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Who Mentors? Student Involvement and Perceptions of Hartford

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Who Mentors?

Student Involvement and Perceptions of Hartford

By: Rachel McHugh

Ed 400 Senior Research Project

Trinity College

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The relationship between a college or university and the community in which it is located can be complex, especially if there is a great disparity of race and social class between the two. Many schools fight against the depiction of the campus community as a bubble, removed, unconcerned, and unaware of the surrounding area (Ferrari and Bristow, 2005, p.404). This fight is a difficult one when students, teachers, and members of the community may hold feelings of resentment towards the other. Many students fear the surrounding community, for it is drastically different from any place they have ever lived. Stereotypes about the students, teachers, and “locals” take root and distrust can sever the ties between the school and the community, hurting all involved. Programs that encourage university-community relationships can help break down the stereotypes, resentment, and distrust through community service initiatives that give students a chance to learn more about their surroundings and form connections with the community.

University-Community Partnerships

University-community partnerships are critical in the formation of lasting community service initiatives that help all those involved and bolster the relationship between the community and the school. Historically, there have been many instances of institutions of higher learning treating communities in ways that increase the community’s negative perception of the university (Anyon and Fernandez, 2007, p.41; London, 2001, p.10). Universities and colleges frequently enter into community-university partnerships in which the university does not pay attention to the strengths and weaknesses of the community and instead focuses on the best way to “fix” the community. Universities also tend to make research a priority instead of focusing on implementing initiatives that will benefit both groups equally. The university does not make long-term commitments to helping the community (Anyon and Fernandez, 2007,

p.41). This can lead to the community mistrusting the university and the university's misconception that the community is without strengths or knowledge. This is especially true in communities that are comprised of mainly low-income minority groups, that have been historically exploited by researchers and people in positions of power and privilege (Anyon and Fernandez, 2007, p.41).

Therefore, it is very important for the university and the community to form a partnership in which both groups benefit from working with one another. A strong community-university partnership must work to change school and community members' negative perceptions of one another in a lasting way (Anyon and Fernandez, 2007, p.42). One way that the community and the university can work together is by implementing several long-term community service projects that benefit both the volunteers and the community members and help reduce the stereotypes and prejudice that exist between the two groups.

One method of reducing prejudice and stereotypes is by face-to-face contact between members of different racial, ethnic and socio-economic groups, referred to as contact theory (Allport, 1954; Amir, 1969; Cook, 1985). Contact theory postulates that there is a minimal level of contact needed in order to break down prejudice and stereotypes between groups (Erickson and O'Connor, 2000, p.63). Through this contact with other groups, individuals get to know one another and, over a series of favorable experiences, generalize these positive experiences to the other group as a whole (Erickson and O'Connor, 2000, p.63). It is critical, for the sake of the process, that when the two groups come into contact with one another, no group has power over the other, that both groups are working toward the same goals, and that the contact occurs over a long period of time (Cook, 1985). This has the effect of reducing stereotypes and

prejudices held by members of the community and the university through engaging in meaningful learning experiences.

Who participates?

Community service allows for interactions between students and community members in a structured way (Al Kandari and Al Shallal, 2008, p.575). In order to have a successful community-university partnership, both partners need to find a group of individuals that are willing to donate their time to help make the partnership work. In the community, this usually means finding an organization or program that is willing to work with people from the school to create a program that will serve members of the community. In the university, this means finding not only people to organize the program, but people that will go into the community and volunteer. The majority of colleges and universities have a community service office that will organize and implement programs with the community; however, these individuals are already in contact with members of the community and are not the ones that will benefit. In order to have a community-university partnership program that breaks down stereotypes and prejudice between the community and the university, a wide variety of students at the university need to get involved.

One aim of such a program should be to attract students that have little or no interaction with community members. Students that are heavily involved in community service activities may already have a different perspective about the community and may not hold the same prejudices or stereotypes about the community that students who have had no interaction with the community may possess. Student participation in community service activities has a great benefit on the student. Through participation in community service, students become more aware and accepting of other cultures, personal and social

values, and community issues and also develop leadership skills (Al Kandari and Al Shallal, 2008, p.575). However, the school may not make all students aware of the opportunities for community service that are available. Many students are not made aware of the opportunities that are available due to the size of the student body and the lack of permanent opportunities for community service (Ferrari and Bristow, 2005, p.405). In a study by Jones and Hill (2003), it was found that students at small liberal arts colleges were more aware of community service activities than students at large public institutions. If one goal of the program is to improve the relationship between the community and the university, it is imperative that such a program draws in students that would not normally spend time in the community. In order to do so, it is important to understand the characteristics of students that are involved in community service.

According to a study done by Cruce and Moore (2007), students are more likely to volunteer during their first year of school if they are female, traditional-aged students, minority students, students that are U.S. Citizens, students with parents went gone to college, students with higher levels of academic achievement, full-time students, students that had pledged or joined a Greek organization, and students that resided on campus. Additionally, education majors had the highest odds of volunteering followed by biology and social science majors (Cruce and Moore, 2007, p.663-64). It is important to strive to create a program that will pull in as many different types of students as possible, in order to help break down stereotypes and prejudices held by students not currently involved in community service activities.

Student Attitudes

Since community service has been shown to reduce stereotyping and prejudice through community involvement (Simons and Cleary, 2006, p.307), it is important to

recognize the specific attitudes that many students have about the community in which their school is located. Prior to involvement in community service activities, many students feel no connection with the community and do not spend time in the community or with members of the community. After significant involvement in community service, students develop a different perspective. A study by Simons and Cleary (2006) examined the influence of service learning on students' personal and social development. Students at a school located in a particularly poor community spoke of their past experiences with the community and the negative influence that these encounters had on their view of the community. After the completion of a one-semester service-learning course, students indicated that one of the main benefits of their experience was that it changed their beliefs about the community and that they now consider the school a part of the surrounding community. Students also reported that they learned a lot about respect for different cultures, how race and socio-economic status influence learning and ways to overcome stereotypes and prejudice (Simons and Cleary, 2006, p.313-14; Eyler and Giles, 1999, p.25). There are certain qualities that a community service program should have in order to ensure that students have a positive experience with the program and form new perceptions of the community. One type of community service program that I believe possesses these qualities and has the potential to attract a wide variety of students is mentoring.

Why Mentoring?

Previous research has shown that community-university partnerships that are formed in the interest of breaking down barriers and working towards a mutually shared set of goals can go a long way in reducing prejudice and stereotyping by members of the community and of the university. However, in order to make an impact, schools must get

many different groups of students involved in these activities. At schools that are located in areas that have a high number of minority and low-income residents, many students are afraid of spending time in the community. In order to make a real difference in the stereotypes held by students, it is crucial that a program possesses the following characteristics. A successful community service program must appeal to a wide range of students, have a minimal time commitment, should be held in a non-threatening location, allow students to take ownership of their service, and it should continue over a long period of time (at least a semester). Perhaps this is why partnerships between institutions of higher learning and K-12 schools are the most popular form of service (Pickeral, 2003, p.174). One unique characteristic of mentoring programs is that they are usually held at the college campus or at a local school. Students are more likely to get involved in a program that is held in a location in which they feel comfortable. Since all students have had some experience with formal schooling and are likely to have spent time in a school, students do not have to step as far out of their comfort zone than they would if they were involved in a different type of community service program that is held in an unfamiliar location. Mentoring programs at local elementary and secondary schools also allow a student from the local college or university to spend one-on-one time with a younger student from the community. This one-on-one time satisfies the requirements of contact theory.

Mentoring programs are highly sustainable partnerships because the university and the community schools follow similar schedules. Mentoring programs usually require a minimal time commitment with maximum exposure to the community. An article by Eyler and Giles (1999) about how to create high-quality placements lists six components of a high-quality placement that fit the characteristics of most mentoring

programs. A high-quality placement should allow students to do meaningful work and have meaningful responsibilities. As mentors, students are working with other students to help bridge the gap between low-income and minority students education and that of their affluent peers. Mentors are in direct contact with the student and can have a huge effect on that student's future. According to Eyler and Giles (1999) students should have varied and challenging tasks; as mentors, students are responsible not only for the students' education but also for their social and emotional well being. In addition, mentors work directly with community partners and the service continues over a sustained period of time (Eyler and Giles, 1999, p.190-91).

Reason for Research

As the literature suggests, mentoring programs are a way for college students to interact with younger students from the area. When handled properly, mentoring programs can help form a bond between the student and the neighborhood in which their school is located. This is particularly important at institutions that are located in areas that are home to individuals of low-income minority groups and often have strained connections with the community. Mentoring programs are a way for students to have personal contact with residents of the surrounding area and have the potential to reduce stereotyping and prejudice that is often present between the institution and the surrounding community. Previous research has shown that the programs that are most effective in building ties between the community and the institution are ones that do not require a large time commitment of the students involved, are on-going, and are made available to the entire student body. These programs are likely to attract more students than programs that require large amounts of time and are further outside of the students' comfort zone. However, there is a lack of information on the effect of involvement in

different community service programs on students' attitudes about the community and on whether certain programs attract a greater variety of student participants than others.

Research Questions

My personal experience with mentoring at Trinity College led me to the formulation of my research questions. Through my involvement with mentoring at Trinity College, I observed that the students involved in mentoring programs seemed to be more diverse than the students that were involved in other community service programs. This observation, combined with the findings of past research, led me to my research questions:

- 1. Who mentors? Are certain students more likely to mentor than other students?**
- 2. Do students that mentor have a different perspective than students that do not mentor?**

Trinity College shares many characteristics with the schools studied in past research. The majority of people living in the area surrounding Trinity are of lower income and minority groups. The relationship between Trinity College and the residents of Hartford is strained and many students do not have a good impression of the area. One way in which Trinity has attempted to combat this negative relationship is by implementing several mentoring programs that involve students from Trinity working with students from Hartford and the surrounding areas. As mentioned in the literature, mentoring programs are structured in a way that appeals to a wider variety of students. Many community service or outreach programs are comprised of a small set of students that are dedicated to improving relations with the area. In order to truly have an effect on the student body as a whole, it is important for a school to have programs that appeal to everyone. In order to see if the mentoring programs at Trinity appealed to a wide variety

of students and to explore whether students that mentor have a different perception of the surrounding area, I conducted a survey of a random sample of Trinity College students.

Survey

To best measure what students were involved in the mentoring programs and whether student mentors held different perceptions than non-mentors, two surveys were conducted. The survey's were created and distributed using Survey Monkey, an online program that allows you to create, distribute, and collect responses to survey's sent through email. It was important that the survey was sent via students email addresses to ensure anonymity of the respondents but also to make sure that the responses were as honest as possible. Since the survey asked students to reflect on perception questions that they might not feel comfortable answering in front of the researcher, it was important that the survey was anonymous and distributed online.

The first survey was sent to all first-year students at Trinity. This survey looked at the demographics of students that were involved in mentoring programs. The survey included questions on race, income, and age, but also asked students to select any clubs or groups to which they belonged (including mentoring programs) and to indicate the racial composition of their neighborhood and of the high school that they attended. These questions were used to determine whether students of a certain background were more involved in mentoring programs than other students.

The second survey was sent to a random sample of 500 students at Trinity. First year students were not included in this survey. The second survey was labeled the "Upperclassman" survey but included sophomores, juniors, and seniors, as well as IDP and graduate students. The first part of this survey was the same as the first year survey but also included a variety of questions about the student's involvement in other service

work such as community service or volunteering, how frequently they interacted with people from the surrounding area, how frequently they spent time in Hartford, how safe or comfortable they felt both on campus and off, and how important qualities such as giving back to the community or promoting racial understanding are to the student.

Results & Discussion

A total of 376 students responded to this survey. 174 participants were first year students and 202 participants were “upperclassmen”. I analyzed the results of the survey using traditional psychology methods.

Who Mentors?

In order to determine whether mentoring programs attract a wide range of students, all participants (non-mentors and mentors) in all grades, were examined based on all demographic information. When analyzing the results, it was clear that student mentors at Trinity shared a few notable characteristics. When comparing the gender of student mentors, significantly more mentors were female ($M= 1.64, SD= 0.48$) than male ($M= 1.85, SD= 0.36$) $F(1, 373) = 111.74, p < .001$.

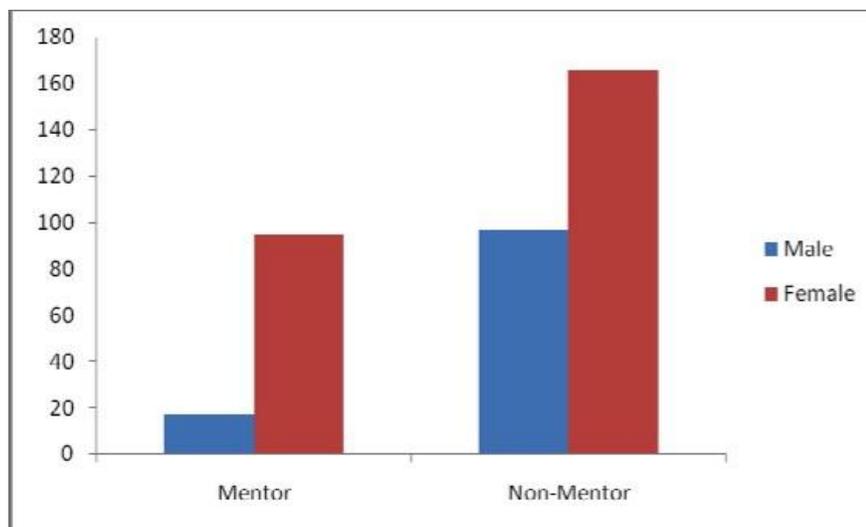


Figure 1. Distribution of male and female students in Mentor and Non-Mentor groups

As shown in Figure 1, there are more female students involved in mentoring programs than male students. Overall, more female students participated in the study but the distribution of female to male in the mentor columns shows the drastic difference in involvement. This finding is consistent with past research that females are more likely to be involved in community service or volunteering than male students (Cruce and Moore, 2007, p.663-64).

Students that mentor did differ from the rest of the population in the racial composition of the neighborhood in which they grew up. Students that mentor grew up in a neighborhood with a significantly lower percentage of white people ($M= 3.68, SD= 1.24$) than students that do not mentor ($M= 3.94, SD=1.06$), $F(1, 374) = 4.07, p < .01$.

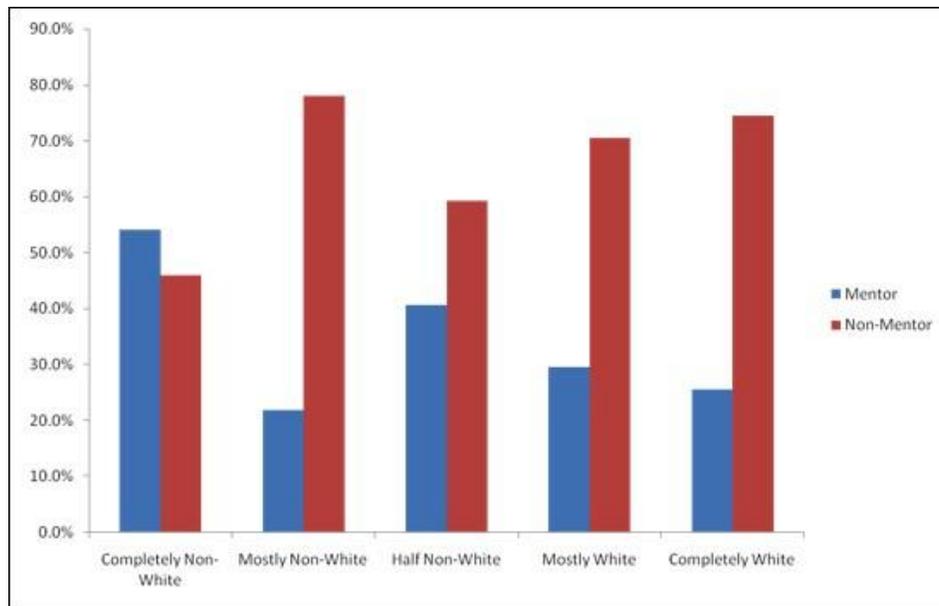


Figure 2. Distribution of Neighborhood Race/Ethnicity for Mentors and Non-Mentors (percent)

Since there was no significant finding with regard to the race of the student or the racial composition of the high school the student attended, this finding shows that students that grow up in more diverse neighborhoods are more likely to mentor, regardless of race or ethnicity. Given that the racial composition of the city of Hartford is

mainly Hispanic and Black, it is possible that students that grew up in a more diverse setting find it easier to bridge the gap between Trinity and Hartford and are more likely to get involved with the community. These students are also less likely to possess stereotypes about the surrounding community because they have lived in communities that are diverse racially and ethnically.

On the survey students were asked to select any career field that they might possibly pursue. Due to the context in which most mentoring programs are held, one might assume that students that mentor are more likely to pursue a career in education. The findings for career choice were not significant for Finance, Business, Marketing, Education, Journalism, Government work, Legal, Clerical, Medical, Real Estate, or the Arts. This finding (or lack thereof) shows the diverse career aspirations held by students that mentor. There were two significant findings for careers aspirations held by students that mentor. Students that mentor were significantly more likely to pursue a career in the non-profit sector ($M= 1.58, SD= 0.49$) than students that do not mentor ($M= 1.72, SD= 0.45$) $F(1, 374) = 8.681, p < .05$. Students that mentor were significantly more likely to pursue a career in the social services ($M= 1.54, SD= 0.5$) than students that do not mentor ($M= 1.72, SD= 0.45$) $F(1, 374) = 11.624, p < .01$. These two career aspirations are closely linked to a desire to give back to the community or to benefit the world in some way. Past research has shown that students that intend to pursue a career in education are also more likely to engage in community service. Since the Educational Studies department at Trinity does not offer a teaching certification program, the majority of students involved in the educational studies department at Trinity are more likely to pursue a career in the non-profit or social services sector. This may be one reason for the finding that students that intend to pursue a career in education are not significantly more likely to mentor.

As shown in figure 3, the majority of mentors had been involved with a mentoring program for more than one semester but less than one year. The amount of time that a student is involved with a community service program is an important factor in how successful the program will be and how much of an impact that their involvement with the program can have on the students perceptions of the community and of community service programs in general. Previous literature has shown that one of the key components of a successful program is the longevity of the program and the accessibility of the program to all students (Eyler and Giles, 1999).

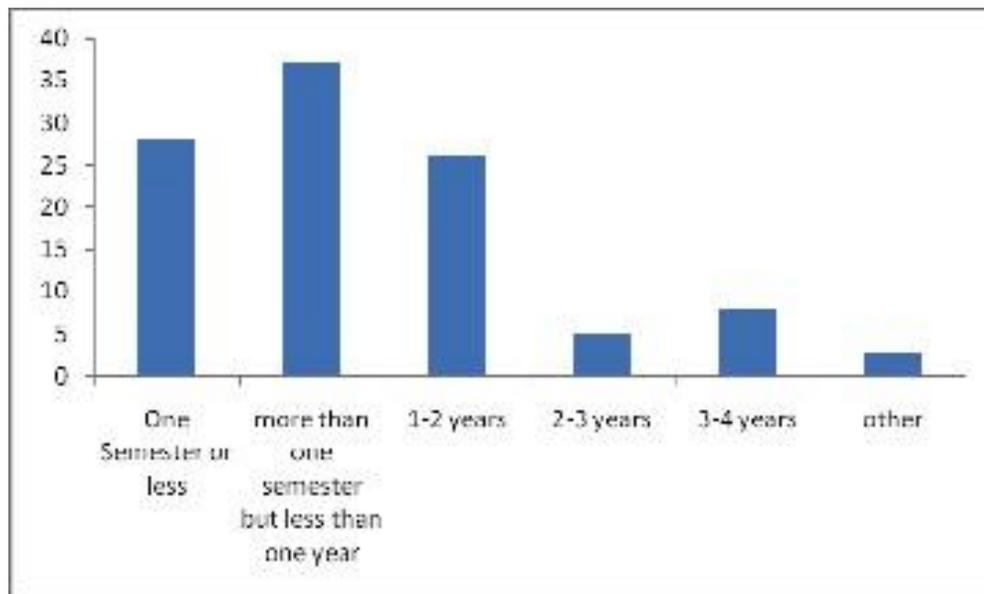


Figure 3. Length of time involved in a mentoring program (Mentors only)

It is important that students stick with the program for a substantial amount of time in order for any relationship to form between the student and the community. A study by Simons and Cleary (2006) found that students involved in a one-semester service-learning course felt that their beliefs about the community had changed over the course of the semester. With more time spent in the program, the effect that involvement in the program can have on the student increases.

Another key component that lends some insight into why and how students get involved in mentoring programs is the students' self-reported reasons for getting involved in a mentoring program.

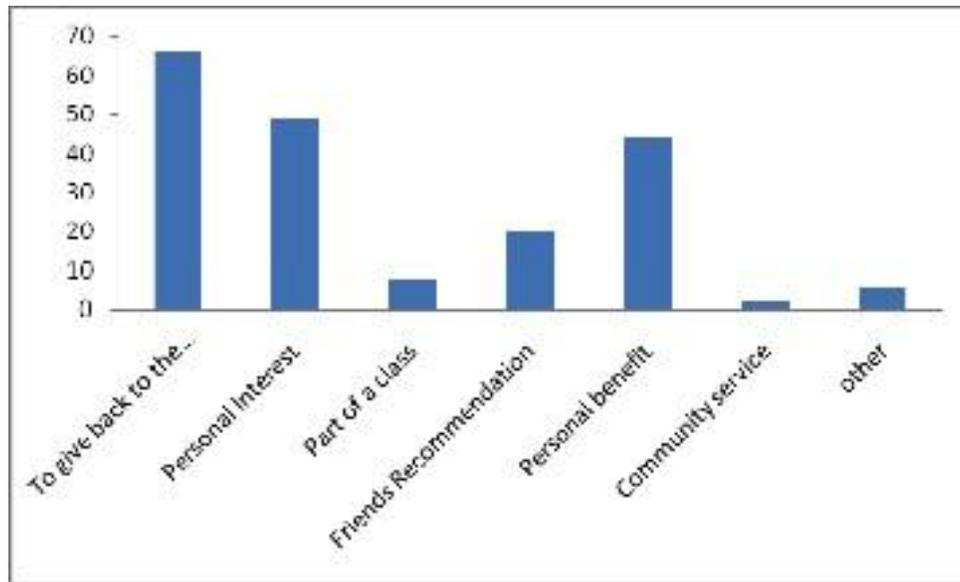


Figure 4. Reason for getting involved in a mentoring program

Of all the mentors surveyed, the highest number of students said that they got involved in a mentoring program to give back to the community. This shows that students have an understanding of the benefit that mentoring has for the community and that students feel a need to give back to the community. This does not mean that students feel a need to give back directly to Hartford, but that the majority of mentors felt a need to give back in general. Whatever the reason for feeling this way, mentors initially got involved in the mentoring program as a way to help others.

Another popular reason for getting involved with mentoring was because they had a personal interest in the program. This reasoning highlights the importance of mentoring programs and the high level of personal interest that students feel with regard to this specific type of community service. It is important to offer mentoring programs because it appeals to a group of students that does not normally get involved in community

service programs or community action programs. Students often develop an interest in using their experiences to help a younger student achieve, and many mentors come away with knowledge but also feelings of empowerment at helping someone achieve. Cruce and Moore (2007) found that students are more likely to volunteer if they are female, traditional aged students, minority students, and students that were interested in pursuing a career in education. This does not reference specific involvement in a mentoring program.

When compared with this study, students that mentor at Trinity are more diverse than the students that are more likely to volunteer in the Cruce and Moore study. This could be due to the unique characteristics of a mentoring program. Because mentoring programs are usually held in schools, a wider group of students feel a connection with the programs. Community service programs that focus on aspects of homelessness or poverty do not apply as directly to students at colleges and universities. Many students have never experienced poverty or homelessness and have trouble identifying with people that do. Students may also be scared of the people that homelessness and poverty programs help, as they have had little experience and feel no connection with these people. Every single college student knows what it is like to go to school. Even if the student has a completely different educational experience than the children in the program, the student can identify with the child's experience in some way. There is also less fear associated with going to a school in the community than going to a homeless shelter and the stereotypes about the homeless are much stronger than ones about urban schools.

Many mentors said that their primary reason for getting involved with mentoring was due to a friend's recommendation of the program. Students are more likely to get involved in a program if one of their friends is involved. This allows the student to step

outside of their comfort zone with a “buddy” and can make the transition easier for many students. This statistic combined with the wide range of clubs that mentors are involved with indicates that perhaps word of mouth is a crucial aspect of involvement in mentoring programs even between groups of students.

Mentor vs. Non-Mentor Perceptions

In order to answer my second question, “do students that mentor have a different perception of Hartford than students that do not mentor”; survey questions addressed how frequently students spent time in Hartford going to dinner, bars, internships and speaking with Hartford residents. Students were asked a number of other questions such as how safe they felt in Hartford and on Trinity’s campus or how likely they were to participate in community service for a class.

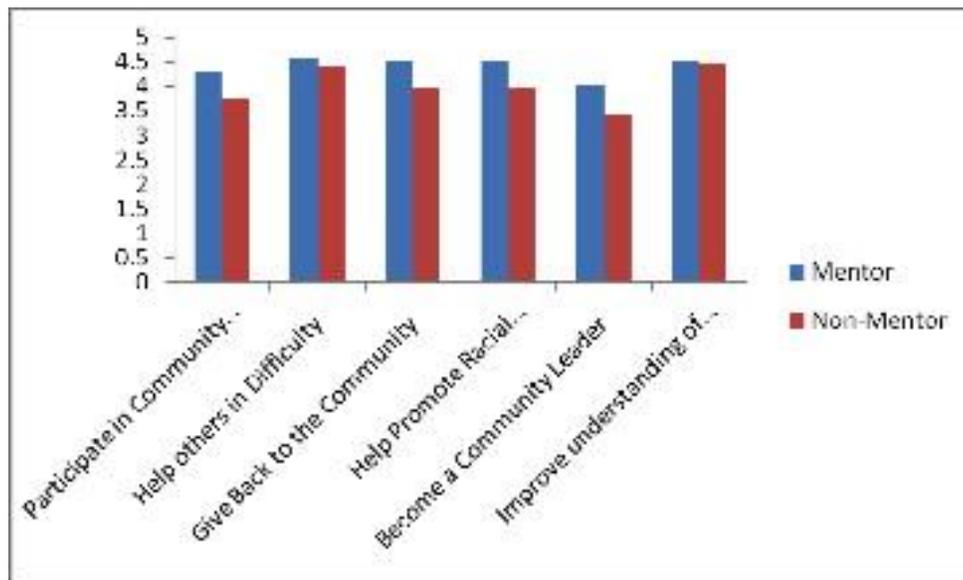


Figure 5. How Important is this to you?

Students that mentor rated helping others in difficulty as significantly more important ($M= 4.58, SD= 0.54$) than students that did not mentor ($M= 4.39, SD= 0.69$), $F(1, 198) = 9.374, p < .05$. Students that mentor rated participating in community action programs as significantly more important ($M= 4.31, SD= 0.76$) than students that did not

mentor ($M= 3.76, SD= 0.9$) $F(1, 198) = 2.456, p < .001$. Students that mentor rated giving back to the community as significantly more important ($M= 4.5, SD= 0.69$) than students that did not mentor ($M= 3.97, SD= 0.85$) $F(1, 197) = .004, p < .001$. Students that mentor rated promoting racial understanding significantly more important ($M= 4.5, SD= 0.69$) than students that did not mentor ($M= 3.97, SD= 0.85$) $F(1, 197) = .004, p < .001$.

Students that mentor rated becoming a community leader significantly more important ($M= 4.02, SD= 0.94$) than students that did not mentor ($M= 3.43, SD= 1.07$) $F(1, 197) = 4.624, p < .001$. Student mentors did not differ significantly in how they rated the importance of improving their understanding of other races and cultures.

It is not surprising that students that chose to get involved in a mentoring program feel a stronger need to help others, participate in community action programs, give back to the community, promote racial understanding, or become a community leader. It is likely that students rate these things as more important because these are the primary reason for getting involved in the mentoring program in the first place. A great majority of student mentors reported their reason for getting involved in a mentoring program as due to a need to give back to the community or for personal benefit/interest. This shows that students that already rate these things as more important to them are more likely to be involved in a mentoring program. Mentoring programs can magnify these feelings and can spur students to get involved with more community projects as their connection with the community strengthens. Since it is impossible to infer that the mentoring program is the reason that these students feel so strongly about all of these variables, we can only guess the two are mutually reinforcing. Students that feel these variables are important are more likely to mentor and once they get involved in the mentoring program, their

involvement in the program increases their feelings about the importance about these variables.

Mentors were significantly more likely to participate in community service as a part of a class ($M= 2.44, SD= 0.69$) than students that do not mentor ($M= 2.61, SD= 0.63$) $F(1, 196) = 7.396, p < .05$.

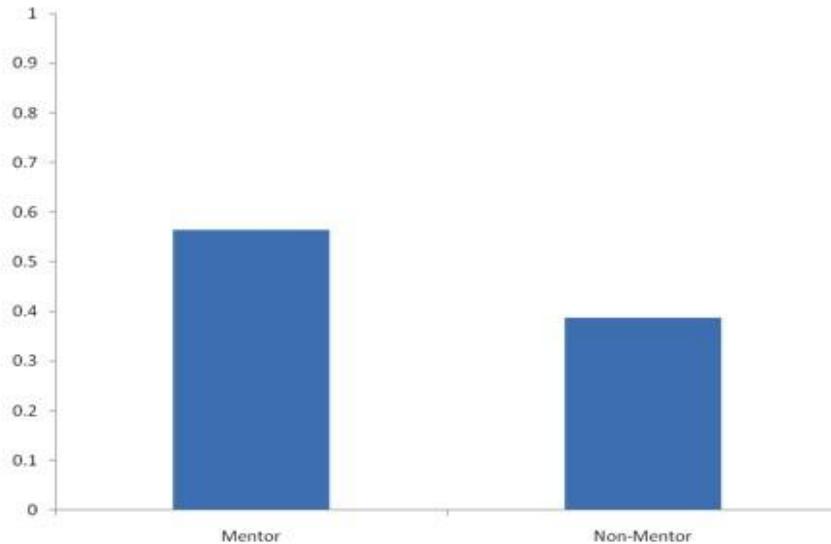


Figure 6. Mean rating of student likelihood of involvement in community service as a part of a class

Many students are hesitant to take a class that requires students to engage in community service programs. As shown in figure 4, a very small number of students said that they initially got involved with the mentoring program as a requirement for a class. Mentors may be influenced by their positive experience with mentoring to take on other community service projects and are more likely to take a class with a community-learning component after having a positive experience with mentoring.

Mentors go to dinner in Hartford more frequently ($M= 1.39, SD= 0.54$) than students that do not mentor ($M= 1.55, SD= 0.87$) $F(1, 200) = .058, p < .05$.

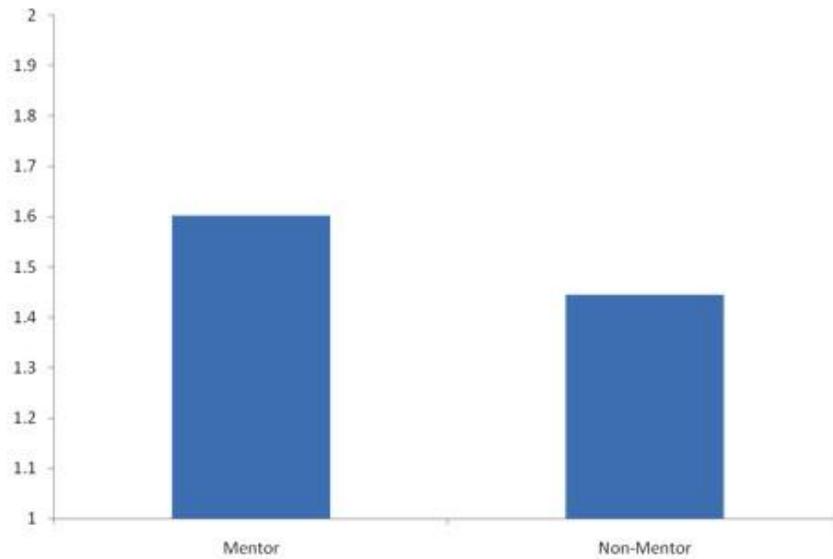


Figure 7. Mean frequency of going to dinner in Hartford

This finding shows there is a difference in how students feel about the accessibility of Hartford and how likely they are to use the city as a resource. If students feel that there is something that the city has that benefits them in some way, they are more likely to spend time in the city and will have a more positive opinion of the city in general. This shows that students that mentor are moderately comfortable spending time in Hartford after dark. While there is a big difference between feelings of safety in a restaurant and feelings of safety overall, this finding shows that students that mentor feel more comfortable in Hartford, if only slightly more comfortable.

The final and most surprising finding of this study was that students that mentor are less likely to consider living in Hartford after graduation ($M= 1.91, SD= 1.1$) than students that do not mentor ($M= 1.62, SD= 0.87$) $F(1, 195) = 2.988, p < .05$.

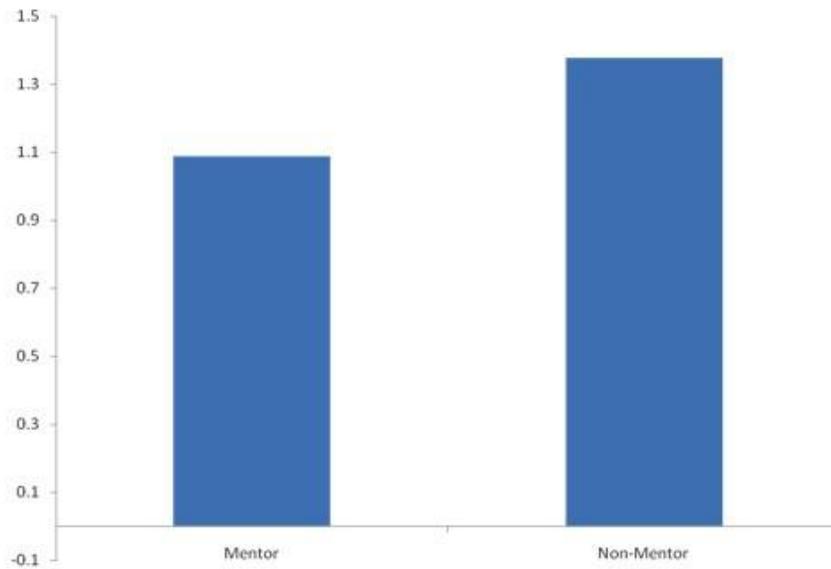


Figure 8. Mean likelihood of living in Hartford after graduation

This is probably due to the fact that most students that mentor are more aware of the problems that face Hartford residents. Many students see that Hartford has a great deal of problems and that students that grow up in Hartford can be at a disadvantage. This shows that students that mentor are more aware of the problems that Hartford residents face but that their experience leads most students that mentor to go elsewhere after graduation.

Limitations

Of all of the mentoring programs at Trinity, five programs are similar to the type of program discussed in the literature. These programs are: Rising Stars, VAMP, Big Brother/Big Sister, Connectikids, and Dream Camp. Additional mentoring programs were included but did not have high numbers of students participating in the program. Of the 376 respondents, 135 students reported that they had been involved in a mentoring program while at Trinity.

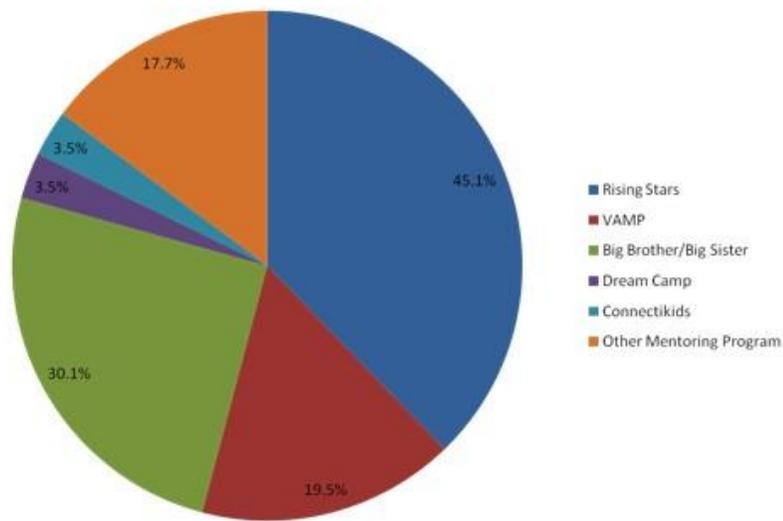


Figure 9. Percent of mentors involved in each mentoring program at Trinity

The majority of the mentoring programs at Trinity are held on or very near to campus. The Rising Stars program has the greatest number of mentors involved. The Rising Stars program is held at Hartford Magnet Middle School, which is located in the “learning corridor” next to Trinity. The V.A.M.P program is also held at the same school. The learning corridor is a cluster of schools located across the street from Trinity that was recently built in a joint venture by the school and the city of Hartford. Because of its’ close proximity to Trinity’s campus, many students do not consider the schools in the learning corridor as a part of Hartford. The same can be said for Dream Camp and for the Connectikids programs, which are held at the Trinity Ice Rink and at Vernon Social Center, respectively. It is possible that students do not generalize their experiences with students at schools in the learning corridor because they do not see the learning corridor as a part of Hartford, but rather as an extension of Trinity. The school at which the Rising Stars and V.A.M.P programs are held is also a magnet school that attracts students from outside of the city of Hartford. While the majority of students come from Hartford, the

non-traditional group of students that Hartford Magnet Middle School attracts may result in many students viewing the school as not a part of the typical Hartford school. Both the location of the program and the type of school that the program is held at could have an effect on the lack of difference in mentor and non-mentor perception.

The Big Brother/Big Sister program is held at several elementary schools in Hartford. Students that mentor with the Big Brother/Big Sister program did not differ in their perceptions about Hartford. It is possible that this is because the Big Brother/Big Sister program only represented 30% of students involved in mentoring. It would have been very interesting to further examine whether there are any differences between on campus and off campus mentoring programs, however due to the small sample size of this study, this was not possible. The one thing that the Big Brother/Big Sister program does show is that students are more than willing to get involved in programs that are held off campus. If further research shows that off campus mentoring programs have a greater effect on improving student perceptions, students would be willing to get involved.

Another limitation of this study is that I did not use standardized measures and created the majority of survey questions. Student perception of Hartford is something that is nearly impossible to measure because overall, most students have negative feelings about the city itself, though not necessarily about the residents of Hartford. Many of the questions on this survey that addressed the students' perception about Hartford dealt with issues of safety and emotions surrounding the city itself, not the residents. Sometimes, student perceptions had nothing to do with Hartford at all. One student told me that she reported feeling unsafe on Trinity's campus at night not because Trinity is located in Hartford but because she feels uncomfortable walking alone at night anywhere. This distinction is very difficult to measure but would provide very interesting results if a

proper measure could be created or obtained. A more inclusive study would have also addressed the students' feelings with specific regard to feelings about Hartford residents and not just about the city itself.

Recommendations

My findings for my first research question about who mentors at Trinity College were fairly consistent with past research. Mentoring programs attract students from all different backgrounds. The one group of students that were noticeably absent from mentoring programs was the student athlete. Only one student, out of all students that reported involvement in a mentoring program, was a member of an organized sports team. Students that are involved in mentoring are members of almost every single club and group on campus. Fifteen mentors are on a club team but only one mentor is on a sports team. It is particularly difficult for students on sports teams to get involved in mentoring programs because mentoring programs are usually held at the same time as sports teams practice. This is unfortunate because student athletes have a unique perspective that could be very interesting to a mentee. Many students at the local schools in Hartford identify with athletes and look up to student athletes. If more student athletes were to get involved in mentor programs, this could have a positive effect on the way in which student athletes identify with Hartford and how mentees in the program identify with Trinity and college sports in general. My one recommendation for Trinity College mentoring programs is to figure out a way for student athletes to get involved in mentoring programs. Many student athletes have practice at the same time as mentoring programs, however when students are not in season, they do not get involved in mentoring programs. I think that a mentoring program that catered to student athletes could be a good addition to the mentoring programs held at Trinity.

Mentoring programs at Trinity attract a wide variety of students from very diverse backgrounds. Overall, the findings of this study, with regard to who is more likely to mentor, are consistent with past research. Student perceptions of Hartford and of community service activities do differ depending on whether the student is a mentor. Further research should focus on creating standardized measures of perception of people and of places. With specific regard to the mentoring programs at Trinity, it would be interesting to study whether the location of a program has an effect on the extent to which mentoring programs change students' perceptions overall.

Instruments

First-year survey

Please select the option that best fits your answer.

1. What is your gender?

Male Female Transgender

2. What is your age?

17 18 19 20 21 22 23 Other

3. What is your class year?

First year Sophomore Junior Senior IDP Graduate Student

4. What is your race?

American Indian or Alaska Native
Asian
Black or African American
Hispanic
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
White
White Non-Hispanic
Other

5. What is your best estimate of your parents' average total income per year? Consider all income from all sources.

Less than 30,000
30,000 to 59,999
60,000 to 79,999
80,000 to 99,999
100,000 to 149,999
150,000 to 199,999
200,000 or higher

6. Is English your native language?

Yes No

7. In what year did you graduate from High School?

2004 or earlier
2005
2006
2007
2008
GED

8. Are you currently enrolled as a:

Part time student

Full time student

9. From what kind of high school did you graduate? (mark one)

Private school

Public school

Private Religious/parochial School

Home school

10. How would you describe the racial composition of the high school you last attended?

Completely non-White

Mostly non-White

Roughly Half non-White

Mostly White

Completely White

11. How would you describe the racial composition of the neighborhood where you grew up?

Completely non-White

Mostly non-White

Roughly Half non-White

Mostly White

Completely White

12. Would you describe the neighborhood where you grew up as:

Rural

Urban

Suburban

13. What is your major? Minor?

14. To the best of your knowledge, what type of career do you intend to pursue?

Finance

Business

Marketing/PR

Education

Journalism

Research

Government Job

Non-profit

Social Services

Legal

Clerical

Real Estate

Arts

Other

15. Have you ever been involved in any of the following programs while at Trinity?

Rising Stars
VAMP
Big Brother/ Big Sister
Dream Camp
Betances School Tutoring
Burns School Tutoring
Kennelly School Tutoring
Lewis Fox Middle School Tutoring
Trinity Camp for Kids
None of the above

16. For what period of time were/have you been involved with these programs? Please select the answer that most closely corresponds to the amount of time you have been involved.

One semester or less
1-2 years
2-3 years
3-4 years
Other _____

17. Are you currently involved in any of these programs?

Yes
No

17. What prompted you to get involved in these programs?

To give back to the community
Sounded interesting
As a part of a class
Friend's recommendation
Personal benefit
Community service requirement
Other

18. Please select any clubs or groups that you are a member of at Trinity.

ACES Best Buddies
ConnPRIG
F.A.C.E.S.
Habitat for Humanity
Green Campus
Praxis
Trinity College Lions Club
AIDS Project
Betances School Tutoring
Burns School Tutoring
Center City Churches
English as a Second Language
Rising Stars
VAMP

Big Brother/Big Sister
Dream Camp
Family Life Ministry
Immaculate Conception
Interval House
Kennelly School Tutoring
Lewis Fox Middle School Tutoring
Scholars Club
St. Elizabeth's Shelter
Youth Emergency Shelter
Youth Under Severe Stress
AASA
CSA
EROS
French Club
German Club
Hillel
IMANI
Italian Club
La Voz Latina
MAC
MOCA
MSA
Portuguese Club
Russian Club
Spanish Club
TCBWO
Venetian Club
Fraternity/Sorority
The Tripod
Musical organization
Amnesty International
AMSA
ASME
Biology Club
College Democrats
College Republicans
The Fred
NSBE
Newman Club
Outing Club
SUSHI
SWE
TCS
VOID
Class Committee
Bantam Rhinestone Rollers
Equestrian Club

Rifle Club
Ski Team
Rugby Club (Men's)
Rugby Club (Women's)
Shotokan Karate Club
Tae Kwon Do
Club Lax
Trinity College Club Ice Hockey Team
Ultimate Frisbee
Water Polo
Other_____

“Upperclassmen” survey

Please circle the option that best fits your answer.

1. What is your gender?

Male Female Transgender

2. Age

17 18 19 20 21 22 23 Other

3. Class Year

First year Sophomore Junior Senior IDP Graduate Student

4. How would you describe yourself? (Circle one answer)

Black or African American

Asian, Asian American or Pacific Islander

White

Hispanic/Latino

Native American

Other_____

5. What is your best estimate of your parents' average total income per year? Consider all income from all sources.

Less than 30,000

30,000 to 59,999

60,000 to 79,999

80,000 to 99,999

100,000 to 149,999

150,000 to 199,999

200,000 or higher

6. Is English your native language?

Yes No

7. In what year did you graduate from High School?

2004 or earlier

2005
2006
2007
2008
GED

8. Are you currently enrolled as a:
Part time student
Full time student

9. From what kind of high school did you graduate? (mark one)
Private school
Public school
Private Religious/parochial school
Home school

10. How would you describe the racial composition of the high school you last attended?
Completely non-White
Mostly non-White
Roughly Half non-White
Mostly White
Completely White

11. How would you describe the racial composition of the neighborhood where you grew up?
Completely non-White
Mostly non-White
Roughly Half non-White
Mostly White
Completely White

12. Would you describe the neighborhood where you grew up as:
Rural
Urban
Suburban

13. What is your major? Minor?

14. Have you ever been involved in any of the following programs while at Trinity?
Rising Stars
VAMP
Big Brother/ Big Sister
Dream Camp
Betances School Tutoring
Burns School Tutoring
Kennelly School Tutoring
Lewis Fox Middle School Tutoring

Trinity Camp for Kids
None of the above

15. For what period of time were/have you been involved with these programs? Please select the answer that most closely corresponds to the amount of time you have been involved.

One semester or less
1-2 years
2-3 years
3-4 years
Other _____

16. Are you currently involved in any of these programs?

Yes
No

17. What prompted you to get involved in these programs?

To give back to the community
Sounded interesting
As a part of a class
Friend's recommendation
Personal benefit
Community service requirement
Other

18. To the best of your knowledge, what type of career do you intend to pursue?

Finance
Business
Marketing/PR
Education
Journalism
Research
Government Job
Non-profit
Social Services
Legal
Clerical
Real Estate
Arts
Other

19. Please select any clubs or groups that you are a member of at Trinity.

ACES Best Buddies
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Betances School Tutoring
Burns School Tutoring
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English as a Second Language
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Big Brother/Big Sister
Dream Camp
Family Life Ministry
Immaculate Conception
Interval House
Kennelly School Tutoring
Lewis Fox Middle School Tutoring
Scholars Club
St. Elizabeth's Shelter
Youth Emergency Shelter
Youth Under Severe Stress
AASA
CSA
EROS
French Club
German Club
Hillel
IMANI
Italian Club
La Voz Latina
MAC
MOCA
MSA
Portuguese Club
Russian Club
Spanish Club
TCBWO
Venetian Club
Fraternity/Sorority
The Tripod
Musical organization
Amnesty International
AMSA
ASME
Biology Club
College Democrats
College Republicans
The Fred
NSBE
Newman Club

Outing Club
SUSHI
SWE
TCS
VOID
Class Committee
Bantam Rhinestone Rollers
Equestrian Club
Rifle Club
Ski Team
Rugby Club (Men's)
Rugby Club (Women's)
Shotokan Karate Club
Tae Kwon Do
Club Lax
Trinity College Club Ice Hockey Team
Ultimate Frisbee
Water Polo
Other_____

For the activities below, indicate which ones you did during the past year. If you engaged in an activity frequently, mark (frequently). If you engaged in an activity one or more times, but not frequently, mark (Occasionally). Mark (Not at all) if you have not performed the activity during the past year. (Mark one for each item)

20. Performed community service as a part of a class
F N O

21. Performed volunteer work (not mentoring)
F N O

22. Socialized with someone of another racial/ethnic group
F N O

23. Gone to dinner in Hartford
F N O

24. Gone to a bar in Hartford
F N O

25. Had an internship or job (besides mentoring) in Hartford
F N O

26. Taken the Hartford public bus
F N O

27. Gone to see a movie in Hartford
F N O

28. Had a conversation with a Hartford resident (excluding Trinity staff)
F N O

Please select answer that most closely corresponds to how you feel about the following questions.

30. How likely is it that you will engage in conversation with a Hartford resident (excluding Trinity staff)?

1 2 3 4 5

31. How happy are you with Trinity's location?

1 2 3 4 5

33. How likely are you to consider living in Hartford after college?

1 2 3 4 5

34. How comfortable are you walking around Trinity's campus at night?

1 2 3 4 5

35. How comfortable are you walking around Hartford during the day?

1 2 3 4 5

36. How comfortable are you walking around Hartford at night?

1 2 3 4 5

37. Are there places where you can go and have fun in Hartford (not on campus)?

1 2 3 4 5

38. Overall, how aware are you of the problems facing people in Hartford?

1 2 3 4 5

39. Overall, how safe do you feel on Trinity's campus?

1 2 3 4 5

40. Overall, how safe do you feel in Hartford?

1 2 3 4 5

Please indicate the importance to you personally on each of the following questions.

41. Helping others who are in difficulty

1 2 3 4 5

42. Participating in community action programs

1 2 3 4 5

43. Giving back to the community

1 2 3 4 5

44. Helping to promote racial understanding

1 2 3 4 5

45. Becoming a community leader

1 2 3 4 5

46. Improving my understanding of other countries and cultures

1 2 3 4 5

Please indicate the importance to you personally on each of the following questions.

Helping others who are in difficulty

Participating in community action programs

Giving back to the community

Helping to promote racial understanding

Becoming a community leader

Improving my understanding of other countries and cultures

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