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Defining and Cultivating School Spirit at Southern Adventist University: A Qualitative Study

Mia Lindsey

Abstract: This research analyzed the student school spirit at a small Christian university to gain understanding of ways to better facilitate growth of school spirit on campus. The measurement of school spirit was based on four characteristics: ethos, sense of community, rituals and traditions and a combination of participation, loyalty, and pride. The researcher conducted three focus groups based on class standings of senior, junior, and sophomore. Each group had six to nine randomly and purposively selected participants. Results showed that the people, the place, and the purpose of the school were significant to the students, and the students' definition of school spirit was a combination of participation, loyalty, and pride. The findings suggest that the university does have a healthy school spirit, although the contributing factors vary from student to student.

School spirit is difficult to define; it is the driving force that not only unites students and faculty in supportive behavior toward their school, but also differentiates them from members of other institutions (Terizian, 2004). School spirit can be seen in something seemingly trivial such as preferring to wear the university colors over those of a rival school (Schloss, Poggesi, & Palmer, 2011), or in something of greater importance like donating money or time to the school. Although the term “spirit” is very broad and sometimes abstract, this idea is “the very essence of an organization” (Ransdell, 2000, p. 18).

The purpose of this study was to add concrete definitions to the concept of school spirit. Once these terms are defined, a school can adjust its culture in order to create an environment that will foster school spirit among students and faculty which will, in turn, strengthen the school. “For an institution seeking to improve a relatively strong or stable present, the work of spirit might be effectively influenced toward even greater strength and stability, and on toward greater prosperity and longevity” (Ransdell, 2000, p. 28).

Southern Adventist University, a private Christian institution, was selected as the location for this study. Only one university is the focus of the study because every school will have distinct qualities that determine the spirit of the school. The results of this study may be taken into consideration by the school administration for cultivating school spirit on the university's campus.

Literature Review

As stated in the introduction, the idea of school spirit is often abstract. In previous research, school spirit has been categorized into 4 areas: ethos; rituals and traditions; a sense of community; and a combination of loyalty, participation, and pride.

Ethos

Ethos, as defined by Kezar (2007), is “the fundamental character or spirit of a culture that connects individuals to a group; it expresses a particular group’s values and ideology in a way that creates an emotional connection” (p. 13). Ethos is important not only because it unites the school body, but also because it is possibly a contributing factor in students’ academic success (Kezar, 2007).

Each campus has a different ethos depending on what the school focuses on as being most important. Ethos is often a characteristic built into the school’s mission and values or an extra-curricular activity that connects people (Kezar, 2007). This is a prime example of why school spirit differs from school to school. The heart of the school’s ethos, whether it is based in academics, athletics, community service, or another outlet, should be defined in the mission statement and supported by administration.

Traditions and Rituals

As pointed out by Van Jura (2010), school spirit can come in the form of a tradition or ritual a student enjoys participating in along with others. A tradition can be identified as a form of school spirit because as Van Jura (2010) explains, “traditions play a unique role in the culture of student life and have the potential to teach students about the history of their institution, provide means of building community, instill common values that span generations of students, and generate pride and enthusiasm” (p. 107).

Rituals are very similar to traditions, but Young (1999) in defining rituals, includes the subject of repetition. “Rituals are behavioral patterns that are repeatable, have purpose, and have acquired a sense of rightness among the people who participate in them” (p. 11). Ransdell (2000) further explains that rituals serve as evidence of spirit, “transforming and developing an organization” (p. 21). Since rituals and traditions are so similar in meaning, the two terms will be used interchangeably in this study.

There are two types of traditions, positive and negative ones. An example of a positive tradition is the Freshman Beanie at University of Vermont. All of the incoming freshmen are given a beanie with their class year displayed on it and urged to wear them to events. When the students return for alumni events, many of them still wear their beanie, which signifies a bond to the school (Van Jura, 2010). However, there are negative examples of traditions such as hazing practices. “These activities put students at risk of suffering physical, emotional, or mental harm, and they work against their stated purpose of building community” (Van Jura, 2010, p. 20)

Traditions do not necessarily come from the history of the school or the mandate of the school’s administration. Young (1999) suggests that rituals happen “everywhere all the time” (p.

16) and Van Jura (2010) notes that many traditions are associated with hazing practices that are unknown by the management of the university. Whether they are purposely created or spring up as a habit over time, traditions should be preserved and encouraged by the school's administration, with the exception of negative traditions that should delicately be abolished. As campuses become more diverse, institutions must make new rituals and traditions to retain their effectiveness in reaching the student body (Van Jura, 2010; Cheng, 2004).

Sense of Community

School spirit is associated with togetherness, or in other words, a sense of community. Cheng (2004) discovered six characteristics that contribute to a sense of community. A campus should (1) be an open environment where people are respected for their individuality and free expressions; (2) engage staff and students in learning and teaching; (3) provide a social and learning atmosphere in the residential halls; (4) nurture relationships between differing cultural and ethnic groups; (5) celebrate the traditions and history of the school; and (6) give assistance to students who feel lonely or down (p. 226).

Elkins, Forrester, and Noel-Elkins (2011) furthered this study by determining that most of these characteristics that establish a sense of community on a campus come from out-of-class experiences. However, a student's involvement in out-of-class campus activities does not automatically translate into a sense of community (Cheng, 2004), and other factors should be taken into consideration when establishing a sense of community among students. Elkins et al. (2011) did determine that if a school is lacking in one of the six areas outlined by Cheng (2004), the administration can take a macro focus of the school and analyze other "specific areas of campus life that make up the whole that is the campus community" (p. 13). Each school has its own areas of strengths, and by understanding the ones prevalent on its campus, the institution can direct attention to reinforcing those characteristics instead of spending time and efforts on creating something that is not there.

Participation, Loyalty, and Pride

Students at an early 20th century high school, as documented in a case study by Terzian (2004), categorized school spirit into three things: participation, loyalty, and pride. These three terms are closely related, yet each adds a different perspective to school spirit.

Willing participation in extra-curricular activities like the athletics and arts programs is an indicator of school spirit. Loyalty refers to "sacrificing one's time, energy, and vanity" for the sake of the school (Terzian, 2004, p. 47). Pride deals with the students' perception of the reputation and image of the school (Terzian, 2004). A school with a positive image and reputation can expect supportive behavior from the students (Sung & Yang 2009). Combined, these three aspects of school spirit provide a solid groundwork for creating unity although it is quite possible for certain parts to exist alone or in a pair.

Theory

Bormann's (1985) Symbolic Convergence Theory suggests that individuals are transformed into a cohesive group after exchanging certain fantasies, which includes stories, jokes, symbols, and other vehicles of emotion and thoughts. This theory can provide explanations of why and how people are connected, which can be applied to a unification of people through school spirit. From this theory, two specific research questions were identified.

RQ 1: What common idea or ideas provide the basis of school spirit at Southern Adventist University?

To qualify as an example of ethos by Kezar's (2007) definition, there should only be one common idea. However, since one area has not been defined by the administration, the possibility of multiple ideas is open to discussion. In order to cultivate the school spirit, administration may want to narrow the source of school spirit to one area.

RQ 2: What are the shared and meaningful experiences that make up the culture of students at Southern Adventist University?

These answers may come from identifying the traditions at Southern or other common experiences that have not yet been nurtured into traditions.

A third research question asks:

RQ 3: What do students perceive the definition of school spirit to be at Southern Adventist University?

It is important to find out if the students themselves can define school spirit. They may or may not already know the answer to this question. It will be interesting to find how their responses correspond with the defined school spirit of similar institutions.

Three research questions are hardly enough to capture the many aspects of school spirit at Southern Adventist University. However, this research will serve as an introduction to the topic and potentially offer valuable data.

Method

Participants

The participants were all current students. Four focus groups were conducted, but only three were used in this study since one of the groups failed to reach the minimum number of people needed for a focus group. Each group consisting of 6-9 common members grouped together based on class standings (i.e. all seniors, all juniors, and all sophomores). It was determined that current freshman students would not have developed a deep enough insight on school spirit since they would have attended the university for fewer than six months. All but one student were randomly selected to participate. The one student had previously voiced interest in the topic to the researcher and asked to join. There were 22 participants in total: nine seniors, seven juniors, and six sophomores. Seventeen of the participants were female. The largest field of study represented was nursing with six participants, which reflects the size of the nursing program at the school.

Materials

The interviewer prepared 13 open-ended questions with each one exploring a different aspect of the subject of school spirit. The topics of ethos, traditions, sense of community, and loyalty and pride were evenly distributed within the questions. The session was audio recorded by two devices. Complimentary food was provided for the participants.

Procedure

The students met in a neutral location and were seated in chairs that had been arranged in a circle. Each session took place within a time span of one to two hours. The focus groups' interviews were then transcribed and analyzed based on common words and themes that emerged from the participants. The themes were grouped and interpreted by the researcher and cross-examined by a faculty supervisor.

Results

Students' sources of school spirit

The first research question attempted to find which, if any, ideas are at the foundation of school spirit. Most of the answers from the students were wide-ranging and seemingly unrelated. However, thematic analysis using Bormann's (1985) Symbolic Convergence Theory revealed that the answers all fit within three themes. The three areas that students identified as being important to Southern were the people, the place, and the purpose of the school. See Table 1 for the entire listing of categories and subcategories reported by students.

People. A strong theme in the data shows that the people themselves are a very central part of the institution. The greatest number of responses, a total of six students, was about the professors. This number is significant since it is double the number of comments about the second highest recognized area in the people category. One of the students commented on the professors' skill in teaching:

What I like about Southern a lot is the teachers. I feel like most of them are really great and spiritual and very helpful, and that is something that has really stuck to me because most of the teachers I've had have been really, really good.

In addition to the academic aspect of the faculty, some of the students also appreciate the compassionate side of the professors. This is the sentiment that was shared by the other students who responded about the professors. As one participant said:

I really like how the teachers care about us and I know especially in our major, they are always like how are you doing? If you miss class they email us, Are you

okay? Can I do anything for you? They are just really welcoming and they make you feel like we are their children also, and they are taking care of us.

The compassionate, caring dimension of the professors is why they are categorized as people, and not as an academic component. Most of the students would agree that they connect with the professors on a more personal level. The academic portion of the school fits into its own separate area later on in the study.

Another people aspect that was mentioned multiple times was the diversity of student body. The students enjoy the opportunity to attend school with people from different places and cultures. One student said:

I like that it's diverse, you know. Like in academy especially when we were there I remember seeing Hispanic or African American groups and stuff and thinking "whoa I don't wanna go down there and be the only one" but I feel like it's a pretty diverse school and I really like that. It's not like a predominately white school in the South.

Students also reported on finding great friends while at Southern, which may be linked to the diverse community found on campus. One student commented on her experience with finding friends while at Southern:

I came from a public school system spending all my life so this is my first exposure to an Adventist institution, and sure in public school you make friends and you hang out, but as soon as you get to a place like this, you just click with people and you just have this instant bond where you're not afraid to be who you really are. They understand you. Cause they come from kind of the same background. You still get a variety of people. There is still the diversity but we all share something so it's so much easier to make lasting friendships when you're in a place like this.

Participants also commented on the esteemed people that speak for convocations and vespers. As one student put it, "they get a lot of low key celebrities in convocations; that is really cool to me."

The last "people" element that deserves special recognition is that the university's president, Gordon Bietz, was mentioned. Although only two students responded with Gordon Bietz, the students' comments were received with very positive feedback from the other students in the focus groups. One of the students said:

I think Gordon Bietz has done massive amounts. It's so important that you enjoy who is your administration or whoever is at the top ... he has really become the

face of Southern and he's done huge amounts, and if somebody else up was up there it just wouldn't be the same at all.

These sample quotes show how important the people aspect of Southern is to the students.

Place. The next theme is that students enjoy the actual physical location and make-up of Southern Adventist University. Three students commented on how well-kept the school buildings and facilities are. One example of this type of remark was:

I like how they are always updating the buildings. That helps us learn and makes us more comfortable and that helps everybody ... It's really nice that they don't stop when the buildings are there. They just keep trying to expand and make everything nicer.

The next physical aspect that students appreciate about Southern is the natural environment of the campus. As one student shared:

Something I really like is just the environment. I really like doing recreational things, or sports, rock climbing, and all that stuff is provided here. But also just on campus I grew up in the country and I really like getting away and sometimes I go to the student park and go out above the Goliath Wall and just have that time where it is quiet and I can just be in nature which I really like. And the Biology Trail is really close and I spend a lot of time out there and I just really am grateful for that it keeps my sanity.

The options for places to eat were important to one participant. The student said:

This place is way better. Like everything that they have down to how many places we have to eat on campus in comparison to other Adventist schools and I would just think our [school] is way better.

Another physical attribute about the campus is the size. One student said, "I like the size of the school because it's small enough to know quite a few people, but big enough to not know everyone so I like that."

The final important physical feature of the school was the growth and expansion the campus. An example that a student expressed was,

The fact that we have to keep building places for people to live and for people to come here--that says a lot about what this school is doing and stuff and the fact that we are expanding so much. I am happy.

The man-made facilities and the natural environment work together to provide a place

that students appreciate.

Purpose. The last thematic category of answers focused on purpose of Southern as an institution. The largest area of purpose that students commented on was the Christianity/spirituality. One of the four students who mentioned this topic said, “Southern is built on God. I just feel that we have so much more because of that, and it kind of adds color when there is so much gray in the world.” Another student said, “I feel like they really care about our spiritual lives, and they really want us to develop a Christ life for us, and they really want us to have Him as the core and the center of our lives.”

The second area under purpose that students said they appreciated was the good academic programs that Southern has. One student, drawing from his own experience, said:

We have super, super prestigious schools like nursing. Most of the people come here for nursing and I'm proud to be nursing because I know once I leave I'm ready to face my clients and my patients and stuff. I feel like a lot of other majors when they're at Southern, they are like it's hard work but in the end I am gonna be the one on top.

The two aforementioned areas of spirituality and academics were the only places that received multiple responses. However, a few of the other areas that were also commented on were individual academic programs and service. Students identified the film, music, and theology programs by name. Not all of the comments came from students who belonged to those departments either. For example, one student mentioned he enjoyed attending the concerts put on by the School of Music.

As for service, one student voiced appreciation for service being promoted on campus. The student said:

I like how service is really incorporated into its missions statement and how they really try to implement it—not even try to, they do implement it and it can seem kind of an issue because the Freshmen kind of have to go because of the requirement of more service, but once you do go out, and serve you kind of forget that you are required to and it really does inspire.

See Table 1 for the complete listing of purpose-related responses.

Students' Experiences

The second research question was: What are the shared and meaningful experiences that make up the culture of students at Southern Adventist University? A few experiences came up in discussion with input from multiple students. Two experiences that held meaning for multiple students were the annual Strawberry Festival and the weekly vespers services. In talking about the Strawberry Festival one student said:

I worked on Strawberry Fest last semester and some may not have liked it, but I think the biggest compliment I got from people was, "Man, I am really proud my school now." Seeing it in this light ... It made us realize, "Okay, that's what really unifies us." That story or mission for education and things like that. It's just trying to be better to be closer to God, and that kind of sent waves to other schools. Man, Southern is a really cool place.

The topic of vespers also gathered multiple responses from students. One example from a student was:

I think of sitting during a vespers service after a long week and everyone has had a long week and whatever we had going on ... yeah, it's required but when you actually sit down and let go of everything else and you actually experience everyone singing a song together. I think that is the time when I feel most in a larger community.

There were a few other shared experiences and traditions that had multiple answers such as vespers dates, Sonrise, and Christmas on the Promenade, but many other events were mentioned by only one individual. However the majority of their distinctive responses can be categorized. One category is food. Students mentioned looking forward to the tradition of pasta day on Thursdays and biscuits and gravy on Wednesday in the cafeteria. Another category was service. Students mentioned Community Service Day, tornado relief, and the "No Thumbprints" campaign for literacy in Central America. The last category fell under holiday traditions. Some of the responses include Christmas on the Promenade and Christmas stories with Bietz.

See Table 2 for the complete list of students' responses on shared experiences and traditions.

Students' definition of school spirit

The final research question of this study sought to find out what students thought the definition of school spirit was. The 17 responses to this question were easily organized into three categories that are similar to the areas of participation, loyalty, and pride as outlined in the case study by Terzian (2004).

Participation. Four responses were categorized within participation. One student summed up this idea by saying school spirit called for students to be active in school.

You have to be active in what you do. Like if you are a student leader person, just be active. If you are running for SA president, or if you really think that vespers is really important, then you go every week whether you get credit or not. Be active in your walk with God, or if for you school is really important, like you don't

want to meet new people and you are just here strictly for school. So whatever your main focus is, be active in that.

Loyalty. Six responses fit within the category of loyalty. A common word that the students used in describing loyalty was the word *bond*. “It’s being bonded to Southern, being bonded to faculty, and it’s being bonded to your fellow students,” one student said. Another student talked about loyalty in terms of support.

I think school spirit is definitely supporting your school. Like as a whole even though there are definitely things that you don’t like about it, but you accept all of the flaws that your school has and you embrace all the good things that it has.

Prides. The last category, pride, had the greatest number of responses with seven in total. The responses about pride captured two sides of being proud. One part of pride is being proud of actual things about school. As one student said, “It’s being proud of what part of Southern you are coming from. Like if you are in intramurals, being prideful of your team. You just need to be proud of something.”

The other side of being proud is the self-identify the students find with the school. One student said:

It’s almost like taking the school as part of your identity. Identifying yourself with the school to the point that it is a really important part of your life. Of course you live here so it’s obviously a big part of that part your life. It’s just a living breathing thing.

Discussion

This study was conducted to find what key elements provide the framework for school spirit at Southern Adventist University and if there was an experience that all the students could identify with. Also, this study examined the definition of school spirit by students.

An analysis of core things that students enjoy at Southern suggests that the school does not have one overarching ethos, unlike those discussed in the study by Kezar (2007). For example, there are universities are known solely for their dedication to education, relationship-building, service, or progressivism (Kezar, 2007). For Southern, the ethos of the school seems to come from several sources including the people involved with the school, the environment of the school and the purpose.

Interestingly, even with all these different aspects to the school, all of these areas are identified within the university’s mission statement and goals. The mission statement for the school is “Southern Adventist University as a learning community nurtures Christ-likeness and encourages the pursuit of truth, wholeness, and a life of service” (Mission statement, n.d.). The school also has five learning goals for students: spiritual, intellectual, occupational, social and physical goals (Mission statement, n.d.). The goals clearly outline the people theme (social) and

purpose theme (combination of goals), and the place theme seems to have emerged without the intentionality of the school. Could Southern have a multi-faceted ethos that administration is capable of getting across to its students? As long as they can continue to intentionally sustain the messages of service and spiritual, intellectual, occupation, social and physical growth in an individual, no change is needed to the curriculum of the school. Every one of these areas is of equal importance to the university, and it seems that they have been successful in sharing their mission and goals whether or not each student realizes every one of them during his time at Southern. The combined themes unite the student body around a common fantasy as suggested by Bormann's (1985) Symbolic Convergence Theory.

When it came to traditions and shared experiences, there were very few that seemed to resonate with every student, especially the students who lived off campus. However, Strawberry Festival seems to be the best example of a tradition here on campus. It captures the school year in pictures and videos, and in some ways, it brings out the school spirit as students bond together over common memories.

While some of the traditions such as vespers dates or biscuits and gravy breakfasts may seem trivial to administration, the students must feel "that their experiences matter to the institution and that they are valuable part of the community on campus" (Van Jura, 2010, p. 114). These shared experiences have the opportunity of creating a connection between the students and the university that lasts after they leave the institution.

Southern has many events such as Sunrise or Community Service Day that involve a majority of the student body. Almost every weekend, the Student Association or another student organization is hosting an event that has the opportunity of attracting a large number of students. In addition to these events, there are smaller occasions that hold significance for the students that prefer smaller communities. For example, students who participate in intramurals look forward to the championships and the regular concerts put on by the school of music. As one student said:

I think if you ask a lot of people, what you would get different events throughout the year. If you ask a public school, they would say at the championship game of our football or the playoffs. Everybody would probably say that, but here you would get events all throughout the year so it's different for each person what's a big moment for them.

Administration must evaluate this fact, and see if this fragmentation helps or hinders the school spirit. "At their core, traditions are designed to foster feelings of community" (Van Jura, 2010, p. 113), and the traditions at Southern do create a feeling of community, but not one that is community as a whole. The majority of students do seem to have common ground which is evident by Southern groups and fan pages on social media sites.

The students' definition of school spirit perfectly parallels the classifications determined in the high school case study by Terzian (2004). All three elements, participation, loyalty, and pride, are important to the school's success. "Active participation in the extra-curriculum would

nurture a unified student body intent on promoting the glory of the school” (Terzian, 2004, p. 46). The majority of the students commented on not only being members of school organizations, but also being student leaders in the club. Table 3 lists all of the clubs represented by the participating students. Southern has a high participation level among most students. The fact that many students are involved links back to the message “Be a Part” promoted by the school’s marketing department.

Loyalty is a connection to the school that lasts beyond graduation and can lead to action being taken by the student or former student. A big example of loyalty is seen at the university’s Alumni Weekend every October. A large number of alumni return to the school because of the concept of loyalty. “Student loyalty is a multiphase concept that may stretch from enrollment through the student’s lifetime” (Sung & Yang, 2009, p. 792). If nurtured and cultivated effectively, this loyalty transfers into actions, such as alumni volunteering, teaching and/or making monetary contributions. Currently, many volunteers, faculty, and donors are, in fact, alumni of the school who are still loyal. If the cycle continues, the loyalty of current students will manifest itself in the future.

As determined in the study, Southern has an abundance of things that students appreciate and are proud of. Southern has a high reputation in both Adventist and non-Adventist circles. Many students do identify themselves with the school. Southern is more than just a school students attend; for many students, it is their own personal school that is a major part of their lives. Administration may not be aware of how proud students are because they only see the students’ pride while on campus. As several students mentioned, they talk only about the great experiences and benefits of attending Southern when they are talking to outsiders about the school. Rarely will students, especially those who stayed at Southern for their entire undergraduate career, ever say anything negative to others outside of the school. While at Southern, students will complain about worship requirements, curfew, and other rules, but it does not seem to have a great effect on the school spirit.

Limitations

The small number of the participants in this study was a limitation. The 26 participants in this study do not constitute as a representative sample of the entire student population. Also, only one focus group was used for each class ranking. Scheduling constraints made further focus groups unattainable. Although the groups did provide valuable and varied insight, more groups may have brought forth new information.

Another limitation was that the head investigator for the study also served as the facilitator of the focus groups and was a current student at the school. The researcher’s relationship with the topic may have inadvertently caused her to bias the questions in order to get desired results. However, since she did record and document everything a cross-examination of the data can determine how severe this limitation was to the research.

Future Research

This study provided excellent examples of which areas of Southern Adventist University lend to creating school spirit. From this research, more definitive categories of school spirit have been discovered. Further qualitative research should be conducted that can include more students to get a representative sample that reflects the whole study body. Perhaps enough focus groups and interviews can be conducted to change the format into a survey or questionnaire that can more easily be answered by the majority of the student body. A group of students that should be targeted are community students. Their experiences in this study tended to vary from those of students who lived in campus housing. It is important that community students feel connected to the school as well.

Also, other groups of people besides students should be questioned about this topic. Alumni of the school could add another perspective on school spirit. They would be able to confirm or deny if the characteristics of school spirit have changed over the years. Non-student members of the Southern community such as the administration, faculty and staff could add additional information on what they witness adds to the school's spirit.

Administration should definitely do follow up research on this topic to be cautious of the changes coming to the university in the near future. The expansion and changes on campus along with the changes coming to the town of Collegedale will have an effect on several the factors identified in this research. The students mentioned this as a concern of their own during the focus groups. One student said, "It's a challenge at Southern that they really have to face since the world is changing so drastically. How can Southern still maintain these old core values—which can be seen as valuable or limiting?" Another student expressed concern over the spirituality of Southern. "It's gonna be harder and harder to stay an Adventist Christian university and appeal to what's going on now." This ever-changing nature of the environment and times around Southern is an important reason for administration to begin taking steps to preserve and expand the school spirit.

An editor at the high school of Kezar's (2007) case study, wrote, "School spirit is not a medicine, but a condition of health." Every school has a spirit whether it is in good or poor condition. School spirit is not something that can be generated out of thin air, but must be drawn from key ideas that are already apparent at an institution. Southern Adventist University has a strong presence of school spirit. Its school spirit lies in an appreciation for the people, place, and purpose of the school and in students who are interested in participating, being loyal and being proud of the school. Now that the sources and definitions of school spirit have been discovered, administration can work with the students to cultivate this school spirit into something that will connect the student body for generations to come.

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Appendix

Table 1.
Sources for Generating School Spirit at Southern Adventist University

Category	Subcategory	Number of Students Reporting
People	Professors	6
	Diversity	3
	Friends/Friendly people	2
	Famous/credible speakers for programs	2
	Gordon Bietz	2
Place	Facilities	3
	Outdoor environment	2
	Options to eat	1
	Size	1
	Expansion	1
Purpose (growth & development in the areas of academics, spirituality, service, work, and health)	Christian/Spiritual	4
	Academics	2
	Film dept.	1
	Music programs	1
	Bible-based theology dept.	1
	Caters to students' needs and wants	1
	Options to worship	1
	Service	1
	Intramural program	1
	Healthy people	1
	Jobs for students	1

Table 2.

Students' Responses on Shared Experiences and Traditions

	How many?		How many?
Strawberry festival	3	Generations of families coming to Southern	1
Christmas on the promenade	2	Grilled pbj on promenade	1
Cultural club nights	2	Gymmasters	1
Sonrise	2	Kirsten Wilcott's death	1
Vespers	2	Little Debbies smell on promenade	1
Vespers dates	2`	Marathons	1
"No more thumbprints" campaign	1	Pasta day	1
Biscuits and gravy breakfast	1	Student on <i>Jeopardy</i>	1
Christmas stories with Bietz	1	Talent show	1
Community service day	1	Tornado relief	1
Conservatism	1	Worship services	1
Convocations	1		
Donut mornings in guys' dorm	1		

Table 3.
Student Organizations

	How many?
Intramurals	9
Cultural clubs	5
Academic/Professional clubs	4
Ministry clubs/mission groups	4
Class/academic department	3
Job	2
Dorm	2
Church/Sabbath School	2
Bible Study/Life Group	2
Gym Masters	1
Outdoor club	1
Student Association	1