeful, intentional, and connected
- Links cognitive and affective dimensions



*“I went to the organizational fair and I’m kind of very outgoing so I joined a bunch of them and I joined a lot and made a lot of friends and they are very outgoing and helpful. I joined the Vietnamese student association so I have some connections and then I also joined the hip hop dance group so people and I, we go to the Strom and they help me and they show me what are available*

*and some good places to go to and get food and to relax and stuff, so it’s nice to have a lot of organizations.”*

*-- Tino Dinh*



*“I was not involved my first two years, I would just go to class, listen to the lecture and head out maybe go to the library until middle of the night. I was here for school I did just school and a little bit of ISA. After the second year I said I think I have two more years left until my time is done here until I have to go back home. I did not live with the American experience and that’s when I decided to join an engineering club. After my first event I went to class the next day and I recognized some people who were in the club and I sat with them and we started a study group and that’s where I really started making American friends.”*



-- Badeer Almandeel

# Research on Engagement

- Engagement in **educationally purposeful activities** is positively related to grades and persistence.
- Student engagement is **unrelated to selectivity**
- The single best predictor of student satisfaction with college is the degree to which they **perceive the college environment to be supportive** of their academic and social needs.

# Learning

(Astin, Kuh, Tinto, others)

- Is key to success
- Is root of persistence and success
- Book learning and life skills learning are both critical



*“You’re forced to grow up a lot faster and a lot more than your friends back home. My friends from high school just sound childish. They really do, they’re like “OMG I broke my nail, mom can you go make a reservation for me to go fix it somewhere” and I’m like take care of your life, man. They do that because they live with the family. Someone cooks for them and makes food, sometimes people drive them. They have moms waking them up to go to class. It’s different when you have an 8am class on a Friday - you have to get up because YOU have to get up, not because someone is telling you to.”*

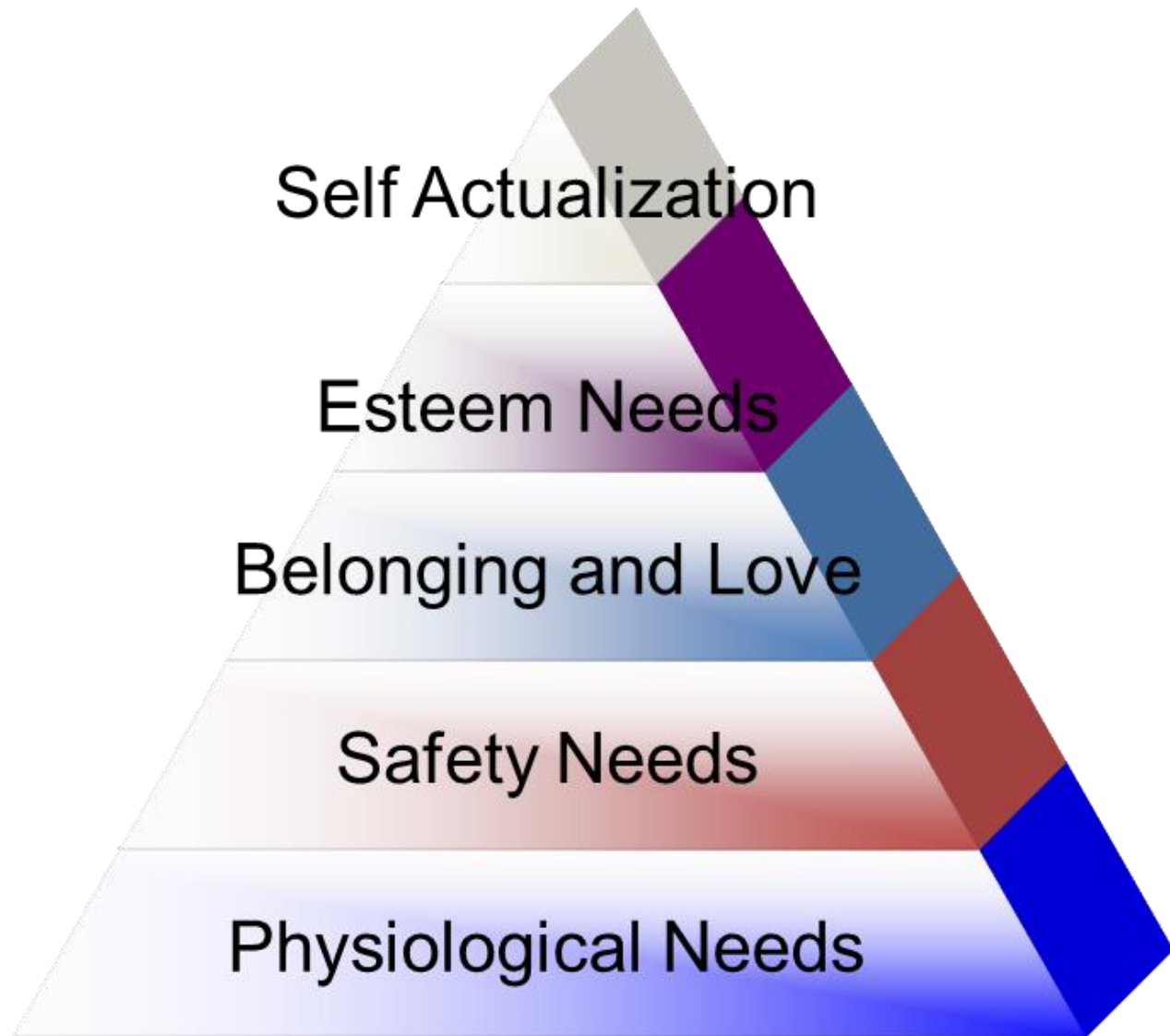
-- Carol DeCarvalho



*“You know really showing them the experience, the full experience....yes academics are great but it’s the other stuff -- the social and the cultural -- that I think is where the experience makes or breaks you.”*

-- Madison Mikhail





Self Actualization

Esteem Needs

Belonging and Love

Safety Needs

Physiological Needs





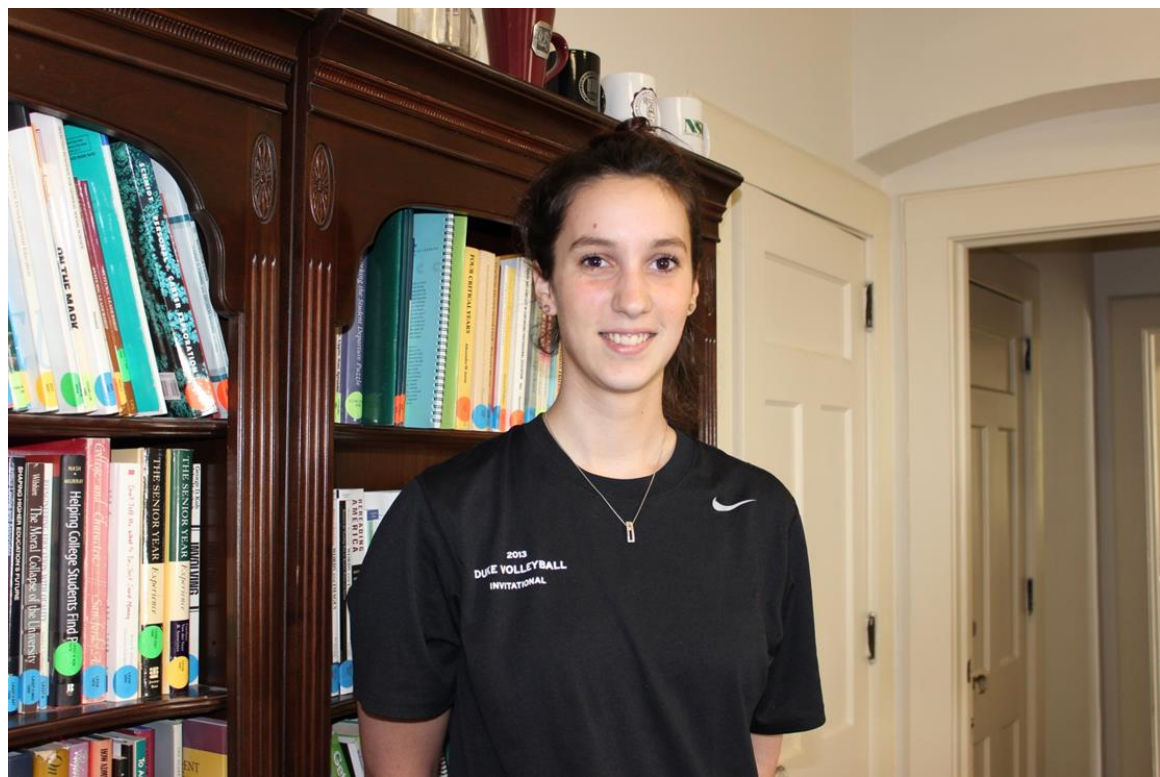
*“It was Ramadan all the time so I was fasting as I was moving in. I came in a few days before housing opened. I arrived at night and it was 11:00 pm and I came to campus and whoever drove me, the volunteers that drove me, they just dropped me off on campus and campus wasn’t open. I was stuck. I just went to the nearest hotel, but I had my luggage. I did not have a phone to Google stuff- it was a very awful experience for me.”*

-- Bader Almandeel

*“But I remember the first year I got here there was a meeting at the international offices and it actually really helped. They told us all the information, all the dorms possible, if you can work, where you can work because of the visa. There’s a lot of stuff that you need to know and it was really helpful.*

*There were a lot of people who were really helpful.”*

-- Juliette Thevenin





*“Another thing I see is that international students come here and they don’t find anyone, they can’t speak English very well, and they are very lonely. I think I have identified with several students, my interests as well are with helping. Especially with African students, I can see when they are lonely and when I talk to them and invite them to some event, then things change for the better for them. I have enjoyed doing that -- seeing somebody needs help and seeing someone who needs help. So just inviting a person to an event, I think that it really helps a lot.”*

-- Camila Sobarzo:

**Education for the Elite**

**Survival of the Fittest**

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**Retention**

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?

WHAT'S NEXT?

?



# The “Thriving” Era



“The construct of thriving as an expanded vision of student success provides a framework for conceptualizing new ways of helping students reap the full benefits of higher education. The very word **thriving** implies that success involves more than surviving a four year obstacle course. Students who thrive are **vitaly engaged** in the college endeavor – intellectually, socially, and emotionally, they experience what Tagg (2003) calls **deep learning**; they are investing effort within the classroom and managing their lives well beyond it.





Thriving students are also ***goal oriented***, applying their strengths to address the academic ***challenges*** they face. When they are thriving, students are ***connected*** to others in healthy and meaningful ways, and they ***desire to make a difference*** in the world about them. They also see the world differently. Equipped with a ***positive perspective*** on life, they are secure in the present and confident of the future.”



*Schreiner, Louis, & Nelson, 2012*

*Emphasis mine*

- Focus on framing of students' strengths – personal tendencies that can be developed
- Avoid focus on innate characteristics that are either present or absent



*Schreiner, Louis, & Nelson, 2012*

# RESILIENCE

the ability to  
persevere and  
adapt when  
things go awry

(Reivich and Shatté, 2002)

# CHARACTERISTICS

Emotion regulation

Impulse control

Optimism

Causal analysis

Empathy

Self-efficacy

Reaching out

(Reivich and Shatté, 2002)



MINDSET

# TWO MINDSETS

CAROL S. DWECK, Ph.D.

Graphic by Nigel Holmes

**Fixed Mindset**  
Intelligence is static



Leads to a desire to look smart and therefore a tendency to...

## CHALLENGES

...avoid challenges



## OBSTACLES

...give up easily



## EFFORT

...see effort as fruitless or worse



## CRITICISM

...ignore useful negative feedback



## SUCCESS OF OTHERS

...feel threatened by the success of others



As a result, they may plateau early and achieve less than their full potential.

All this confirms a **deterministic view of the world.**

**Growth Mindset**  
Intelligence can be developed



Leads to a desire to learn and therefore a tendency to...



...embrace challenges



...persist in the face of setbacks



...see effort as the path to mastery



...learn from criticism



...find lessons and inspiration in the success of others

As a result, they reach ever-higher levels of achievement.

All this gives them a **greater sense of free will.**

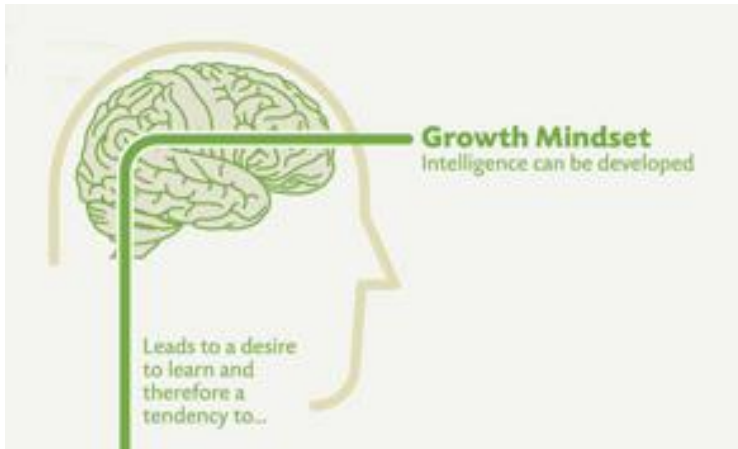
# FIXED MINDSET

- Avoids challenges
- Gives up easily
- Sees effort as fruitless or worse
- Ignores useful criticism or feedback
- Feels threatened by the success of others
- As a result, they peak early and don't achieve full potential



(Reivich and Shatté, 2002)

# GROWTH MINDSET



- Embraces challenges
- Persists in the face of setbacks
- Sees effort as the path to mastery
- Learns from criticism
- Finds lessons and inspiration in the success of others
- As a result, they reach ever-higher levels of achievement

(Reivich and Shatté, 2002)



# CULTIVATE A GROWTH MINDSET

- Focus your praise and feedback on the *process*, not the *person*.
- Provide feedback on elements that students can *improve*, not *innate characteristics*.

# First-Year Student Success

(Upcraft, Gardner & Barefoot, 2005)

- Academic and intellectual competence
- Interpersonal relationships
- Identity development
- Career and lifestyle
- Personal health and wellness
- Civic responsibility
- Faith/ spirituality dimensions of life
- Diversity

# How do we Help Students Thrive?

*60-60 / 30-30*



Time to tweet a selfie!





<https://www.dropbox.com/s/z1te9numgss tafq/%22HAPPY%22.mp4>

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