

DISSERTATION

SPIRITUAL WELLNESS AMONG UNDERGRADUATE COLLEGE STUDENTS

Submitted by

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In partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Colorado State University

Fort Collins, Colorado

Spring 2006

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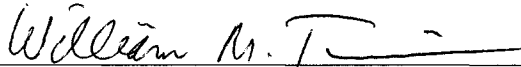
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WELLNESS AMONG UNDERGRADUATE COLLEGE STUDENTS BE ACCEPTED
AS FULLFILING IN PART REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF
PHILOSOPHY.

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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION
SPIRITUAL WELLNESS AMONG UNDERGRADUATE COLLEGE STUDENTS

The purpose of this research study was to explore the spiritual wellness of undergraduate college students. More specifically, the aim of this study was to assess the spiritual beliefs, views, and practices of undergraduate college students and the influence of spiritual wellness on the other five dimensions of wellness including emotional, physical, social, intellectual, and occupational. In turn, this should provide valuable information to campus community members for the development of programs and services in an effort to meet the spiritual wellness needs of this target group. A self-report questionnaire was developed specifically to collect measures of spirituality and demographic information. The sample consisted of 303 undergraduate students who were randomly selected from the 2005-2006 Colorado State University Directory. Findings showed that spiritual wellness plays an important part in the lives of college students and the decisions they make on a daily basis regarding the other dimensions of wellness. Students are active in nurturing spirituality in a variety of ways such as volunteer activities for personal and social helping, personal reflection, and prayer. Over half of the students would like the university to offer a variety of learning experiences to help develop spiritual wellness. At the same time, some students say that it is not the responsibility of the university. The results further indicated differences across gender, age, ethnicity, and year in school with regards to views on spirituality and the influence spiritual wellness has on the other

wellness dimensions. This study should help to expand the body of literature in the area of spiritual wellness among college students. Further research is recommended to examine student spiritual wellness and the influence spirituality has on the other dimensions of wellness.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This research project has been an awesome personal and professional journey. It is with gratitude and appreciation that I acknowledge all of the people who have helped me throughout this project.

I am deeply grateful for the support and encouragement of my doctoral committee. As my advisor, Dr. Nathalie Kees provided constant counsel, wisdom, and patience. Dr. Cathy Kennedy provided thoughtful insights into wellness and careful examination of the document. Dr. David Most offered guidance through the jungle of statistical analysis and helped me to see research through a new lens. Dr. William Timpson provided encouragement and helped me to think in terms of possibilities.

Deep gratitude is extended to the students who served in this study. Their participation and trust in this research was invaluable. Without them this project would not have been possible.

Most of all, I would like to thank my best friend and husband, Jay, for his love, support, and sacrifice during the doctorate school experience. His faith and confidence in me never wavered.

Finally, I would like to add that my own search for spiritual wellness inspired this research and has been a constant source of strength and support during the process.

Thanks for journeying with me.

Peace,

Anne

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

The concept of wellness is a multidisciplinary process comprised of spiritual, emotional, intellectual, social, occupational, and physical dimensions (Hettler, 1984). To better understand the role spirituality plays in wellness, it is important to view it in relation to the other dimensions. Hettler's six-dimensional model identifies spirituality as the core dimension of wellness. What is more, it is the central core within individuals that grounds all the other dimensions and plays a key role in influencing one's wellbeing (Banks, 1980). It is the interconnective component essential for overall wellbeing and within which the other dimensions operate (Scandurra, 1999).

Spirituality can act as the fundamental life process through which all experiences (emotional, physical, social, intellectual, occupational, and spiritual) are integrated into one's everyday life. From this view, according to some scholars (Eberst, 1984; Hamilton & Jackson, 1998) the spiritual component of wellness provides the supporting means by which the other components articulate and interact. Although spirituality is a vital component, it is the most complex and often overlooked component of wellness (Collins, Hurst, & Jacobson, 1987; Hawks, 1994).

According to Moberg (1984), the spiritual nature of humans influences and is influenced by all of the other dimensions and experiences in life. The spiritual pervades every part of a person's life. Maslow (1970) asserts that the spiritual life is the essence of what makes us human and that an appreciation for the spiritual is needed for optimal

human development and wellbeing. Gelo (1995) stresses that spiritual growth is a developmental process through which individuals learn that decision making demands knowledge of oneself and that this knowledge is vital in solving problems in life. Moreover, this knowledge can lead to a connection between spirit, body, and mind that helps to build a strong healthy self. According to Chandler, Holden, and Kolander (1992), spiritual wellness is a part of being human and it needs to be cultivated as much as the other dimensions of wellness. It offers a path through which an individual can create a new and more whole self.

A review of the literature shows that spirituality is a multi-dimensional construct and is used in interchangeable contexts such as spirituality, spiritual wellness, and spiritual wellbeing. There are a number of factors that makeup this construct such as meaning, purpose, connection to others or a higher power, love, and service to others. When some people contemplate spirituality, however, they confuse it with religion. According to Baker (2003) spirituality is much more than simply a religious belief or affiliation. As Adams and Bezner (2000) aptly point out, “developing spirituality can add meaning to the practice of religion, while the practice of religion can deepen spirituality” (p. 3). They further add “it is inappropriate to discount the spiritual importance of organized religion to millions of people, yet, equally inappropriate to suggest that one must practice a specific religion if one is to develop spirituality” (p. 3).

By including their religious beliefs, many people feel that they are more capable of dealing with the challenges of life. For many people, having a strong religious belief or affiliation is important to help them attain spiritual wholeness (Kitko, 2001). For many others, they believe they can achieve spiritual wholeness through a variety of activities

such as yoga, meditation, music, poetry, and prayer (Scandurra, 1999). Simply, Noddings (2003) suggests that the enhanced awareness of things in everyday life may contribute to one's spiritual life and to happiness.

During the past decade, there has been an increased interest in the topic of spiritual wellness in college student life (Boehnlein, 2000; Fry, 2000; Koenig, McCullough, & Larson, 2001). This seems to be a natural fit, since one of the roles of higher education is to cultivate an environment that aids in the holistic development of college students including emotional, intellectual, physical, social, and spiritual development (Astin et al., 2002). As a college student develops spiritually, he or she may have gained new or additional insight into what spirituality means for them. This in turn may help the student change an attitude or a behavior concerning one's purpose and direction in life (Northcutt, 1998). There might be a risk of an interest in spirituality becoming co-joined with those pushing a particular religious belief or that faith will collide with the critical thinking demanded in college. However, appreciating the connection between spirituality and wellness does not have to undermine a university's commitment to openness, critical thinking, scientific method, and the like.

Education should aim to promote spiritual wellbeing in students to guide them to fuller private lives and more thoughtful public lives (Noddings, 2003). Unfortunately, during the college years, students are rarely afforded the same developmental process with regards to spirituality as with other areas of student development. While the focus of campus community members – faculty, students, and staff – is to address the holistic development of the students, the subject of spirituality is rarely addressed as a component

of holistic development. In particular, the assessment of and programs centered on spirituality are largely lacking at public institutions (Fenneberg, 2003).

In an effort to address this spiritual gap, there has been a growing call among campus community members to create a campus environment that encourages the appreciation for and understanding of the spiritual diversity of its students. This growing interest is occurring at a time of greater exploration of the connection of spirituality to lifestyle choices for optimal wellness. Furthermore, campus community members have been calling for an examination of ways to better incorporate students' spiritual development with activities inside and outside the classroom. This concern grew out of the knowledge that the college years have a major impact in shaping the direction of an individual's life (Stamm, 2003).

It is estimated that college enrollment will increase 19% between 2000 and 2013. A key factor in the increase in college enrollment is the expected increase of 18-24 year olds projected to make-up 62% of the college population by 2013 (Gerald & Hussar, 2003). Yet, limited literature has been collected on the assessment of spiritual wellness and its impact on the lives of the college student population. With this in mind, some argue that campus community members should take steps to explore the role that spirituality plays in the overall wellbeing of its students (Love, 2000; Love & Talbot, 1999).

The inclusion of spirituality as a component of wellness can be important for optimal wellbeing. Therefore, an examination of the students' spiritual wellness should assist campus community members in addressing the diverse spiritual needs of the students. Additionally, it should assist campus community members in understanding

how spirituality contributes to the students' response to daily living experiences. Understanding the role spirituality plays in student life may assist campus community members in designing learning experiences (programs, services, and curricula) that cultivate spiritual growth for optimal wellbeing. Lastly, this information should help to expand the body of literature in the area of spiritual wellness among undergraduate college students.

Statement of the Research Problem

The purpose of this research study was to explore the spiritual wellness of undergraduate college students. More specifically, the aim of this study was to assess the spiritual beliefs, views, and practices of undergraduate college students and the influence of spiritual wellness on the other five dimensions of wellness including emotional, physical, social, intellectual, and occupational. In turn, this should provide valuable information to campus community members for the development of programs, services, and curricula in an effort to meet the spiritual wellness needs of this target group.

Research Questions

1. What are the spiritual wellness beliefs and views of undergraduate college students?
2. What views do students have about the influence spirituality has on the other dimensions of wellness including physical, intellectual, social, emotional, and occupational?
3. In what ways do undergraduate college students practice their spiritual wellness?
4. What programs, services, and curricula would undergraduate college students like the university to offer in order to help develop their spiritual wellness?

5. What are the differences in the spiritual beliefs and views across gender, age, ethnicity, and year in school?
6. What are the differences in views about the influences of spirituality on the other dimensions of wellness across gender, age, ethnicity, and year in school?

Significance of the Study

Astin and Astin (1999) suggest that there is a need within our colleges and universities to bring about a greater understanding of issues of spirituality to enhance individual spirituality and to bring a greater sense of purpose and meaning into the academic world. They further suggest that our institutions should “assist their students in developing a sense of spirit, meaning and purpose, and to lead lives that are responsible, healthy, and whole” (p. 36). Further research in the area of spirituality and higher education is needed in a variety of ways to advance our understanding of these issues.

In a study from UCLA, 56.7% of first year students consider integrating spirituality into their lives as “very important” or “essential” (Barlett, 2002). According to Howe and Strauss (2000), spirituality is reawakening for young millenials, individuals born in 1982 or after. They contend that this is a topic with which students are comfortable and willing to explore because this generation has lived in a society that is more accepting of spirituality. Thus, higher education may be at a critical point that calls for an increased understanding of student spirituality, in order to impact individual students and the campus environment in this area of development. According to Fenneberg (2003), it is important for all campus community members to take advantage of the openness to spirituality that is emerging in this changing society and start to explore the spirituality of college students as a main component of their total wellbeing.

A review of literature shows that few studies have addressed the spiritual wellness of college students. Thus, this study should help campus community members address the diverse spiritual wellness needs of students. Also, this study should help campus community members in understanding how spirituality contributes to the students' responses to daily living experiences. The findings of this study should aid campus community members in the development of programs, services, and curricula that nurture spiritual growth for optimal wellbeing. Lastly, this study should help to expand the body of literature in the area of spiritual wellness among undergraduate college students.

Study Delimitations

This study had one delimitation to narrow the scope of the study. The population sampled in the study consisted of undergraduate college students enrolled at Colorado State University during the fall of 2005.

Study Limitations and Assumptions

There were some notable limitations and assumptions to the study. First, the participants gave open and honest responses to each question on the survey instrument. Second, the participants were able to read, clearly understand, and answer the questions presented according to the instructions provided. Third, the participants may have been reluctant to provide sensitive information on the questionnaire, resulting in an inability of the researcher to use their data. Fourth, the participants may or may not have been representative of undergraduate college students at Colorado State University, thereby limiting the ability to generalize the results. Fifth, the survey instrument developed for this study was a valid and reliable instrument for data collection. Lastly, all humans have the capacity for spiritual awareness and growth.

Definition of Terms

For the purposes of this study, the following terms were defined:

1. Spirituality: a search to create a personal sense of life's meaning, value, and purpose through everyday experiences. It may involve connectedness to oneself, others, nature, and/or a higher power. It can be fully experienced through the practice of one's belief system, mindfulness, creativity, play, love, forgiveness, compassion, wisdom, and faith (Insel & Roth, 2006; Brewer, 2001).
2. Spiritual Wellness: "the ability to develop one's spiritual nature to its fullest potential and includes the ability to discover, articulate, and act on our own basic purpose in life; to learn how to give and receive love, joy, and peace; to pursue a fulfilling life; and to contribute to improvement of the spiritual health of others" (Chapman, 1987, p. 17).
3. Spiritual Wellbeing: "encompasses a host of concepts from several disciplines (psychology, sociology, philosophy, and theology) which collectively create an integrative network of characteristic traits and are expressed as emotions and behaviors within the spiritual paradigm" (Seaward, 1991, p. 166).
4. Spiritual Development: "an interrelated process of seeking self knowledge and centeredness, transcending one's current locus of centrality, being open to and embracing community, recognizing an essence or pervasive power beyond human existence, and having that sense of spirit pervade one's life" (Love & Talbot, 1999, p. 367).

5. Holistic Wellbeing or Wellness: “a way of life oriented toward optimal health and wellness in which body, mind, and spirit are integrated by the individual to live more fully within the human and natural community. Ideally, it is the optimum state of health and well being in all areas: spiritual, physical, mental, social, occupational, emotional that each individual is capable of achieving” (Myers, Sweeney, & Witmer, 2000, p. 252).
6. Healthy Lifestyle: “a pattern or set of behaviors in daily living that are conducive to health and wellbeing” (Kulbok, Baldwin, Cox, & Duffy, 1997, p. 6).
7. College Student: young adults, traditionally between the ages of 18-24 who are in attendance at a four year college or university.
8. Campus Community Members: faculty, staff, administrators, and students.

Researcher's Perspective

My interest in and commitment to spirituality and wellness has been long standing both personally and professionally. It is my opinion that spirituality is the heart of holistic wellness development. It is the key dimension that holds together all of the other dimensions of wellness for the development of total wellbeing.

The inclusion of spirituality as a component of wellness is important for lifetime wellness. Therefore, I believe a university is an ideal setting in which to offer wellness programs that promote the development of spirituality. In addition, I believe that the university has a responsibility to provide students as well as the entire campus community – faculty, administration, and staff – with opportunities through wellness activities and programs that encompass all aspects of a person's life. These opportunities will allow individuals to grow and develop as whole, well-rounded individuals enabling

them to succeed in their university careers, demonstrate leadership in the community, and live happy, healthy, productive lives.

In my view, this study may have a positive impact on the lives of a large number of students as well as faculty and staff members. Furthermore, it may be instrumental in the development and implementation of spiritual programs, services, and curricula for the campus community. Because of the mounting evidence that supports the positive influence spirituality has on wellness, in my opinion, choosing to ignore the spiritual component is irresponsible of those in the wellness and education fields. I believe that with careful thought and consideration, individuals can make spirituality an integral part of their daily living that positively affects their lifestyle, academics, family life, and work.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

The purpose of this research study was to explore the spiritual wellness of undergraduate college students. More specifically, the aim of this study was to assess the spiritual beliefs, views, and practices of undergraduate college students and the influence of spiritual wellness on the five dimensions of wellness including emotional, physical, social, intellectual, and occupational. In turn, this should provide valuable information to campus community members for the development of programs, services, and curricula in an effort to meet the spiritual wellness needs of this target group.

This chapter contains a review of the literature that provided a background for the focus of the research study discussed in Chapter 1. The literature cited in this chapter was identified primarily through a search of the electronic databases, print media, interlibrary loan resources, and web-based information searchers available through the Colorado State University Libraries. Various combinations of the following key words were used for database and web-base searches: spiritual, spirituality, religion, religious, religiosity, faith, spiritual development, religious development, health, wellness, wellbeing, college student, higher education, and post secondary education. Records were identified through the various journal databases, online journals, Dissertation Abstracts, ERIC, MEDLINE, PsycINFO, PubMed, Web of Science, OCLC First Search Systems, and the ProQuest online information services.

The review of literature begins by addressing spirituality and religiosity as separate but related constructs, followed by a discussion on defining spirituality. Next, spirituality and the other dimensions of wellness (including emotional, physical, social, intellectual, and occupational), the assessment of spirituality, and spirituality and general health outcomes will be discussed. Last, a brief discussion on nurturing spiritual wellness and a summary of the literature review will be presented.

Spirituality and Religiosity: Separate but Related Constructs

During the latter part of the 20th century, the western society witnessed a change in its religious and spiritual landscape. The effect of these changes reflected a rising disillusionment with religious institutions, an increase in secularism, and a rise in individualized and personalized forms of spiritual expression. With this, the meanings of the constructs themselves began to change and spirituality began to gain more distinctive meanings and connotations apart from organized religion. Whereas, historically the terms religiosity and spirituality were not distinguished from each other (Turner, Lukoff, Barnhouse, & Lu, 1995; Zinnbauer et al., 1997).

Both religiosity and spirituality are complex constructs, multidimensional in nature, and any single definition of each is likely to reflect a limited viewpoint (Hill et al., 2000). The word religion is derived from the Latin root *religio* meaning to bind together humanity and some greater-than-human power and spirituality comes from the Latin root *spiritus* meaning breath of life (Ingersoll, 1994). A review of the descriptions and definitions given to religiosity and spirituality showed the complexity of these constructs and lack of agreement among researchers.

Some scholars viewed religion and spirituality as separate constructs. Mahoney

and Graci (1999) argued that religiosity and spirituality were separate, contrasting constructs rather than interchangeable. Spirituality is a more abstract and inclusive concept than religiosity. Chandler, et al. (1992) suggested that spirituality is independent of religion claiming that “spirituality can occur in or out of the context of the institution of organized religion and not all aspects of religion are assumed to be spiritual” (p. 170). This polarization is accompanied by religiosity representing an authoritarian, institutional, doctrinal, outward, inhibiting, formal expression and spirituality representing an unsystematic, individual, subjective, inward, freeing, emotional expression (Koenig et al., 2001).

The concept of God may be a key moderator of different effects in defining spirituality and religiosity and one of the main reasons for the division of the two terms. It may be possible that people who embrace spirituality rather than religiosity may do so because of the discomfort associated with the traditional held concepts of God. For example, to Jews, Christians, and Muslims the view of God as personal is different from the Buddhist view of not believing in a personal God, but rather the attainment of Oneness, enlightenment, and a state of Nirvana. If one lives by a Buddhist view, then in a monotheistic culture a person may not identify with the word religiosity. The term spirituality may feel less bound to traditional religious beliefs. (Emmons & Crumpler, 1999).

According to Shafranske and Malony (1990), spirituality should be distinguished from religiosity. The latter term refers to one’s involvement in and adherence to the beliefs and practices of a religious institution or organized church. Spirituality refers to more personal beliefs and practices, which may or may not evolve from a particular

organized religion. A noteworthy aspect of this definition is that religiosity is understood as existing within an institutionalized context, whereas spirituality can exist apart from institutions.

In contrast, Pargament (1999) and Zinnbauer et al. (1997) argued that such polarization both oversimplifies and distorts spirituality and religiosity. When distinguishing between religion and spirituality it is important to refrain from dichotomizing the two concepts. As a consequence, they noted that religiosity and spirituality appear to describe different concepts, yet are interchangeable.

Although the literature reflects an attempt by some researchers to distinguish religion from spirituality, Pargament (1999) saw no need for the distinction between the two terms. Pargament noted that it would be impossible to separate the two constructs because both encompass similar elements. Both encompass the sacred, beliefs about the sacred, and practices to enhance a sense of the sacred. Here, the sacred is the common denominator of religious and spiritual life. It represents the most vital destination sought by the religious/spiritual person and it is interwoven into the pathways many people take in life (Hill & Pargament, 2003).

The major difference between these terms seems to be how they are viewed and described by researchers. Notably, religiosity is described as the ideological, the ritual, and the organizational. This institutional religiosity definition is contrasted with spirituality, which is described as the affective, the thoughtful, the personal, and the experiential. By categorizing these concepts as such, religiosity has become a narrower concept. Where religiosity historically was viewed as a broadband concept encompassing both the individual and the institutional, it is now viewed as a narrow-band concept that

encompasses the institutional side of life often restricting any human potential. And, spirituality is viewed as an individual expression speaking to the greatest of human potential (Pargament, 1999; Zinnbauer et al., 1997).

Although spirituality and religiosity seem to describe different ideas, they are not completely independent. One of the major commonalities between the two constructs is the incorporation of the concepts of the sacred. Concepts of the sacred may include a higher power, a religious community, prayer, transcendence, or a spiritual mission (Zinnbauer et al., 1997).

According to Hill et al. (2000), since spirituality is a central function of religion, they can co-occur. When a person participates in spirituality that is advocated by a particular group, spirituality occurs with religiosity. While spirituality can occur within the context of religiosity, it also may not. At the same time, the practice of spirituality may lead a person to become religious and a part of an organized religion and it also may not. These criteria highlight the challenge of separating religion from spirituality.

Ingersoll (1994) supported the idea that spirituality and religion are related but separate constructs. Ingersoll conceptualized spirituality as an organismic construct common to all human beings and religion as a framework that helps develop the organismic spiritual potential. Likewise, Kelly (1995) viewed spirituality and religion as both connected and separate. Spirituality is a personal belief and expression of connectedness with the transcendent, while religion refers to beliefs and practices in creeds and rituals related to religious institutions and expressions of spirituality. Therefore, people may consider themselves spiritual though they may not be religious and people may be religious but not consider themselves spiritual.

As the research shows, religiosity and spirituality are dynamic processes and defining and distinguishing between the two is a complex issue. In light of this, the next section will take a comprehensive look at the construct spirituality.

Defining Spirituality

Although spirituality has been recognized as an important dimension of comprehensive wellness or health, its very nature makes it difficult to define. Presently, a commonly accepted definition of spirituality does not exist. A review of the literature showed that spirituality is a multi-dimensional construct and is used in different contexts such as spirituality, spiritual wellness, and spiritual wellbeing. Each of these terms varied, frequently overlapped, and often provided more descriptive characteristics than explicit definitions of terms. The major descriptors of each of these terms have been presented below.

The word spirituality was derived from the Latin word *spiritus*, meaning breath, air, life, or courage. Spirituality, then, is that which gives life or in other words that which gives people a reason for functioning (Baker, 2003). According to Tanyi (2002), spirituality is an inherent element of being human and is fundamental to all. Hindman (2002) asserted that our spirituality is a dynamic expression of who we are at our deepest levels. Bessinger and Kuhne (2002) noted that spirituality is a part of a person's individuality and varies among people and throughout one's lifetime.

Many descriptions of spirituality have emphasized one aspect of spirituality sometimes to the neglect of other elements. Recognizing that spirituality may include several characteristics, a number of researchers have proposed multidimensional frameworks. For example, building on the definition by Adams and Bezner (2000) that

spirituality is a positive sense of meaning and purpose in life, Kitko (2001) added that spirituality included connectedness to oneself, the environment, or a higher being. Many individuals also feel their religious beliefs are important to help them achieve balance in this dimension. A person with balance in this area seeks to find harmony between their inner self and the outside environment.

Coyle (2002) identified a trichotomy of approaches to spirituality termed the transcendent, the value guidance, and the structuralist-behaviourist. These approaches included: (a) transcendent approach – sense of connectedness with God or a Supreme Being, (b) value guidance approach – any firmly held value that gives life meaning and purpose, and (c) structural-behavioral approach – behaviors and actions associated with organized religion.

In a similar fashion, Baker (2003) described spirituality using a three dimensional model: the transcendent, the transpersonal viewpoint, and the transmissional. The transcendent is a quest for meaning that may include a philosophical or religious element and may be expressed through meditation, worship, or dialogue. The transpersonal viewpoint helps us to view ourselves and our relationships with others and may be expressed through communication, service to others, and caring for others. Lastly, the transmissional includes values and morals and may be expressed through journaling, mentoring, and teaching.

In a pioneering study, Banks (1980) yielded a definition of spirituality based on four elements. First, spirituality is the central core within individuals that grounds all the other dimensions and plays a key role in determining one's state of wellbeing. A second element is the identification of what an individual believes gives meaning and purpose to

life. Third, the spiritual dimension transcends self and enables individuals to act in a selfless and caring manner towards others. Fourth, spirituality includes faith in a higher power and perceptions of what causes the universe to work. Research conducted by Hawks (1994) supported Banks view of spirituality as “a high level of faith, hope, and commitment in relation to a well-defined belief system that provides meaning and purpose to life and offers an ethical path to personal fulfillment which includes connectedness with self, others, and a higher power” (p. 6).

Westgate (1996) proposed dimensions of spirituality from several sources and categorized them under the headings purpose and meaning, intrinsic values, transcendent beliefs, and spiritual community. The purpose and meaning dimension is woven within the innate human need to find purpose and meaning in life. The intrinsic values dimension relates to an individual’s personal belief system and principles and its relationship to the individual’s behavior. The transcendent beliefs dimension involves a relationship to a higher being or creator of the universe. The spiritual community dimension embraces shared values and perspectives with others.

According to his synthesis of the literature, Love (2000) claimed that spirituality is an interrelated process of: (a) seeking personal genuineness; (b) transcending one’s locus of centricity; (c) connecting with self and others; (d) deriving purpose, meaning, and direction in life; and (e) exploring a relationship with a higher power. In his research, LaPierre (1994) identified six components of spirituality that appeared with enough frequency to identify them as fundamental aspects of spirituality. These were a search for meaning, purpose, and direction in life; an encounter with transcendence; a sense of community; a search for ultimate truth; a respect and appreciation for the mystery of

creation; and a personal transformation.

In their efforts to describe spirituality, Myers et al. (2000) used the analogy of a wheel. At the center of the wheel was spirituality, described as “an awareness of a being or force that transcends the material aspects of life and gives a deep sense of wholeness or connectedness to the universe” (p. 252). This description of spirituality included seven dimensions: (a) prayer, meditation, self reflection, or worship; (b) belief in a higher power; (c) compassion, love, and service to others; (d) meaning and purpose in life; (e) going beyond or transcending the rational limits of mystical experience; (f) hope that things will turn out the best; and (g) ethical and moral values for guiding everyday life. Further, spirituality interconnected with four other life tasks including self-directions, love, friendship, and work. Not only did these life tasks interact with each other they interacted with the life forces of community, family, education, religion, media, business, and government.

Elkins, Hedstrom, Hughes, Leaf, and Saunders (1988) provided another description of spirituality. They defined spirituality as “a way of being and experiencing that comes about through awareness of a transcendent dimension and that is characterized by certain identifiable values in regard to self, others, nature, life, and whatever one considers to be the Ultimate” (p. 10). They elaborated on this definition of spirituality by identifying what they considered to be its nine major components: (1) transcendent dimension, (2) meaning and purpose in life, (3) mission in life, (4) sacredness of life, (5) material values, (6) altruism, (7) idealism, (8) awareness of the tragic, and (9) fruits of spirituality.

The transcendent dimension is a personal belief in an unseen world with which

harmonious contact is beneficial. In the dimension known as meaning and purpose in life, one believes that life and one's own existence are meaningful and purposeful. In the component known as mission in life, one has a mission, sense of responsibility, and destiny in life. The sacredness of life dimension allows one to appreciate the sacredness and wonderment of life. In the material values dimension, one knows that material things cannot bring ultimate satisfaction. The altruistic dimension allows one to sense their interconnection with all humanity. In the idealism dimension, a person is a visionary and committed to the betterment of all life. In the awareness of the tragic component, one is aware of the pain, suffering, and loss of human existence. The last component of spirituality is referred to as the fruits of spirituality and in this dimension one experiences the positive effects of one's relationship with self, others, and the Ultimate (Elkins et al., 1988).

In a proposed definition of spirituality, Ingersoll (2001) viewed spirituality as being a part of human nature, character, and quality. Along with this, Ingersoll provided a rather comprehensive list of dimensions of spirituality derived from a review of the literature. The dimensions included: (a) spiritual freedom, (b) conception of the absolute or divine, (c) experiences or rituals, (d) meaning, (e) forgiveness, (f) connectedness, (g) hope, (h) present centeredness, (i) mystery, and (j) knowledge and learning. It should be noted that these 10 dimensions function as an integrated and synergistic unit.

Vaughan (1991) noted that spirituality exists in every human being and is not limited to any given group or doctrine. Spirituality can be found in the hearts of women and men of all creeds, cultures, and races both inside and outside of religious institutions. Spirituality can be found everywhere in every moment of everyday life. Some

characteristics of spirituality included: awareness, authenticity, love and compassion, community, insight and forgiveness, letting go of the past, facing our fears, liberation, and peace.

In an analysis of the literature, Tanyi (2002) proposed that spirituality is a personal search for purpose, meaning, and direction in life and may or may not be linked to religion. It entails connection to one's values, beliefs, and practices that give meaning to everyday life, thereby inspiring people to realize their optimal wellbeing. This connection brings hope, faith, empowerment, and peace and results in awareness, joy, transcendence, forgiveness of self and others, and a heightened sense of wellbeing.

Goodloe and Arreola (1992) as well as Kolander and Chandler (1990) viewed spirituality as the umbrella under which all the other dimensions unite. The umbrella is spirituality. Spirituality is the essence of who and what we are. It is not a part of us, it is us. Spirituality draws people together and defines our oneness and likeness. Alienation and separation are created when individuals feel a need to define the self as separate from others.

Hamilton and Jackson (1998) recognized spirituality as a vital component of holistic health. It acts like a fog that permeates every element of one's consciousness and quality of life. The spiritual aspect of health consists of elements such as moral and ethical codes, confidence, enthusiasm, and life force. These elements are essential to a person's emotional, physical, mental, social, and vocational health. From this view, the spiritual component of health provides the supporting means by which the other components articulate and interact.

Spiritual wellbeing "pertains to the inner resources of people, their ultimate

concerns around which all other values are focused, their central philosophy of life that guides conduct, and all the supernatural and nonmaterial dimensions of human nature” (Moberg, 1974, p. 259). Spiritual wellbeing is a multidimensional phenomenon with hundreds of components such as happiness, optimism, a feeling of one with nature, empathy, and social relationships. The spiritual nature of humans influences and is influenced by all of the other dimensions and experiences in life. These multi-dimensions are complementary rather than exclusive components (Moberg, 1974). Moberg (1984) noted that the spiritual pervades every part of a person’s life.

Scandurra (1999) addressed spiritual health as being a fundamental part of living. It is considered the interconnective and integrative component that is pivotal to overall wellbeing. Spirituality acts as the fundamental life process through which all experiences (emotional, physical, social, intellectual, occupational, and spiritual) are integrated into one’s everyday life. According to Scandurra, spirituality addressed three themes: interconnectedness, practice of mindfulness, and spirituality as a part of everyday life. This involves a connectedness to self, nature, and to a larger purpose or meaning. It is experienced through mindfulness practice such as love, compassion, play, creativity, and faith, which is deeply rooted in everyday life.

Chandler et al. (1992) presented a definition of spiritual wellness as “a balanced openness to or pursuit of spiritual development” (p. 170). They considered spiritual wellness as a continuous conscious undertaking. Also, spiritual wellbeing should be considered as a component present within each of the interrelated components of wellness including emotional, social, physical, intellectual, and occupational. The individual remains incomplete, without attention to spiritual wellbeing in each

component.

Spiritual wellbeing is a complex construct with a number of factors contributing to its makeup (Seaward, 1991). These can be expressed best as the integration of three facets: a meaningful purpose in life, a strong personal value system, and a perceptive relationship with oneself and others. These supporting facets provide the means to promote spiritual growth by developing personality traits (expressed as spiritual strength) associated with spiritual wellbeing. Applications of these spiritual traits (behaviors and emotions) express a current state of spiritual health. The absence of the development of these spiritual traits aid in the construction of roadblocks, which may impede spiritual growth. Exercises to enhance utilization of the traits of spiritual strength can remove obstructions of spiritual roadblocks and are essential for spiritual health. Spiritual wellbeing transcends all other components of the wellness paradigm and its importance cannot be undertaken.

Eberst (1984) described spiritual wellbeing as including integrity, trust, ethics and principles, purpose and drive in life, feelings of selflessness, commitment to a higher being, and a believe in the transcendent. The spiritual dimension of wellbeing has the greatest impact on overall health. Given this, spirituality provides the supporting means with which the other components interact with each other.

According to Burkhardt (1989) and Hawks, Hull, Thalman, and Richins (1995), health requires a holistic view of the person. This involves an understanding of the human being as a unity where mind, body, and spirit are descriptors of the interconnected manifestation of the person. The body, mind, and spirit benefit by working together recognizing one other equally to maintain a healthy balance. They do not have to

discount or compete with each another (Kolander & Chandler, 1990).

Ellison (1983) described the mind, body, and spirit as an integrative view of healthy human functioning. This integration is at the heart of the landscape of spiritual wellbeing. Ellison suggested that spirituality may be referred to by studying the states it directly affects and spiritual wellbeing functions as one of those states. Spiritual wellbeing may be understood as a measurement of the state of one's spirituality. Therefore, much like one's pulse rate is an expression of one's physical health, spiritual wellbeing is a measurement of spirituality. Ellison further noted that just as there are multi-dimensions to our physicality there are multi-dimensions to our spirituality. Spirituality motivates us to search for purpose and meaning in life, to seek the supernatural that transcends us, to wonder about our identities, and to require morality. It integrates and synthesizes all of the dimensions of a person and provides a sense of order and direction.

In summary, despite the lack of a consensual definition, the following themes were found to be present in most of the definitions of spirituality. First, there is a prevalent assumption that spirituality is a universal experience. Secondly, spirituality is composed of meaning, purpose, values, and beliefs. Third, there is a relational nature to spirituality in which self, others, and a Higher Being are included. Finally, there is a transcendent element to spirituality. A profile analysis involving each element individually and all elements collectively within a multidimensional framework may be a fruitful way to approach the study of spirituality.

Spirituality and the Other Dimensions of Wellness

Wellness has been viewed as “an active process of becoming aware of and making choices toward a more successful existence” (Hettler, 1984, p.13). A person’s self-concept and the parameters of their environment influence these choices. To that end, wellness is an approach that puts emphasis on the whole person.

In review of the many wellness models made available in the literature, both Eberst (1984) and Hettler (1984) viewed wellness as a multi-dimensional concept comprised of six areas that affect the individual (see Figure 1). These included the physical, intellectual, emotional, social, occupational, and spiritual dimensions. The dimensions of wellness have been described below.

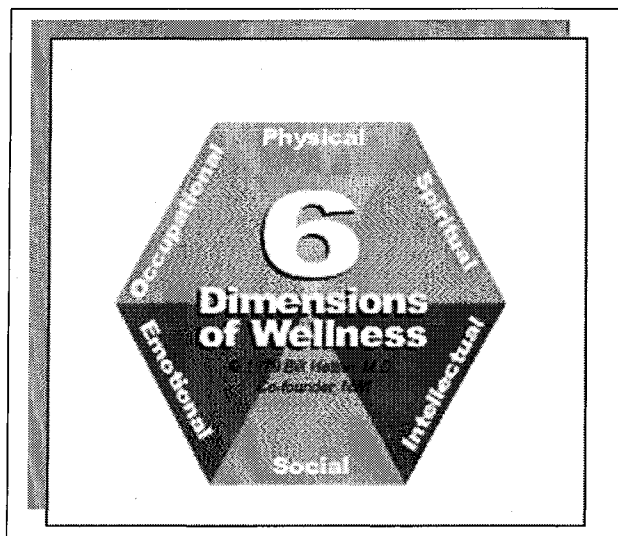


Figure 1. Six Dimensional Model of Wellness.

Physical wellness was the most thought of dimension of wellness (Kitko, 2001). Physical wellness was evidenced by exercising weekly to build and maintain physical endurance, strength, and flexibility; choosing a healthy diet for proper body functioning;

choosing behaviors that help to detect and prevent injuries and disease; (Eberst, 1984; Hettler, 1984; Insel & Roth, 2006; Kitko, 2001; Opatz, 1986); avoiding harmful habits, and regular dental and medical checkups (Insel & Roth, 2006). Greenberg (1985) considered physical wellness as the biological integrity of the body.

Emotional wellness was evidenced by the ability to recognize and accept one's feelings and to cope with setbacks or failures (Hettler, 1984; Kitko, 2001; Opatz, 1986). It included many emotions such as optimism, love, empathy, honesty, fear, anger, joy, self-confidence, self-control, trust, and integrity (Adams, Bezner, & Steinhardt, 1997; Eberst, 1984; Insel & Roth, 2006; Kitko, 2001). Emotional wellbeing included the ability to appropriately express and share feelings, to identify challenges to emotional wellness, and to find solutions to emotional problems as needed (Hettler, 1984; Insel & Roth, 2006; Kitko, 2001).

Intellectual wellness was evidenced by the amount of intellectually stimulating activities in which one engaged (Adams et al., 1997; Hettler, 1984). It included the capacity to question and think critically, creativity, openness to new ideas, sense of humor, and motivation to master new things (Eberst, 1984; Insel & Roth, 2006; Opatz, 1986). People who enjoy intellectual wellbeing never stop learning and relish new challenges and experiences in an effort to learn something new everyday (Insel & Roth, 2006; Kitko, 2001).

Social wellness was evidenced by the ability to interact with and contribute to the common welfare of one's community (Hettler, 1984; Kitko, 2001; Opatz, 1986). It included developing good communication skills, maintaining intimacy with others, seeing oneself as part of a larger group, respect and concern for others, developing

support systems, and living in harmony with others (Adams et al., 1997; Eberst 1984; Hettler, 1984; Insel & Roth, 2006; Kitko, 2001; Opatz, 1986). Social wellness involved learning about and protecting oneself against hazards such as second hand smoke, air and water pollution, violence in society, and UV rays in sunlight (Insel & Roth, 2006).

Occupational wellness was evidenced by the satisfaction and enrichment experienced from one's work (Hettler, 1984; Opatz, 1986). It included incorporating one's talents and interests into a profession, gaining new insight into problem solving, impacting the quality of life of others, sharing experiences with co-workers, job satisfaction, service to human kind, meeting new challenges, expanding professional horizons, and recognition for contributions (Eberst, 1984; Kitko, 2001).

Spiritual wellness was evidenced by one's involvement in searching for a personal sense of life's meaning, purpose, and direction through everyday experiences (Adams et al., 1997; Eberst, 1984; Hettler, 1984; Insel & Roth, 2006; Kitko, 2001; Opatz, 1986). Each person expressed their spirituality differently depending on their values, ethics, and beliefs (Kitko, 2001). It included connectedness to self, others, or a higher power; a strong religious affiliation; or a oneness with nature or the universe (Adams et al., 1997; Eberst, 1984; Hettler, 1984; Insel & Roth, 2006; Kitko, 2001). Spiritual wellbeing was expressed through love, compassion, forgiveness, play, mindfulness, creativity, and acts of selflessness (Eberst, 1984; Insel & Roth, 2006). A spiritually well person sought harmony between their inner self and the forces that come from the outside (Kitko, 2001; Opatz, 1986).

The concept of wellness has been recognized as a process with multiple dimensions that change and grow throughout a person's lifetime (Hettler, 1984). The

choices made and the habits developed largely determine the quality of one's life and the number of years lived (Insel & Roth, 2006). The multi-dimensions of wellness are interconnected on several levels and work together to maintain a healthy balance in everyday life (Eberst, 1984; Hawks, 1994; Hettler, 1984).

With consideration of the multi-dimensionality of wellbeing, Hoyman (1966) asserted that wellness means wholeness and is rooted in a person's flesh, developed in the heart and mind, and flowered in the spiritual life. Moreover, Hoyman noted that it was the spiritual dimension that was inextricably related to and went beyond the other dimensions. In a similar fashion, Maslow (1970) noted that spirituality was the most essential element of wellness. He asserted that the spiritual life was the essence of what makes us human. He further asserted that an appreciation for the spiritual was needed for optimal human development and wellness.

In the model of wellness, Banks (1980) noted that spirituality was the core dimension, which integrated all of the other dimensions of wellness. Eberst (1984) contended that the spiritual component "may be the supporting mechanism with which the other five dimensions articulate and interact with each other" (p. 101). In support of Banks and Eberst, Chandler et al., (1992) noted that spirituality was the key component upon which the other dimensions were built and was essential for overall wellbeing.

According to Scandurra (1999), the dimensions of wellness has been best understood by considering these points: (a) spirituality is the interconnective dimension essential to overall well being, (b) the other dimensions operate within the spiritual dimension of wellness, and (c) the other dimensions act as individual dimensions of wellness. Spiritual wellness has been considered the source from which the other

components arise. Spirituality represents an umbrella under which all of the other dimensions of wellness unite. It represents the essence of who we are as humans (Kolander & Chandler, 1990).

In summary, the concept of wellness has been described as a multi-dimensional process. The six dimensions are interconnected, thus, a change in one area may have an impact on the other areas. Furthermore, the dimension of spiritual wellness has been recognized as the core dimension from which the other dimensions articulate and interact and is essential to overall wellbeing. With this, it is important to assess one's spiritual wellbeing. The next section will address the assessment of spiritual wellbeing.

Assessment of Spirituality

For the past two decades, many researchers have advocated including spirituality as a dimension of wellness and developing it to the same degree as the other dimensions of wellness. Because of this, there have been many instruments seemingly related to the assessment of spirituality developed in the literature. With use of these instruments, indicators related to and consequences of spirituality have been observed, measured and analyzed. These indicators and consequences included but were not limited to meaning and purpose in life, connectedness with others, relationship with a higher power, and/or transcendence.

As a result of a thorough review of the literature, several instruments were considered for inclusion in the present study. These included: the Spiritual Wellbeing Scale (Paloutzian & Ellison, 1982); the Spiritual Wellbeing questionnaire (Moberg, 1984); the Spiritual Orientation Index (Elkins et al., 1988); the Human Spirituality Scale (Wheat, 1991); the Spiritual Assessment Scale (Howden, 1992); the Spiritual Wellness

Inventory (Ingersoll, 1995); the Spiritual Assessment Inventory (Hall & Edwards, 1996); and the Spiritual Involvement and Beliefs Scale (Hatch, Burg, Naberhaus, & Hellmich, 1998). A brief review of each of these instruments has been provided below.

In 1982, Paloutzian and Ellison developed the Spiritual Wellbeing Scale (SWBS) to measure spiritual wellbeing. The SWBS was a 20-item, self-assessment instrument constructed of two dimensions. The religious wellbeing (RWB) dimension measured one's relationship with God. The existential wellbeing (EWB) dimension measured one's relationship to others, purpose in life, and life satisfaction (without a specific religious reference). The scale had .93 test-retest reliability, .89 internal consistency, and high content validity.

Moberg (1984) viewed spirituality as multidimensional and because of this he developed the Spiritual Wellbeing (SWB) questionnaire to measure spirituality from a holistic perspective. The SWB questionnaire contained 82 items that addressed spiritual beliefs and attitudes, social and charitable activities, feelings, and religious activities and identity. The instrument appeared to measure what was intended, while there was no measure reported for reliability.

The Spiritual Orientation Index (SOI) was designed by Elkins et al. (1988) to measure spirituality. Their 85-item, self-report questionnaire was constructed of these nine components: (1) transcendent dimension, (2) meaning and purpose in life, (3) mission in life, (4) sacredness in life, (5) material values, (6) altruism, (7) idealism, (8) awareness of tragic, and (9) fruits of spirituality. The instrument had high reliability with an alpha range from .75 to .95 and seemed to measure what was intended.

Wheat (1991) designed the Human Spirituality Scale (HSS) to measure one's level of spirituality. The HSS was a 20-item instrument constructed of the following content dimensions: (1) larger context, (2) awareness of life, and (3) compassion. The dimension of larger context included selflessness, trust, justice, morality and meaning in life. Next, the awareness of life dimension included personal growth and wholeness as well as connection with other life. Lastly, the dimension of compassion included sacredness and awareness of pain and suffering. The HSS rated high for both reliability and validity.

The Spirituality Assessment Scale (SAS), a 28-item, self-assessment instrument, was developed by Howden (1992) to measure spirituality. The SAS focused on four attributes deemed to be critical to spirituality: purpose and meaning in life, innerness or inner resources, unifying interconnectedness, and transcendence. The scope of the SAS appeared to be broad and attempted to address all of the major themes thought to exist with regard to spirituality. Hence, the SAS would likely produce an estimate of spirituality that is more comprehensive than scales attempting to estimate only a limited realm of spirituality. The reliability of the instrument was .91 using Cronbach's alpha and appeared to measure what was intended.

In 1995, Ingersoll developed the Spiritual Wellness Inventory (SWI) to measure an individual's spiritual wellness. The inventory contained 55 questions addressing 10 dimensions of spiritual wellness. These dimensions included: (1) conception of the Absolute/Divine, (2) meaning, (3) connectedness, (4) mystery, (5) spiritual freedom, (6) experience/ritual, (7) forgiveness, (8) hope, (9) knowledge/learning, and

(10) present-centeredness. The instrument suggested good validity, while no measure of reliability was reported.

Hall and Edwards (1996) designed the Spiritual Assessment Inventory (SAI) to measure individual spiritual maturity. The SAI was a self-report questionnaire composed of 43 items. It was constructed based on the idea that spiritual maturity consisted of two components: (1) the quality of one's relationship with God and (2) the level of awareness of God in one's life. Both reliability and validity of the instrument measured high.

The Spiritual Involvement and Beliefs Scale (SIBS) was developed by Hatch et al. (1998) to assess an individual's spirituality. The scale contained 26 items constructed from a broad view of spirituality encompassing elements such as meaning and purpose, relationship with a higher power, trust and forgiveness, and spiritual activities. The goal of the SIBS was to be a more comprehensive and more widely applicable assessment instrument than those currently available. Instrument reliability and validity was high.

The above descriptions have made it apparent that there are several instruments available for the measurement of spirituality. Despite this finding, none of the above described instruments were chosen in their entirety for inclusion in the present study due to various shortcomings. These shortcomings included the following: 1) not consistent with the conceptual framework of this study, (2) does not address the full spectrum of spirituality as described in the literature, (3) narrow focus with the Judeo-Christian perspective, (4) focused only on spiritual beliefs and attitudes and not actions, (5) prohibitive length, or (6) use limited to a specific population or age group.

While none of the described instruments were chosen in their entirety for inclusion in the present study, questions were borrowed from several of the instruments

to develop an instrument specific for this study. The developed instrument was a more appropriate match for the conceptual framework and research objectives of this study. Details of this instrument have been provided in the instrumentation section of Chapter 3.

Having explored ways in which spirituality has been assessed, it is logical to proceed by exploring the connection that has been found between spirituality and overall wellness status. Therefore, the next section will focus on spirituality and health outcomes.

Spirituality and General Health Outcomes

There has been a growing body of literature that has examined spirituality and overall health status. One clear message from this literature has been that people consider spirituality to be important in their lives and a part of how they deal with their daily living experiences and self-care. A majority of the research has been conducted on adults in various settings with limited published evidence at the college level. As a result, the role spirituality plays in overall health status among young adults and adults will be presented in this section. Further, the studies selected for inclusion in this section attempted to explore a much broader construct of spirituality.

Research indicated that a positive relationship exists between spirituality and the ability to cope with stress. A study by Frankel and Hewitt (1994) showed that students affiliated with a faith group handled stressful life events better and were physically healthier and happier than those nonaffiliated with a faith group. Similarly, Kim and Seidlitz (2002) found that spirituality helped to maintain a sense of inner peace and moderated the effect of personal daily stress on the adjustment to college life. Spirituality also was found to act as a buffer against negative life events (Young, Cashwell, & Shcherbakova, 2000).

In another study, Malathi and Damodaran (1999) demonstrated that individuals who participated in yogic practices experienced less anxiety during demanding and stressful situations such as exams when compared to the control group. Parameters such as sense of wellbeing, feeling of relaxation, improved concentration, self-confidence, improved efficiency, lowered irritability levels, and an optimistic outlook in life were some of the beneficial effects enjoyed by the yoga group.

Other research has focused on the positive connection between spirituality and lower depression, higher life satisfaction, and healthier lifestyle habits. For instance, students who frequently participated in religious activities had fewer depressive symptoms and better mental wellbeing (Hofius, 2004). Yoga participants experienced decreased depression and anxiety and improved mood compared to nonparticipants (Woolery, Myers, Sternlieb, & Zeltzer, 2004). Hammermeister and Peterson (2001) found that those with high spiritual wellbeing had higher levels of self-esteem and lower levels of hopelessness and loneliness than their counterparts, which may lead to overall healthier lifestyles.

In a study conducted by Koenig, Kvale, and Ferrel (1988), results showed that frequent prayer and religious worship was associated with less loneliness and dissatisfaction with life and greater well being. Koenig (2002) suggested in his study that religious practices such as prayer, attending worship, and reading scripture helped to prevent functional disability, lower depression, and decrease the development of psychiatric problems among cardiac patients. In a nationally representative sample, Ellison, Gay, and Glass (1989) observed the relationship between religious commitment and general life satisfaction. Their study showed that religious devotion, affiliation, and

participation were positively associated with dealing with traumatic life events and overall life satisfaction.

A study by McIntosh and Spilka (1990) suggested that people who linked spiritual beliefs with personal control and health reported less illness and more positive health habits, whereas people who did not link beliefs with personal control and health reported more negative health habits and illness. Doster, Harvey, Riley, Goven, and Moorefield (2002) showed that a greater sense of spirituality was associated with lower cardiovascular risk factors such as lower triglyceride levels, lower cholesterol levels, and higher erythrocyte measures (red blood cells reflecting more relaxed vasculature and contributing to longer cell life with less cellular damage).

Koenig, Pargament, and Nielsen (1998) demonstrated that adults who used positive spiritual coping behaviors such as collaboration with God, giving religious help, and seeking support from clergy reported better physical health, higher quality of life, and fewer depressive symptoms. However, the adults who used negative religious coping behaviors such as not asking God for help and discontentment with the church reported poorer physical health, lower quality of life, and more depressive symptoms.

Using data from 1,848 adults interviewed for the National Survey of Black Americans, Levin, Chatters, and Taylor (1995) examined the connection between religiosity, life satisfaction, and health status. Results revealed that the more active people were in church, the greater importance people place on religion, and the more religious they felt they were the greater their life satisfaction and health status. In a similar fashion, Levin and Chatters (1998) investigated the impact of religiousness on wellbeing and health status using data on approximately 6,000 adults from three

nationally representative studies. Results showed that religious involvement was strongly associated with better health and greater wellbeing in all three studies.

Additional research suggested a positive link between spirituality and decreased use of alcohol and cigarettes. Stewart (2001) examined the association between spiritual beliefs and substance use in college students. Stewart found that spirituality provided a protective effect against the decision to use certain drugs and alcohol. Whooley, Boyd, Gardin, and Williams (2002) found that regular attendance at religious services is associated with lower rates of current smoking and subsequent smoking. In another study, nonreligious affiliated individuals reported significantly higher levels of preconceived drinking norms, drinking frequency and quantity, celebratory reasons for drinking, and getting drunk than religious affiliated individuals (Patock-Peckham, Hutchinson, Cheong, & Nagoshi, 1998).

Still other studies have observed a positive association between spirituality and the recovery from various illnesses. In a famous randomized double blind study by Byrd (1988), coronary care patients were placed in an intercessory prayer group or a control group. Patients in the prayer group were assigned to receive intercessory prayer from a select group of Christian prayer groups. No one prayed for the control group. Byrd found that the prayed-for group did significantly better on several health measures compared to the control group. These health measures included less need for intubation; decreased use of antibiotics and diuretics; and fewer cases of pneumonia, cardiopulmonary arrest, and congestive heart failure.

Oxman, Freeman, and Manheimer (1995) investigated spirituality and cardiovascular disease in adults undergoing heart surgery. They found that the amount of

comfort and strength patients derived from their religious faith was the most consistent indicator for risk of death. In a six month period after surgery, patients who did not find comfort and strength from religion had a death rate three times that of patients who found strength and comfort in religion. No one who described themselves as religious died.

In a similar fashion, Sicher, Targ, Moore, and Smith (1998) conducted a randomized, double blind study on the effects of intercessory prayer on advanced AIDS patients. Patients were matched for disease severity and randomly assigned to either an intercessory prayer group or a control group. Results showed that subjects who had been prayed for had significantly fewer doctor visits, hospitalizations, and days in hospital; lower illness severity ratings; and fewer new AIDS related illnesses compared to the control group.

Septon, Koopman, Schaal, Thoresen, and Spiegel (2001) studied the relationship between immune status and spirituality in women with metastatic breast cancer. They found that women who rated spiritual experience in their life as highly important had greater immune function compared to those who did not. Greater immune function consisted of greater numbers of white blood cells and total lymphocyte counts.

With his seven principles, Levin (2001) encapsulated the way spirituality benefits wellness: (a) religious affiliation and membership benefit health by promoting healthy behavior and lifestyles; (b) regular religious fellowship benefits health by offering support that buffers the effects of stress and isolation; (c) participation in worship and prayer benefits health through the physiological effects of positive emotions; (d) religious beliefs benefit health by their similarity to health-promoting beliefs and personality styles; (e) faith benefits health by leading to thoughts of hope, optimism, and positive

expectations; (f) mystical experiences benefit health by activating a healing bioenergy of life force of altered state of consciousness; and (g) absent prayer for others is capable of healing by divine intervention.

In summary, the positive connection between spirituality and health appears to be evident in many forms such as decreased adverse psychological and physical symptoms and an enhanced sense of wellbeing. It should be noted, however, that the evidence of a connection does not imply causation. The connection supports the contention that “a spiritual approach to life fosters wellbeing” (Tloczynski, Knoll, & Fitch, 1997, p. 212). As part of this, the next section will attempt to cover ways in which individuals may nurture their spirituality.

Nurturing Spiritual Wellness

Although the role of spirituality in wellness is significant, perhaps what is more important is how individuals come to nurture spirituality in their lives. Hamilton and Jackson (1998) pointed out that spirituality emerges as individuals reflect on their lives, behaviors, and relationships as well as the meanings attached to these lived experiences. They noted that spirituality is both a way of being as well as a way of doing.

According to Hill and Pargament (2003), spirituality is not a set of practices and beliefs divorced from everyday life and applied on special occasions and at special times. Instead, spirituality is a way of life to be consistently sought, experienced, fostered, and sustained. Growth in spirituality is a continuous conscious undertaking that can occur as a consequence of both spontaneous events as well as intentional activity and practice (Chandler et al., 1992). Burkhardt and Nagai-Jacobson (1994) maintained that “in the

spiritual quest one can start only from where one is; no one is excluded, and anyone can become an awakened person” (p. 10).

When students enter college, many bring with them the values and beliefs from their family, peers, community, and religious institutions. Often these values and beliefs have not been tested by outside forces that create ambiguity. In their search for purpose in the midst of all this, students need help in recognizing the ambiguities that exist and in identifying the spiritual values that buttress their opinions, define their options, and affirm their experiences. Such a process of spiritual exploration may help a student arrive at a new self-awareness that may assist with difficult decisions (Gelo, 1995).

Spiritual maturity is a developmental process. In the same way we grow as psychological and emotional beings, we grow as spiritual beings. As students are provided opportunities to view themselves more openly, they can be guided to learn that good decision making requires self-knowledge, which is invaluable in finding solutions to problems in life. Moreover, such knowledge leads to an incorporation of mind, body, spirit that is vital to the development of a more mature spirituality (Gelo, 1995).

According to Parks (2000), the spiritual quest is vital to the developmental process. Naturally, young adults are renegotiating questions regarding their future, the ethical dimensions of their choices, a higher power, and death. These big questions hold the potential for meaning-making at profound levels, both personally and communally. These are spiritual questions because they affect the whole of life. If they are put aside because there is no room for them or no language to give them a voice, the development of spirituality becomes disjointed (Parks, 2000).

A group of recent college graduates were contemplating life over coffee in Manhattan. They had attended universities and colleges where there was no specific encouragement to examine questions of spirituality. Collectively, they wondered how their consciousness of spirituality had been alive before they attended college, but then had seemingly gone underground. Now, in the harsh reality of the need for a spirituality that made sense, they found themselves scrambling for a spirituality to live by. Together they arrived at this analogy to illustrate their experience:

It's like high school was the period when you're trying to think up the paper topic, and you get a rough thesis, an idea of what you want to find out or prove, and the questions you need to ask in your research. Then you spend four years in the library researching, and you find out more than you ever knew you would, and maybe you lose sight of what you were supposed to be researching in the first place, and maybe think of a couple of new ideas while you're at it, or discover something that changes the entire idea you had coming in. And after four years, you step out of the library (where it's been very dark and quiet and safe) and it's noisy and you're blinking in the sun and you have a messy stack of note cards that you're supposed to organize into something cohesive to write the paper, and your original idea sort of comes back to you. But you know way too much to do that thesis, and you're disoriented and have no idea where to start, and the last thing you want to do, having been in the library for so long, is write the damn paper. (Parks, 2000, p. 199)

As a group, their shared thinking is that life is unlikely to unfold very well if that *damn paper* is never written. Spiritual development and formation happens best in unison with the whole flow of one's life. This means that college students need access to spiritual communities the whole time that they are in the library. These spiritual communities need to extend to the big questions; give access to viable stories; recognize the plurality of religious traditions; and create a meaningful network of comfort, belonging, and ethical challenge (Parks, 2000).

Love and Talbot (1999) contended that spiritual development is an integral part of students' development. They suggested that spiritual development is composed of five

propositions: seeking personal knowledge and centeredness, transcending one's current locus of centrality, recognizing a pervasive power beyond human existence, being open to and embracing community, and having a sense of spirit permeate one's life. Taken together these propositions described spiritual development as an interrelated process rather than separate stages.

Seaward (1995) suggested that there are four specific processes to nurture human spirituality. These included the processes of centering, emptying, grounding, and connecting. Centering is the process of quieting the mind by shutting out distractions making way for personal wisdom and insight. Emptying is the process of cleansing the mind and body of toxic thoughts, feelings, and attitudes that inhibit spiritual growth. Grounding is the process of tapping into and cultivating inner wisdom and intuition. And, lastly, connecting is the process of sharing insight, creativity, and compassion in an effort to enrich the lives of others.

In view of these propositions and processes, there are a variety of techniques that can be accessed for the formation and development of spirituality. Meditation, progressive relaxation, mental imagery, and rhythmic breathing are common techniques used to foster spiritual growth. In a similar fashion, practices such as yoga, tai chi, and other forms of rhythmic exercise can enhance spirituality. These techniques can facilitate feelings of inner peace and spiritual homeostasis (Chandler et al., 1992; Elkins, 1999; Hawks et al., 1995; Seaward, 1995).

Koenig (2002) noted "taking a spiritual history is often a powerful intervention in itself" (p. 1708). Activities such as prayer, spiritual gatherings, scripture readings, worship sessions, bible studies, and theology classes can be expressions of students'

search for purpose and meaning (Elkins, 1999; Ma, 2003). In addition, journal writing can provide individuals with an opportunity for soul searching and self-awareness. Personal reflection, reading inspirational books, listening to music, experiencing nature, practicing forgiveness, and spiritual discussions can help to strengthen the connection between spirituality and everyday life (Scholten, 2004).

Chapman (1987) recommended several ideas for the inclusion in a health promotion/wellness program dedicated exclusively to the development of spiritual wellness. These included spiritual renewal seminars/retreats, spiritual health support groups, spiritual health oriented lending libraries, and spiritual health workshops. One method recommended by Scandurra (1999) for the enhancement of spirituality was the mere discussion of spiritual issues such as mindful awareness questions, definitions of spirituality, and spiritual story telling.

The use of service learning projects such as servant events, mission trips, and volunteer opportunities can help students explore meaning and purpose, connection with others and a higher power, and discover a vocational calling (Koth, 2003; Ma, 2003). Additionally, mentoring opportunities can influence the spiritual development of students (Love, 2001). According to Hindman (2002), as mentors faculty and staff can play a significant role in the spiritual growth of students. Mentors can help students to establish their own identity and be open to another person's viewpoint.

In short, the development in spirituality happens as individuals explore who they are and what they do. Helping individuals to nurture their own spirituality can be achieved through a number of activities and practices, which can be made available in programs, services, and curricula. Bringing about spiritual development in students is

ideally a collaborative endeavor and campus community members can provide for the integrative efforts needed to plan and implement learning experiences for spiritual development.

Summary

In summary, the literature reviewed in this chapter reflects the scope of spirituality as a component of overall wellness. Literature showed that spirituality is a multidimensional construct and that despite the lack of a universally accepted definition it is not an unworkable concept. Several themes were found to be present in most of the definitions of spirituality. First, there is a prevalent assumption that spirituality is a universal experience. Secondly, spirituality is composed of meaning, purpose, values, and beliefs. Third, there is a relational nature to spirituality in which self, others, and a Higher Being are included. Finally, there is a transcendent element to spirituality.

Many scholars stressed that spirituality was the core dimension from which the other dimensions articulate and interact and is essential for optimal human development and wellbeing. Additionally, many researchers advocated including spirituality as a dimension of wellness and developing it to the same degree as the other dimensions of wellness. Because of this, there have been many instruments seemingly related to the assessment of spirituality developed in the literature. With use of these instruments, indicators related to and consequences of spirituality have been observed, measured and analyzed.

There has been a growing body of literature that has examined spirituality and overall health status. One clear message from this literature has been that people consider spirituality to be important in their lives and a part of how they deal with their daily

living experiences and self-care. The positive connection between spirituality and health appears to be evident in many forms such as decreased adverse psychological and physical symptoms and an enhanced sense of wellbeing.

Even though the role of spirituality in wellness is significant, perhaps what is more important is how individuals come to nurture spirituality in their personal lives. The formation and development of spirituality happens as individuals explore who they are and what they do. A campus community can aid in the process by offering a number of activities and practices for the spiritual formation and development of its students.

This study should help to fill the gaps in understanding the spiritual wellness of undergraduate college students. The findings of this study should help members of the campus community to develop programs, services, and curricula to nurture the spiritual wellbeing of students. Additionally, this study should help to expand the body of literature in the area of spiritual wellness among higher education students.

CHAPTER 3: METHODS

Introduction

The purpose of this research study was to explore the spiritual wellness of undergraduate college students. More specifically, the aim of this study was to assess the spiritual beliefs, views, and practices of undergraduate college students and the influence of spiritual wellness on the other five dimensions of wellness including emotional, physical, social, intellectual, and occupational. In turn, this should provide valuable information to campus community members for the development of programs, services, and curricula in an effort to meet the spiritual wellness needs of this target group. This chapter includes a description of the research methodology used to accomplish the purpose of this study. More specifically, the research design, participants, measures, data collection procedure, and data analysis are discussed.

Research Questions

1. What are the spiritual wellness beliefs and views of undergraduate college students?
2. What views do students have about the influence spirituality has on the other dimensions of wellness including physical, intellectual, social, emotional, and occupational?
3. In what ways do undergraduate college students practice their spiritual wellness?
4. What programs, services, and curricula would undergraduate college students like the university to offer in order to help develop their spiritual wellness?

5. What are the differences in the spiritual beliefs and views across gender, age, ethnicity, and year in school?
6. What are the differences in the views about the influences of spirituality on the other dimensions of wellness across gender, age, ethnicity, and year in school?

Research Design

The study employed a cross-sectional survey design approach to address the research problem and more specifically the research questions. The research approach made primary use of a self-administered questionnaire to collect demographic information as well as measures of spirituality. With the survey approach, the researcher was able to thoroughly explore the patterns of spiritual views, beliefs, practices, and the influence of spiritual wellness on the other five dimensions of wellness among a sample of undergraduate college students.

According to Creswell (2003), a survey design approach provides a quantitative description of patterns or perceptions of a population by studying a selected group of that population. Similarly, Babbie (2004) noted that a survey research approach is the best method available for collecting original data for describing a groups perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors. For the purpose of the research study, the survey design approach was a preferred type of data collection. The survey design approach often is used to describe and examine social phenomena and is appropriate for research asking about self-report beliefs and practices (Fink, 2003).

Participants and Site

For this study, the names of the students were secured through the 2005-2006 Colorado State University Directory using a systematic random sampling technique. The

selected sample consisted of 1,000 undergraduate college students enrolled at Colorado State University during the fall semester of 2005. Of the 1,000 students, the actual sample consisted of 303 students.

There were 159 female students and 144 male students who participated in the study. A vast majority of the students (93.1%) ranged in age from 18 to 24 years. White (84.5%) was most frequently reported as the ethnicity of the study participants. Almost all of the participants (94.7%) were single. Forty-two of the participants in the study were freshmen, 66 were sophomores, 82 were juniors, and 113 were seniors. The top three major areas of study were Applied Human Sciences (21.5%), Natural Sciences (17.1%), and Liberal Arts (15.5%).

Measures

Instrument Development

Self-administered questionnaires are commonly used to gather information about spiritual beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors. Generally, self-administered questionnaires can be administered quickly and are relatively inexpensive (Babbie, 2004). Often times, however, measurement instruments are not found in the literature and are developed by the researcher to better meet the needs of the respective study. A self-administered questionnaire was developed specifically for use in the data collection process of the study.

The questions from the survey instrument were based on an extensive review of literature coupled with a review of several existing spirituality questionnaires that were deemed appropriate (e.g. Elkins et al., 1988; Ellison & Paloutzian, 1982; Hall & Edwards, 1996; Hatch et al., 1998; Howden, 1992; Ingersoll, 1995; Moberg, 1984;

Wheat, 1991). In addition, information from Fink (2003), Sudman and Bradburn (1982), Pedhazur and Schmelkin (1991), Insel and Roth (2006), and Grace (1997) served as guides in constructing the questionnaire items. Along with this, the questionnaire was reviewed for clarity in wording, readability, and representativeness of the important concepts by a four-member panel of professors reflecting expertise in research design, data collection, spirituality, and wellness. Recommendations made by the panel members were incorporated into the final draft of the questionnaire.

Pilot Test

In an effort to finely tune the survey instrument and to practice the survey administration procedure, the researcher conducted a pilot test with multiple groups of individuals such as those knowledgeable in the field and those who represent the target group (Gliner & Morgan, 2000). During the pilot test, the individuals were given the questionnaire to complete and then asked questions about the instrument. Questions covered issues such as phraseology, readability, appropriateness of items, length of the questionnaire, and format of questionnaire. Revisions and additions to the instrument were made based upon suggestions of the reviewers. Sudman and Bradburn (1982) strongly recommend that researchers pilot test their questionnaire(s) before conducting the actual study.

Instrument Validity and Reliability

Instrument validity was established using face validity and content validity. Face validity is the extent to which the measurement looks to be valid for the purpose of the instrument. By itself face validity is not enough, however, according to Gliner and

Morgan (2000) it can be a selling point for an instrument.

Content validity is the extent to which the content of the instrument is representative of the concept the researcher is attempting to measure. For this study, content validity of the research instrument was based on an extensive literature review that established the concepts that the researcher was attempting to measure. The actual questionnaire items were a composite of the researcher's findings. In addition, content validity was based on the findings of the pilot test and the recommendations made by the four-member review panel who reviewed the questionnaire for clarity of wording, readability, and representativeness of the important concepts. As a result of this process, the researcher rated the content validity of the research instrument as high.

Instrument reliability was estimated by examining various measures of agreement across two survey administrations. The procedure consisted of giving the survey to eight students who fit the target group. One week later, the survey was given a second time to the same eight students. Upon receipt of all completed questionnaires, the percentage of agreement across measures between survey administrations for each student was calculated. Next, the percentages among the eight students were averaged. With this, the reliability was estimated to be 75.1.

Research Instrument

The revised instrument was submitted to the researcher's four member panel of professors for final approval. A cover page was included with the questionnaire instrument. The cover page explained the purpose of the study and why the participants are important, reminded students that their participation is confidential, promised anonymity and confidentiality, and thanked the students for participating. Also, the

researcher's name and contact information as well as the name and contact information for the researcher's adviser was provided should students have any questions or concerns about the survey topic or want a copy of the results (Sudman & Bradburn, 1982).

Within the questionnaire, instructions were given to the respondents to insure accurate responses. The first part of the questionnaire included responses to closed-ended questions using a Likert scale. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement to each question. Response options ranged from *strongly agree* to *strongly disagree*, *very much* to *not at all*, and *daily* to *never* and were considered ordinal data (Fink, 2003; Gliner & Morgan, 2000; Morgan, Griego, & Gloeckner, 2001; Sudman & Bradburn, 1982).

Additionally, the questionnaire used partially closed-ended questions with the option *other*, which allowed respondents to write in their responses. For example, for the question asking about spiritual practices provided several options along with the option *other*. Responses to the *other* option were kept in their entirety. Also, an open-ended question was posed to gather additional information regarding student's thoughts on spirituality.

Next, the respondents were asked to answer a group of questions by filling in the appropriate box indicating their response. Questions included:

1. Do you believe in a Higher Power?
2. What is your faith?

Responses to these questions were considered categorical data. The last part of the questionnaire asked for demographic information on several categorical variables including gender, age, ethnicity, marital status, year in school, and major area of study.

Responses to questions one through 15, 44, and 45 of the questionnaire addressed research question one. Responses to questions 17 through 27 of the questionnaire addressed research question two. Responses to questions 16 and 28 through 41 of the questionnaire addressed research question three. Responses to question 42 of the questionnaire addressed research question four. Responses to questions one through 15, 46 through 48, and 50 addressed research question five. Lastly, responses to questions 17 through 27, 46 through 48, and 50 addressed research question six.

Data Collection Procedure

Before initiating this study, an application requesting permission to conduct the research was submitted to the Colorado State University Human Research Committee. Permission was granted to conduct this research on October 10, 2005 (see Appendix A).

In carrying out the research design, the researcher adapted several of the recommendations made by Salant and Dillman (1994) to ensure a high response rate. Data was collected using web based survey software called SurveyMonkey.com. First, a prenotification letter (see Appendix B) explaining the purpose and importance of the study was emailed to all the participants inviting them to participate in the study.

Approximately one week later, a link to the survey was sent to the participants by email (see Appendix C). The email informed the participants that they had been selected to participate in an online survey concerning the spiritual wellness among undergraduate college students at Colorado State University. Additionally, it informed them that their participation was completely voluntary and that the survey took approximately 15 minutes to complete. At that point, the participants were given two options. One option allowed the participants to click on a link that took them directly to the survey. The

second option allowed participants to click on a link that automatically removed them from the mailing list.

Participants who opted to participate in the study proceeded by clicking on the provided URL that linked them to the cover letter and survey (see Appendix D). The cover letter explained the purpose of the research project and assured confidentiality of their name and responses. Also, the cover letter indicated that participation was completely voluntary and provided contact information regarding the study.

Approximately, one week after emailing the survey, a thank you letter (see Appendix E) was emailed to all participants. This email thanked those who had already responded to the questionnaire and acted as a reminder to those who had not yet completed the survey online. About two weeks after emailing the thank you letter, a follow-up letter (see Appendix F) was emailed to those individuals whose questionnaires had not been returned to further encourage their participation in the study.

Data from the questionnaire was automatically entered into the researcher's personal account at SurveyMonkey.com using Microsoft Excel and SPSS as participants submitted their completed survey. Along with this, the researcher was able to track those who had and had not responded to the survey invitation for purposes of monitoring the follow-up procedure.

Data Analysis

For this study, data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 11.5 (SPSS, 2002). The obtained data was analyzed using several statistical methods such as frequency distributions, percentages. Data was presented in narrative and tabular form.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore the spiritual wellness of undergraduate college students. More specifically, the aim of this study was to assess the spiritual beliefs, views, and practices of undergraduate college students and the influence of spiritual wellness on the other five dimensions of wellness including emotional, physical, social, intellectual, and occupational. In turn, this should provide valuable information to campus community members for the development of programs, services, and curricula in an effort to meet the spiritual wellness needs of this target group. This chapter presents the findings from the analyses of the sample data. The information is organized in the following sections: (1) description of the participants, (2) results of research questions, (3) additional comments regarding student spirituality, and (4) summary.

Description of the Participants

Surveys were sent to 1,000 undergraduate college students who were listed in the 2005-2006 Colorado State University Student Directory. Of the surveys sent, 23 were undeliverable due to closed email accounts, changes in email addresses, or spam blockers. Thus, there were 977 potential undergraduate college students in the sampling frame. From this group, a total of 303 surveys were returned for a 31% response rate.

Demographic information was obtained on all of the participants. This information described the participants' gender, age, ethnicity, marital status, year in school, and major area of study (see Table 1). The data indicated that slightly more

Table 1

Demographic Information of Participants

Characteristic	<i>f</i>	%
Gender		
Male	144	47.5
Female	159	52.5
Age		
under 18	--	--
18 to 24	282	93.1
25 and older	21	6.9
Ethnicity		
African American	--	--
Hispanic	18	5.9
Asian	6	2.0
Native American	1	.3
White	256	84.5
Multi-Ethnic	13	4.3
Other	9	3.0
Marital Status		
Single	287	94.7
Married	13	4.3
Separated/Divorced/Widowed	3	1.0
Year in School		
Freshman	42	13.8
Sophomore	66	21.8
Junior	82	27.1
Senior	113	37.3
Major Area of Study		
Agricultural Sciences	22	7.3
Applied Human Sciences	65	21.5
Business	24	8.3
Engineering	29	9.6
Liberal Arts	48	15.5
Natural Resources	13	4.3
Natural Sciences	52	17.1
Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences	7	2.3
Open Option	8	2.6
Double Major	31	10.2
Undeclared	4	1.3

Note. Dash indicates data was not reported.

females (52.5%) than males (47.5%) responded to the survey. A large group of student participants (93.1%) fell into the 18 to 24 age category, whereas 6.9% fell into the 25 and older age category.

White (84.5%) was most frequently reported as the ethnicity of the study participants. Participants reporting their ethnicity as Hispanic made up 5.9% of the sample, Asian 2.0%, Native American .3%, Multi-Ethnic 4.3%, and Other 3.0%. Responses found in the other category included Arab, European, Hispanic White, Multi-ethnic White, human ($n = 2$), and all kinds. Almost all of the participants (94.7%) were single with 13 (4.3%) currently married, and three (1.0%) separated, divorced, or widowed.

Of the 303 participants in the study, 42 (13.9%) were freshmen, 66 (21.8%) were sophomores, 82 (27.1%) were juniors, and 113 (37.3%) were seniors. Because a wide variety of majors were reported, majors were grouped into broader categories according to College and Department programs of study at Colorado State University. The top three major areas of study noted were Applied Human Sciences (21.5%), Natural Sciences (17.1%), and Liberal Arts (15.5%). A complete list of reported majors according to the College and Department programs of study can be found in Appendix G.

Results of Research Questions

Research Question 1. What are the spiritual wellness beliefs and views of undergraduate college students?

Survey questions 1 through 15 and 43 were designed to measure the spiritual beliefs and views of the undergraduate college students. In terms of student's belief in a higher power (question 43), a vast majority (81%) reported that they believed in a higher

power, whereas 17% students reported that they did not believe in a higher power. Seven participants failed to respond to the question.

As for faith, participants were diversified across a variety of backgrounds: 5.3% Baptist, 2.0% Buddhist, 18.8% Catholic, 1.3% Episcopalian, 1.0% Jewish, 7.9% Lutheran, 5.0% Methodist, .7% Mormon, .7% Muslim, and 5.9% Presbyterian. Almost half of the students indicated No Preference (18.5%) or Other (29.7%) (see Table 2). Among the responses in the other category were Agnostic, Atheist, Christian, Evangelical Free, Humanism, and Unitarian. Of particular interest, were those who made these responses: (a) “non-denominational, but by no means Atheist or Agnostic;” (b) “I don’t believe I need to classify myself as a certain religion to exercise my spirituality or prove I believe in a Higher Power;” and (c) “I believe in personal guidance and right and wrong decisions that make your life and others lives happier and more fulfilling. I don’t believe one religion or faith is better than the other.” See Appendix H, for a complete list of the responses to the other category.

Participants also noted their level of agreement on a set of statements (questions 1-15) regarding their spiritual wellness views. The response format consisted of a Likert scale, which allowed for a range of choices from *strongly agree* to *strongly disagree*. Percentages were rounded to the nearest whole number to eliminate decimals. Responses to the statements are reflected in Table 3.

Data revealed that a vast majority of the students were in agreement (strongly agreed or agreed) with the spiritual wellness statements. Most participants (87%) felt a sense of wellbeing about the direction in which life is headed. A high percentage of participants, 68% and 67% respectively, felt a sense of connection between mind, body,

Table 2

Faith Backgrounds of Participants

	<i>f</i>	%
Baptist	16	5.3
Buddhist	6	2.0
Catholic	57	18.8
Episcopalian	4	1.3
Jewish	3	1.0
Lutheran	24	7.9
Methodist	15	5.0
Mormon	2	.7
Muslim	2	.7
Presbyterian	18	5.9
No Preference	56	18.5
Other	90	29.7

Note. Missing data = 10 participants, therefore, percentages do not total 100.

and spirit as well as believed that spiritual beliefs lead them to care for others.

Nearly two thirds of the sample agreed that they know someone they can turn to for spiritual guidance (66%) and that spirituality helps them maintain a positive outlook on life (65%), gives them strength in times of trouble (64%), and is an important part of life (62.0%). More than half of the students indicated that spirituality gives meaning and purpose to life (57%) and they talk to family about spirituality (57%). Additionally, over half agreed that spirituality helps them maintain a positive self-image (54%), plays a role in the way they do things daily (53%), and they talk to friends about spirituality (51%).

Table 3

Views on Spiritual Wellness

	SA	A	N	D	SD
Statement	%	%	%	%	%
1. I feel a sense of wellbeing about the direction my life is headed.	31	56	8	5	0
2. Spirituality is an important part of my life.	29	33	23	10	5
3. My spiritual beliefs give meaning and purpose to my life.	27	30	27	10	6
4. I talk to my higher power about my daily affairs.	17	22	21	21	19
5. I talk to my friends about my spirituality.	12	39	25	17	7
6. I talk to my family about my spirituality.	17	40	19	14	10
7. My spiritual beliefs lead me to care about other people.	29	38	18	10	5
8. In times of trouble, my spirituality gives me strength.	30	34	19	9	8
9. I know someone I can turn to for spiritual guidance.	28	38	17	11	6
10. I seek opportunities to grow spiritually.	17	30	30	15	8
11. I feel a connection between my mind, body, and spirit.	22	46	21	7	4
12. My spirituality plays a role in the way I do things daily.	18	35	28	12	7
13. My spirituality comforts me when I feel ill.	14	29	28	17	12
14. My spirituality helps me maintain a positive outlook on life.	26	39	21	7	7
15. I trust in my spirituality to help me maintain a positive self-image.	20	34	25	11	10

Note. SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, N = Neither Agree nor Disagree, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree.

About half agreed that they seek opportunities to grow spiritually (47%) and four in 10 feel spirituality comforts them when sick (43%) and talk to a higher power about daily affairs (39%). One-fifth of the students were ambivalent about their spiritual wellness views thereby selecting *neither agree nor disagree*.

Research Question 2. What views do students have about the influence spirituality has on the other dimensions of wellness including physical, intellectual, social, emotional, and occupational?

Survey questions 17 through 27 were designed to measure the view's students have about the amount of influence their spirituality has on the other dimensions of wellness. The response format consisted of a Likert scale, which allowed for a range of choices from *very much* to *not at all*. Percentages were rounded to the nearest whole number to eliminate decimals. These results are displayed in Table 4.

The data showed that a large percentage of the participants indicated that spirituality has some influence on the decisions they make about the other dimensions of wellness, whether it was *very much*, *much*, *a fair amount*, or *a little*. Eighty one percent of the participants indicated that spirituality has some influence on the way they handle relationship issues, 73% indicated the way they deal with stress, and 72% indicated the decisions they make about the people with whom they choose to associate. Followed by 69%, 67%, and 66% of the students, respectively, who indicated that spirituality has some influence on the decisions they make about protecting the environment, sexual behavior, and personal safety.

Sixty two percent reported that spirituality has some influence on the choices they make about academic studies and 54% on exercising for health. Participants were split in

Table 4

Influence of Spiritual Wellness on the Other Dimensions of Wellness

Please indicate how much influence your spirituality has on:	Very Much	Much	A Fair Amt	A Little	Not at all
	%	%	%	%	%
17. the way you deal with stress.	9	15	25	24	25
18. the way you handle relationship issues.	17	19	20	25	17
19. the decisions you make about your academic work.	7	16	18	21	36
20. the decisions you make about your sexual behavior.	16	15	15	21	31
21. the decisions you make about your personal safety.	8	16	22	20	32
22. the decisions you make about the use of alcohol.	10	9	10	21	48
23. the decisions you make about the use of tobacco.	11	11	10	13	53
24. the decisions you make about exercising for your health.	4	12	19	19	44
25. the decisions you make about what you eat.	3	10	15	22	48
26. the decision you make about protecting nature.	12	18	20	19	29
27. the decisions you make about the people with whom you choose to associate.	15	19	21	17	26

Note. Missing data = 6 participants, therefore, percentages do not total 100.

half on the influence spirituality has on the decisions they make about what they eat (50%) and use of alcohol (50%). Nearly half of the students (45%) reported spirituality has some influence on the decisions they make about using tobacco.

Research Question 3. In what ways do undergraduate college students practice their spiritual wellness?

Survey questions 16 and 28 through 41 were designed to determine the ways in which undergraduate college students practice their spiritual wellness. This information is provided in Tables 5 and 6.

Question 16 asked the students to choose from a list all of the activities they had done during the past 12 months to practice spiritual wellness (see Table 5). For this question, students were asked to check all responses that applied. Because not all of the students may have done something in the past 12 months, not all of the students responded to this question.

From students who responded, large numbers helped a family member or close relative when in trouble ($n = 240$); donated food, money, or clothing to a community agency to help those in need ($n = 205$); prayed for other people or problems of the world ($n = 187$); and volunteered their services to a community agency to help people ($n = 160$). Ninety of the participants indicated that they donated money to a faith based organization and 20 indicated that they performed other tasks. These other tasks included: (a) gave blood, (b) helped raise over \$5,000 for the Silver Lining Foundation, (c) taught natural family planning classes, and (d) worked at a spiritual camp for the summer. For a total list of other responses, see Appendix I.

Questions 28 through 41 asked students to report how often they nurtured their

Table 5

Activities Used to Practice Spiritual Wellness

	<i>f</i>	%
a. Helped a family member or close relative when he or she was in trouble.	240	79.2
b. Volunteered my services to a community agency to help people.	160	52.8
c. Prayed for other people or for problems of the world.	187	61.7
d. Donated money to a faith based organization.	90	29.7
e. Donated food, money, or clothing to a community agency to help those in need.	205	67.7
f. Other	20	6.6

spirituality. The response format consisted of a Likert scale, which allowed for a range of choices from *daily* to *never*. Percentages were rounded to the nearest whole number to eliminate decimals. The results are shown in Table 6.

Interestingly, data showed that the amount of time students spent nurturing spirituality varied based upon the activity. In general, half of the activities were used at some time and half were never used. As for personal reflection and prayer, 70% and 50% of the students, respectively, indicated that they used these activities on a *daily* or *weekly* basis to nurture spirituality.

More than half of the students (51%) reported that they connect with nature or the universe on a *daily*, *weekly*, or *monthly* basis in an effort to nurture spirituality. Sixty three percent of the participants noted that they attend worship services *weekly*, *monthly*, or *yearly* to cultivate spirituality. On the other hand, a large percentage of students *never*

Table 6

Ways to Nurture Spiritual Wellness

	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Yearly	Never
	%	%	%	%	%
28. Personal reflection	41	29	12	4	12
29. Meditate	7	16	11	8	56
30. Pray	32	18	14	9	25
31. Chant	1	4	2	3	88
32. Sing or listen to spiritual music	12	18	14	10	44
33. Attend worship services	--	24	18	21	35
34. Attend fellowship activities	1	16	12	16	53
35. Watch or listen to spiritual television or radio programs	2	6	8	9	73
36. Attend spiritual seminars or workshops	--	2	5	22	69
37. Read holy scripture	10	15	10	19	44
38. Read other spiritual writings or devotions	5	11	16	17	49
39. Connect with nature or the universe	15	18	18	12	35
40. Participate in yoga, tai chi, or some other practice	3	7	12	16	60
41. Seek spiritual guidance from a qualified teacher	2	10	10	12	64

Note. Missing data = 6 participants, therefore, percentages do not total 100. Dashes indicate data was not reported.

spent time nurturing spirituality by chanting (88%), watching or listening to spiritual television or radio programs (73%), attending spiritual seminars (69%), or seeking spiritual guidance from a qualified teacher (64%).

Research Question 4. What programs, services, and curricula would undergraduate college students like the university to offer in order to help develop their spiritual wellness?

Survey question 42 was designed to determine the programs, services, and curricula undergraduates would like the university to offer in an effort to develop spiritual wellness. For this question, students were asked to check all responses that applied. Because of the nature of the question, not all students responded. These results are summarized in Table 7.

From those who responded to the question, 86 students noted they would like the university to offer speakers to help develop spirituality, 69 noted programs through the wellness zone, 60 noted discussion groups, and 55 noted courses. Furthermore, 52 of the participants selected weekend activities, 49 selected workshops, 49 selected retreats, and 10 selected other. Responses to the other category included: (a) activities focused on self-awareness, and connections between mind, body and spirit; (b) community service projects to help needy people/families; and (c) Capoeira classes/courses. See Appendix J, for a list of responses to the other category. On the other hand, one hundred forty one indicated that they did not want the university to offer any programs because it was not necessarily the responsibility of the university to develop student spiritual wellness.

Research Question 5. What are the differences in the spiritual beliefs and views across gender, age, ethnicity, and year in school?

Table 7

University Programs and Services to Develop Spiritual Wellness

	<i>f</i>	%
a. Courses	55	18.2
b. Workshops/Seminars	49	16.2
c. Retreats	49	16.2
d. Speakers	86	28.4
e. Weekend activities	52	17.2
f. Activities during new school year orientation	38	12.5
g. Programs through the wellness zone	69	22.8
h. Discussion groups	60	19.8
i. Nothing – it is not the responsibility of the university	141	46.5
j. Other	10	3.3

Survey questions 1 to 15, 44, 46 to 48, and 50 were used to measure the differences in spiritual beliefs and views across gender, age, ethnicity, and year in school. Questions 1 to 15 asked students to indicate their level of agreement on a set of spiritual wellness statements. The response format consisted of a Likert scale, which allowed for a range of choices from *strongly agree*, *agree neither disagree nor agree*, *disagree*, to *strongly disagree*. For analysis purposes, the responses *strongly agree* and *agree* were condensed into one category labeled *agree* and *strongly disagree* and *disagree* were condensed into one category labeled *disagree*. Differences found during original data analysis did not change as a result of condensing categories.

Due to the proportionately low numbers of backgrounds reported, ethnicity was condensed into two categories. Percentages were used to make the comparisons necessary to answer this question and were rounded to the nearest whole number to eliminate decimals. These results are shown in Tables 8 through 12.

From the data, a higher percentage of female students (88%) indicated that they believe in a higher power compared to male students (76%). Groups of students 18 to 24 years and 25 and older; whites and non-whites; as well as freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors, respectively, differed by only a few percentage points with regards to belief in a higher power (see Table 8).

Based on a set of 15 statements, more females were in agreement on each spiritual wellness view than their male counterparts (see Table 9). The biggest difference observed between the two gender groups was on agreement with spirituality giving them strength in times of trouble with an 18 point difference (73% of females and 55% of males). Followed by a 15 point spread on agreement about spirituality giving meaning and purpose to their life (64% females and 49% males) and talking talk to their friends about their spirituality (58% women and 43% men). Thirteen point gender differences were observed on spirituality helping them maintain a positive self-image and playing a role in the way they do things daily (60% and 59% of females versus 47% and 46% of males, respectively). On average, over one fifth of the students from the two genders were uncertain about their views on spiritual wellness thereby choosing the option *neither nor disagree*. Slightly more males were ambivalent about their views than females.

On eight of the statements more students 18 to 24 years agreed with the spiritual wellness views than students 25 and older (see Table 10). The largest difference observed

Table 8

Differences Between Demographic Characteristics and Belief in a Higher Power

Characteristic	Belief	
	Yes	No
Gender		
Male	76	24
Female	88	12
Age		
18 to 24 Years	82	18
25 and Older	85	15
Ethnicity		
White	82	18
Nonwhite	84	16
Year in School		
Freshman	83	17
Sophomore	83	17
Junior	84	16
Senior	81	19

between the two age groups was regarding agreement on knowing someone they can turn to for spiritual guidance with a 24 point difference (67% of 18 to 24 versus 43% of 25 and older). Followed by a 19 point spread on agreement concerning talking to their friends about spirituality (52% of 18 to 24 versus 33% of 25 and older) and a 16 point spread on talking to their higher power about their daily affairs (40% of 18 to 24 versus 24 % of 25 and older). Students 18 to 24 years also were more likely than those 25 and older to talk to family about their spirituality (58% versus 48%) and agree that spirituality helps them maintain a positive self-image (55% versus 48%). On average, students from both age groups appeared equally unsure about their views on spiritual wellness thus selecting the category *neither agree nor disagree*.

Table 9

Differences Between Gender and Spiritual Wellness Views

Statement	Male			Female		
	A	N	D	A	N	D
1. I feel a sense of wellbeing about the direction my life is headed.	85	6	9	89	9	2
2. Spirituality is an important part of my life.	56	24	20	67	23	10
3. My spiritual beliefs give meaning and purpose to my life.	49	31	20	64	24	12
4. I talk to my higher power about my daily affairs.	35	17	48	43	24	33
5. I talk to my friends about my spirituality.	43	29	28	58	22	20
6. I talk to my family about my spirituality.	51	20	29	63	18	19
7. My spirituality leads me to care for others.	62	21	17	71	16	13
8. In times of trouble my spirituality gives me strength.	55	24	21	73	14	13
9. I know someone I can turn to for spiritual guidance.	60	17	23	71	17	12
10. I seek opportunities to grow spiritually.	46	26	28	48	34	18
11. I feel a connection between my mind, body, and spirit.	64	21	15	71	21	8
12. My spirituality plays a role in the way I do things daily.	46	30	24	59	26	15
13. My spirituality comforts me when I feel ill.	36	28	36	48	29	23
14. My spirituality helps me maintain a positive outlook on life.	59	24	17	71	18	11
15. I trust in my spirituality to help me maintain a positive self-image.	47	28	25	60	22	18

Table 10

Differences Between Age and Spiritual Wellness Views

Statement	18 to 24 Years			25 and Older		
	A	N	D	A	N	D
1. I feel a sense of wellbeing about the direction my life is headed.	88	7	5	81	14	5
2. Spirituality is an important part of my life.	62	22	16	62	33	5
3. My spiritual beliefs give meaning and purpose to my life.	57	27	16	62	24	14
4. I talk to my higher power about my daily affairs.	40	20	40	24	28	48
5. I talk to my friends about my spirituality.	52	25	23	33	24	43
6. I talk to my family about my spirituality.	58	19	23	48	24	28
7. My spirituality leads me to care for others.	67	18	15	67	24	9
8. In times of trouble, my spirituality gives me strength.	64	19	17	62	24	14
9. I know someone I can turn to for spiritual guidance.	67	17	16	43	19	38
10. I seek opportunities to grow spiritually.	46	30	24	57	29	14
11. I feel a connection between my mind, body, and spirit.	67	22	11	76	10	14
12. My spirituality plays a role in the way I do things daily.	52	29	19	62	14	24
13. My spirituality comforts me when I feel ill.	42	28	30	43	29	28
14. My spirituality helps me maintain a positive outlook on life.	66	21	13	62	19	19
15. I trust in my spirituality to help me maintain a positive self-image.	55	24	21	48	28	24

For nine of the statements, more white students agreed with each spiritual wellness view than non-white students (see Table 11). The largest difference observed between the two groups was with regards to agreement on knowing someone they can turn to for spiritual guidance with a 15 point difference (68% whites and 53% non-whites). Followed by a 13 point spread on seeking opportunities to grow spiritually (49% whites and 36% non-whites). White students also were more likely than non-white students to agree that they feel a connection between mind, body, and spirit (69% versus 60%), spirituality leads them to care for others (68% versus 60%), and spirituality plays a role in the way they do things daily (54% versus 47%). Interestingly, non-white students appeared more uncertain about their views on spiritual wellness by choosing the option *neither agree nor disagree* than white students.

Regarding the level of agreement on 15 spiritual wellness statements, juniors and sophomores were more likely in agreement than freshmen and seniors (see Table 12). The largest class level difference observed was concerning agreement on seeking opportunities to grow spiritually with an 18 point difference (56% of juniors versus 38% freshmen, 49% sophomores, and 42% seniors). Followed by a 17 point spread on agreement regarding feeling a sense of connection between their mind, body, and spirit (74% sophomores versus 57% freshmen, 72% juniors, and 64% seniors). A 15 point gap was observed on talking to their higher power about their daily affairs with sophomores (44%) and juniors (44%) equally in agreement versus freshmen (29%) and seniors (36%). Fourteen point differences were noted on agreement about spirituality playing a role in the way they do things daily (59% of sophomores versus 45% freshmen, 53% juniors, and 52% seniors) and helping to maintain a positive self-image (61% juniors versus 55%

Table 11

Differences Between Ethnicity and Spiritual Wellness Views

Statement	White Students			Non-White Students		
	A	N	D	A	N	D
1. I feel a sense of wellbeing about the direction my life is headed.	88	7	5	85	11	4
2. Spirituality is an important part of my life.	62	23	15	64	25	11
3. My spiritual beliefs give meaning and purpose to my life.	57	27	16	59	28	13
4. I talk to my higher power about my daily affairs.	39	19	42	40	30	30
5. I talk to my friends about my spirituality.	51	24	25	47	32	21
6. I talk to my family about my spirituality.	58	17	25	57	28	15
7. My spirituality leads me to care for others.	68	16	16	60	34	6
8. In times of trouble, my spirituality gives me strength.	64	19	17	66	19	15
9. I know someone I can turn to for spiritual guidance	68	14	18	53	34	13
10. I seek opportunities to grow spiritually.	49	28	23	36	41	23
11. I feel a connection between my mind, body, and spirit.	69	21	10	60	23	17
12. My spirituality plays a role in the way I do things daily.	54	27	19	47	36	17
13. My spirituality comforts me when I feel ill.	42	28	30	45	32	23
14. My spirituality helps me maintain a positive outlook.	64	21	15	74	17	09
15. I trust in my spirituality to help me help me maintain a positive self-image.	55	23	22	51	34	15

Table 12

Differences Between Year in School and Spiritual Wellness Views

Statement	Freshmen			Sophomore			Junior			Senior		
	A	N	D	A	N	D	A	N	D	A	N	D
1. I feel a sense of well being about the direction my life is headed.	90	5	5	88	9	3	87	7	6	86	8	6
2. Spirituality is an important part of my life	64	24	12	58	32	10	66	17	17	61	22	17
3. My spirituality gives meaning and purpose to my life.	55	31	14	51	35	14	58	26	16	60	22	18
4. I talk to my higher power about my daily affairs.	29	31	40	44	23	33	44	16	40	36	20	44
5. I talk to my friends about my spirituality.	48	26	26	50	26	24	54	29	17	51	21	28
6. I talk to my family about my spirituality.	59	17	24	59	20	21	60	22	18	54	17	29
7. My spirituality leads me to care for others.	64	22	14	74	14	12	69	16	15	61	22	17
8. In times of trouble, my spirituality gives me strength.	69	12	19	68	20	12	66	21	13	59	20	21
9. I know someone I can turn to for spiritual guidance	67	9	24	67	18	15	71	16	13	61	19	20
10. I seek opportunities to grow spiritually.	38	33	29	49	30	21	56	24	20	42	33	25
11. I feel a connection between my mind, body and spirit.	57	29	14	74	18	8	72	22	6	64	19	17
12. My spirituality plays a role in the way I do things daily.	45	29	26	59	23	18	53	34	13	52	27	21
13. My spirituality comforts me I feel ill.	45	29	26	43	30	27	44	28	28	40	27	33
14. My spirituality helps me maintain a positive outlook on life.	67	14	19	61	26	13	73	20	7	62	21	17
15. I trust in my spirituality to help me maintain a positive self-image.	55	24	21	58	27	15	61	19	20	47	27	26

freshmen, 58% sophomores, and 47% seniors). On average, the four class levels were equally ambivalent about their views on spiritual wellness by selecting the category *neither agree nor disagree*.

Research Question 6. What are the differences in the views about the influences of spirituality on the other dimensions of wellness across gender, age, ethnicity, and year in school?

Survey questions 17 to 27, 46 to 48, and 50 were used to measure the differences in the influences of spirituality on the other dimensions of wellness across gender, age, ethnicity, and year in school. Questions 17 to 27 asked students to indicate the amount of influence their spirituality has on the decisions they make about the other dimensions of wellness. The response format consisted of a Likert scale, which allowed for a range of choices from *very much*, *much a fair amount*, *a little*, to *not at all*. For analysis purposes, the responses *very much*, *much*, *a fair amount*, and *a little* were condensed into one category and labeled *some*. Differences found during original data analysis did not change as a result of condensing categories.

As previously noted, due to the proportionately low numbers of backgrounds reported, ethnicity was condensed into two categories. Percentages were used to make the comparisons necessary to answer this question and were rounded to the nearest whole number to eliminate decimals. These results are summarized in Tables 13 through 16.

For each question, more females indicated that spirituality has some influence on the choices they make about the other wellness dimensions than their male counterparts (see Table 13). The largest difference observed between males and females was regarding the amount of influence spirituality has on the decisions they make about personal safety

Table 13

Differences Between Gender and Spiritual Influence on Other Wellness Dimensions

Question Item	Males		Females	
	Some	Not at all	Some	Not at all
17. the way you deal with stress.	70	30	78	22
18. the way you handle relationship issues.	79	21	86	14
19. the decisions you make about your academic work.	59	41	68	32
20. the decisions you make about your sexual behavior.	61	39	76	24
21. the decisions you make about your personal safety.	59	41	75	25
22. the decisions you make about the use of alcohol.	46	54	55	45
23. the decisions you make about the use of tobacco.	41	59	51	49
24. the decisions you make about exercising for your health.	54	46	57	43
25. the decisions you make about what you eat.	49	51	54	46
26. the decisions you make about protecting nature.	66	34	73	27
27. the decisions you make about the people with whom you choose to associate.	71	29	75	25

with a 16 point difference (75% of females and 59% of males). Followed by 15 point spread on the influence of spirituality on the choices they make about sexual behavior (76% of females and 61% of males). A 10 point gender difference was noted on the amount of influence spirituality has on the decisions they make about the use of tobacco (51% women and 41% men). Females also were more likely than males to report that

spirituality has some influence on the choices they make about academic work (68% versus 59%) and the use of alcohol (55% versus 46%).

In seven of the 11 questions, more students 18 to 24 years indicated that their spirituality has some influence on the choices they make regarding the other wellness dimensions than those 25 and older (see Table 14). The largest age differences observed were regarding the influence spirituality has on the decisions they make about personal safety and the people with whom they choose to associate with 19 point differences (69% and 74% of 18 to 24 versus 50% and 55% of 25 and older, respectively). Followed by a 13 point gap on the influence of spirituality on the way they handle relationship issues (83% of 18 to 24 versus 70% of 25 and older). Students 18 to 24 years were more likely than those 25 and older to report that spirituality has some influence on the choices about the use of alcohol (52% versus 40%) and academic work (64% versus 55%).

On all but one question, more white students than non-white students indicated that their spirituality has some influence on the decisions they make concerning the other wellness dimensions (see Table 15). The largest difference observed between the two groups was pertaining to the amount of influence spirituality has on the decisions they make about protecting nature with a 10 point difference (71% of whites and 61% non-whites). Followed by a nine point spread on the influence spirituality has on the choices they make about exercising for health (57% of whites and 48% non-whites). White students were more likely than non-white students to report that spirituality has some influence on decisions they make about what to eat (52% versus 45%), use of alcohol (52% versus 45%), and the people with whom they choose to associate (74% versus 68%).

Table 14

Differences Between Age and Spiritual Influence on Other Wellness Dimensions

Question Item	18 to 24 Years		25 and Older	
	Some	Not at all	Some	Not at all
17. the way you deal with stress.	74	26	70	30
18. the way you handle relationship issues.	83	17	70	30
19. the decisions you make about your academic work.	64	36	55	45
20. the decisions you make about your sexual behavior.	69	31	70	30
21. the decisions you make about your personal safety.	69	31	50	50
22. the decisions you make about the use of alcohol.	52	48	40	60
23. the decisions you make about the use of tobacco.	46	54	50	50
24. the decisions you make about exercising for your health.	56	44	55	45
25. the decisions you make about what you eat.	51	49	55	45
26. the decisions you make about protecting nature.	70	30	75	25
27. the decisions you make about the people with whom you choose to associate.	74	26	55	45

With respect to year in school, in general more juniors and sophomores than freshmen and seniors indicated that their spirituality has some influence on the choices they make regarding the other dimensions of wellness (see table 16). The biggest difference observed among the groups was concerning the amount of influence spirituality has on the decisions they make about the use of alcohol with a 16 point

Table 15

Differences Between Ethnicity and Spiritual Influence on Other Wellness Dimensions

Question Item	White Students		Non-White Students	
	Some	Not at all	Some	Not at all
17. the way you deal with stress.	73	27	80	20
18. the way you handle relationship issues.	83	17	82	18
19. the decisions you make about your academic work.	64	36	59	41
20. the decisions you make about your sexual behavior.	69	31	68	32
21. the decisions you make about your personal safety.	68	32	66	34
22. the decisions you make about the use of alcohol.	52	48	45	55
23. the decisions you make about the use of tobacco.	47	53	43	57
24. the decisions you make about exercising for your health.	57	43	48	52
25. the decisions you make about what you eat.	52	48	45	55
26. the decisions you make about protecting nature.	71	29	61	39
27. the decisions you make about the people with whom you choose to associate.	74	26	68	32

difference (60% of sophomores versus 45% of freshmen, 57% juniors, and 44% seniors).

Followed by 13 point differences on the amount of influence spirituality has on the choices they make about sexual behavior (75% of juniors versus 74% of freshmen, 69% of sophomores and 62% of seniors), personal safety (75% of juniors versus 69% of freshmen, 65% of sophomores and 62% of seniors) and protecting nature (77% of juniors

Table 16

Differences Between School Year and Spiritual Influence on Other Wellness Dimensions

Question Item	Freshmen		Sophomore		Junior		Senior	
	Some	Not at all	Some	Not at all	Some	Not at all	Some	Not at all
17. the way you deal with stress.	71	29	82	18	74	26	71	29
18. the way you handle relationship issues.	86	14	88	12	85	15	76	24
19. the decisions you make about your academic work.	67	33	66	34	69	31	57	43
20. the decisions you make about your sexual behavior.	74	26	69	31	75	25	62	38
21. the decisions you make about your personal safety.	69	31	65	35	75	25	62	38
22. the decisions you make about the use of alcohol.	45	55	60	40	57	43	44	56
23. the decisions you make about the use of tobacco.	43	57	45	55	52	48	44	56
24. the decisions you make about exercising for your health.	52	48	57	43	61	39	52	48
25. the decisions you make about what you eat.	50	50	54	46	54	46	48	52
26. the decisions you make about protecting nature.	71	29	71	29	77	23	64	36
27. the decisions you make about the people with whom you choose to associate.	74	26	75	25	79	21	67	33

versus 71% of freshmen, 71% of sophomores and 64% of seniors). Twelve point gaps were observed on the amount of influence spirituality has on the choices they make about the people with whom they choose to associate (79% juniors versus 74% freshmen, 75% sophomores, and 67% seniors), academic work (69% juniors versus 67% freshmen, 66% sophomores, and 57% seniors), and the way they handle relationship issues (88% sophomores versus 86% freshmen, 85% juniors, and 76% seniors).

Additional Comments Regarding Student Spirituality

The questionnaire also provided the students an opportunity to share any additional thoughts they may have on the topic of spirituality. About one third of the participants actually made comments, which were found to be very insightful and diverse. To maintain the integrity of the responses, they were kept in their entirety. Examples provided by students follow.

One student noted, “Spirituality is an individual and unique journey.” Another stated that “Spirituality is very important. I think everyone has their own way of being part of spirituality.” A third said, “It’s something everyone has to decide for him/herself – there is no right or wrong.” One simply wrote, “It is vital to a healthy lifestyle.” Another student offered this response “I really do not rely on spirituality to determine any daily activities. I usually rely on common sense and realization of consequences of both positive and negative actions.”

One student commented that “I feel that the University may offer activities for those who wish to participate.” Another student wrote, “Spirituality is something that should be open to everyone – by having more seminars, etc. that would be possible.” While, a different student said “I think that the idea of having the university offer

activities to help people develop spiritual wellness is a nice idea, but not to be confused with it being their responsibility to provide it to us.”

One student had this to say “I know it is a very touchy subject and I applaud the university for trying to help the students with spirituality.” Lastly, one student offered this “ Thank you for doing this study - I think your questionnaire is quite complete in the spectrum of its questions.” Appendix K contains a complete list of all additional comments made by the participants.

Summary

This chapter presented the analysis and data findings used to examine the spiritual wellness among undergraduate college students at Colorado State University. Demographic characteristics of the study sample were described in the first section. Next, results of data analysis related to each research question in the study were presented. Plus, additional comments made by students about the topic of spirituality were offered. In Chapter 5, a summary of findings will be provided as well as conclusions, recommendations for practice, and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

This chapter has been organized into four sections. In the first section, a summary of the entire study is presented. This is followed by, conclusions drawn from the study and recommendations for practice. Lastly, recommendations for further study and a summary statement are presented.

Summary of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the spiritual wellness of undergraduate college students. More specifically, the aim of this study was to assess the spiritual beliefs, views, and practices of undergraduate college students and the influence of spiritual wellness on the other five dimensions of wellness including emotional, physical, social, intellectual, and occupational. In turn, this should provide valuable information to campus community members for the development of programs, services, and curricula in an effort to meet the spiritual wellness needs of this target group.

The study specifically sought to address the following research questions:

1. What are the spiritual wellness beliefs and views of undergraduate college students?
2. What views do students have about the influence spirituality has on the other dimensions of wellness including physical, intellectual, social, emotional, and occupational?
3. In what ways do undergraduate college students practice their spiritual wellness?
4. What programs, services, and curricula would undergraduate college students like the university to offer in order to help develop their spiritual wellness?

5. What are the differences in the spiritual beliefs and views across gender, age, ethnicity, and year in school?
6. What are the differences in the views about influences of spirituality on the other dimensions of wellness across gender, age, ethnicity, and year in school?

A survey questionnaire was specifically developed for this study to explore the research questions and to collect demographic information. Surveys were administered using web based survey software called SurveyMonkey.com.

The actual sample consisted of 303 undergraduate students who were randomly selected from the 2005-2006 Colorado State University Directory. Of the 303 participants, 159 were female and 144 were male. A majority of the students were white, single, and between the ages of 18 to 24 years. Forty-two of the participants in the study were freshmen, 66 were sophomores, 82 were juniors, and 113 were seniors. The top three major areas of study included Applied Human Sciences, Natural Sciences, and Liberal Arts (Table 1). Considering the enrollment data for fall 2005, the study sample was reflective of the undergraduate college population across the university campus with regards to gender, ethnicity, age, year in school, and major (Office of Budgets and Institutional Analysis, 2006).

The major findings of the study have been summarized within the context of the research questions. Research question 1 explored the spiritual wellness beliefs and views of undergraduate college students. Of the total sample, a large number of the students (81%) responded that they believe in a higher power. This is consistent with Lee, Matzkin, and Arthur (2002) who found that 83% of the undergraduates surveyed believed in a higher being. This finding also is similar to the studies by Higher Education Research

Institute (HERI) (2005b) and Schafer (1997) that found 79% and 77%, respectively, of the college students believe in a higher power.

Among the sample of students, faith was distributed across a variety of backgrounds including Baptist, Buddhist, Catholic, Episcopalian, Jewish, Lutheran, Methodist, Mormon, Muslim, and Presbyterian. Approximately half of the students indicated no preference or other. These findings suggest that representation from various faith backgrounds can be found on campus. This is similar to those reported by Lee et al. (2002) as well as HERI (2005b).

Findings from this study show that a majority of the students *strongly agreed* or *agreed* with the statements regarding spiritual wellness views. These included feeling a sense of wellbeing about the direction in which their life is headed; believing spirituality is an important part of their life; believing spirituality gives meaning and purpose to their life; talking to friends about their spirituality; talking to family about their spirituality; believing spirituality leads them to care for others; believing spirituality gives them strength in times of trouble; knowing someone they can turn to for spiritual guidance; feeling a connection between their mind, body, and spirit; believing spirituality plays a role in the way they do things daily; believing spirituality helps them maintain a positive outlook on life; and trusting spirituality to help them maintain a positive self-image. Nearly half of the students agreed that they seek opportunities to grow spiritually and four in 10 agreed that spirituality comforts them when sick and that they talk to a higher power about their daily affairs.

As this study points out, the importance of spiritual wellness is reflected in the college student's views. These spiritual wellness views are commensurate with other

findings in the literature. Recent studies show that students are searching for meaning and purpose in life (HERI, 2005b; Northcutt, 1998; Schafer, 1997), have an interest in spirituality, and agree spirituality is a source of joy (HERI, 2005b). Also, students agree spirituality plays an important role in life (Northcutt, 1998; Schafer, 1997), shapes how they act everyday (Northcutt, 1998) and provides them with strength and guidance (HERI, 2005b; Schafer, 1997). Furthermore, they talk about spirituality with friends and family and feel a sense of connection with a higher power (HERI, 2005b). Like the present study, HERI (2005b) and Northcutt (1998) found that students are on a quest to develop spiritually. About half of the students surveyed by HERI and nine in 10 surveyed by Northcutt seek opportunities to grow spiritually.

Research question 2 examined the views students have about the influence spirituality has on the other dimensions of wellness. Findings from this study demonstrate that a majority of the students reported that spirituality has some influence on the decisions they make about the other wellness dimensions. These involved the way they handle relationship issues, the way they deal with stress, as well as the decisions they make about the people with whom they choose to associate, protecting the environment, sexual behavior, personal safety, exercising for health, and academic studies. Students were 50-50 on the influence spirituality has on the decisions they make about what they eat and use of alcohol. Nearly half indicated spirituality has some influence on the decisions they make about using tobacco.

Results from the current study indicate that spirituality influences the choices students make about the other dimensions of wellness. These findings reflect previous research that suggests spirituality plays a role in student's physical and psychological

wellbeing. Students have demonstrated that spirituality influences their personal behaviors and the choices they make on a daily basis (Penn State, 2004). College students who reported themselves as spiritual displayed healthier self-esteem (Hammersmeister & Peterson, 2001) and rated themselves as physically healthy (HERI, 2005b).

Moreover, students who considered themselves to be spiritual were more likely to participate in physical activity (Nelms, 2005) and to maintain a healthy diet (HERI, 2005b) and were less likely to use alcohol (Hammermeister & Peterson, 2001; HERI, 2005b; Nelms, 2005; Penn State 2004) and to use tobacco (HERI, 2005b; Nelms, 2005). Undergraduates with high levels of spirituality were less likely to be sexually active (Beckwith & Morrow, 2005; Zaleski & Schiaffino, 2000), however, those who were sexually active were less likely to use condoms (Beckwith & Morrow, 2005). Students also expressed that spirituality influences the choices they make about their partner and friends and that the presence of one's spiritual group on campus influences matriculation (Penn State, 2004). Furthermore, while students with high spirituality experienced greater psychological distress in life (i.e., anxiety, stress), they also were more likely to find meaning during difficult times, and in turn were able to use their spirituality to better cope with these situations (Fabricatore, Handal, & Fenzel, 2000; HERI, 2005b).

Research question 3 looked at the ways undergraduate college students' practice their spiritual wellness. In practicing spirituality, students expressed that they helped a family member or close relative when in trouble as well as donated food, money, or clothing to a community agency to help those in need. They also prayed for other people or problems of the world and volunteered their services to a community agency to help people. Additionally, they donated money to a faith based organization as well as

practiced spirituality in other ways. These findings are similar to those of HERI (2005b), in which students indicated that it was important to help others in need as well as reduce pain and suffering in the world. Students acted on these beliefs by performing volunteer work and trying to change unfair things in the world.

In the present study, students also nurtured spiritual wellness by means of other activities which some used more often than others. Activities used more often consisted of personal reflection, prayer, connecting with nature or the universe, and attending worship services. On the other hand, activities not used a majority of the time consisted of chanting, watching or listening to spiritual television or radio programs, attending spiritual seminars, and seeking spiritual guidance from a qualified teacher.

As the present study demonstrates, spiritual development is important to students and can take shape in many forms. Previous research suggests that students practice their spirituality through prayer (HERI, 2005b; Hulett, 2004; Lee et al., 2002); worship services (HERI, 2005b; Hulett, 2004; Ma, 2003; Penn State, 2004); discussion with friends and family (HERI, 2005b); and spiritual organizations (Penn State, 2004). Additionally, students practice their spirituality through meditation, personal study, and gatherings with students from the same and/or different spiritual groups (Lee et al., 2002). Along with this, students practice their spirituality through peer relationships, working through a personal crisis, and personal spiritual disciplines (Ma, 2003).

Research question 4 looked at the programs, services, and curricula students would like the university to offer in order to help them develop spiritual wellness. Over half of the students indicated they would like the university to offer speakers, discussion groups, workshops, retreats, weekend activities, activities during new school

orientation, courses, and programs through the wellness zone to help develop spiritual wellness. Less than half of the students selected the option *nothing – it is not the responsibility of the university*. From these findings, it appears that students are mixed about the role the university plays in spiritual development.

Interestingly, HERI (2005b) found that a national sample of students have high expectations that college will encourage personal expression and development of spirituality. The majority of students involved in the survey by Penn State (2004) indicated that they would like the university to offer a variety of services and programs to meet spiritual needs. These consisted of providing space for religious services, presenting cultural and social programs, having a spiritual center, presenting educational programs on spirituality, and providing space for individual meditation. Further, students expressed that the college be supportive of diverse religious groups, provide a facility in which to practice spirituality, and cultivate a campus atmosphere conducive to spiritual expression (Lee et al., 2002). On the other hand, however, Ma (2003) found that students were less likely to want the college to help them to develop spirituality through contact with administrators, social events, volunteer or service projects, and campus-wide religious conferences. This disparity may be due to the differences in students used in the sample, instrumentation, and/or the lack of emphasis of these activities on the campus.

Research question 5 examined the differences in the spiritual beliefs and views across gender, age, ethnicity, and year in school. The researcher would like to preface the subsequent findings by noting that an exhaustive review of literature was done to generate discussion with the findings of the current study. Unfortunately, minimal research was revealed that addresses college student spiritual wellness and in particular

the influence of spirituality on the other dimensions of wellness across various demographics. Hence the need for this study and additional research like it.

In terms of belief in a higher power, more female students indicated they believe compared to male students. This is consistent with Sacks' (2002) finding in which more females expressed belief in a higher being than males. Groups, whether 18 to 24 years and 25 and older; whites and non-whites; or freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors, respectively, appeared to differ by only a few percentage points on belief in a higher power. Interestingly, ethnic differences were found in the HERI (2005a) survey in which more African Americans expressed belief in a God/higher power than Whites, Latinos, and Asians.

In the current study, spiritual wellness views varied across groups whether they were male and female students; those 18 to 24 years and 25 and older; whites and non-whites; or freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors, respectively. Based on a set of 15 statements, more females expressed agreement on each spiritual wellness view than their male counterparts. Most notably, females were more likely to agree that spirituality gives them strength in times of trouble, gives meaning and purpose to their life, and plays a role in the way they do things daily. Females also were more likely to agree that they talk to friends about spirituality and that spirituality helps them to maintain a positive self-image.

These findings are not surprising since women tend to be more spiritually involved (i.e., prayer, worship, fellowship) than men (Bartlett, 2005; Levin, 2001). Results of the present study mirror results from HERI (2005a) in that females scored higher on 11 of 12 spirituality measures. These included spirituality, spiritual quest,

equanimity, religious commitment, religious engagement, religious/social conservatism, religious struggle, charitable involvement, compassionate self-concept, ethic of caring, and ecumenical worldview. Each measure was comprised of questions similar to those asked on the survey used in the present study. Similarly, in another survey female college students expressed higher levels of spirituality than males on a 26 item spiritual involvement and beliefs questionnaire (Dillman, 1999).

In general, more students 18 to 24 years agreed with the spiritual wellness views than those 25 and older. Most of all, more students 18 to 24 years agreed that they know someone they can turn to for spiritual guidance, talk to friends about spirituality, and talk to family about spirituality. Students 18 to 24 years also were more likely to agree that spirituality helps them maintain a positive self-image and they talk to a higher power about daily affairs. Findings reflected in existing literature are mixed. For example, in the Dillman (1999) study there were no differences found in level of spirituality between students 18 to 24 and those 25 and older. While not college students, a comparison between employees 25 and younger and those 26 and older at a home health equipment company revealed that the older group had slightly higher levels of spirituality than the younger group (Waite, 1997). In a group of college students' ages 18 through 25, younger students reflected higher levels of spirituality on a 20 item questionnaire than older students (Knox, Langehough, Walters, & Rowley, 1998).

Spiritual views may transition in the early and mid twenties as students are longer away from home and questioning beliefs and practices from their family of origin. Evans, Forney, and Guido-DiBrito (1998) suggested that the movement away from family of origin and the transition into a new community might cause students to challenge

previous ways of thinking and believing. In his faith development theory, Fowler (1981, 2000) places most college students in the synthetic conventional faith stage where individuals are tuned into the judgments and expectations of others. At this point, students do not have a clear sense of their own spiritual identity to maintain an independent perspective. Synthetic conventional faith is similar to Helminiak's (1987) conformist stage in which an individual has deduced a worldview based on external authorities. This stage acts as a beginning point to discuss spiritual development.

It is possible under Fowler's (1981, 2000) theory that college students move out of the synthetic conventional faith stage into the individuative reflective faith stage. This stage is characterized by questioning accepted beliefs and assuming responsibility for choices made with regards to the development of one's own ideology. During this phase, students make a mature connection with their own personal beliefs versus those of the collective group. Helminiak (1987) describes this as the conscientious stage in which individuals have a sense of commitment to their principles and accept a sense of responsibility for self, others, and the world. The shift from one stage to another occurs when students are ready to assert their beliefs as their own. With these theories, chronological age is not necessarily an indicator of spiritual development as much as is the process of maturation, therefore it is likely to see variations in responses across age.

Generally, more white students appeared to be in agreement with the spiritual wellness views than non-white students. Most notably, more white students agreed that they know someone they can turn to for spiritual guidance, seek opportunities to grow spiritually, and feel a connection between, mind, body, and spirit. White students also were more likely to agree that spirituality leads the to care for others and plays a role in

the way they do things daily. While no black students participated in this study, it is interesting to note that ethnic differences in the HERI (2005a) study showed that black students were more engaged in spirituality than white, latino, and asian students by scoring higher on 7 of 12 measures of spirituality. These involved spiritual quest, equanimity, religious commitment, religious engagement, religious/social conservatism, compassionate self-concept, and ethic of caring. Some of the ethnic differences may be attributable to differences in cultural backgrounds, family traditions, faith preferences, as well as the size of the ethnic groups within the sample.

On the whole, more juniors and sophomores indicated agreement with the spiritual wellness views compared to freshmen and seniors. More juniors agreed that they seek opportunities to grow spiritually and that spirituality helps them maintain a positive self-image. More sophomores agreed feeling a sense of connection between mind, body, and spirit and that spirituality plays a role in the way they do things daily. Sophomores and juniors were equally more likely to agree that they talk to a higher power about daily affairs. In contrast, Creel's (2000) findings showed that freshmen scored higher on the human spirituality scale than the other three classifications and that sophomores scored the lowest. The results of a study by Hammersla, Andrews-Quall, and Frease (1986) offered an even different story. They found that students' concepts of religiosity did not differ across the four class levels. As students change and grow, it is not surprising to see variations in the spiritual wellness views of students across class level.

While spiritually involved, each group appeared to be somewhat ambivalent about their views on spiritual wellness, whether they were males and females; students 18 to 24 years and 25 and older; white students and non-white students; or freshmen, sophomores,

juniors, and seniors, respectively. On the whole, male students demonstrated more ambivalence about their views compared to female students, as did non-white students compared to white students. The two age groups and four class levels, respectively, shared equal ambivalence about their spiritual wellness views. It is quite natural to have uncertainties about a topic such as spirituality during the college years. This uncertainty may mean that students are questioning what they believe and what they have been taught to believe by family and community. Perhaps they are gaining independence and determining what brings meaning and purpose to their life.

Research Question 6 explored the differences in the views about influences of spirituality on the other dimensions of wellness across gender, age, ethnicity, and year in school. For each question, more female than male students reported that spirituality has some influence on the choices they make about the other wellness dimensions. Females were more likely to report that spirituality has some influence on the choices they make about personal safety, sexual behavior, tobacco use, academic studies, and use of alcohol. In similar findings, female students with stronger spiritual beliefs were more likely to abstain from alcohol (Poulson, Eppler, Satterwhite, Wuensch, & Bass, 1998) and were less likely to engage in sexual activity (Poulson et al., 1998; Zaleski, and Schiaffino, 2000). These findings are to be expected considering the fact that females tend to be more spiritually involved (i.e., prayer, worship, fellowship) than males (Bartlett, 2005; Levin, 2001).

In general, more students 18 to 24 years indicated that spirituality has some influence on the decisions they make about the other wellness dimensions than those 25 and older. Most notably, more students 18 to 24 indicated spirituality has some influence

on the decisions they make about personal safety, the people with whom they choose to associate, the way they handle relationship issues, use of alcohol, and academic work. While not quite the same age groups, Fabricatore et al. (2000) found that in a sample of college students' ages 18 through 22 the influence spirituality has on subjective well being and life satisfaction slightly varied across the ages.

For all but one of the questions, more white students versus non-white students reported that spirituality had some influence on the decisions they make regarding the other dimensions of wellness. Most of all, more white students indicated that spirituality has some influence on the decisions they make about protecting nature, exercising for their health, what they eat, using alcohol, and the people with whom they choose to associate. While no black students participated in this study, it is interesting to note that when making comparisons, they value the integration of spirituality in the other dimensions of wellness more than white students (Nelms, 2005). Similarly, black students placed more emphasis on the role spirituality plays in helping them deal with stress than white students (Elam, 2000).

Generally, juniors and sophomores were more likely to report that their spirituality has some influence on the decisions they make about the other wellness dimensions compared to the other three class levels. Most notably, juniors were more likely to indicate that spirituality has some influence on the choices they make about protecting nature, personal safety, and sexual behavior. Juniors also were more likely to report that spirituality has some influence on the choices they make about the people with whom they associate and academic studies. More sophomores were likely to report that spirituality has some influence on decisions they make about the use of alcohol and the

way they handle relationship issues. Interestingly, Stewart's (2001) study revealed that the influence of spirituality on alcohol helps to buffer the use of alcohol by freshmen and sophomores. However, this buffering effect decreases when the students reach the junior and senior years. This makes sense as many students wrestle with their beliefs and those of their parents and community, which can gradually lose its influence as students achieve independence.

Along with these major findings, about half of the students provided comments in response to an open-ended question asking them to provide additional thoughts on the topic of spirituality. A majority of the students who responded noted that spirituality is an important part of everyday life and that it is an ongoing journey. As part of this journey, students are open to the university offering a variety of programs. Some of the activities suggested by the students to help develop spiritual wellness included seminars, community work, retreats, spiritual wellness courses, activities during new school year orientation, activities at the religious center on campus, discussion groups, speakers, and open forums. Students also noted that spirituality can take many shapes and that people should be respectful of other people's beliefs. Moreover, spirituality does not mean people should force their beliefs or affiliations on others.

Conclusions of the Study

The following conclusions were drawn from the findings of this study:

1. A vast majority of undergraduate college students report high levels of spiritual wellness and spiritual wellness influences the choices they make regarding the other dimensions of wellness including physical, intellectual, social, emotional, and occupational.

2. A considerable majority of undergraduate college students are involved in nurturing spiritual wellness through a variety of actions such as helping family or close relatives in times of trouble (79%); donating food, money, or clothing to help those in need (68%); volunteering at community agencies (53%); personal reflection (70%); praying for other people or problems of the world (62%); attending worship services (63%); and connecting with nature (51%).
3. Over half of the undergraduate college students would like the university to offer a variety of programs and services to help develop spiritual wellness such as speakers (28%), programs through the wellness zone (23%), discussion groups (20%), courses (18%), weekend activities (17%), and workshops (16%). Less than half say that it is not necessarily the responsibility of the university to nurture spiritual wellness.
4. Up to 18% more female students report higher levels of spiritual wellness and up to 15% more females report spiritual wellness has influence on the choices they make regarding the other dimensions of wellness compared to male students.
5. Up to 24% more students 18 to 24 years report higher levels of spiritual wellness and up to 19% more students 18 to 24 report spiritual wellness has influence on the choices they make about the other dimensions of wellness than those 25 and older.
6. Up to 15% more white students report higher levels of spiritual wellness and up to 10% more white students report spiritual wellness has influence on the choices they make concerning the other dimensions of wellness than non-white students.
7. Up to 13% more juniors and sophomores report higher levels of spiritual wellness and up to 14% more juniors and sophomores report spiritual wellness has influence on the choices they make about the other dimension of wellness than freshmen and seniors.

Recommendations for Practice

It has been suggested that college is an opportunity for students to learn about and engage in spiritual wellness. One of the goals of working with undergraduate students is to provide helpful programs and services that aid in development of student spiritual wellness. As a result of the findings of this study and conclusions drawn therefrom, the following are offered as recommendations for campus community members who work with college students:

1. From this study, it is apparent that spiritual wellness is important in the lives of undergraduate college students and influences the choices they make about the other dimensions of wellness including physical, intellectual, social, emotional, and occupational. These findings may provide the university campus community with valuable insight and understanding into student spiritual wellness. In turn, this information can help to serve as a basis for the development and support of systematic spiritual wellness program planning and implementation. Further, it is important to recognize that this information may help to aid students in the integration of all the dimensions of wellness to live a fuller, more whole life.
2. In an effort to nurture spiritual wellness, the findings of this study showed that undergraduate college students are actively involved in many ways such as volunteer activities for personal and social helping as well as personal reflection and connecting with nature. Toward this effort, faculty, health educators, student affairs staff, and others can take advantage of this knowledge and play an active role in emphasizing the inclusion of these activities in a variety of learning opportunities to promote students' spiritual wellness. The integration of spiritual practices in a variety of

modes for learning may offer students greater opportunities for experiencing spiritual growth.

3. Data from this study demonstrated that undergraduate students would like the university to offer programs and services to help develop spiritual wellness. Campus professionals are in a unique position to facilitate the enhancement of spiritual wellness. Therefore, it is important for campus professionals to utilize this information to address students' needs and to offer various programs that may help students cultivate spiritual wellness during the college years. The inclusion of spiritual wellness programs is an effective way to help students in improving their sense of spiritual wellbeing.
4. Spiritual wellness differences across gender, age, ethnicity, and class levels, respectively, were reported in this study. Campus professionals may want to keep these differences in mind when designing spiritual wellness programs, services, and curricula. This may help to provide more meaningful and effective programs to enhance individual spiritual wellness.
5. University administrators, faculty, and staff should collaboratively work with students to discuss spiritual wellness and the development of future programming efforts. Additionally, the university should be respectful of and embrace the many different views students hold regarding spiritual wellness and create a safe place where issues can be discussed without undue influence of any particular denominational viewpoint. This may help to create a climate that encourages students to explore and clarify personal spiritual wellness.

Recommendations for Future Research

As a result of this investigation, the following recommendations for future research are identified:

1. Replication of this study is needed to further examine the spiritual wellness of college students and the influence spirituality has on the other dimensions of wellness including physical, intellectual, social, emotional, and occupational.
2. Replication of this study is needed to examine the spiritual wellness of college students and the influence spirituality has on other dimensions of wellness across a variety of demographics such as gender, age, ethnicity, and year in school.
3. A series of longitudinal studies is needed to assess changes in spiritual wellness among undergraduate students as they move through the college years.
4. The researcher recommends the employment of additional research methods such as personal interviews and focus groups to gain valuable information regarding spiritual wellness among college students.

Summary Statement

Spiritual wellness plays an important part in the lives of college students and the decisions they make on a daily basis. As part of the journey, students are active in a variety of ways in an effort to nurture their spiritual wellness. Herewith, students are open to a variety of learning experiences offered by the university to help nurture spiritual wellness. This seems like a natural fit since the university can play a valuable role in the development of student spiritual wellness while at the same time being mindful of the diverse spiritual landscape within the campus community. Further, this study should help to expand the body of literature in the area of spiritual wellness among college students.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

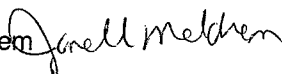
Human Subjects Approval

Notice of Approval for Human Research

Principal Investigator: Nathalie, Kees, School of Education, 1588
Co-Principal Investigator: Ann Patneaude, School of Education, 1588
Title: Spiritual Wellness Among Undergraduate College Students
Protocol #: 05-274H **Funding Source:** N/A

Number of Participants/Records: 1,000 participants
Committee Action: **Approved on:** October 10, 2005 **Expires:** October 6, 2006

HRC Administrator:

Janell Meldrem 

Consent Process:

Because of the nature of this research, it will not be necessary to obtain a signed consent form. However, all subjects must receive a copy of the approved electronic cover letter. The requirement of documentation of a consent form is waived under § __.117(c)(2). Parental Waiver is waived through § __.116(d).

Investigator Responsibilities:

- It is the PI's responsibility to obtain this consent form from all subjects.
- It is the responsibility of the PI to immediately inform the Committee of any serious complications, unexpected risks, or injuries resulting from this research.
- It is also the PI's responsibility to notify the Committee of any changes in experimental design, participant population, consent procedures or documents. This can be done with a memo describing the changes and submitting any altered documents.
- Students serving as Co-Principal Investigators must obtain PI approval for any changes prior to submitting the proposed changes to the HRC for review and approval.
- The PI is ultimately responsible for the conduct of the project.
- A status report of this project will be required within a 12-month period from the date of review. Renewal is the PI's responsibility, but as a courtesy, a reminder will be sent approximately two months before the protocol expires. The PI will be asked to report on the numbers of subjects who have participated this year and project-to-date, problems encountered, and provide a verifying copy of the consent form or cover letter used. The necessary continuation form (H-101) is available from the RCO web page www.research.colostate.edu/rcoweb/.
- Upon completion of the project, an H-101 should be submitted as a close-out report.
- If approval did not accompany a proposal when it was submitted to a sponsor, it is the PI's responsibility to provide the sponsor with the approval notice.
- **Should the protocol not be renewed before expiration, all activities must cease until the protocol has been re-reviewed.**

This approval is issued under Colorado State University's OHRP Federal Wide Assurance 00000647.

Please direct any questions about the Committee's action on this project to me for routing to the Committee.

Attachments

Date of Correspondence: 11/13/05

Appendix B

Prenotification Letter

Date

Dear CSU Student,

My name is Anne Patneaude and I am working toward completion of a doctoral degree in Education and Health at Colorado State University. I need your help. As partial fulfillment of my doctoral studies, I am conducting a study on the spiritual wellness among undergraduate college students at Colorado State University. You have been randomly selected to participate in this study.

Within the week, you will be receiving a link to an online (Survey Monkey) questionnaire by email. Your participation is completely voluntary. The survey should take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. Please read and answer the survey questions carefully. Your response to the survey will provide valuable information to campus community members in an effort to better meet the spiritual wellness needs of the students. This research project has been approved by the Human Research Committee at CSU.

Those who return a completed questionnaire will get a chance to win an Apple iPod nano.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Anne Patneaude
Doctoral Candidate, CSU

Nathalie Kees, Ed.D.
Adviser and Associate Professor School of Education, CSU

Appendix C

Survey Email

Date

Dear CSU Student,

You have been randomly selected to participate in an online survey concerning the spiritual wellness among undergraduate college students at Colorado State University. Your participation is completely voluntary. The survey should take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. This research project has been approved by the Human Research Committee at CSU.

Those who return a completed questionnaire will get a chance to win an Apple iPod nano. Respondents will be given a numeric code such as 101, which will correspond with their respective email address. Using Microsoft Excel's random selection process, a winner will be randomly chosen and notified by email in mid November.

Anne Patneaude
Doctoral Candidate, CSU

Nathalie Kees, Ed.D.
Adviser and Associate Professor School of Education, CSU

Please click on the following link to participate:

Link address will be provided here.

Please note: If you do not wish to receive further emails from us, please click the link below and you will be automatically removed from our mailing list.

Link address will be provided here.

Appendix D

Cover Letter and Spiritual Wellness Survey



Date

Dear CSU Student:

Recently I introduced myself to you and told you about the research study I am conducting concerning the spiritual wellness of undergraduate college students at Colorado State University. As part of this research project, I have randomly selected your name from the 2005-2006 Colorado State University Directory. Your input is very important to the success of this study.

The questionnaire will take approximately 15 minutes to complete and is confidential. To protect your confidentiality, no name or identification is necessary. Only the researchers will see the data that is collected and the data will be reported in aggregate.

Your participation in this research is voluntary and your consent to participate will be assumed by the completion of the questionnaire. If you decide to participate in the study, you may withdraw your consent and stop participating at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

For purposes of this study, spirituality has been described as:

A search to create a personal sense of life's meaning, value, and purpose through everyday experiences. It may involve connectedness to oneself, others, nature, and/or a higher power. It can be fully experienced through the practice of one's belief system, mindfulness, wisdom, play, creativity, love, forgiveness, compassion, and faith (Insel & Roth, 2006; Brewer, 2001).

There are no known risks associated with this study. It is not possible to identify all potential risks in an experimental procedure, but the researcher(s) have taken reasonable safeguards to minimize any known and potential, but unknown, risks. There are no direct benefits in participating, but we hope to gain more knowledge about the spiritual wellness of undergraduate college students.

Please click the "Done" button to submit your questionnaire, when you have finished completing the questionnaire. Please complete and submit the questionnaire by Wednesday, November 9, 2005. Those who return a completed questionnaire will get a chance to win an Apple iPod nano. Respondents will be given a numeric code such as 101, which will correspond with their respective email address. Using Microsoft Excel's random selection process, a winner will be randomly chosen and notified by email.

If you have any questions about this study, please contact me at 303/940-9889 or

Nathalie Kees at 970/491-6720. This study has been approved by the Human Subjects Committee at CSU. If you have any questions about your rights as a volunteer in this research, contact Janell Meldrem, Human Research Administrator at 970/491-1655.

Thank you for your participation.

Sincerely,

Anne Patneaude
Doctoral Candidate, CSU

Nathalie Kees, Ed.D.
Adviser and Professor School of Education, CSU

Spiritual Wellness Survey

Instructions: In answering the questions, please think about what spirituality means to you. For each question, there are a number of possible answers. Please choose the answers that best represent your personal view and understanding at the present time. Please answer as honestly as you can. There are no right or wrong answers.

Please indicate your (dis)agreement with each of the following statements:	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. I feel a sense of well being about the direction in which my life is headed.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. Spirituality is an important part of my life.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. My spiritual beliefs give meaning and purpose to my life.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. I talk to my Higher Power about my daily affairs.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. I talk to my friends about my spirituality.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. I talk to my family about my spirituality.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. My spiritual beliefs lead me to care about other people.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. In times of trouble, my spirituality gives me strength and guidance.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9. I know someone I can turn to for spiritual guidance.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10. I seek out opportunities to grow spiritually.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
11. I feel a connection between my mind, body, and spirit.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
12. My spirituality plays a role in the way I do things from day to day.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
13. My spirituality comforts me when I am feeling sick or ill.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
14. My spirituality to help me maintain a positive outlook on life.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
15. I trust in my spirituality to help me maintain a positive self-image.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Please indicate which of the following you have done during the past 12 months (check all that apply):					
16. ☐ Helped a family member or close relative when he or she was in trouble. ☐ Prayed for other people or for problems of the world. ☐ Donated money to a faith based organization. ☐ Donated food, money, or clothing to a community agency to help those in need. ☐ Volunteered my services to a community agency to help people. ☐ Other (please specify): 					

Please indicate how much influence your spirituality has on:	Very Much	Much	A Fair Amount	A Little	Not At All
17. the way you deal with stress.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
18. the way you handle relationship issues (family, friends, partners).	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
19. the decisions you make about your academic work and studies.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
20. the decisions you make about your sexual behavior.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
21. the decisions you make about your personal safety from accidents.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
22. the decisions you make about the use of alcohol.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
23. the decisions you make about the use of tobacco products (cigarettes, smokeless).	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
24. the decisions you make about exercising for your health and to keep fit.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
25. the decisions you make about your diet (what you eat) and managing your weight.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
26. the decisions you make about protecting nature and the environment.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
27. the decisions you make about the people with whom you choose to associate.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Please select the response that best indicates how often you do the following:	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Yearly	Never
28. Personal reflection	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
29. Meditate	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
30. Pray	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
31. Chant	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
32. Sing or listen to spiritual music	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
33. Attend worship services	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
34. Attend fellowship or similar activities	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
35. Watch or listen to spiritual television or radio programs	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
36. Attend spiritual seminars or workshops	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
37. Read holy scriptures	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
38. Read other spiritual writings or devotions	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
39. Connect with nature or the universe	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
40. Participate in yoga, tai chi, or some similar practice	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
41. Seek spiritual guidance from a qualified teacher.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Please indicate the activities you'd like the university to offer to help nurture your spirituality (check all that apply):

42. ☐ Courses
- ☐ Workshops/seminars
 - ☐ Retreats
 - ☐ Speakers
 - ☐ Weekend activities
 - ☐ Activities during new school year orientation
 - ☐ Programs through the wellness zone
 - ☐ Discussion groups
 - ☐ Nothing – not the responsibility of the university
 - ☐ Other (please specify):

43. In the space provided below, please share any additional thoughts you may have about the topic of spirituality.

44. Do you believe in a Higher Power?

- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Yes | No |
| ☐ | ☐ |

45. What is your faith?

- ☐ Baptist
- ☐ Buddhist
- ☐ Catholic
- ☐ Episcopalian
- ☐ Hindu
- ☐ Jewish
- ☐ Lutheran
- ☐ Methodist
- ☐ Mormon
- ☐ Muslim
- ☐ Presbyterian
- ☐ No Preference
- ☐ Other (please specify):

Please provide some basic demographic information. This will be strictly used for data analysis.

46. What is your gender?

Male Female

☐☐

47. What is your age?

☐ Under 18

☐ 18-24

☐ 25 or more

48. What year are you in School?

☐ Freshman

☐ Sophomore

☐ Junior

☐ Senior

49. What is your major?

50. What is your ethnicity?

☐ African American

☐ Hispanic

☐ Asian

☐ Native American

☐ White

☐ Multi-ethnic

☐ Other (please specify):

51. What is your marital status?

☐ Single

☐ Married

☐ Separated/Divorced/Widowed

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!

Please click on the "Done" button to submit your questionnaire.
Remember this gives you a chance to win an Apple iPod nano.
Winner will be notified by mid November

<< Done >>

Appendix E

Thank You Letter

Date

Dear CSU Student,

Thank you for completing the online survey for my study. Your response will provide valuable information to campus community members in an effort to better meet the spiritual wellness needs among students at Colorado State University.

I need your help. If you have not completed the survey, please do so now by clicking the link below. Remember, it will only take about 10-15 minutes to complete. As an undergraduate student at CSU, your response is vital to the success of this study.

Those who return a completed questionnaire will get a chance to win an Apple iPod nano. Respondents will be given a numeric code such as 101, which will correspond with their respective email address. Using Microsoft Excel's random selection process, a winner will be randomly chosen and notified by email in mid November.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Anne Patneaude
Doctoral Candidate, CSU

Nathalie Kees, Ed.D.
Adviser and Associate Professor School of Education, CSU

Please click on the following link to participate:

Link will be provided here.

If you do not wish to receive further emails from us, please click the link below and you will be automatically removed from our mailing list.

Link address will be provided here.

Appendix F

Follow-up Letter

Date

Dear CSU Student,

About two weeks ago, I sent an online (Survey Monkey) questionnaire to you by email. My records indicate that you have not yet returned a completed survey.

I need your help. Your response will provide valuable information to campus community members in an effort to better meet the spiritual wellness needs among students at Colorado State University.

Please click on the link below now to complete the survey. Remember, it will only take about 10-15 minutes to complete. As an undergraduate student at CSU, your response is vital to the success of this study.

Those who return a completed questionnaire will get a chance to win an Apple iPod nano. Respondents will be given a numeric code such as 101, which will correspond with their respective email address. Using Microsoft Excel's random selection process, a winner will be randomly chosen and notified by email in mid November.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Anne Patneau
Doctoral Candidate, CSU

Nathalie Kees, Ed.D.
Adviser and Associate Professor School of Education, CSU

Appendix G

Open Ended Responses to Question 49

What is your major?

Major	<i>f</i>
Accounting	2
Agricultural Business	2
Animal Science	9
Anthropology	5
Anthropology and History	1
Apparel and Merchandising	3
Apparel Design and Production	1
Art Education	3
Biochemistry	3
Biochemistry and French	1
Biological Anthropology	1
Biological Science	4
Biology	11
Biology and Political Science	1
Biology and Psychology	1
Biology and Zoology	1
Biology and Zoology, changing to Psychology	1
Biology (Molecular Biotechnology)	1
Business	23
Business and Political Science	1
Chemical and Biomedical Engineering	1
Chemical Engineering	5
Chemistry	2
Civil Engineering	3
Computer Engineering	4
Computer Engineering and Computer Science	1
Computer Science	3
Construction Management	11
Economics	3
Economics and Political Science	1
Economics and Sociology	1
Electrical Engineering	3
Engineering	3
English	6
Environmental Health	1
Equine and Animal Science	1
Equine Science	4
Equine Science and Agricultural Business	1
Equine Science and Theatre	1
Family and Consumer Sciences Education	1
Fishery Biology	1
Food Science and Human Nutrition	1

Major	<i>f</i>
Forestry	1
French and International Studies	1
Geology	1
Graphic Design	2
Human Development Family Studies	10
Human Development Family Studies and Spanish	1
Health and Exercise Science	15
History	2
History and Anthropology	1
History and Biology	1
History and Sociology	1
Horticulture	1
Horticulture business	1
Interior Design	7
Interior Design and Construction Management	1
International Studies	1
International Studies and Spanish	1
Journalism	2
Journalism and Political Science	2
Landscape Architecture	1
Landscape Horticulture	1
Liberal Arts	1
Liberal Arts with concentration in Social Science	1
Mathematics	4
Mechanical Engineering	10
Microbiology	6
Microbiology and Biochemistry	1
Music and Mathematics	1
Music Education	1
Natural Resource Management	1
Natural Resource Recreation and Tourism	6
Nutrition	3
Nutrition and Food Science	1
Nutrition and Hospitality Management	1
Open Option	8
Philosophy and English	1
Philosophy and Religion	1
Physics	1
Political Science	4
Political Science and History	1
Political Science and Speech Communication	1
Pre-Nursing and Biological Sciences	1
Psychology	19
Psychology and Criminology	1
Psychology and Graphic Design	1

Major	<i>f</i>
Psychology and Public Relations	1
Range and Forest Management	1
Restaurant Resort Management	6
Sculpture and Pottery	1
Social Work	5
Sociology	3
Sociology and Criminology	1
Soil and Crop Sciences	2
Soil and Crop Sciences and Anthropology	1
Spanish	1
Speech Communication	2
Technical Journalism	4
Technical Journalism and Spanish	1
Theatre	1
Undecided	4
Watershed Science	2
Wildlife Biology	1
Zoology	2
Zoology/Biology	1

Appendix H

Other Responses to Question 45

What is your Faith?

Response	<i>f</i>
• Agnostic	8
• Agnostic converted atheist	1
• Apathetic	1
• Atheist	4
• Bible-Believing Evangelical Christian	1
• Both Jewish and Christian	1
• Catholic with Buddhist tendencies	1
• Christian	10
• Christian - Non-Denominational	12
• Congregationalist	1
• Crist	1
• Deist/Agnostic	1
• Evangelical Free	2
• Gaian	1
• Greek Orthodox	2
• Humanism	1
• I am a Christ Follower.	1
• I am not spiritual.	1
• I AM/Gnosticism	1
• I believe in God.	1
• I believe in personal guidance and right and wrong decisions that make your life and others lives happier and more fulfilling. I don't believe one religion or faith is better than the other.	1
• I can only speak for myself, but I assume an organic connection between living things. Overall, I am a secular humanist.	1
• I don't believe I need to classify myself as a certain religion to exercise my spirituality or prove I believe in a higher power.	1
• I grew up Episcopalian and if I were to identify with any particular faith it may be that...however at this point in my life I believe in a higher power but not organized religion.	1
• I was raised Methodist, but would describe myself now as spiritual rather than religious.	1
• I was raised Pentecostal, but am unsure of my beliefs at this time.	1
• I would like to convert to Catholicism.	1
• I'm not sure if I believe or not.	1
• Lover	1
• Maybe Logic	1
• Methodist and Shinto	1
• Modified Methodist	1
• Mormon, but in a learning period.	1

Response	<i>f</i>
• My own.	2
• My own beliefs mingled with Hindu/Buddhism.	1
• My own collection of the above.	1
• My own shit.	1
• Non practicing catholic.	1
• Non-denominational	2
• Non-denominational, but by no means Atheist or Agnostic	1
• None	2
• Non-practicing Taoist, borderline deist.	1
• Protestant, Christian	2
• Satanist (LaVey)	1
• Secular humanism	1
• Self derived	1
• Spiritual (would be the best label to stick on it)	1
• Study Zen Buddhism, but do not practice.	1
• Transcendentalist	1
• Unitarian	2
• Wiccan with Taoist influences	1

Appendix I

Other Responses to Question 16

Please indicate what you have done during the past 12 months to nurture your spirituality.

- Applied to be a Peace Corps volunteer and work with Engineers without Borders in El Salvador, but not because I'm spiritual, but because I am a good person.
- Attended religious services weekly.
- Donate Blood.
- Donated my time to charitable organizations with no faith affiliation.
- Donated time to help others.
- Gave blood.
- Go to Church.
- Help others understand what spirituality is before I pass them onto looking for their own spiritual conquest.
- Helped a friend when they were in trouble.
- Helped a friend when they were in trouble.
- Helped a friend when they were in trouble.
- Helped coworkers and friends when they were in trouble.
- Helped raise over \$5000 for the Silver Lining Foundation.
- Hurricane Katrina help fund.
- Meditate.
- Sought my own divinity.
- Taught Natural Family Planning Classes.
- Volunteered for church activities.
- Worked at a spiritual camp for the summer.
- Yoga and meditation prayers.

Appendix J

Other Responses to Question 42

Please indicate which activities you would like the university to offer to help you develop your spiritual wellness.

- Activities focused on self-awareness, and connections between mind, body and spirit.
- All, none, as long as my bill doesn't go up because righty wanted Jerry Falwell to speak on the university's ticket.
- Capoeira classes (or some other martial art).
- Community service projects to help needy people/families.
- Encouraging people to take advantage of college groups and local churches and not banning, inhibiting those organizations from reaching campus, or making it difficult for their outreach.
- Get the guys who call themselves Christians out of the plaza, they are harassing everyone and only putting people down for what they do.
- I just am not interested, so I would not attend anything like this.
- It's not the universities responsibility but that of the individual.
- Nothing - I'm moderately indifferent about it.
- Yoga/Pilates

Appendix K

Open Ended Responses to Question 43

In the space provided below, please share any additional thoughts you may have about the topic of spirituality.

- A lot of people at this age aren't concerned with spirituality on a regular basis. Dealing with school is stressful enough; spirituality is another thing to have to put time and energy in to, which we don't have.
- Although I do hold that religion and government should be separate, I still believe that even though education has a political aspect, opportunities to learn about different religions should be presented in schools. Christianity does seem to be pushed aside because it's so mainstreamed in America, but there should be the option to learn about it along with any other religion (Buddhism, Hindu, Jewish, and even Scientific Evolution-oriented.) This is especially important to do in the college years because many students are trying to find themselves and spirituality plays a key role in that.
- Although I think it would be cool for the university to host events on spirituality I do still think it is not the responsibility of the university. CSU is a public university and therefore spirituality should not have much to do with how university money is spent. I think student groups should put these events on and welcome others to attend but maybe the university could simply help publicize these events a bit more so that more students know about them.
- Although my religious beliefs really define who I am, the college experience is enough to bring the strongest to their knees. God is the only reason why I am still 'succeeding' in life. I am in awe of those who aren't phased by life's challenges and yet still hold to atheistic principles. I also feel bad for them because they are unaware of the one true God that still wants them to come to faith even though they reject him.
- As long as you maintain that spirituality does not solely mean Christianity, and you are willing to provide services of many types for many groups then give it a shot, but you will certainly have a difficult time pleasing everybody in ventures of this nature.
- First I would like to specify that I marked 5i not because I would be against the university offering these activities but because I would not be interested in going to them myself. For me spirituality is not governed by an organized source but rather through the activities and experiences of everyday life.
- For me, spirituality is a crucial piece of my life. Without it, I wouldn't find much in this world worth living for, but because of it, I'm driven to achieve greater levels of my own personal being. I may not have the same faith that others wish me to have, but my faith is strong none the less. I believe that spirituality is great, so long as people don't try to force it on others.
- For me, spirituality is an ongoing search. I honestly don't know where I am spiritually, and I have a lot of trouble synthesizing the religious beliefs I grew up with, with my personal views. I think a lot of college students at this university share this feeling.
- For people like me spirituality may be preferred to be discussed on a more personal level, such as one or two other people.
- Having been raised in a Christian home and being Native American. Some of the traditions, beliefs, and values clash.

- I am agnostic therefore I do not have a spiritual life or believe in a spiritual being.
- I am agnostic. There may be a Higher Power, but all I can do is live my life as well as I can and take everything- including death- as it comes. The answer to the question on the next page is neither yes nor no.
- I am not religious at all. I do not really associate with religious people either.
- I am very spiritual. I wish other people would stop pushing their religious beliefs on me.
- I believe in the divinity of man. I am my own God, and everything is possible through the sheer force of will. Limits are an illusion, as is death. Belief may be the greatest power in the universe, as is disbelief. I seek the personal autonomy to affect my own reality and expand upon my force of will, as well as seek out people of similar goals and establish a self-sustaining community with them.
- I believe it's important for people to be aware that it's out there but I feel it is something that is very personal and private. I don't like it when people try and force it upon others, although if they ask it's a different story. I believe that it good for people to experience and acknowledge its existence but needs to be their decision and a willingness not forced to learn or be exposed.
- I believe spirituality is a completely personal thing. In my case my views are not mainstream or held by any other natural perspective either. Personal reflection and sharing with others is all that is required. No services need to be offered for spirituality, as it is something one must reach on his or her own.
- I believe spirituality may help many people now a days to get through their lives, but personally the only thing that is helping me get through my life is myself.
- I believe that retreats and the like who be a nice outlet for some who need to get away from the stresses and pressures of everyday life, however I do not know how involved I am in comparison to others who attend church and other activities on a regular basis.
- I believe that spirituality is a personal thing and that it should really only matter to those that want to explore their feelings. Spirituality is not something that should be pushed on others.
- I believe that spirituality covers a broader area then the questions in your survey covered. You should consider this before you make and generalizations.
- I believe that spirituality does not exist, it is a waste of my time to even think it does. I have better things to do with my life than waste it on all that nonsense.
- I do appreciate that the University has a religious center on campus that in not solely focused on Christianity.
- I do not believe I have any spirituality, so therefore it doesn't contribute to any aspect of my life.
- I do not believe in God or even that humans have a spirit, I believe instead that we are just another animal like the rest of them. However, I feel that I am a very good, ethical, moral person. My education and life will be focused on helping those less fortunate than myself. I am one of the nicest, most passionate people you will ever meet, yet I do not believe in a higher power. I believe my life goes to where I allow it to go, my successes and failures are my doing, and mine alone. I just wanted to let you know the viewpoint of an Atheist. I have as many or more morals than a Christian.

- I do not consider myself religious or too spiritual. But I do keep an open mind and do invite discussion on the topic. Although I have not yet in my life, I feel that at some point I will seek out spirituality and religion, but at this point it's not really something I feel is necessary.
- I do regard my self as spiritual, but I am very, very much non-Christian. I do not choose to associate with any particular religious affiliation, and I like it that way. I wish there were more outlets or resources for people like me, are there any people like me? See, I don't even know.
- I don't believe in it.
- I don't like the Christian faiths but I believe that spirituality is important as a means for self-reflection and understanding responsibility for your actions. I am more inclined toward the Buddhist ideas of karma.
- I feel that spirituality is most commonly related directly to religion, which I find to be the biggest flaw in most people's exploration of the subject.
- I feel that the University may offer some activities for those who wish to participate. I, however, am not interested in any of them. I take care of myself because I know it is good for my body, not because I need spirituality to maintain my life in a happy and healthy way.
- I feel that we are all in charge of what we need to be doing in our life at this point in time. We do not need speakers like 'Brother Matt' coming to where we spend the majority of our time yelling at us that we are worthless and going to hell. If anything the University needs to keep people like this off of our campus. There are other places and times for things like this to happen. This University is where we come to get an education not listen to preachers.
- I honestly consider myself to be a spiritual person, but in a non-traditional sense. I am strongly against organized religion, and I don't believe in God, but I do believe in karma. I believe that everything happens for a reason, and if you put out good in the world, it will come back to you. I reflect on my self, life, and day everyday while in the shower. That's where I get most of my thinking done, and I try to be as honest with myself as possible. To me, spirituality means connecting with and understanding yourself. If you can do that, then you are a spiritual person, in my mind.
- I know it is a very touchy subject and I applaud the university for trying to help the students with spirituality.
- I like the religious debates that have been occurring on campus. Though they don't necessarily present or represent my views on life and Christianity, they help strengthen my beliefs by making a forum to openly discuss them.
- I really can't stand it when they religious guys are in the plaza yelling condemnation to everyone. That is not Christianity. Christ said people like them, or the Pharisees, were like 'snakes from Hell.' They do not come with love from Jesus, they come with hatred and condemnation. That makes me sick.
- I really do not rely on spirituality to determine any daily activities. I usually rely on common sense and realization of consequences of both positive and negative actions.
- I think programs that are in place for spirituality should be advertised more. I would probably do more things if I knew more about them.
- I think 'spirituality' as it is so broadly defined in this survey is important in the daily lives of all people. Given the high stress levels, diversity and states of transition

college students face it may be even more important to the college population. However, I do not appreciate being constantly bombarded by religious extremists on the plaza. Supporting/promoting student's 'spiritual well-being' is very different than supporting/promoting organized religion. While organized religions may be important in the personal lives of many students at CSU I don't think organized religion has a place at CSU or any public institution.

- I think spirituality is a very positive thing. It is what sets my morals and gives me purpose. It is what motivates me everyday. With an overwhelming schedule it would be impossible to maintain without God there by my side.
- I think spirituality is entirely personal and unique to many individuals. We also all interpret spirituality differently.
- I think spirituality is too often connected only to religion. While I am a religious person, much of my 'spirituality' is simply the way that I choose to look at the world and to treat others. There is no course or workshop that I have ever seen that discusses that part of spirituality that was defined as 'A search to create a personal sense of life's meaning, value, and purpose through everyday experiences'. THAT would be interesting to see.
- I think spirituality is very important and I think that everyone has their own way of being part of their spirituality, meaning that just because someone doesn't go to church weekly or at all doesn't mean they don't have a connection with their spirituality.
- I think spirituality plays a large part in the lives of those who are open to it. However, I believe that it is important for people to realize that for many one set of beliefs or values don't fit the masses.
- I think spirituality is for the most part should be separate with school. Clubs and events involving your place of worship are where you should share, but not the classroom.
- I think that persons' spirituality is their own business. Surveys are fine, but the people walking around the plaza bugging students is the wrong way to go about convincing people. I am a Christian, but I think it is wrong for Christians to harass students into becoming a Christian.
- I think that college is a place where most people find their spirituality, but I would love a class or two that explain the different religions.
- I think that having activities during the new school year orientation would increase student participation greatly- this is when they are looking for things like this by the time you are a senior you aren't always looking for something new to go to.
- I think that if the University offered more activities throughout the year centered on spirituality, then many students would grow stronger or not lose their faith due to the positive environment and support from peers.
- I think that it is a guiding force in many people's lives and that some are more private about their spirituality than others and express them differently which is really cool.
- I think that spiritual awareness should be harnessed and made available to students as an option. This may not help myself directly, but I know many people who use religion or spiritual reflection to help them in their respective situations.
- I think that spirituality comes mostly from within and not from an outside source. I don't think it is necessary to be religious to be a spiritual person. Everyone needs to

figure out what makes them in particular feel good and others should not judge on someone else's spiritual practices.

- I think that spirituality is a rather silly term. We need to lean on God for our needs rather than nature, yoga, and such. He is the only One who can fill the emptiness everyone feels. We see His hand through nature and we are to take care of the bodies He has given us, and therefore, we have no excuse but to worship Him. Other 'spiritual' activities cannot do what God has done and can do for us.
- I think that spirituality is something that should be open to everyone, and by having more seminars, etc. that would be possible.
- I think that spirituality should guide a person to be in touch with themselves, get to know themselves, and to know how and when to do the right thing. I think it's the person's responsibility, and it can't be forced.
- I think that the idea of having the university offer activities to help people develop spiritual wellness is a nice idea, but not to be confused with it being their responsibility to provide it to us.
- I think that you have to really know yourself and take the time to figure out what you believe in. I think you always need to have an open mind, and I love discussing these kinds of things. I guess in a sense, I don't always rely on an outside spirituality, for me it's definitely internal and some of it is common sense that I feel like I've received from my parents. I didn't need a higher power to tell me not to do some things, but I'm guided by my parents, people I trust and my intuition...I guess that's spirituality.
- I view spirituality differently from Religion. Religion is a ruled run organization that determines how you must worship and run other aspects of your life. Spirituality is the feeling of something greater than your self whether it be God, inner peace, nature, or something else. Spirituality doesn't have rules and regulations, and is available to all. If the school becomes involved with spirituality, it should include a wide array of religious beliefs, and not just Christianity.
- I was born and raised a Catholic, going to Catholic school my whole life before CSU. Since I have attended CSU (5 years), I only go to mass when I go home for holidays. I feel lost in a way and I don't feel as good about myself because of it. I keep telling myself, after college I need to change my habits.
- I wasn't raised with any particular religion and in college have taken a philosophy class, which has helped me to make my own decisions as far as spirituality is concerned. Some people who are very devout in their religion are almost sickening to me, seemingly following near-cult ideologies, but it seems to make good souls out of those people (mostly) so I don't pry. To each his own, 'God Bless America.'
- I would be fine if the university offered something for spirituality as long as it had nothing to do with different faiths. Just focusing on general spiritual well being.
- In my opinion spirituality is a very personal commitment. I don't think that it is absolutely necessary to go to church to be spiritual. I believe there are so many different ways...singing, noticing God's beauty around us, praying anytime of the day no matter what, appreciating life and what God has given us.
- In my view my spirituality is for me. It helps me to live a very honest life and it is extremely rare that I share my views with anyone.
- In this survey spirituality is not defined. I took it to mean something supernatural, that is, above or beyond nature. I do not believe in the supernatural, thus I don't believe in

'spirituality'. However I do believe that one can connect and share experience with nature, and natural phenomenon, sometimes unexplained by modern methods but nonetheless still natural. Thus my studies in meditation and the martial arts have led me to experience this in a personal way. Often such methods are confused with spirituality as they are relatively alien and unexplained to people, yet I affirm that there is nothing unnatural (or supernatural) about them.

- It is a very personal thing for some.
- It is important to look at spirituality when talking to someone about it that way they understand what you see in it, and what they see in it. It is not fair to push spirituality on anyone it is their choice to make not yours.
- It is very important to me in my daily life.
- It is vital to a healthy lifestyle.
- It would be sort of difficult for a state school to legally offer activities that are explicitly Christian, and not more including of other religions, therefore I would not participate in CSU spiritual activities.
- It's all a matter of the person. I think that it depends on whether or not the person is willing to put forth the time and faith of spirituality. The school does not necessarily have to offer any sort of programs because a person can find all those programs by going to a service of their belief.
- It's not a huge part of my life, but I feel it makes life a little easier.
- It's something everyone has to decide for him/herself, there is no right or wrong and there is certainly no connection to any groups/churches etc. for me.
- I've been disenfranchised with spirituality for quite some time. Occasionally I wish that something would happen to renew my appreciation in spirituality, but that never happens for me, so I guess I will just continue to be a hater.
- Most 'spirituality' discussion groups end up being fights over which church's view is 'correct'. There should be more unbiased discussion groups concerning what it means to be spiritually whole.
- My belief in God, is what keeps me going in times of trouble. God is the one person I know will never leave me or get sick of me talking to him. There are others I feel this way about and I know it's because we share our faith together in God.
- My minor is religious studies and while I myself am not conventionally 'religious' I am spiritual and I feel that there are many good courses offered by the University from the philosophy department on religion.
- My son has helped a lot to give meaning to my life.
- My Spirituality is one of the most important things in my life. I reflect daily on the choices I've made and things that need work in my life.
- My spirituality is very important to me, but I wish I could develop my spiritual wellness more. Especially with being in a college setting, it is sometimes difficult to continue to practice my spirituality as I did when I was younger.
- No.
- None.
- People can be very spiritual yet not be religious. Since the divine made the world, a little bit of it is in every one of us. The myth of Jesus is a metaphor for the changes and temptation we must all go through to reach the divine. The divine is within us.

- Pertaining to question 5, I think that the programs I checked would help build a sense of community and help people meet others in a positive environment. However, I don't necessarily think that those activities should be affiliated with a denomination or certain spirituality. In fact, I think they would be most effective if they were made up of a diversity of viewpoints on spirituality.
- Separation of church and state don't impose on student's choices.
- Spirit takes 99% of our life...for me it is the most important thing.
- Spiritual services and centers are responsible for develop the spiritual wellness. They should have weekly or daily speakers, spiritual courses, etc.
- Spirituality does not play a major role in my life I do not however believe that reflects on the type of life decisions that I make. I give to charity, I do not smoke, and I do not drink to excess. Personally I feel fulfilled in my life, and in the direction that my life is going. I do not feel that I need look to higher powers, or supernatural means to guide my life, I know that I have all the power and strength within me, and my friends and family to guide me through any tough times in my life.
- Spirituality is a personal thing and should be shared openly in only a comfortable environment. Spirituality is individual and not everybody has the same take on it or should be swayed to have the same take on it. It is a quality that makes us unique.
- Spirituality is an individual and unique journey. In my experience it is this journey, and the lessons learned along the way, that is the important part of spirituality. While it is valuable to discuss spirituality, such discussions must be done with an open mind and with the intent of personal growth; not as a debate on the validity of someone's beliefs. Often spirituality revolves around a belief, or faith, in things that cannot be proven or seem illogical. That's why it is called faith, because you have to take it on the foundation that it rings true to you.
- Spirituality is not a thing to be spread around. Each individual either has their own ideals and connections to be followed the best that they can. Anyone who proselytizes with out being requested to do so is a burden on humanity. To claim that anyone specific individual has the answers to the beyond is irresponsible and self-important. It is imperative that we value our own individual spirituality, not try to force them on others, and understand that the only way human beings may live in peace, is to exist in a world that is secular in all public institutions.
- Spirituality is so diverse that I don't think the university could offer certain programs without excluding some group because the groups are so diverse. And I think that having the University more involved in spiritual activities rather than academia would give rise to the dominant faith trying to convert others and saying that they are wrong. I absolutely hate waking across the plaza and getting stopped by some minister asking me about my beliefs, and then asking me what god said and when I answer he says I'm wrong. I don't believe anyone can be wrong when it comes to spirituality, It is all about the individual and what they believe, not what someone is forcing them to believe.
- Spirituality is so unique to each person that it maybe hard to target it and teach it to a general public, but I think there are many people who don't try or know how to tap into and understand their own spirituality. If there was a way to teach or guide that I think it would be beneficial to those willing to learn.

- Spirituality is something that has to be sought out by each individual. The university has no responsibility in this area, I think those who are looking for something will go out and find something to fill the void in their life.
- Spirituality is unique to each individual. I believe each person has the right to search out what is meaningful to them and what their purpose is in relation to all mankind, the earth, the universe and the creator.
- Spirituality to me is not necessarily related to religion, which seems to somewhat be the theme in this survey. To me, spirituality is my outlook on life; it is my internal happiness and the attitudes I keep about everything and everyone around me. I am not ruling out religion in my life, but some of the structure that comes with religion is not for me - I guess maybe I would like to say I am a free spirit who finds happiness and hope from a number of sources.
- Spirituality, is different for everyone, on many different levels, and should not be assumed to be an on off switch for any person to use. Individuality is an amazing thing that should be respected and opened not enclosed by the human mind, not abused by other's. Please keep in mind when making these programs, to cater to educated college students, not easy, impressionable 'kids'.
- Spirituality is such an individual choice/ relation that I personally don't chose to associate with organized groups/ programs that have influence on this topic- ones spiritual wellness so to speak is a product of many other factors with family friends and most importantly self identity- I don't use my spirituality to define my wellness- but rather how 'well' I am with myself has influence on my ability to focus spiritually or to dedicate myself to such studies/ practices- I think relying solely on spiritual resources as a means to 'fix' ones self is often a false sense- (one goes to church/ worship, etc. therefore he or she is now a better person) that kind of thinking is a bit naive to me- but this is all just my two cents- good luck with your study.
- Thank you for doing this study - I think your questionnaire is quite complete in the spectrum of its questions.
- The path to God should be one person's journey, but they can be helped along that road by people. Organized religion has its place, but as a resource, not the end point.
- The university shouldn't be worried so much about the spiritual wellness of its students as the physical wellness and academic performance, in my opinion.
- The way which can be spoken of (or written about) is not the true way. ;)
- There are several positive choices I make (abstinence from tobacco products for instance) that are not affected by spirituality but merely by the knowledge of their unhealthy affects.
- While you can probably tell from my survey that I am not really a spiritual individual, I can see its purpose for those who are. It is very important to have something that can tie all the aspects of one's life together. However, I strongly believe that one's or one's group's spirituality or beliefs should not be forced on others. I welcome and would participate in positive activities of spiritual groups such as community work.
- You need to define spirituality. For instance, what if I engage in activities that I feel nurture my spirituality, but aren't religious in any way? Does that count as a spiritual activity or not? If I find running in the morning spiritual, does that count as my spirituality having an effect on my health or not?