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This dissertation explores students' perceptions of—and experiences with—the Student Court at one of the first early college high schools in the southeastern region of the United States of America. Specifically, I provide a mosaic of narratives of former students who served—and current students who are serving—as members of a school-based youth court.

By the late 1990s youth courts—also called student courts—developed and expanded exponentially when states across North America began to capitalize on the promise of positive peer pressure. Few studies have examined the effectiveness of youth courts and its members. Because of the emergent literature about youth courts, little is known about the impact of youth courts on participants from justices and peer-advisers to clerks and accused students. The research questions of the doctoral research study were:

- How do members perceive their experiences on a school-based youth court?
- How do members of a school-based youth court see themselves developing as leaders?

As the founding (and former) principal-director of University Academy (UA), I served as adviser to three student organizations—including its student court—and used my undergraduate college experiences to shape the high

school's overall student leadership development philosophy. I envisioned student organizations as vehicles for developing problem-solving skills; transferring knowledge and understanding to other disciplines; and sparking interest in other curricular and co-curricular activities. I believed this approach would fulfill UA's mission and simultaneously enable students to be self-directed lifelong learners who are prepared to succeed in higher education and in the changing world beyond.

TESTIFYING: A CASE STUDY OF STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS
OF EXPERIENCES AS MEMBERS OF A SCHOOL-BASED
YOUTH COURT AT AN EARLY COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOL

by

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I dedicate this doctoral dissertation to those who have provided me
with inspiration and encouragement along this journey.

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Court after my departure as principal-director. Where other principals would have been intimidated by my presence and legacy as a founder, he took it all in stride understanding my connection to the Student Court and to the school. Lastly, I am profoundly indebted to the students of Potter County Schools who shared stories of their experiences as members of the school-based youth court at University Academy.

PROLOGUE

Throughout high school, I was the quiet kid who wielded a briefcase, sported wire-framed glasses, and wore skinny ties. All of this changed when we met. He was an arresting sight. I happened upon him as he ambled down the street as confident as any film star. His navy double-breasted blazer must have been tailor made. His slacks were creased to razor-sharp perfection. His monogrammed cuff links were weighty and ornate, yet not gaudy. His crisp dress shirt was a pristine canvas upon which he presented a masterpiece: his bowtie. This was not just any bowtie—it was a hand-tied bowtie. (“Clip on bowties,” he bellowed “are for little boys.”) I was drawn to his bowtie as much for its purple hue as for the sheer mystery of how he tied it together. That evening I rushed out and bought my first bowtie. The salesperson taught me how to tie it. It was a beauty, a silken blend of earth tones and paisleys.

My high school was abuzz with excitement surrounding commencement. All of us—even the jocks—were giddy as we rehearsed the program. Our senior advisors ran down a laundry list of what we could not wear for the ceremony. Girls were to wear pant suits or collarless dresses. Guys could don slacks, though coat and tie were preferred. Jeans, shorts, and sandals were definite nos. They were tough. Of course, they did not mention bowties. I decided that I would wear my new bowtie to our baccalaureate service on Sunday. That afternoon we paraded into the local Civic Center before masses of family and

friends. Just as I was about to stroll down the aisle, an advisor commanded that I tuck my bowtie inside my gown. I was appalled, yet I complied with her demand.

Six days later at graduation I put on my bowtie and was again told to tuck it in. What must I do? I thought about what the bowtie meant for me as I sat with my classmates. My bowtie—tied slightly askew—demanded attention and respect. I was alive when I wore it. Each time I did so, I became that dapper gentleman who shared with me his love for bowties. I stood up when the marshal arrived at our row, and exhaled. I knew what had to be done. Then as that magical moment approached, I liberated my bowtie and crossed the stage to receive my diploma. They were livid. I knew that wearing a bowtie was not disruptive. I knew that our school had no history of problems with briefcase toting, bowtie wearing students. Somehow I knew I had the right to wear a bowtie.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This dissertation explores students' perceptions of—and experiences with—the Student Court at an early college high school in the southeastern region of the United States of America. I provide a mosaic of narratives of former students who served—and current students who are serving—as members of a school-based youth court. This chapter presents the background of the study and rationale for conducting research on the topic. I specify the problem of the study, describe its purpose, and explore its significance. This chapter also offers a review of the pilot study, notes its limitations, and defines special terms utilized.

Out of Nothing - Background

Imagine arriving at a high school with no textbooks, no computers, nothing. No mission nor philosophy, no traditions nor heritage, nothing. Such was the case when University Academy (UA)¹ opened in August 2002 in Potter County Schools (PCS). A few teaching positions remained vacant and textbooks were trapped on a delivery truck a few weeks before students were to arrive. Computers were stolen from the school's main office just hours before the first day of operations. And what is more, students did not have clubs because the

¹ All names of schools, school districts, and participants are pseudonyms.

school was brand new. Students and their families were flexible with everything except the absence of clubs. UA families placed a high value on educating students in a comprehensive manner. UA faculty and staff were charged with preparing students academically, socially, and emotionally; further, they were fully expected to nurture the essential skills of leadership by merging theory and practice (Schmitz & Galbraith, 1985; Denston & Gray, 2001; Dobbins, 2002; Szwed, Goulet, & Siniscalchi, 2007). In short notice, students established 24 clubs and organizations, including a system of student governance replete with a student council, a student legislature, and a Student Court. Over time, many of these clubs and organizations developed regional and national affiliations.

As the school's founding principal-director, I felt it was important for students to play an active role in forming groups, I had no idea they would establish as many clubs and organizations as they did that first semester. We—as staff members—initially envisioned our roles as that of faculty advisers at conventional high schools. Our small staff of seven was overwhelmed by these advising responsibilities. We quickly found it necessary to take a radically different approach. We posited as a staff (Personal communication, September 12, 2002):

University Academy will maintain a learning environment that allows every student to explore, discover, assimilate, and apply knowledge.

It seemed logical that students should take ownership of their groups. Pedelty's (2001) assertion, "texts alone often fail to fully engage students" supports this brand of student engagement (p. 244). Instead of leading student organizations, adults at our school truly became advisers (Mitra, 2005). We no longer pondered, "What will I get my club to do?" Instead, we thought, "What will the students in the organization I advise learn and use today?" We consulted with students; we asked probing questions; we signed key paperwork; and we accompanied students on field trip experiences. The major functions of organizations have remained the province of students and this has made all the difference. We relied on the concepts of problem-based learning and leadership to develop problem-solving skills; to transfer knowledge and understanding to other disciplines; and to spark and sustain student interest in co-curricular as well as curricular endeavors (McPartland, McDill, Lacey, Harris, Novey, 1971; Norman & Schmidt, 1992; Pearson & Jurich, 2005; Szwed, Goulet, & Siniscalchi, 2007).

On the Pulse of the Morning – Rationale and Problem

One crisp fall morning in 2005, I received a lengthy and disturbing message from a faculty member. As a principal, I have dealt with my fair share of minor offenses from students kicking rocks and breaking windows to he-said-she-said gossip and drama madness. This report of a student's alleged violation of UA's honor code troubled me deeply and caused me to reflect on my efforts to engage students in meaningful conversations about our school's mission and

philosophy. The situation became a powerful learning experience for the entire University Academy family, especially for its Student Court. In part, the teacher wrote (Personal communication, October 3, 2005):

In grading papers on the First and Second Great Awakening for my [Social Studies] class, I came across a paper that was noteworthy. Mathias had turned a paper in that, in syntax, style and grammar, was atypical of his work. I read the paper more closely and was sure that this was not the type of work Mathias was consistently producing. . . . The first five paragraphs are almost verbatim from [a] website. I marked the areas that were common. The subsequent paragraphs were not checked simply because the work plagiarized was so extensive; even if he did create the remainder by himself it would only constitute half the paper. I shared the discovery with Mathias' other teachers . . . and found similar issues.

I gave this message to the Chief Justice of the Student Court and he compiled the evidence from faculty and then convened a hearing.

The allegations were quite clear when case 002-F05 was heard (See Appendix H). Mathias was alleged to have violated UA's student handbook and honor code for plagiarizing multiple times. Members of the Student Court found themselves wrestling with the evidence and testimony of Mathias who testified (Personal communication, October 5, 2005):

This is the first time I have ever plagiarized anything. I didn't cite any sources for the science paper because it wasn't required. She said it was preferred but she didn't say that it was mandatory. I didn't have that much time to finish the paper for science because we had a project and a notebook check. I have signed the honor code sheet. I acknowledged that I was plagiarizing but I wanted a good grade. I have three AP classes. I am aware of the consequences of plagiarizing.

The case tore at the fiber of our school because the justices needed to make a hard decision about a peer; and because Mathias breached the Student Court's confidentiality policy by circulating a rumor that he would be dismissed from UA for misquoting three lines of text from one bibliographic source. Members of the Student Court, especially the Chief Justice, concurred with Harpaz (2005), who observed:

Learning is best when it occurs in an authentic context, in which learners grapple with a problem that they experience as “real” and “urgent,” that bothers them, that involves their life plan or identity. Learning, like thinking, starts with an experienced problem. (pp. 141-142)

The Student Court had an authentic problem that “bother[ed] them”. Not long after the alleged plagiarism episodes, the Student Court met to hear and deliberate the case. The justices carefully considered each allegation of student misbehavior and questioned Mathias in a way that encouraged him to critically reflect upon his actions. The five justices unanimously found Mathias in violation of the UA student handbook and honor code for plagiarizing class work. They based their decision on the evidence presented (i.e., there were multiple instances of plagiarism) and on the student’s tenure at UA (i.e., he was in his second year). Additionally, the justices offered a strong recommendation: They recommended that Mathias be immediately dismissed from University Academy.

Charting the Course

This great tension between and among individual rights, community norms, and individual responsibilities piqued my interest as the Student Court adviser and as a graduate student in an educational leadership program. How did the members of the Student Court reach their conclusion? What did they learn from this process? How did their participation shape them? How did their recommendations and pro-social behaviors impact peers? How were they developing as leaders? These questions—and my service as faculty adviser to the Student Court—sparked within me an interest in exploring UA's Student Court—and the possible role it played in the pro-social development of its members (Burton, Ray, & Mehta, 2003; Callaghan, 2005). I decided to explore the impact of a school-based youth court on its members and contribute to the small body of existing research on the topic (Huber, 1942; Lifton, 1997; Butts & Buck, 2000; Pearson & Jurich, 2005).

Purpose

The purpose of conducting research on school-based youth courts was to explore students' perceptions of—and experiences with—the Student Court at an early college high school. In this case study, I described and explored the articulated stories of former and current students who served—or are serving—as members of a school-based youth court within Potter County Schools.

Significance

This study was conducted at University Academy, one of the first early college high schools in the region (Grier & Peterson, 2005). UA offered a writing-intensive, fast-paced curriculum in partnership with Gilman University (GU), a selective, national liberal arts institution. UA students took honors courses in the ninth grade, Advanced Placement courses in the tenth grade, and GU courses with professors in the eleventh and twelfth grades. They did not receive special privileges or modifications because they were high school students. As a staff we recognized that students learn in different ways and that an effective academic program must respond to these differences. Accordingly, staff members utilized a variety of approaches, including:

- Cooperative and collaborative learning (Kagan, 1994; Cooper, Ponder, Merritt, & Matthews, 2005);
- Student-centered learning (Montessori, 1912; Coble & Brubaker 2007);
- Democratic community (O' Hair & Reitzug, 1997; Carlson, & Gause, 2007); and
- Experiential learning (Carver, 1996; Harpaz, 2005).

In the end, UA students graduated with a high school diploma and two years of university credit. UA is among a growing body of schools across America for highly motivated students:

During the past 25 years, an entirely new class of educational [schools] has sprung up in the United States. Because of innovative ideas, colleges have found new ways to cater to the very brightest high school age youth. These early entrance [schools] take entire groups of students who have yet to complete high school and place them in a supportive peer environment within a collegiate setting. In almost every case they are taking college level courses alongside regular college students and are expected to perform to that high standard. (Rohde, 2001)

The origin of UA's Student Court is rooted in the school's aforementioned approaches, namely, student-centered experiential learning. After a series of conversations about inappropriate behavior, I asked three UA students to research honor codes and councils. They examined North American public and independent schools, all in an effort to gather information for my consideration. Their pioneering efforts built a firm foundation for UA's Student Court system. The founding Chief Justice reflected:

I guess my first experience with Student Court, was both in organizing it and participating. I remember [the principal-director of UA] had mentioned to me that someone had brought up the idea of having a Student Court, but had never really followed through on it and that's sort of where I entered the picture and picked up from there. I sent out an e-mail and got some contacts of people who were interested and I guess sort of from there things fell into place. We did research on other student courts. I learned a lot about the judicial process just from doing that. We based it off a model used at a lot of our [state university system schools]; as well as, with input from the research that [the principal-director of UA] had done on the various models and sort of forged a bit of a compromise between the two different kinds and sort of struck out with the ten original members and started from there. (Chumley)

Notions of North American students utilizing positive peer pressure to promote pro-social peer behavior and sanction peers who behave inappropriately are not new (Huber, 1942; Johnston & Faunce, 1952; Lifton, 1997; Pearson & Jurich, 2005). Butts and Buck (2002) noted, "In the 1940s . . . teens in Mansfield, Ohio, served as judges and attorneys in a 'Hi-Y' bicycle court, which heard cases involving minor traffic violations committed by bike-riding juveniles" (p. 29). Huber (1942) charted a rich historical overview of teen or youth courts from Plato's work with "scholarchs" and William Penn Charter School's pre-1800 founding of a student court to a 1938 study in which 25% of the junior high schools in Camden County, New Jersey, used student courts. Such school-based youth courts have evolved significantly since the 1940s (Butts & Buck 2000). By the late 1990s this evolution was matched by exponential growth in numbers when states across North America began to capitalize on the power of positive peer pressure. Gause (2001), in speaking about the lived experiences of post-Civil Rights Era African-American educators, stated, "Very few first-person narratives exist in the discourse; therefore there is a distinct advantage to utilizing this case study approach" (p. 67). Likewise, I share this single case because few studies have examined the effectiveness of youth courts and its members. What is most salient; however, is that this case study was conducted at one of the first early college high schools in the region (Grier & Peterson, 2005). Furthermore, the case was conducted by describing and exploring one component of a three-part

student governance model. Because of the emergent literature about youth courts, little is known about the impact of youth courts on participants from justices and peer-advisors to clerks and accused students (Butts & Buck, 2002; Pearson & Jurich, 2005). The significance of this study—and the reason I chose to conduct it—is two-fold:

- The members of a “real-life” school-based youth court model would be interviewed to ascertain their perceptions and thus gain some understanding of the implementation of this specific youth court model.
- The chosen setting—University Academy—is unique in design and such research is likely to be beneficial to practitioners as they seek to establish more early college high schools across the United States of America and around the world.

Testing the Waters - A Pilot Study

The research questions emerged from a pilot study done at University Academy in the spring of 2007. After inviting all current members of the Student Court to participate in a pilot study, I interviewed three students who agreed to participate so that I could explore their perceptions of their experiences as members of a school-based youth court (See Appendix A). Interviews were recorded and transcribed. I reviewed each audio recording and corrected each written transcript. I then shared the revised transcripts with each participant for member checking (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Stake, 1995). After communicating with

each participant to confirm the contents of their stories, I coded the interview responses (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). I used this process to determine what members of the Student Court deemed important and worthy of a doctoral research study (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). From the pilot study, six categories of student responses emerged as seen in Table 1. These six aspects were further grouped according to three domains: self (responsibility and leadership); court (perceptions and decision-making) and peers (expectations and relationships). I determined that my dissertation research would focus on students' perceptions of—and experiences with—the Student Court at an early college high school.

Table 1

Pilot Study Categories of Student Responses

SELF	responsibility	leadership
COURT	perceptions	decision-making
PEERS	expectations	relationships

Focusing and Refining - Research Questions

The research questions of the doctoral research study were:

- How do members perceive their experiences on a school-based youth court?
- How do members of a school-based youth court see themselves developing as leaders?

I offered the same prompt to each participant: “What is the story of your life as a member of the Student Court” (See Appendix B). As a result of the pilot study, I learned to share prompts and ask questions of those participants who—after several minutes of silence—stated that they had nothing more to say (See Appendix E).

Creswell (1998) offered various means of case study data collection: interviews, observations, document collection, review of artifacts, and field notes. I recorded and analyzed the articulated stories of Student Court members to explore whether and how students craft, construct, and otherwise, make themselves through the sharing of their narratives.

Limitations

This study was limited to a school-based youth court situated at a public early college high school located on a four-year university campus in the southeastern region of the United States of America. The eight Student Court members who participated in the final study were among twelve others who served on the Student Court from September 2003 to May 2007. The findings of this study are subject to alternative interpretations and are not intended for formal generalizations. Additionally, the study was limited by my role as both researcher and participant-observer. Because I am the former principal-director of UA and former faculty adviser to the Student Court, I reminded each Student Court member of the following:

- Their responses would be kept strictly confidential.
- None of the data released in this study would identify them by name or any other identifiable data, descriptions, or characterizations.
- They could discontinue participation in the project at any time or refuse to respond to any questions of their choosing.
- They were voluntary participants and had no liability or responsibility for the implementation, methodology, claims, substance, or outcomes resulting from the research project.
- Their decision not to participate would not result in any adverse consequences or disparate treatment due to that decision.

Definitions

The following terms are defined as they pertain to this study which was conducted at University Academy. I offer these definitions to promote clarity and understanding within the context of this research study:

Early college high school: An early college high school is small, public (not private or independent) learning community wherein students enroll in both high school and college courses and graduate with a high school diploma and either an associates degree (two year degree) or two years of college credit. Such schools capitalize on the power of the host institution's site. The typical locations are campuses of two- and four-year colleges and universities (Jobs for the Future, 2008).

School-based youth court: A school-based youth court operates at a public, private, or independent school (not through the juvenile justice/court system) and is staffed by students who handle breaches of the student handbook and the honor code and recommend consequences for inappropriate behavior (National Association for Youth Courts, n.d.;

Butts & Buck, 2000; National Youth Court Center, 2000; Pearson & Jurich, 2005).

Chapter Summary and Conclusion

In this chapter, I presented the background of the study and general rationale for conducting research on my topic. I specified the problem of the study, described its purpose and significance, reviewed the pilot study, noted limitations of the study, and defined special terms used. In Chapter II, I situate the study by taking a closer look at literature and prior research on the historical perspectives of students' rights and school law, as well as notions of student governance and leadership. In Chapter III, I utilize a natural history approach to outline the methodology of the study by sharing my personal context; the setting and participants; research design rationale; data collection procedures; methodological lessons learned; and the delimitations and limitations of my study. In Chapter IV, I introduce the eight storytellers of the study. I utilize my observations as founding principal, artifacts, and student narratives to recount the history and processes of the Student Court at UA in Chapter V. In Chapter VI, I explore two themes that emerged from the eight narratives: Leadership and Perceptions. In Chapter VII, I explore an additional theme that emerged (i.e., Decision-making), recount the story of Case 002-F05 (an illustrative court case), and reflect on students' leadership identity development. Finally, I present the findings and implications in Chapter VIII.

CHAPTER II

SITUATING THE STUDY THROUGH LITERATURE

I have always been aware of a clear line of demarcation between home and school in North American education (Ambert, 2001). Whether a school was public, private, or independent was inconsequential; students were charged with negotiating the nuances of this differentiated landscape (hooks, 2003). hooks (1994) wrote in Teaching to Transgress:

To be changed by ideas was pure pleasure. But to learn ideas that ran counter to values and beliefs learned at home was to place oneself at risk, to enter the danger zone. Home was the place where I was forced to conform to someone else's image of who and what I should be. School was the place where I could forget that self and, through ideas, reinvent myself. (p. 3)

hooks and her writings gave me language to contextualize and articulate my values and beliefs as an educational leader. As I read Teaching to Transgress and Teaching Community, I discovered that hooks—much like Brazilian educational theorist Freire (1970) and Italian physician and educator Montessori (1912)—believes education is the practice of freedom. The works of all three spoke to me on many levels and fronts. Like hooks, Freire, and Montessori, I believe that teaching and learning cannot be confined to a classroom where

students are filled from the fountain of wisdom. Education is much too important to be restricted in that fashion. Learning is organic, as such, learning happens everywhere, often when we least expect it (Kaul, n.d.; Rich, 2004).

[E]ducators are, indeed, accountable for the dissemination of knowledge. But they are accountable first and foremost for the advancement of the human spirit! It is important to make organizations effective; it is important, as well, to foster humane social conditions. Remember: we need leaders who will respond to knowledge in ways that will benefit not only the organization and its members, but the social order as well. (Gause, 2003, p. 4)

To be sure, education has a transformative power over the self (Carlson & Gause, 2007).

In this dissertation, I researched students' perceptions of—and experiences with—the Student Court at an early college high school. I described and explored the articulated stories of former and current students who served—or are serving—as members of a school-based youth court. In this chapter, I situate the study by taking a closer look at literature and prior research on the emergence and evolution of students' rights, as well as notions of student governance and leadership.

Historical Perspectives and Background

Notions of North American students utilizing positive peer pressure to promote pro-social peer behavior and sanction peers who behave inappropriately are not new (Burton, Ray, & Mehta, 2003; Butts & Buck, 2002; Fanning, 2002;

Pearson & Jurich, 2005). In their research, Butts and Buck (2002) noted, “In the 1940s . . . teens in Mansfield, Ohio, served as judges and attorneys in a ‘Hi-Y’ bicycle court, which heard cases involving minor traffic violations committed by bike-riding juveniles” (p. 29). Teen or youth courts have evolved significantly since the 1940s. By the late 1990s this evolution was matched by unprecedented growth in numbers when states across North America began to capitalize on the power of positive peer pressure (Butts & Buck, 2002; Heward, 2006; Pearson & Jurich, 2005). Despite this growth, few studies have examined the effectiveness of youth courts and its members. Furthermore, because of the emergent literature about youth courts, little is known about the impact of youth courts on participants from justices and peer-advisors to clerks and accused students (Butts & Buck, 2002). This case study provides additional literature in the area and specifically speaks to the perceptions of members of school-based youth courts and their roles in democratic leadership.

Definitions and Court Models

Researchers Acker, Hendrix, Hogan, and Lordzek (2001) asserted that student courts:

are an innovative quasi-legal forum in which adolescents pass judgment on their peers in cases involving relatively minor offenses. These courts hold much promise to benefit offending youth, the youthful volunteers who participate in the adjudicative process, the traditional juvenile court system, and the surrounding communities. (p. 197)

It is possible from this definition to conclude that such student courts handled simple tasks for the sake of moving through an overflowing docket of cases; however, the study cited shoplifting, possession and use of drugs and alcohol, absenteeism, and vandalism among its list of “minor offenses”. The offenses about which they refer potentially have a major impact on the safe and orderly functioning of schools (Acker et al., 2001).

Pearson and Jurich (2005) defined a youth—or teen—court as:

an alternative to the traditional juvenile justice system and school disciplinary proceedings that empower youth and communities to take an active role in addressing the early stages of youth delinquency. (p. 8)

This definition is similar to one provided by the National Youth Court Program:

Youth courts (also called teen, peer, and student courts) are programs in which youth sentence their peers for minor delinquent and status offenses and other problem behaviors. (National Association for Youth Courts, n.d.)

National Youth Court Guidelines (Godwin, Heward, & Spina, 2000) offered a succinct definition, “Youth Court: A program in which youth are sentenced by their peers.”

Regardless of the terms and definitions used, such courts in the United States of America exist in four primary formats as found in Table 2 (The National Youth Court Center, 2000). The “Adult Justice or Judge” model is in wide-spread

use in the United States. The judge role is filled by an adult and students function as jurors, clerks, bailiffs, and attorneys with the model. The “Youth Justice or Judge” model expands the scope of the “Adult Justice or Judge” model. The judge role is filled by a student whose peers function as jurors, clerks, bailiffs, and attorneys with the model. When this model is used, students usually are required to meet certain service requirements such as minimum tenure on the court, maximum or minimum grade level, or minimum age.

Table 2

Four Courtroom Models Used by Teen Courts

	Adult Justice	Youth Justice	Tribunal	Peer Jury
Justice Type	Adult	Youth	Youth	Adult
Youth attorneys advocates	Yes	Yes	Yes, but no jurors	No
Role of justices	Recommend consequence	Recommend consequence	Recommend consequence	Question peers directly, recommend consequence
Approximate percent in use	53%	18%	10%	31%

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The “Youth Tribunal” Model utilizes a panel of three youth justices or judges. Students serve in all of the essential court roles (e.g., attorneys and bailiffs); however, there are no jurors with this model. The “Peer Jury” Model does not utilize attorneys; instead, case presenters read the facts of the case to a small group of youth jurors. Youth jurors directly question students who are alleged violators of school rules and codes with this model. When this model is used, an adult typically serves as the judge or justice (Godwin et al., 2000; Acker et al., 2001).

School Law Perspectives

School districts and educational professionals form covenants with families to establish and maintain safe, orderly, and caring schools in which students grow and learn (Duke, 1990; Charney, 1992). School districts and educational professionals use codes of conduct—among other tools—to communicate acceptable standards of behavior to students (McCabe, Trevino, & Butterfield, 1996; Kidwell, 2001; Guilford County Schools, 2007). North Carolina General Statute Chapter 115C Elementary and Secondary Education articulated the duties of principals and teachers thusly:

It shall be the duty of all teachers, including student teachers, substitute teachers, voluntary teachers, and teacher assistants when given authority over some part of the school program by the principal or supervising

teacher, to maintain good order and discipline in their respective schools. (North Carolina General Statute Chapter 115C Elementary and Secondary Education, n.d.)

And

The principal shall have the authority to exercise discipline over the pupils of the school pursuant to policies adopted by the local Board of Education as prescribed by G.S. 115C-391. (NCGS, n.d.)

Beginning in 1969, the United States of America witnessed the entrée of an unprecedented wave of student rights. Mary Beth Tinker, one of the plaintiffs in the seminal Tinker case (American Civil Liberties Union, n.d.), reflected on factors that influenced the decision-making of her sibling, herself, and her friends:

When I was thirteen years old, in 1968, I didn't know anything about my rights. But I knew something was wrong with the world. When I came home from school every night, there was news on TV about civil rights movement and the war in Vietnam . . . when I saw pictures on TV of Vietnamese kids getting bombed by the United States with a gooey gel called napalm, I didn't think that was right, and it mobilized me to action . . . Robert Kennedy, the brother of President John F. Kennedy, called for a Christmas truce. My brother and a group of our friends thought us kids should do something to support the truce. We decided to wear black armbands to school. (Raskin, 2003, pp. xvii-xviii)

Their decision to wear black armbands to school made its way to school officials who quickly decided to create and enact a policy requiring all students wearing armbands to remove them. Students choosing to wear the armbands after being directed to remove them would be suspended from school. Mary Beth, her older brother John, and their friend Christopher Echardt were suspended until after

January 1 for refusing to remove their armbands. Since the school officials viewed the act of wearing armbands as disruptive or having the potential of being disruptive, they chose to proactively curtail any actions on the part of students. Almost four decades later, this form of student protest came to life in the aftermath of a University Academy case surrounding Mathias' brush with academic integrity as referenced in Chapter I. I offered an detailed exploration of this case in Chapter VII (See Appendix H). Justice Brennan, speaking for the Supreme Court, disagreed with the school officials' rationale:

These petitioners merely went about their ordained rounds in school. Their deviation consisted only in wearing on their sleeve a band of black cloth, not more than two inches wide. They wore it to exhibit their disapproval of the Vietnam hostilities and their advocacy of a truce, to make their views known, and, by their example, to influence others to adopt them. They neither interrupted school activities nor sought to intrude in the school affairs or the lives of others. They caused discussion outside of the classrooms, but no interference with work and no disorder. In the circumstances, our Constitution does not permit officials of the State to deny their form of expression. (as cited in Rossow & Stefkovich, 2005, p. 549)

In a landmark 7 to 2 decision, the Supreme Court determined that School districts and educational professionals could not limit student First Amendment rights because “undifferentiated fear or apprehension of disturbance is not enough to overcome the right to freedom of expression and school authorities must accept” (as cited in La Morte, 1999, p. 77).

Prior to the historic Tinker case, educators acted in the place of parents and guardians and students were expected to do as they were told (Selden, 1898, Conte, 2000). Students' rights were virtually nonexistent. Students were fundamentally unaware of their rights and adults viewed students' rights from a limited perspective (Purdy, 1992; Archard, 1993, Stasiulis, 2002; Raskin, 2003; American Civil Liberties Union, n.d.). Students—contrary to Supreme Court Justice Abe Fortas' opinion—were expected to surrender their rights at the door of their schools (Raskin, 2003; Tinker v. Des Moines Ind. Comm. School Dist., 1969). Further, educational professionals operated in loco parentis which dictated that in the absence of the parent or guardian, the school staff member functioned as the parent (Zirkel & Reichner, 1987). Schools and communities espoused and exercised the liberal caretaking theory expressed by Archard (as cited in Johnny, 2005). The theory envisioned students as being ill-equipped for decision-making and thus in need of guidance from capable adults. Conventional wisdom expressly dictated that adults refrain from encouraging students to critically reflect upon their actions to inform their future decision-making. All of this changed that crisp December morning when a small band of students breached the arbitrary cultural, social, and historical barriers existing between childhood and adulthood (Stasiulis, 2002); Tinker signaled a new era in students' rights. Justice Hugo Black, in his dissent to Tinker, predicted:

[I]t is the beginning of a new revolutionary era of permissiveness in this country fostered by the judiciary. The new logical step, it appears to me, would be to hold unconstitutional the laws that bar pupils under 21 and 18 from voting, or from being elected members of the boards of education. (as cited in Raskin, 2003, p. 26)

Admittedly, the ensuing period was an “era” of student-centered and student-favored court opinions (American Civil Liberties Union, n.d.). Goss v. Lopez (1975) secured procedural and substantive due process safeguards for students. Despite this, many of the rights established by the Tinker case have eroded over the succeeding decades since the decision (Raskin, 2003; Rossow & Stefkovich, 2005). It could be the result of changing family dynamics, as well. No longer does the mother stay at home to raise the children while the father works. To be sure, parents and guardians typically work outside of the home and send that which is most precious to them—their children—to schools to grow and learn (Ambert, 2001). Teachers, principals, and other school staff become the de facto parents of these children (Zirkel & Reichner, 1987). Their parents and guardians fully expect school districts and educational professionals to teach them in safe, orderly, and caring schools (Conte, 2000). The perspectives parents and guardians have on students’ rights run the gamut: some expect tight control of their students (Purdy, 1992), others prefer a philosophy of *laissez faire* (Grusec & Goodnow, 1995).

A former student had this to say when she inquired about my proposed dissertation topic (Personal communication August 21, 2006):

Rules established by [schools] should protect students from the actions of other students . . . and throughout the punishment should fit the “crime” . . . and there should be room for student error. I mean, we’re human; we make mistakes. In most high schools, I don’t think [rules] are as effective as [they] should be. (McKenzie)

This led to a lively lunchtime conversation about things that could be done to improve matters for students. I learned during the conversation what mattered most to her. She felt that students must be empowered to claim a place at the table (Cushman, 2005). As Johnny (2005) noted:

The full exercise of participatory rights in schools remains haphazard and inconsistent given that several schools continue to function as hierarchical structures that produce rules and ideas that often exclude student voices.

The establishment of a school-based youth court was one firm step in the direction towards the “full exercise of participatory rights.” Even with the erosion of some rights, there remains hope that students’ rights will not return to their pre-Tinker days. This would—in many ways—stifle our efforts as educators to build a truly confident and capable democratic citizenry (Charney, 1992; hooks, 2003; Kidwell, 2001; Montessori, 1912).

This great tension between and among individual rights, community norms, and individual responsibilities piqued my interest as the Student Court adviser and as a graduate student in an educational leadership program. The faculty and staff of University Academy (UA) concur with Montessori (1967) who asserted:

As a rule . . . we do not respect children. We try to force them to follow us without regard to their special needs. We are overbearing with them, and above all, rude . . . let us treat them, therefore, with all the kindness which we would wish to help to develop in them . . . Kindness consists of interpreting the wishes of others, in conforming one's self to them, and sacrificing, if need be, one's own desires. (p.133)

Conceptual Framework

Reitzug (2006) queried rhetorically, “What is a conceptual framework? It is a lens through which you look at your data. This lens is constructed from previous work and your own thinking about the literature” (n.p.). My research study's conceptual framework, as represented in Figure 1, emerged from a review of literature regarding the historical perspectives of students' rights and school law, notions of student governance and leadership, my prior research as classroom teacher on culture and stories, and my learnings from lived experiences with UA's Student Court. “Stories—not lists and plaques—reveal deeply held values, turning points, and amazing acts that give texture to culture” (Barrett & Fry, 2005, p. 49). University Academy utilized its mission, student handbook, and honor code to communicate culture:

Rules and Regulations, Rewards and Sanctions: to ensure consistency in the behaviours of members inside and organization, rules and regulations are generally drawn up to define boundaries for activity and to guarantee predictable performance and outcomes. (Beare et al., 1989, p. 198)

Beare, Caldwell, and Millikan (1989) developed a conceptual framework to explicate the ways in which school culture could be enhanced. Their “tangible expressions and symbolism” also informed my conceptual framework (p. 176).

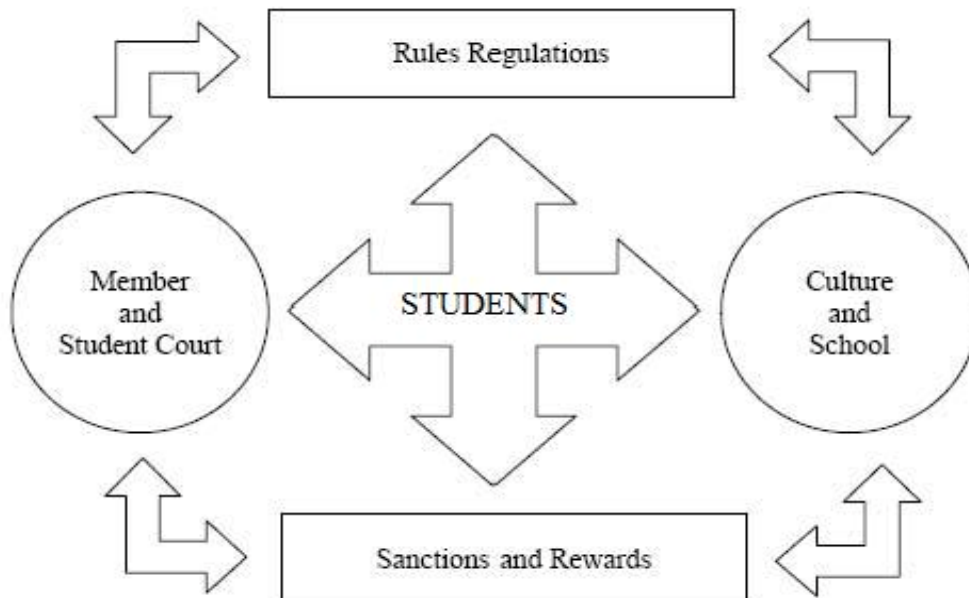


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

According to this study's conceptual framework, students' perceptions of their experiences as members of a school-based youth court can be explored within the context of the school and court's culture influencing the students and the students influencing the school and the court. It asserts that “culture is a blueprint for living” and that culture shapes and informs people, just as people shape and inform culture (Kluckholm, 1944). Members of the Student Court and the Court itself have strong ties between and among each other as represented by the arrows around the perimeter of the conceptual framework and those in the

center of the image. Adams (1983) noted, “We not only act on our world, we respond to it” (p.77). Students—both members of the Student Court and non-members—are central to the conceptual framework of this research study. As members of the school, they are directly and indirectly impacted by context as expressed in the conceptual framework.

UA and its culture, represented as “Culture and School” in the conceptual framework, inform the Student Court and its members. To illustrate, one element of the school's culture promotes treating youth and adults as members of an extended family. This “school family” approach influences the care with which Student Court members interact with students who come before the Student Court as a result of handbook and honor code violations. Students who have come before the Student Court have consistently reported that they were treated with the care, concern, and dignity as a family member. Equally important is the influence the Student Court and its members have on the school and its culture. The decisions and recommendations of the Student Court clarify the laws of the land and UA's philosophy for functioning as a school family. The school and the Student Court collectively articulate the standard way of doing things as members of the school family (represented as “Rules Regulations” in the conceptual framework). These—in turn—inform students' behavior and decision-making which result in “Sanctions and Rewards” as necessary and appropriate. For example, a UA-specific rule prohibits high school student occupancy of and

visitation to university residence halls and dormitories. When students violated this edict, they were reassigned to their sender traditional high schools. Such sanctions not only inform rules and regulations, they also impact the Student Court and its members as well as the school and its culture. Indeed, they are each intertwined and bound to the other.

Chapter Summary and Conclusion

I explored students' perceptions of—and experiences with—the Student Court at an early college high school to contribute to the small body of existing research on the topic. In this chapter, I situated the study by taking a closer look at literature and prior research on the emergence and evolution of students' rights, as well as notions of student governance and leadership by discussing the background, various court model conceptions and historical and school law perspectives. In the next chapter, I will utilize a natural history approach to outline the methodology of the case study.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Purpose

The purpose of conducting research on school-based youth courts was to research students' perceptions of—and experiences with—the Student Court at an early college high school. In this study I described and explored the articulated stories of former and current students who served—or are serving—as members of a school-based youth court.

In this chapter, I utilized a natural history approach to outline the methodology of this study (Silverman, 2005, pp. 305-308). Specifically, I have sought to inform readers of my personal context; the setting and participants; research design rationale; data collection procedures; methodological lessons learned; and delimitations and limitations of my study.

Personal Context

In the spring of 1989, just weeks before graduating from high school I bought my first bowtie. I decided that I would wear it to the baccalaureate service on Sunday. That afternoon we paraded into my hometown Civic Center, and just as I was about to stroll down the aisle, an adviser commanded that I tuck my bowtie inside my gown. I complied with her demand. Six days later at graduation

I put on my bowtie and was again told to tuck it in. I thought about what the bowtie meant for me as I sat with my classmates. Then as that magical moment approached, I puffed my bowtie and wore it with pride as I crossed the stage and received my diploma. My advisers were livid.

What I did was surprising to all who knew me because as a child I grew up hearing three early commandments from my family and community: (a) Children should be seen and not heard; (b) Silence is golden; and (c) Do as I say, not as I do. Indeed, the social and cultural milieu in which I lived was about order, structure, and positionality. These early values and commandments were ideally meant to protect children; reality proved to be different. When English jurist and legal antiquity scholar John Selden penned Table-Talk in 1654, his actual words were “Preachers say, ‘Do as I say, not as I do’” (p. 114). This clearly has a radically different meaning. Why did I stray from my early teachings? What was it that made me think differently? Somehow I knew I had the right to wear a bowtie. I knew that wearing a bowtie was not disruptive. I knew that our school had no history of problems with briefcase toting, bowtie wearing students. Somehow, I knew that I had these rights. My recollection of this marker event in my life sparked an interest in exploring students’ rights and governance as well as student’s perceptions of their experiences as members of a school-based youth court. Over the intervening years I worked with the Student Government Association of Morehouse College, was appointed Chief Justice of the college’s

Student Court, graduated from Morehouse, became a high school educator, enrolled in graduate school to earn a master's degree, became an elementary school principal, relocated to the southeastern region of the United States of America, and started an early college high school which eventually established a Student Court. Throughout these various experiences along my personal and professional journey, I did not realize that I was utilizing skills that would support students in matters of agency, belonging, and competence (Carver, 1996).

Setting and Participants

Established in 2003, the Student Court of UA is a student-conceptualized and wholly student-operated organization that handles breaches of the student handbook and the honor code. The court is composed of five justices, three student advocates/advisors, a clerk, and a court recorder. The court is a youth justice model court. It is the only school-based youth court in Potter County Schools and is one of over 1000 youth courts operating under various names in schools, juvenile justice systems, and community-based organizations across the United States (National Association for Youth Courts, n.d.). The court protected the identity of students who were "on trial" and was not open to the public. There were no clear options to best express the proceedings of the court. Even anonymous synopses of court proceedings were harmful because of the relative ease of pinpointing students given the small size of UA. During my tenure as

principal-director at UA, justices heard cases, deliberated the evidence, and, when applicable, recommended consequences to me.

At the time of the study, 100% of the ten founding members of the school-based youth court (herein The Chumley Court) were enrolled in undergraduate studies at colleges and universities across the United States of America. Six of the members identified themselves as European-American, one as Asian-American, three as African-American. Half (50%) are females. Four served the court for two years. Six served the court for three years. All remained in the same role throughout their years of service.

Of the ten current members of the court (herein The Bostic Court), all were enrolled full-time at UA at the time of the study. Six of the members identified themselves as European-American, two as African-American, one as Latin-American, and one as Asian-American. Six were females; four were males. Six were in grade 12. Four served the court for two years. Six served the court for one year. All but the Chief Justice remained in the same role throughout their service; he previously served as an associate justice.

I was able to interview 16 of the 20 students who served—or are serving—as members of UA's Student Court . I used purposive sampling and emergent analysis for this study (Merriam, 1998). I deliberately selected eight students from the 16 I interviewed once I determined that their narratives yielded rich descriptive data regarding their experiences as members of a school-based

youth court (Geertz, 1973). Upon listening to the 16 digitized audio recordings, I graphically charted the essence of each storyteller's narrative and how the 16 narratives connected to each other. Figure 2 presents a composite rendering of my charting of students' connections to one theme. The Student Court members whose names are circle did not chose to participate in this study.

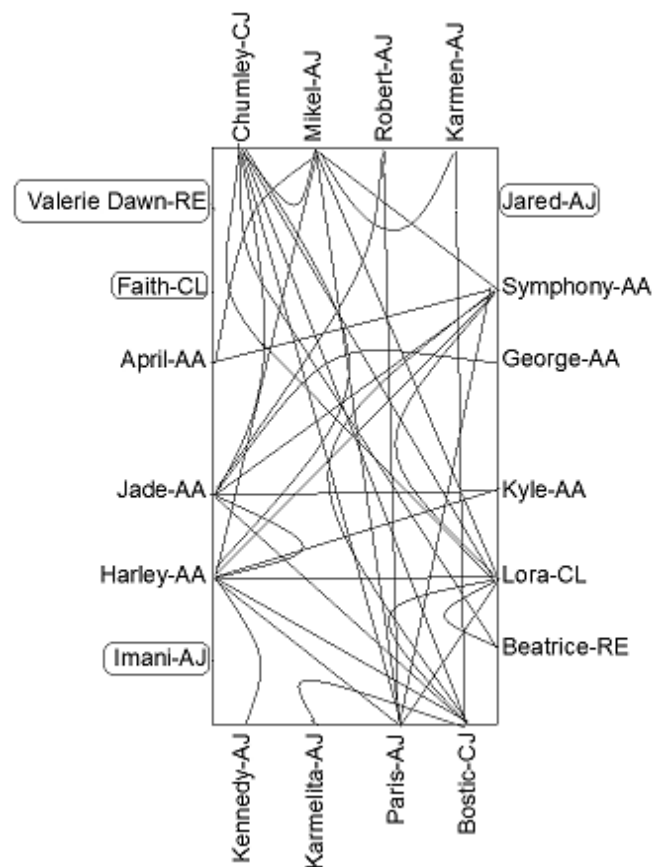


Figure 2. *Thematic Connections*

The actual renderings were handcrafted and included the emergent and multiple iterations for the themes of this study. The connections reflected agreement,

disagreement, silences, and slippages. Such connections were made when a storyteller's narrative demonstrated agreement, alignment and/or commonalities with the narrative of one or more storytellers. For example, students who referenced decision-making—or elements of decision-making—were shown to have linkages around that theme. Further, connections and linkages were established when one's narrative was dissimilar and/or opposed to those of others. Of the eight students found in Table 3, 50% identified themselves as White or European-American and 50% identified themselves as students of color (i.e., 37.5% Black or African-American and 12.5% Hispanic or Latin-American). I asked students to suggest possible pseudonyms for themselves; all eight students requested that I create pseudonyms for them.

Table 3

Study Participant Information

Pseudonym	Role	Court	Interview(s)
Lora	Clerk	First/Founding	1
Chumley	Chief Justice	First/Founding	2
Bostic	Chief Justice	Second/Successor	3
Jade	Advocate	Second/Successor	1
Harley	Advocate	Second/Successor	1
Mikel	Associate Justice	First/Founding	1
Paris	Associate Justice	Second/Successor	1
Symphony	Advocate	First/Founding	1

This study was conducted at University Academy, one of the first early college high schools in the region (Grier & Peterson, 2005). UA offers a writing-intensive, fast-paced curriculum in partnership with Gilman University (GU), a selective, national liberal arts university. At the time of this study, UA enrolled 181 students; of these 53.6% were female; and 35% were identified as students of color. Ninth and tenth graders totaled 97 while eleventh and twelfth graders totaled 84. Students were selected to attend UA in a competitive process that evaluated academic achievement, standardized test results, letters of recommendations, personal essays, and self-reported interests and activities.

UA students took honors courses and Advanced Placement (AP) courses in the ninth and tenth grades. At the time of this study, UA offered six AP courses: Art History, English Language and Composition, Environmental Science, Psychology, United States History, and World History. UA's Science and History programs received world-wide acclaim in the 2006 AP Report to the Nation (The College Board, 2006). The School is one of 84 schools recognized by The College Board for AP Program participation and performance.

Students were formally advanced to university studies at the end of the tenth grade; they took GU courses with professors alongside college students in the eleventh and twelfth grades. They did not receive special privileges or modifications because they were high school students. As a staff we recognized that students learn in different ways and that an effective academic program must

respond to these differences. Accordingly, staff members utilized a variety of approaches, including:

- Cooperative and collaborative learning (Cooper, Ponder, Merritt, & Matthews, 2005; Kagan, 1994);
- Student-centered learning (Coble & Brubaker, 2007; Montessori, 1912);
- Democratic community (Carlson & Gause, 2007; O' Hair & Reitzug, 1997); and
- Experiential learning (Carver, 1996; Harpaz, 2005).

In the end, UA students graduated with a high school diploma and two years of university credit. UA is among growing body of schools across America for highly motivated students. UA is a locally-funded early entrance or early college high school. It is not a “program” and it is not a public charter school.

Research Design Rationale

I chose a qualitative case study research design for this inquiry because I wanted to explore students' perceptions of—and experiences with—the Student Court at an early college high school. Furthermore, I chose a qualitative research design because it enables researchers to probe human and social issues in-depth to make sense of the stories we tell (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Glesne, 1999; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Rubin & Rubin, 1995). I then decided to specifically use a narrative case study approach. According to Merriam and Simpson (1984)

a case study is “an intensive description and analysis of a phenomenon or social unit such as an individual, group, institution, or community” (p. 95). Creswell (1998) offered various means of case study data collection: interviews, observations, document collection, review of artifacts, and field notes. I recorded and analyzed the articulated stories of Student Court members to explore whether and how students craft, construct, and otherwise, make themselves through the sharing of their narratives (McAdams, 1993; Casey, 2007).

Data Collection Procedures

Data collection occurred from March 2007 to December 2007. Interviews were held from May 2007 to August 2007. During these periods, I gathered information from multiple sources to describe a school-based youth court and its members’ perceptions of their experiences (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The multiple sources included interviews (semi-structured), interview transcripts, documents (electronic messages, memoranda), archival records (i.e., discipline records, case abstracts), physical artifacts (photographs, drawings), and my personal notes as adviser to the Student Court.

Phase One – Pilot Study

In January 2007 I enrolled in ELC 688—Narratives of the Self—at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro. We were given individual assignments and I considered casting my assignment as a pilot study. I consulted with the course professor and my dissertation co-chairs about my desire to use

data collected during such a pilot study for a subsequent research study to fulfill requirements for a dissertation leading to a Doctorate in Educational Leadership. Each agreed with me and I then requested permission from the School District's Research Review Committee and the principal of University Academy to conduct a pilot research study involving students in Potter County. Concurrently, I submitted an Institutional Review Board (IRB) Application for the Use of Human Participants in Research to The University of North Carolina at Greensboro. I contacted the ten current members of the school-based youth court to request their participation in the pilot research study. I sent each student a Pilot Study Invitation and Fact Sheet by electronic mail, I also gave copies of both documents to UA to be maintained in and distributed from the School Office (See Appendix A). I hosted two sessions (March and April 2007) so that students could meet with me face-to-face to learn about the pilot study and so that I could respond to any questions they had.

The pilot study took place at UA and its purpose was to explore the extent to which service on a school-based youth court enhanced or promoted the leadership development of its members. After inviting all current members of the Student Court to participate, I interviewed three of the current school-based youth court members between April and May 2007. The central question of this pilot study was: *What role does service on a school-based youth court play in the development of its members?* The pilot study explored and described the

articulated stories current members of a school-based youth court situated at an early college high school. I asked each participant the same question: “What is the story of your life as a member of the Student Court?” (see Appendix B). Of the three who shared their stories, two students identified themselves as European-American. The one student who identified as multi-racial (i.e., West African and European) for the pilot research study would later identify as African-American. Two students were males, one was female. Two students had two years of service with the school-based youth court and one student had one year of service. All three students were graduating high school seniors and met the criteria guidelines for selecting participants for the subsequent research study.

Interviews were recorded and transcribed. I reviewed each audio recording and corrected each written transcript. I then shared the revised transcripts with each participant for member checking (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Stake, 1995). After communicating with each participant to confirm the contents of their stories, I coded their interview responses (Maxwell, 2005; Reitzug, 2006; Silverman, 2005). I used this process to determine what members of the Student Court deemed important and worthy of discussion. From the pilot study six categories of student responses emerged: *responsibility, leadership, perceptions, decision-making, expectations, and relationships*. These six categories were further grouped according to three domains: self (responsibility and leadership); court (perceptions and decision-making) and peers (expectations and

relationships). I determined that my dissertation research would focus on students' perceptions of—and experiences with—the Student Court at an early college high school. I was not surprised that themes of Decision-making, Leadership, and Perceptions were evident in the narratives of each student.

Kennedy—like his peers in the pilot study—articulated the importance of one's decision-making responsibilities:

. . . I think that's an important thing being able to see that your decisions that you make right now will not only affect the students, but it will also affect students in the future and the court itself. So, even though our decisions do [not] . . . are not binding they are still important because the student is there and he gets to be heard by his peers and then he gets to hear their opinion of what happened.

Students reported the impact of the decision-making process. They found themselves being more reflective, more thoughtful, and more caring in their interactions with students who came before the court as a result of an honor code or handbook violation (Seyfrit, Reichel, & Stutts, 1987).

Another thematic area was Leadership. When asked to detail the essential skills requisite for a successful tenure with the school-based youth court, Bostic cited strong leadership skills:

I think you need to be a strong leader even if you are not in a leadership role on the court. You need to be able to represent the school and you need to be able to look at things objectively and not have your feelings come into play. You just be able to look at things as what's best for the school and justice in general, not just what's best for your friends.

Even Bostic's response to a question to cite a proud moment suggests leadership:

One thing that I think we are all kind of proud of is when we all agree after deliberations that we have made the right decision that we did what's best for the student and school. Also if just in deliberations we can help someone learn even more about the Student Court or the ways to think about it. If we can help people learn and grow that is always good.

Leadership—at its core—is about creating conditions wherein others are able to reach their maximum potential and to become better people (Bennis, 2003; Komives, Longenecker, Owen, Mainella, & Osteen, 2006; Maxwell, 1998).

The final thematic area was Perceptions. While reading the transcripts over and over, I discovered that one could further sub-divide “perceptions” into two aspects: (a) Pre-Service Perceptions of the Court Service and (b) Service-Time Perceptions of the Court.

The Student Court was a mystery of sorts to several students. Members of the court shared many of the same perceptions (Pre-Service Perceptions) of the court as their peers. Bostic “didn't know what the Student Court was about.” The Student Court never came up in conversations among his circle of friends. In fact, Bostic said, “I never really heard of experiences with them . . .” Karmelita maintained these perceptions until the day she participated in a mock trial:

[W]e had a little mock trial during the summer and I think that's where all of my previous perceptions of the Student Court were sort of dispelled

because I had initially thought that they sort of like persecuted...or prosecuted [LAUGHS] like the people, but I found out that they just clarified the situation . . .

Service-Time Perceptions of the Court range from mysterious and racist to all-powerful and all-knowing. Bostic noted the ramifications of one Student Court case and the court's efforts to uphold its ideals:

This one case in particular the students reacted negatively to the court decision and it was mainly a result of the students not knowing the facts of the case, but the Student Court kept getting this negative reaction, but it was nothing they could do. We were all silent about it. And I think that was a good thing, the right thing to do because we had to protect this guy's confiden...or anonymity. So, even though everyone was acting negatively to it; we were all pretty mature about it and could remain silent until the facts came out. So, even though the community reacted negatively in that case; usually they appreciate and like the Student Court because it is so different and it is such a big part of the experience.

This pilot study was very productive; it was enlightening to see students make themselves as they shared the stories of their experiences as members of the Student Court (McAdams, 1993; Casey, 2007). Furthermore, what Barrett and Fry (2005) posited about stories and their telling helped confirm that a narrative approach would yield rich data for my subsequent dissertation study:

As children of all ages know, there is something magical about good stories. . . . They give shape to our hopes, wishes, and fears. Stories also remind us of our most important values. Stories—not lists and plaques—reveal deeply held values, turning points, and amazing acts that give texture to culture. (p. 49)

My revised research questions emerged from this pilot study, my experiences as a researcher, and upon the review of literature and prior research I presented in Chapter II:

Research Question One: How do members perceive their experiences on a school-based youth court?

Research Question Two: How do members of a school-based youth court see themselves developing as leaders?

Phase Two – Expanded Study

I submitted a separate IRB Application to extend the study from June to August 2007. I contacted the remaining seven current members of the school-based youth court and the ten former members to request their participation in the expanded doctoral dissertation research study. I sent each student a Dissertation Study Invitation and Fact Sheet by electronic mail, I also gave copies of both documents to UA to be maintained in and distributed from the School Office (see Appendix C).

I conducted an analysis of physical school-based youth court artifacts, including electronic communications, when school was not in session. I reviewed artifacts before and after school, on weekends, and during breaks (e.g., fall, winter, spring, and/or summer break). I used artifacts to confirm and verify what I heard in interviews; I also found artifacts to be additional sources of data. Gall,

Gall, and Borg (2003, p. 282) asserted that researchers can get a sense of one's thinking through the various documents that one writes.

I interviewed 13 former and current school-based youth court members between July and August 2007—this yielded 16 interviews. Individual interviews were arranged such that they were conducted when current students were not in session (i.e., during quarterly breaks). I offered the same prompt to each participant, “Tell the story of your experiences as a member of the Student Court” (see Appendix D). All interviews were audio taped and transcribed. The average interview length was 18 minutes and 27 seconds. The longest interview lasted 39 minutes and 4 seconds and the shortest interview took 10 minutes and 48 seconds. I learned a few important methodological lessons while conducting the pilot study. A key learning was the need to offer follow-up questions or conversation stems to students who—by one’s own admission—felt they had “run out of steam” within minutes of telling their stories. Basically, I asked select participants questions when—after several minutes—stated that they had nothing more to say. I asked one follow-up question of each participant. The question was, “Did you have a question in mind that you assumed I would ask you? If so, please share the questions and your response.” For students who stated that they had nothing more to say only minutes into the interview, I shared prompts and conversation stems (see Appendix E).

Third, I compared the transcripts to the audio recording to determine that they were correctly transcribed. I also re-read the transcripts to clarify and recast categories. As Polkinghorne (as cited in Gause, 2001, p. 74) stated, “researchers speak with the voice of the storyteller . . . they speak in the first person as the teller of their own tale” (internal citations omitted). I tested the categories (herein “aspects”) by classifying responses from the pilot study. After this I used the final aspects to code the remaining interviews. Specifically, five aspects emerged from student responses as seen in Table 4. Students articulated their thoughts about themselves, the court, and their peers via their storytelling.

Table 4

Domains and Aspects of Student Responses

DOMAIN	Aspects		
SELF	leadership	decision-making	perceptions
COURT	process	history	

These five aspects were further grouped according to two domains: self (leadership, decision-making, and perceptions) and court (process, history, and perceptions). I analyzed the data and I coded each transcript. I used a master coding document to graphically represent if and how members of the court comments aligned with the five aspects (Silverman, 2005). According to Reitzug (2006), data analysis is the process of organizing, manipulating, and

transforming data. This process also involved weaving between and among description, analysis, and interpretation. When preparing and producing the descriptive elements of the study, I asked, “How can I permit the reader to vicariously experience what I heard and saw as I collected my data?” For the analytical elements, I queried, “What are the themes and patterns that run through my data?” With the interpretive elements, I inquired, “What do the themes and patterns mean and why are they important?” The elements of description, analysis, and interpretation are extended and articulated in Chapters VI, VII, and VIII of this dissertation.

Methodological Lessons Learned

Software and Technology

My first lesson learned was the importance of learning software (e.g., NVivo, Endnote, and speech-to-text applications) within the relatively safe confines of a Qualitative Research course. I did not fully utilize the learning of such tools. Likewise, it is important to conduct tests of related technology (e.g., digital recorders, laptop computers, and microphones) to ensure they are fully-functional before you are in the presence of participants. To do otherwise is to potentially jeopardize the whole dissertation because Murphy’s Law abounds and such tools may fail when you least expect—or want—they to do so. I had grand plans for using NVivo for this case study. In the end, I considered my learning styles (i.e., tactile and visual learning) and chose to utilize a basic—yet effective

and organic—form of coding to ascertain salient points and to determine essential themes.

Pilot Study

My second lesson learned was the importance of conducting a pilot study to determine which questions or prompts to utilize. Pilot studies offer fertile ground for sowing key research kernels, permitting researchers to reap a bounty from trial-and-error experiences. I was able to pilot this case study first in theory in my Qualitative Data Collection and Analysis course. Subsequently, I piloted it in reality in my Narratives of the Self course. With each experience I reflected on the process and asked: “Which questions roll effortlessly off my tongue?”; “Which prompts are misleading or unclear?”, and “What needs to be changed?”

Transcripts, Audio Recordings, and Member-checking

My third lesson learned was the importance of multiple opportunities to process students' narratives. Once my interviews were transcribed, I began by comparing type-written transcripts to the corresponding audio-recordings. I reviewed each transcript while listening to the audio recording. Then I shared the edited/revised transcripts with participants for checking of content (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Stake, 1995). The benefit of this process is multi-fold: typographical errors were corrected; participant voices and inflections were heard and noted; patterns and themes emerged with greater ease; and trustworthiness and credibility were built (Glesne, 1999; Reitzug, 2006). I happened upon another

means of increasing time immersed in the narratives of the members of the Student Court. I was obsessed with horror stories of losing critical dissertation data. In addition to making multiple electronic copies, I carted hard copies of my research wherever I traveled. Additionally, I digitized the audio-recordings as a way to archive them. One morning while exercising, I pushed play on my device and heard a song. The next selection was a digitized narrative which I skipped. A few times later, I heard the beginnings of a narrative and skipped it until one day a student's opening line struck me and I listened to the entire narrative while jogging indoors. Over the months since then, I have listened to narratives again and again. Each time I heard their voices, I gained new insights into their experiences and their values (Casey, 2007).

Delimitations and Limitations

This study was limited to school-based youth court situated at a public early college high school located on a four-year university campus in the southeastern region of the United States of America. The Student Court members who participated in this study were among 20 students who served on the Student Court from September 2003 to May 2007. The findings of this study are subject to alternative interpretations and are not intended for formal generalizations. The limitations of this study included the following:

- This qualitative research was limited to the case studies of eight Student Court members.

- This study was narrowed in scope by a pilot study conducted from March 2007 to May 2007 and by a dissertation study conducted from July 2007 through December 2007.
- All individual interviews and analysis of physical school-based youth court artifacts—including electronic communications—were conducted when school was not in session and/or when students were not in classes.

Other possible limitations of this case study include slippages and silences as students recollected their stories and my role as both researcher and participant-observer. Admittedly, my service as the former principal-director of the school and former faculty adviser of the Student Court gave me access to elements of the school-based youth court's oral history, recorded/written history, records, and artifacts that would be unavailable to a university researcher who was not a part of the UA's lived experience. I took steps to remind each Student Court member of the following:

- Their responses would be kept strictly confidential.
- None of the data released in this study would identify them by name or any other identifiable data, descriptions, or characterizations.
- They could discontinue participation in the project at any time or refuse to respond to any questions of their choosing.

- They were voluntary participants and had no liability or responsibility for the implementation, methodology, claims, substance, or outcomes resulting from the research project.
- Their decision not to participate would not result in any adverse consequences or disparate treatment due to that decision.

Chapter Summary and Conclusion

In this chapter, I presented the methodology of this study. I specified my personal context; the setting and participants; research design rationale; data collection procedures; methodological lessons learned; and shared my thoughts about the delimitations and limitations of the study. In the next chapter, I provide biographical sketches student-participants.

CHAPTER IV

PARTICIPANT PROFILES

“When a griot dies, it is as if a library has burned to the ground”

Alex Haley (1982, p. viii)

In this dissertation, I explored students’ perceptions of—and experiences with—the Student Court at an early college high school. In this chapter, I provided biographical sketches of the storytellers (i.e., study participants).

Haley (1982), in his seminal work, Roots, avowed the immense value of the storyteller as a keeper of history. He admitted:

Finally, I acknowledge immense debt to the griots of Africa—where today it is rightly said that when a griot dies, it is as if a library has burned to the ground. The griots symbolize how all human ancestry goes back to some place, some time, where there was no writing. Then, the memories and the mouths of ancient elders was the only way that early histories of mankind got passed along . . . for all of us today to know who we are. (p. viii)

As founding principal-director of one of the region's first early college high schools, I found myself anxiously awaiting the annual admissions season during which time we selected a diverse and capable group of students through a competitive admissions process. When the University Academy liaison and I searched for prospective students, we looked for a sense of purpose and a

willingness to engage in rigorous work. We looked for flexibility and a decidedly zany interest in academics and more. These are among the hallmarks of great students. Indeed, these are the traits of the members of the Student Court at University Academy (UA).

I liken the members of the Student Court to griots because they maintain a rich oral history (Hale, 1998). I credit their years of service and unique perspectives with helping increase my understanding of the implementation and impact of a school-based youth court model. Their insights and perspectives elucidated my thoughts about leadership, perspectives, and decision-making. Their collective member vantage point enabled me to gather rich data about their lived experiences in service as members of the Student Court (Casey, 2007). It is through them that “early histories” of the Student Court will get “passed along” for the benefit of others. For the purposes of this case study, the Student Court at University Academy was from time to time referenced by first names of the Chief Justices. The Chumley Court consisted of ten members, four of whom participated in this case study, as noted in Table 5. The Bostic Court had ten members, as well. Four of its members participated in this case study, as noted in Table 6.

Bostic

Bostic, the Chief Justice of the Second/Successor Student Court, is a high school senior at UA in his second year of service. He served as an Associate

Justice during his first year. Bostic became Chief Justice when the founding Chief Justice graduated from UA. I have observed that he sets a positive example for integrity as a member of the Student Court.

Table 5

Study Participants from Founding Court

The Chumley Court - First Court – established 2003	
Pseudonym	Role
<i>Lora</i>	Clerk
<i>Chumley</i>	Chief Justice
<i>Mikel</i>	Associate Justice
<i>Symphony</i>	Advocate

Table 6

Study Participants from Successor Court

The Bostic Court - Second Court– established 2006	
Pseudonym	Role
Bostic	Chief Justice
<i>Harley</i>	Advocate
Jade	Advocate
<i>Paris</i>	Associate Justice

The essence of Bostic can be expressed in our school's mission to graduate confident, ethically responsible, lifelong learners who are prepared to

succeed in higher education and in the changing world beyond. For example, when the Student Court convened to discuss an allegation of cheating on a test, Bostic and the Associate Justices met with the student to determine what took place. They carefully considered each allegation of student misbehavior and then Bostic framed reflective questions for the accused student. Bostic's questioning revealed his compassion and his respect for the worth and privacy of each student regardless of the Student Court's ruling. The students who met with the Bostic Court report that they left the Student Court chambers—despite the outcome—feeling that they had been heard. Additionally, Bostic and I collaborated at the end of the data collection phase of this case study to co-lead an interactive Student Court New Member Orientation not long before his first day of undergraduate studies at a nearby university (See Appendix G).

Chumley

Chumley, the Chief Justice of the First/Founding Student Court, is a second year undergraduate student. He served the Student Court for three years as Chief Justice. I first met Chumley in August 2002 when he enrolled in UA as a ninth grader. Since then—via my roles as founding principal-director, seminar teacher, and Student Court adviser—I have had dozens of opportunities to observe him leading and motivating others.

Whether tutoring ninth and tenth graders at our school, serving at Clinton Elementary School, or volunteering as a guide for our annual New Student

Orientation, Chumley was a gifted teacher. He engaged students and adults alike with relative ease. Chumley was a leader whether or not the Student Court was in session. He was a leader whether or not his actions were witnessed by others. Chumley had an uncanny ability to lead his peers by example because he realized that he was a role model.

One day in junior seminar, my colleague and I assigned Chumley and his classmates the task of identifying their mission or purpose in life. Chumley wrote:

I know that my purpose in life is to help others, and because of that, my mission is to continue serving people throughout my life.

Chumley has a commitment to servant leadership that is uncommon for someone his age. This will surely inform his desire to blend international relations, law, and business as a career. Chumley, another Student Court member, and I led a session entitled "School-based Youth Courts: Empowering teenagers through decision-making and positive peer pressure" at a regional character education and safe schools convention during their last year of service to the Student Court.

Harley

Harley, an Advocate/Advisor with the Second/Successor Student Court, is a high school senior at UA in his second year of service. I have come to know him through his manifold work with Harvard Model Congress (HMC).

The HMC organization sponsors several conferences each year so that high school student delegates may learn about the United States government,

international institutions, and the democratic political process through role-playing experiences. UA students have attended HMC conferences in San Francisco, Boston, Paris, and Thailand. After a few years of successful participation and performance in HMC, a team of UA students led by Harley proposed hosting Gilman Model Congress (GMC) during spring break. UA's local conference—much like HMC—encouraged student delegates from middle and high schools in Potter County to apply what they learned about United States government and its political process through role-playing experiences. Dressed in professional attire, student delegates actively participated in simulated congressional proceedings and deftly “got into character”. This required that they research and monitor the voting records of elected officials. They also had several opportunities to evaluate the role of debate, consensus, compromise, and negotiation in the legislative process.

I asked student delegates and their parents and guardians to anonymously evaluate their GMC experience at the Closing Ceremony. Their handwritten feedback was insightful. Some students expressed thanks for exposure to the ideas and processes of GMC. One parent commented (Personal Communication, March 11, 2006):

GMC was a good experience for our daughter as the Congress format included group discussions, debates, team work, learning about the legislative process, and knowing more about the topics of current day interest. It was an interesting experience as the facilitators were also

fellow students. Excellent showing for a first time event. We look forward [to] many more Congresses in the future.

A letter of recommendation written for Harley's admission to college encapsulates my sentiments about him (Personal communication, November 29, 2006):

I could write pages about Harley's involvement (e.g., he tutors college students) and his academics (e.g., he has been on the Gilman University's Dean's List and was identified as an AP Scholar with Distinction as a tenth grader); however, here is what I know to be true: I can count on Harley's vision, leadership, and commitment. Through his efforts, he has instilled within students a sense of civic responsibility.

Jade

Jade, an Advocate/Advisor with the Second/Successor Student Court, is a high school senior at UA in his second year of service. Admittedly, I have had less contact with Jade as compared to other Student Court members; however, I have witnessed his work at UA. I have great admiration for him as a student and a leader. I spoke about Jade near the end of his senior year (Personal communication, May 1, 2007).

My words do not adequately convey the deep respect I have for Jade as a human. I have learned much from him and I count it an honor to have both served as his principal and to have worked with him on various school activities and events. From his work with Student Court to his high energy presence (and performance) at every UA dance, I can count on him to make a difference in the life of our small school. Jade is so modest about his gifts and talents, yet he strives to live out the meaning of our school's mission which is to graduate confident, ethically responsible, lifelong learners who are prepared to succeed in higher education and in the changing world beyond. Jade has done this and more.

Lora

Lora, the Clerk of the First/Founding Student Court, is a second year undergraduate student. She served the Student Court for three years in her role. Though she did not query students, Lora was privy to highly sensitive information. She called witnesses to the stand and maintained and eventually archived evidence. She introduced Justices. She began and ended all hearings. Lora and Chumley were responsible for the operations of the Student Court; together they established the tone for each hearing. Like Harley, Lora actively participated in Harvard Model Congress (HMC) concurrently with her service to the Student Court. Throughout HMC students were members of the House, Senate, Presidential Cabinet, Supreme Court, National Security Council, and Press Corps. Lora chose to participate as a member of the HMC Press Corps. She roamed the hallways of the conference venue looking for leads and the latest scoop. She wrote well-crafted articles and earned an HMC Pulitzer Prize in Journalism for her exemplary efforts.

A UA staff member wrote this about Lora (Personal communication, November 1, 2005):

In addition to seeking an academic challenge at our school, Lora encountered an extracurricular challenge: the absence of a [specific organization]. Lora made arrangements to return to her sender high school to participate....It was not without its challenges. From learning routines while juggling college studies to enduring mistreatment from senior members of the [specific organization], she honed her gifts of grace and patience. When she met with her mathematics teacher during lunch

and at other times to clarify concepts she may have missed because she had to leave early for an “away” game, she learned time-management. And she continues her involvement with the [specific organization] to her very last days at UA; long after many of her other UA peers had given up activities at their respective sender schools. Admittedly, Lora and her peers did not win every event or match in which they have competed, yet, they learned life lessons—such as compassion, cooperation, fortitude—that will make them champions beyond the field.

Lastly, Lora, Chumley, and I led a session entitled “School-based Youth Courts: Empowering teenagers through decision-making and positive peer pressure” at a regional character education and safe schools convention during their last year of service to the Student Court.

Mikel

Mikel, an Associate Justice of the First/Founding Student Court, is a second year undergraduate student. She served the Student Court for three years in her role. One of the greatest joys of serving as founding principal of UA was the opportunity to build positive relationships with families, staff, and students like Mikel.

By her own admission, Mikel chose rigor over ease when she applied for admission to UA. As a junior at UA, she engaged in an intensive study of a specific world/foreign language and culture. She designed an eight-week Study Aboard experience to extend her classroom learnings and traveled between her junior and senior years at UA. Her time in abroad afforded her countless opportunities to utilize and hone her language skills. In the end, she returned

home having learned as much as she shared with her newfound friends. Her continued placement at—and subsequent graduation from—UA was indicative of her academic abilities and her possession of the wherewithal necessary for success in a rigorous environment.

Paris

Paris, an Associate Justice of the Second/Successor Student Court, is a high school senior at UA in her second year of service. Paris recounted her growth and development since enrolling in UA:

[Initially] I had trouble defining my own priorities and let some things get in the way which later I [saw] as unimportant. I worked hard almost every day to be the straight A student I knew I could be. Every day I would come home from school, practice violin for an hour or so, and then work on my homework until around midnight. I saved my social life for Saturdays. My schedule was successful and I did well in my classes. I feel like my academics have now become a strength.

I daresay there is not a single aspect of our school that Paris has not touched. Over the years she has served as co-president of the Harvard Model Congress club and member of the FIRST Robotics team. She has represented UA as a member of its award-winning Speech and Debate team. She has taught violin with Potter County Youth Orchestra since eighth grade; and she has volunteered extensively for the last two years with “a fair trade, nonprofit organization that sells handicrafts of artisans” from around the world.

Paris understands that learning is not confined to a traditional classroom. As was the case with Harley, Lora, Mikel, and—though not mentioned in this chapter—Bostic, Paris participated in Harvard Model Congress (HMC) San Francisco, HMC Europe, and the flagship HMC event in Boston, garnering award after award and becoming UA's most decorated HMC participant. I believe her experiences with the HMC Supreme Court led to her eventual service as an Associate Justice with the Student Court.

Symphony

Symphony, an Advocate/Advisor with the First/Founding Student Court, is a second year undergraduate student. She served the Student Court for three years in her role.

It is no secret that UA was devoid of student clubs and organizations at its inception. Students formed affinity groups to forge new student groups. Symphony was one such student. She and Student Court member, George, were unmatched in their service to UA's fledgling Speech and Debate team. Symphony and her peers advocated for a Speech and Debate course to solidify the team's presence at UA. I hired someone that year and assigned the person to teach the Speech and Debate class; it was the teacher's first time with a Speech and Debate class. Instead of complaining about matters, Symphony, her Speech and Debate peers, and the teacher collaborated. The teacher became a quick understudy and devoted time to learning the course content, researching best

practices, and designing a curriculum. Thanks to her flexibility and leadership—and the support of Symphony and George—the new Speech and Debate team went on to garner awards at novice tournaments throughout the state. I could always count on the passion and professionalism that Symphony brought to her work with Speech and Debate activities and events.

Chapter Summary and Conclusion

In this chapter, I provided biographical sketches student-participants. In the next chapter, I will offer an historical overview of the Student Court and outline the process for cases utilizing my reflections as the organization's faculty adviser and as founding principal-director of UA.

CHAPTER V

STUDENT COURT PROFILE

In this dissertation, I explored students' perceptions of—and experiences with—the Student Court at an early college high school. In this chapter, I offered an historical overview of the Student Court at University Academy (UA) and outlined the process for cases utilizing my reflections as the organization's faculty adviser and as founding principal-director of UA.

Student Court History and Process

It is possible to conclude from University Academy lore that the Student Court sprang Athena-like from the head of the school. In my Chapter I background mythology, this “out of nothing[-ness]” yielded a novel approach in the blink of an eye, a mere flick of a Harry Potter-esque sorcerer's wand. The actual birth of the Student Court—though less mythical—is no less remarkable in that it encouraged students to transform leadership, development, ethics, and decision-making theory into practice (Harpaz, 2005; Kidwell, 2001). Through a series of conversations and events, three students and I found ourselves researching honor codes and councils. The students searched college and university websites and they contacted high schools. They examined public and independent/private schools, to gather information for my consideration. Their

efforts as researchers laid a foundation for our Student Court system (Pranis, 1998). The first Chief Justice of the Student Court recalled:

We emailed people to sort of get a group of people who were interested and we had ten people total who would later go on to become the original members of the court. We all sort of got together, brainstormed the different roles that we thought were necessary on the court; the different positions that we thought we needed; whether or not to have a judge and jury sort of system or sort of a tribunal of justices; as well as, trying to figure out the different processes of getting advisors and clerks and recorders. So from there we sort of broke off from the group and researched different models that we had seen before or that we could find different information about and came back together. (Chumley)

Another founding member of the Student Court offered her recollections of the founding of the Student Court at UA:

I guess the easiest way to begin is at the beginning. The idea was brought to the school about starting a student court as a way I guess of getting students more involved in what we already were [doing]. So, several of us came together, wrote up. What was it? A creed? I forgot what we called it. [We] wrote it up, got it approved and everything, and that's basically how it all started. It was up to us. We were allowed the freedom and opportunity to kind of shape with guidance...kind of shape how we wanted our Student Court to be. We had procedures that we had to go by. Then we were—or the whole entire school was—asked who was interested and if they were then they could come and apply. I applied for the position of justice and got it and we had a lot of, not a lot, a few training sessions I guess to prepare. (Mikel)

This was not an easy task for the ten students. In addition to establishing the Student Court, the members of the founding court, as noted in Table 7, were also negotiating the nuances of enrollment in an early college high school.

Table 7***Founding Court Members***

The Chumley Court - First Court – established 2003	
Pseudonym	Role
Chumley	Chief Justice
Mikel	Associate Justice
Robert	Associate Justice
Karmen	Associate Justice
Jared	Associate Justice
Symphony	Advocate/Advisor
George	Advocate/Advisor
Kyle	Advocate/Advisor
Lora	Clerk
Beatrice	Recorder

They were taking a combination of four to six Advanced Placement courses without special privileges or modifications. They did this in a writing-intensive, fast-paced curricular environment.

I think really just going through the process of creating a body like that—the sort of formation side of it—was also challenging. Trying to find, just basically finding people, finding places and trying to figure out how to take care of business as well as again dealing with other people’s personalities, going through interviews and selection processes and trying to figure out and think of everything that we can to select good members for the court, presented its own challenges that were completely different from the challenges we faced participating on the court. (Chumley)

Chumley continued:

You know we had cases ranging from juvenile little things like pulling people's pants down in the hallway to all the way up to you know things that were serious violations of rules, including plagiarism. I forget the word for it, but lighting things on fire . . . just general school vandalism and you know they all sort of stand out to me for different reasons. I tell you the plagiarism one obviously stands out because that's the one we came under the most fire for. The hardest decision for us to make was probably our first decision as a court which involved transporting students across campus in cars.

The students drafted a process for the Student Court that was approved by me as faculty adviser. The preamble of the Student Court process articulated the beliefs of the school community as a whole:

We, the students of University Academy, do institute the formation of the University Academy Student Court to uphold, protect, maintain, and defend the values and ideals set forth in the Honor Code of University Academy and the student handbook of Guilford County Schools.

The first article outlined the purpose succinctly:

This Student Court shall deliberate, decide, and deliver a recommended course of action as determined by the Justices of said Court.

The goals of the Student Court at UA were similar to those of the Pima County Teen Court (n.d.) which stated that school-based youth courts must embrace positive or constructive sentences" (n.p.). Pima's Teen Court—like that of UA—addressed a number of offenses:

- Truancy, chronic tardiness
- Dress code violations
- General misconduct in school or on the school bus
- Cheating on exams / schoolwork
- Reckless endangerment
- Use of profane / abusive language
- Possession of offensive material
- Plagiarism
- Petty larceny and/or possession of stolen property
- Altering official documents
- Graffiti / damaging school property
- Excessive library fines
- Any other offenses deemed appropriate by school administrators (Pima County Teen Court, n.d.).

A typical month at UA was uneventful with the Student Court meeting to discuss what it might do once it received a docket of cases. Whenever a student violated the honor code or the student handbook, the Student Court would spring into action:

I would personally get an e-mail from the principal saying we have a situation that needs to go before the court and [that] we need to do it as soon as possible. And initially at that point, I would just e-mail all the other members and try to get a date that was good for everyone. Later on we

learned that it was much more convenient to have decided on a time of the week ahead of time when everyone would be free so that we could just say, "Alright—you know—activate your decoder ring. It's time to—you know—go to work." Basically my job was to disseminate the information to the other court members particularly getting information to the [advocates/advisors] about the student and about a basic picture of what had happened and then arranging a time for them to talk more with the student. And then just informing the other members of the court when and where to meet..which sometimes changed even up to just a few minutes before where we started and the we'd be running all over looking for a location where we'd be able to have a little bit of privacy. (Chumley)

Once the student who was alleged to be in violation of the code or handbook and members of the Student Court were duly informed, the Student Court would convene to hear the case. The Clerk called the court to order and introduced the sitting justices. She then asked each student to state her or his name and promise to uphold the Honor Code before the Court (see Appendix F). Lora relished her role as Clerk:

I'm kind of like the bailiff on TV Court shows: The "oye" thing. I made sure the judges had their privacy when they were debating what was going to happen with the case. I swore in witnesses. I kind of managed the time because there were some time issues with how long you could stay after school and still use the space and then I made—I didn't make them—but I brought all the witnesses in and I kept them separated from the actual people who were in trouble and then I dismissed the court.

The Chief Justice always read the allegations against the student. We required that the student or teacher making the allegation against the student be present to state the specific allegation. From time to time—due to the scheduling conflicts of high school and college schedules—the Student Court would accept written

statements from those making allegations. For example, such would be the case if a teacher were unable to present her allegation of a student attempting to steal a test answer key because she was teaching a course at the same time the Student Court was convening to deliberate the matter. The Justices were then invited by the Chief Justice to ask questions of the person making the allegation. The student who was alleged to be in violation of the code or handbook was given an opportunity to share an account of the case and respond to the allegation. Witnesses were involved in the process, as well.

When the respondents actually came in we were actually very solemn. As you get into the court it is kind of a contagious feeling. You realize that you are there for something serious something significant. You are trying to clarify that feeling to the people that are coming in front of the court part of it that—I guess—is upholding making the court seem like it is a significant power a significant authority figure and—you know—when the respondent actually came in front of the room at first they were very...they seemed to take it very seriously and they seemed to be scared if not—you know—a bit intimidated by the presence of the court. (Harley)

Those making allegations and the accused student were all permitted to call on witnesses. These witnesses were typically asked questions by Advocates/Advisors; occasionally Justices would ask questions of clarity. Also, throughout the process the accused students were guided by Advocates/Advisors.

We would actually met with them about ten minutes before the case and then talk about what they were saying and then differently what we did this time is we talked about—you know—how do you feel about what you did.

We actually went and got into their mind and started to really get a feeling of—you know—how they felt about it. How they would respond to it and what they would say in front of the justices and then we gave them advice based on how they felt. (Harley)

Advocates/Advisors found their roles to also be comforters while the Justices were deliberating the case:

Jade, myself, and Kyle sit there and we just kind of talk. We actually talk to the [accused students] who [are] in the room. We just actually talk about random things. You know, “how is school?” “How is life?” And then Kyle reflects on the fact of not actually living until you have seen a hobo walking on the train tracks and so it becomes this kind of this really relaxed environment. Even though—you know—there are really high stakes for several of the people and before then there is this serious aura to it and suddenly now we’re just in kind of a casual mode. I thought [this] was difficult which is not what I expected either during deliberation. We just kind of sat there I think. The whole point of it seemed to me was, we were actually trying to calm [them] down. (Harley)

After hearing presentations for each participant, the Chief Justice and the Associate Justices would recess to further discuss the case and any new information gathered during the hearing. They would return to the hearing chambers and share their findings. Their findings were in the form of a recommendation to the principal-director of UA.

One thing that we did specifically was try to work with rectifying situations as opposed to punishing students or making the focus more on the situation rather than the student. So—you know—what became the bread and butter of Student Court decisions was always—you know—an apology letter, or school service, or a way to try to make something positive or at least neutral out of a negative experience. So whether it is apologizing to any person who had been hurt or wronged in that act or—you know—

doing school service that would better the school as opposed to—you know—just laying out suspensions for the students. That was one thing that we didn't focus on so much initially, but eventually found ourselves moving towards in order to get a more positive community based effect. (Chumley)

Indeed, Butts and Buck (2000) reported:

Proponents of teen court argue that the process takes advantage of one of the most powerful forces in the life of an adolescent—the desire for peer approval and the reaction to peer pressure. According to this argument, youth respond better to prosocial peers than to adult authority figures. (p. 2)

In the end, I reviewed the recommendation of the Student Court and made the final binding decision about the accused student. My menu of consequences for honor code and student handbook violations included after-school detention, In-School Suspension, Out-of-School Suspension, Saturday detention, community service, loss of school privileges, and reassignment to one's sender school. Of course, the Student Court could not recommend consequences such as a long-term sentence, cruel or unusual punishment, and decisions that could pose danger to a member of the UA community, including the student. In the history of the Student Court at UA, I over-turned only two cases and I did so because they would potentially negatively impact our small staff of seven.

Established in 2003, the Student Court is composed of five justices, three student advocates/advisors, a clerk, and a court recorder.

[The role selections were] based off of the skills and talents of those original ten people who thought they would be better at what capacity that we got our original ten-person model with four justices, one chief justice, two advisors lead by a head advisor, one clerk and one recorder. (Chumley)

Its organizational structure provided for a smooth functioning court process.

I really enjoyed the fact that it was as structured as it was. If it had been less structured things could've gotten crazy and it would have been more chance for students to kind of go nuts more than they should have. But with the structure that was laid out and rules and the very clearly laid out agendas, that was great. Having a chief justice was extremely helpful. That led to a whole lot more order than if it hadn't been one. (Symphony)

The Student Court's second Chief Justice, as identified in Table 8, observed:

Since we only had one case, a few meetings, and few experienced leaders, I was seen as more of the one with "the answers" rather than as an equal. If we would have had more practice opportunities where the other members of the court could have mastered their roles, I believe they would have been able to function more independently. However, since I was one of the few that knew a lot of about the proceedings, the other members of the court looked to me to lead. For that reason, I felt I should back off and let them reach their own conclusions [during hearings]. (Bostic)

The Student Court member selection process mirrored what Bostic experienced when he was first chosen as an Associate Justice and what he implemented as Chief Justice of the second Student Court:

I applied to join the court at the end of my sophomore year and became an Associate Justice in my junior year. I did not know very much about how the selection process worked at that time. The next year, when I was

chosen as Chief Justice, I was very involved in the selection process. In that selection, the previous Chief Justice, the Clerk and I were the only ones who came to the meeting and had a voice. We based our choices on several factors – their current abilities, their potential, and their work ethic. We judged their current abilities off of a mock trial and essays. Their current abilities were important because there is little opportunity to “train” them, and they may potentially need to be able to go from the start. Potential was important because we knew we would need leaders for the next year, and we felt that there were certain students who, with a little training, could do very well. Their work ethics would come into play here; we would judge if we felt they could reach that potential and how committed they would be to the court.

Table 8

Successor Court Members

The Bostic Court - Second Court – Established 2006	
Pseudonym	Role
Bostic	Chief Justice
Paris	Associate Justice
Karmelita	Associate Justice
Kennedy	Associate Justice
Imani	Associate Justice
Harley	Advocate/Advisor
Jade	Advocate/Advisor
April	Advocate/Advisor
Faith	Clerk
Valerie Dawn	Recorder

He continued:

The next year, after I had graduated, I led the selection processes for the next court. We graded them on several factors that we judged from a mock trial and essays. These grades differed somewhat from person to person, so the selection was somewhat arbitrary. However, this arbitrariness is what makes the court work so well—everything in the functioning of the court is about personal opinion, and usually there are not a lot of hard facts that can be used. So, having the confidence in one's own judgment of another's ability, while sometimes unfair, is ultimately how the court runs. (Bostic)

Before Bostic became Chief Justice; however, he underwent an introduction to and preview of his new role at the hands of the then sitting Chief Justice Chumley:

To prepare me for becoming the Chief Justice, my predecessor, gave me extra information in my packet than the average justice. Looking back, I think [Chumley] recognized a difference in style and operation, and wanted me to lead the court in my own fashion. While he was more likely to lead the discussion, I was more prone to just guiding it. He recognized that and did not advise me on any way to “run” the court. He gave me his contact information, and I asked him a few questions over the year on how to lead. (Bostic)

While the Chief Justices executed a transition plan of sorts, the Advocate/Advisors were largely self-taught and experienced on-the-job training (Greenwald, 2004). An Associate Justice questioned the limited access to essential training for Advocates/Advisors as functioning members of the Student Court.

His defense advisor told everyone he didn't know how to defend him. Jade said he wanted to be the prosecutor—whatever it's called—and Chumley said that he needed to be the defender and then Jade said, “Well, I don't

know how to defend him. I have never been the defender. I don't know how this would work." So Chumley said, "Well, Kyle, you take him over there and just explain it to him." (Paris)

She continued:

When it went to Jade, [he] didn't have any questions. Which, I mean it bothered me in a formulaic way, like—you know—Jade needed to at least try to set up a motive for [the accused student] or at least try and get us to sympathize with him more by saying—you know—you are in tenth grade and this is really hard, but that didn't happen that much. (Paris)

Jade presented his perceptions of the selection process and alluded to the limited training provided to Advocates/Advisors prior to their service to accused students:

I think that the process of what's the word? Initi..yeah, initiating. Of initiating new members into the court, I think it was more haphazard in most cases. You know, we only took maybe 20 minutes out of a morning seminar to—you know—have to go ask questions and do a mock trial. I think the way that it was, the way that it's laid out, it was sort of difficult to access who has the best skills at being a member of the court. I think that something more structured where each person has a better opportunity to participate whether not in front of their peers who are acting like whatever is going on.

Harley concurred with Paris and Jade:

So, I was sitting in the room and the [accused students] of course come in and then all the justices are still outside in the hall or probably in a different room and then we all rise and we watch as the justices come in and they sit down. And we all sit at the same time and at this point we are all looking at Kyle who has been on the court for several years and knows what he's doing. He's completely has gone through this process several

times and just has a hang for it. I remember Jade and I actually looking at Kyle and with these blank faces like, “What are we suppose to ask?” “How are we supposed to help?” “What exactly is our job?” (Harley)

Indeed, they all agreed that appropriate training and continuing education would have improved the skills of those who served as Advocates/Advisors:

I think that I would’ve made better use of my time on the court had I had more experience or had I been—I guess—trained in that area. (Jade)

Chapter Summary and Conclusion

In this chapter, I provided an historical overview of the Student Court and outlined the process for cases utilizing my reflections as the organization’s faculty adviser and as founding principal-director of UA. In the next chapter, I will present the findings of my research study. Specifically, I will describe and explore the articulated stories of members of a school-based youth court via the themes of Leadership and Perceptions.

CHAPTER VI

ANALYSIS – PART ONE

Leadership and Perceptions

Being [a leader] is like being a lady; if you have to tell people you are, you aren't.

Lady Margaret Thatcher (as cited in Maxwell, 1998, p. 45)

In this dissertation, I explored students' perceptions of—and experiences with—the Student Court at an early college high school. In this chapter, I describe and explore the articulated stories of members of a school-based youth court via the themes of Leadership and Perceptions. Specifically, I reflected on my first research question: “How do members perceive their experiences on a school-based youth court?”

Leadership

Bennis (2003) argued there are three ingredients for successful leadership: guiding vision, passion, and integrity. These need not be “traits you're born with and can't change. . . . Leaders invent themselves” (p. 33). University Academy (UA) Student Court members honed their essential leadership skills in any number of curricular and co-curricular activities. From collaborative learning work in academic courses to service with school, civic, and faith community

organizations, members of the Student Court were identified as leaders whether or not they served in official capacities as such. Coble (2003) suggested that one's self-perception and self-awareness be grounded in introspection, reflection, and renewal. Although Coble was referring to educational leaders, this notion is applicable to students as leaders. Indeed, successful leaders—despite ages and life histories—are reflective individuals fully capable—and willing—to learn from their lived experiences (Coble, 2003; hooks, 1994). Bostic, the second Chief Justice of the Student Court, declared:

I think you need to be a strong leader even if you are not in a leadership role on the court. You need to be able to represent the school and you need to be able to look at things objectively and not have your feelings come into play. You just [have to] be able to look at things as what's best for the school and justice; in general, not just what's best for your friends.

This call to service and leadership, while critical, is not without pause, Paris mused:

It's really awkward. You have to tell people terrible things sometimes even if that's what they need to hear, and—I don't know—sometimes even decide things that really severely affect their life for the worst. Even if you could say they are learning their lessons—I mean—it makes you wonder . . . I guess.

Members of the Student Court were held to high standards and were asked to always consider their school and its culture when they there deliberating. In

Chapter V, founding Chief Justice Chumley, contextualized the lived experiences of members of the Student Court. Continuing he reminded:

Probably the biggest experience was learning how to deal with situations like that and I guess I don't know how to phrase it exactly, but perform the duties of the job while at the same time you know being a student and being friends with these people and it got hard.

Chumley further noted:

I think a lot of it is confidence in my own opinions and what I think is right. Before, I found myself a lot times worrying if the decision we were making was going to be popular or not popular and—you know—as time wore on I'd gotten more accustomed to—you know—thinking in terms of “we need to do this, because that is what is right and that is what the rules say and it's what we need to do.”

Admittedly, this is difficult work for high school students. Erikson's (1968) research on the eight stages of identity development is illustrative. During one intense stage, adolescents grapple with concerns of appearance and congruence with others. Adolescents raise questions such as “Who am I?” and “How do I fit in?” When faced with the subject matter or the after-math of a court case, the first Chief Justice alluded to his growth as a leader capable of making “an unpopular decision” and maintaining “confidence in [his] own opinions”:

[A]nd again with the cases like the plagiarism case where Student Court members came personally under fire for the decision that they had made. I think that really stood out to me as a time—you know—being persecuted for making your own decision. It's hard but at the end of the day it's what you have to do and I think that's what I have to do and go forward and—

you know—in other leadership situations and when I've had to make an unpopular decision. (Chumley)

The culture at UA was not the sole beneficiary of the workings of the Student Court; members of the Student Court profited in varying ways. Lora confessed:

I'm also a hot head. I think things through a lot more because I saw that process going on all the time in court so it really calmed me down. I'm more rational. Yeah, I guess. I don't argue as much. It's more of an intelligent debate now with people. I'm not just screaming my point of view. I really, I've learned to understand other people's sides of—like—the problems. So, it's helped in that aspect. Before I make my decisions [now], I kind of look at the sides of things. I even do like a pro/con list now and figure out what's going on. So it's helped.

She continued:

I've learned from Student Court how to be patient with a lot of people because I don't get along with everyone and a lot of people get on my nerves or they just do really stupid things and so, from Student Court I don't yell as much or curse people out. That's good.

Bostic saw the benefit of Student Court service beyond the confines of the court chambers, "just being able to think on your feet and reason objectively will help. I have noticed that it helped with other classes." In the end; however, he concluded:

Information about how a court runs is not as relevant as what I learned about myself: how to lead, how I lead, how to speak and write well, and how to live up to expectations, to name a few. (Bostic)

Several researchers (Butts & Buck, 2002; Pearson & Jurich, 2005) have noted the role of student courts in providing enriching experiences for students. Students benefit by serving on the court where they experience a school's student court in action. Students also benefit from a deeper understanding of rights, responsibilities, and freedoms as students (Lifton, 1997).

I think it provides a school community a way to participate in school leadership and participate in the community, so—you know—I would say that something like [Student Court] should be considered in every school. (Jade)

Mikel offered:

It was a great opportunity to gain leadership skills. And it made students feel more involved with their school system as well as the county school system, because we went by the student handbook that is given to everyone in Potter County Schools along with our own [school] creed.

She attested to the impact of the Student Court on her growth and development as a person and even years later as an undergraduate student at a southeastern university:

I do kind of pride myself now as a person who's able to talk and get along with many different people—deal with people—because people are different and they are going to come at you differently. You're going to have to make decisions right then and there that may affect other people. And I've had to do that since leaving court in my personal life and school life and with other organizations I've recently joined. I really like the fact that Student Court was ran by us. We had very little interference. We had an adviser—the principal—but we were able to come together as a cohort

and do it. And I think we succeeded in our leadership positions. I think we did. (Mikel)

Perhaps the most touted benefit is the notion that students assume responsibility for themselves, their peers, and their school community when they serve the Student Court (Butts, Buck, & Coggeshall, 2002; Mitra, 2005). One Advocate/Advisor used language of possession—or more likely responsibility—when expressing her sentiments:

As a student advisor, I felt like I got to help out my students, who needed helping. My friends in some cases sometimes total just acquaintances that kind of seemed and sometimes people that I didn't know went to our school. I felt like I had a role to play in their experience at that school and that it was a positive role because they wouldn't be meeting me in that capacity if they didn't need some sort of disciplinary action in almost every case. (Symphony)

The words of Nobel Laureate and fellow Morehouse alumnus, Martin Luther King, Jr., were so etched in our minds as first year students at Morehouse College that we would often recite them with such ease that some assumed we had penned the phrases ourselves. King (1977) wrote, "The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy" (p. 35). Student Court members found themselves in times of challenge and controversy that tested their resolve as leaders:

One thing that was sort of different about the court and I had not really thought about how you would respond to it is what happens when a friend of yours or someone you have a close relationship with comes in front of the court, at some point in the year. How you deal and respond to that and—you know—we actually as a court had talked about it—you know—we had talked to one another and saying we, “This is how I feel that situation.” “What is your advice about how I should handle this.” “I know this person.” (Harley)

He continued and pondered:

[In] some cases where you had necessarily known more information than was officially presented to the court [this] would have made you biased to the court. You could of have sat out of the case but also, “What happens when you’re in a case?” (Harley)

Another challenge of the Student Court is confidentiality and access to personal student information. Members of the court, student participants, and any observers had to recite an oath or promise to maintain confidentiality. The Student Court process delineated repercussions for those who disregarded or otherwise broke this oath:

Anyone who breaks their oath of confidentiality shall be suspended from the court for a period of no less than two sessions. If a second offence (sic) is committed, they shall be suspended indefinitely, and upon the third offence (sic) shall be expelled from the court, at the discretion of the senior members of the court.

Paris expressed:

It was very a weird experience because I never actually had any actual control over like—you know—the outcome of somebody’s life and I know

we just offer or suggest what happens, but usually it's followed through with. And in the two cases where the people were ultimately sent back to their sender schools it was really heavy.

She then articulated the elements of their ultimate “test” as justices:

So, then the process didn't end after the hearing. What would happen is afterwards—you know—tons of people would come up to us. Like some, I remember when we were hearing the ninth graders. When I left the building we were in Bowman-Gray and the buses were about to leave I was flocked by like 15 kids who were asking if we kicked them out. So, afterwards I think it's a test of the justice. It's a test of the Justices.

Chief Justice Bostic concurred with Paris and other members:

One of the biggest things about the court is that we have to keep it silent about other students at our school and one of the biggest pressures I think in high school is—you know—telling your friends all the drama going on and whenever there's a case it's about one of our friends. Being in such a tight knit community, we know a lot of what is going on and everyone wants to know about their friends. So, still being a student at the school as well as being a court member, I had to be able to separate the two and it was kind of hard in the beginning . . . but it's also a big responsibility knowing that that's someone's information that they don't want you to share and you need to respect their rights as well. So, I think that's really helped me grow because I've realized it's not just about being able to find out secrets, it's—and more importantly—it's about actually helping the students learn and helping the court develop.

As faculty adviser to the Student Court at UA, I typically restricted my day-to-day involvement to ensure that students were able to truly operate the court. I had to intervene; however, when I discovered that a member of the court had

shared confidential information. Chief Justice Chumley noted in a message to the Clerk (Personal communication, June 15, 2006):

[The principal-director] already talked with [the Student Court member], and he said the probation thing. He also said that we (leaving members) may approach him and talk to him about it, but that the members who will be working with him next year should just understand that the Student Court member] already talked to [the principal-director], and leave it at that, but that they should report anything happening again directly to [principal-director].

The power of positive peer pressure was underscored by Butts and Buck (2000, 2002) in their work on Teen Courts which argued that pro-social peers exerted positive pressure on other adolescents. Scully (as cited in Bennis, 2003) observed, “The real role of the leader is to figure out how to make diverse people and elements work together” (p. 106). Symphony reflected:

Getting to see—like I said earlier—both sides of the story as well as getting just to be familiar with the idea of what standards students wanted other students to be held to, that was something that wasn’t addressed at all in a non-Student Court system. It’s the administration and the teachers and [Potter County Schools] in many cases. It’s their expectations for the students, but when a kid realizes that there are other kids around them that have expectations for them, too. It’s a whole other side of the peer pressure thing that is very positive because it’s time that peer pressure is positive.

Ironically, the information, connections, and prestige associated with Student Court membership was similar to that present in founder-driven organizations. In such institutions, decision-making is performed by the founder instead of the

collective and the organization is dependent upon the founder for growth, development, and success (Gottlieb, 2005). One court member confessed:

I didn't like giving up my position when I graduated. I was kind of hoping that I could just keep doing it. I didn't really want Dani to do it, but, oh well. It helped my friendships with a lot of people like Chumley. We became really close. (Lora)

Symphony, an Advocate/Advisor with the Student Court, shared thoughts about the transformative nature of service:

I grew immensely in that I started considering my actions in front of my peers. I'd never really considered anything except for—you know—ashamed reaction or, or a laughing good reaction. I actually started thinking about how my actions affected those and my peers around me and people who saw myself and my peers. That was great and using it further in life. I'm surrounded by peer groups and that's a part of the human nature. You know you have peers and you're grouped together. Knowing that they're times when other people will be held responsible for my actions or their lives will be negatively or positively affected by my actions and my choices. That's great. That's something that every human has to learn sometimes painfully in some people's cases, but it's a very good life long kind of lesson that stays with you and I'm extremely glad that I was a part of Student Court.

Perceptions

As human beings, we are hard-wired to make sense and meaning of our environs and each other. We touch, taste, smell, hear, and see to aggregate and disaggregate sensory data. We—in turn—use this sensory data to intuit, to perceive (Asch, 1946; Heider, 1958; McAdams, 1993, 2001; Ybarra, 2002).

Harley, an Advocate/Advisor with the second Student Court, reflected:

When I first looked at it I couldn't say that I had a really good first impression. Just from an outsiders view all I saw was—you know—of course the two advisors and the five justices that were standing there. It didn't seem like the advisors really did a lot and it didn't seem like justices really did a lot. It actually looked like no one really did anything at all. It seemed like "oh, the Student Court"—you know—you come there and you go up...it's a five minute process. You say what you did and and what you didn't. Everything is really simple and things really quickly . . . it's just pretty straight forward and—you know—you assume that everyone pleads guilty or not guilty—quote, unquote—and it just goes straight from there.

These first perceptions were not lasting; he continued:

I didn't really understand the significance of. . . I mean I understood the difference, but I didn't really understand the significance until I actually became a member and had just seen how things worked differently with the court. . . . And then I started to realize—you know—that this is actually something serious. There is even in the diction and the rhetoric that we use. It was supposed to be very careful in what we say because of how people would perceive it and respond to our concept of the court. (Harley)

Bostic, Chief Justice of the second Student Court, and Paris, an Associate

Justice of the second Student Court, much like Harley, were unsure of the nature of the Student Court:

At first I didn't know what the Student Court was about. I knew that it was a court that solved disciplinary problems for students at our school, but I never really heard of experiences with them or what it was really about. So, I applied and I became part of the court for my junior and senior years. (Bostic)

Well I had heard about the Student Court when I was in ninth grade and really didn't know much about it and that continued throughout tenth grade. I did know that Kyle and Chumley were in it and they kind of were respected because they were in the court and I was really interested in debate so I thought it should follow so I thought I should try and get on the

court. So, like tenth grade I tried out for the position of the justice and luckily got it. So, that was real exciting. (Paris)

Founding Chief Justice Chumley's perceptions spoke to the perceived influence of the Student Court:

My initial perception of the court was that we would be this big bad ass governing body of University Academy . . . pardon the language. What I really found was that our role served more of just a means of expressing student to student that as a student community we were not going to be accepting of this behavior. I think a lot of times the mindset that is student versus teachers and administrators and you know all your friends are suppose to have your back and when you have to go to the principal's office for spray painting a car or something like that, but this changed the idea from the you know it's not us against them, but we're not happy with the fact that you spray painted a car either so that creates this sort of dynamic of policing ourselves and I think the results of that were fairly evident.

He continued:

It evolved into that sort of self-policing student-on-student governing sort of system that just worked as a way to advertise what the student body themselves felt was appropriate or not appropriate for their peers.
(Chumley)

This notion of fairness at the hands of one's peers was present in the narratives of both Student Courts. A member of the Chumley Court recalled that the idea to establish a school-based youth court aligned with UA's mission to graduate confident, ethically responsible, life-long learners who are prepared to succeed in higher education and in the changing world beyond:

My initial reaction when I think in terms of actually having this happen, was that it was like a really good idea, [it] sounded very student-centered, very University Academy. [The principal-director] always placed an emphasis on rules that made sense as opposed to rules that didn't really need to be stated. [He] never once had a rule that wasn't there for a reason and we appreciated that. When [the principal-director] brought up Student Court that made me feel like once again the students were been given rules that actually had a purpose rather than students being given punishments by their superiors all the time. (Symphony)

The mission necessitated active student engagement in all facets of their high school experience including the Student Court. Like members of the Chumley Court, Paris, an Associate Justice with the Bostic Court, emphasized:

I think there's a perception that—and it's probably true—there's a lot more real justice in [the Student Court] because the students who offer the consequences have been in the stressful positions that the people who committed the crimes or whatever, so they aren't disconnected from it like teachers might be. I don't think teachers have bad intentions, but sometimes it's like hard to like—I guess—remember what it was like even if it was just—you know—ten years ago that they were in school.

Another member of the Bostic Court agreed:

I think the Student Court, the fact that we actually had one at our school gives students a feeling of participation uh within—you know—their school and their community and gives them—I guess—a feeling of fairness. Where at most schools—you know—it's all up to the principal or disciplinary figure, but at our school we were able to—you know—have this court that suggests punishments or consequences to one of your actions. I guess it sort of felt like it was a bit more of an equal playing ground as oppose to—you know—someone up here who doesn't know what's going on. (Jade)

A concomitant perception was one that non-members had of the Student Court.

Mikel, an Associate Justice with the Chumley Court, shared her thoughts and views:

I think at first a lot of kids thought it was a joke, but we got our first—I don't want to say trial—but our first, what's the term we used? . . . Our first case, [in] a few days, like it was within a short amount of time when Student Court began and we made decisions based upon that. One of our first cases had to deal with riding on campus. If you were an underclassman it was a rule that even if you had your license students ninth grade and tenth grade couldn't leave campus during school hours throughout the day and we had several students, well a couple of students, who disobeyed that rule and it was brought before the Student Court. I can't speak for anyone else, but I know I was a little bit scared and nervous how it was gonna go cause here I was in front of our peers and two of them were actually my classmates. So I don't know how things were gonna be after the fact. I didn't know how they were gonna react to it.

She was thankful of her peers' responses in the aftermath of the Student Court's decision, “Uh, they took it pretty well” (Mikel). Of course, the Student Court established a reputation via its first hearings and decisions:

After that second or third case, I guess not too many kids wanted to come to us. . . . We were told that students were—or we got the impression that students were—afraid of Student Court. (Mikel)

This perception was reinforced by what one Student Court member depicted as scare tactics:

I had a few disappointments in what happened [during my time with the Student Court] and one of the big ones was I noticed that kids in the court really liked to make an example of the kids . . . I just got the sense that

sometimes the Student Court was about scaring kids and I really didn't like that even if it is effective. I mean maybe if that's the purpose it should be made more clear. [S]omebody would say something like, "Well we need to teach them a lesson or show people that you just can't get away with that", which I agree with to an extent, but I don't know. (Paris)

Two founding members of the Student Court confirmed Paris' observations:

We stuck together as a court. Students didn't understand how important it was for us as a court to make decisions because if not then Student Court would've been seen as a joke. It would've given kids the okay to disobey other rules and think that no consequences would've been given. (Mikel)

We wanted to be the big bad group on campus. (Chumley)

The founding members realized that these tactics would not prove effective over time:

We tried not to set it as—you know—a system where Student Court members were feared on campus or people would avoid doing stuff around them because—you know—they'd be afraid of being sent to Student Court. (Chumley)

He continued:

We realized that we weren't [the big bad group on campus] and we shouldn't be that. We were—you know—normal students and the whole point of it was that this is a system run by your peers. (Chumley)

Chapter Summary and Conclusion

In this chapter, I described and explored the articulated stories of members of a school-based youth court via the themes of Leadership and

Perceptions. In the next chapter, I will explore the stories via the theme of Decision-making. I will also utilize data and artifacts from a specific Student Court case to further elucidate these articulated stories.

CHAPTER VII

ANALYSIS – PART TWO

Decision-making and Case 002-F05

In this dissertation, I explored students' perceptions of—and experiences with—the Student Court at an early college high school. In this chapter, I described and explored the articulated stories of members of a school-based youth court via the theme of Decision-making. Specifically, I reflected on my first research question: “How do members perceive their experiences on a school-based youth court?” I utilized data and artifacts from a specific Student Court case to further elucidate these articulated stories. I explored my second research question (i.e., “How do members of a school-based youth court see themselves developing as leaders?”) vis-a-vis Komives et al.'s (2006) conception of the developing self.

Decision-making

Scholars have suggested that when schools involve students, such involvement enables students to develop essential skills for effective and sustained participation in society as responsible citizens (White, 1996; Wyse, 2001). A member of the first Student Court of University Academy (UA) reluctantly offered:

I'm not sure if it sounds sadistic or anything, but I really enjoyed. I really enjoyed having to make tough decisions. I really enjoyed being able to learn about myself, learn about others, my other peers. (Mikel)

Each decision they made gave them a deeper understanding of themselves and of each other:

So, each court member brings their own personality and background to the case and that's one of the most interesting things about it is that if everyone just said the same thing then there wouldn't be any point to it. What's really important about the court is that each person can bring their own experiences into it and use that to shape their decision. (Bostic)

Each decision created closer ties and built relationships between and among members of the Student Court:

The relationship with other court members I think was also important. It was a group of people that I sort of knew because we got into a small school and we know everybody, but didn't really know that well and you get on a court together and you start making decisions. All of a sudden you start to learn things about people that you never knew before about their beliefs and—you know—how they interpret things and you hit this big difference of opinions that you have to work through and make a decision about and that gets back to the whole life skills thing that helped. It helped me a lot with learning to understand other peoples points of view about different things and accepting that not everybody saw things the way I saw them. (Chumley)

Early on, members of the Student Court realized the importance of the organization and the increasing responsibility they had as its members. Chief Justice Bostic shared salient thoughts about the court's aim:

It's one of those [organizations] that actually serves a real purpose in the community. It's funny because we always say that it's the one [group] that never wants to meet and it's the only [group] that you have to apply and actually earn a spot to be a part of and as a result it's a privilege to be a part of it.

As noted in Chapter I, Harpaz (2005) concluded that "Learning is best when it occurs in an authentic context" (pp. 141-142) and when students wrestle with a problem or challenge. The Student Court offered its members multiple opportunities for decision-making and decision-management. Chief Justice Bostic continued:

We have a big impact on the community because our decisions shape their lives, whether it's the lives of one of their friends or just the school environment and experience...the decisions that we make have large impact.

Even less-experienced members of the Student Court concurred with this notion:

I think it sort of gives students the opportunity to participate within their school decision making process and it gives the students a feeling of—it sounds silly to say—justice, but to know there's a process involved whereby you may be tried by—you know—a jury of your peers who sort of know what you're going through and have had similar situations and are able to—you know—who are able to try to discern—you know—what you did. I think it's important to have that as opposed to—you know—having somebody just—you know—dictate what's what and not actually—you know—have some sort of accountability, part of the community, the student community with a method of participation that I think is important. (Jade)

The Student Court embraced the words of US Senator Fulbright, who declared, “we should welcome and not fear the voices of dissent” (as cited in Nemeth & Owens, 1996). It was not uncommon for members of the Student Court to differ in interpretation of the alleged offense or the resulting consequence. The two Chief Justices cited similar observations:

It came down to splitting hairs on different—you know—the word of law versus the general sentiment of law or school rules [that] we would jokingly refer to as the law. I guess that was probably the one that I learned the most from because it was very clear to me and I was very adamant about the fact that—you know—regardless of what that specific wording of it was, there was a general sentiment behind the rule that had been broken. There were other justices on the court who were just as equally adamant about the fact that the wording was confusing or misleading or whatever it may be and that really sort of opened my eyes to the fact that not everybody looked at things the way I did and—you know—even though a group of us agreed that something wrong had been done there was a huge difference in opinion on what should be done about it. So that sort of notion of having to deal with other people and other people’s opinions still stands out to me and I still remember that when I run into situations where you know I’m at loggerhead with people about a certain issue or about how best to go about doing something. Trying to step back and remember that experience and use that knowledge to sort of make a better decision. (Chumley)

I’m thinking about this case in which we were deadlocked. I think going into it everyone has their own opinion of what should be done even before we hear the case. It’s impossible to separate that bias even though we listen to it as impartially as possible we still can’t take away our own personalities. So we all went into that case and heard it and heard the same facts but we all came out of it differently. So, I think in that case we each grew as much as we did in all the other cases because we had to get through conflict. So, although each of us had skills and strong leadership skills that we’ve developed outside of the court we really had to apply them and kind of have this clashing to make sure we were correct in what we were thinking. It’s like if there’s ever a debate you know that by the end

you will have gotten closer to the truth whether you were right or not...it's kind of that same way with this case. (Bostic)

According to Fox (1987), effective group decision-management requires increased participation in the decision-making process which leads to increased follow-through. The decision-making and decision-management processes benefit from the active involvement of each member. By working together with the processes, participants increase and sustain communication and promote and enhance understanding between and among all involved. In the case of the Student Court, when students (i.e., members and accused students) participate in the processes, they become invested and thus benefit from the experience (Callaghan, 2005; Huber, 1942; Lifton, 1997; McPartland, McDill, Lacey, Harris, Novey, 1971; Seyfrit, Reichel, & Stutts, 1987).

I really like the fact that it was a panel of their peers so things that were extremely offensive to, say, teachers, or extremely offensive to administrators, in general, wouldn't have been seen the same way by current and fellow students. I felt like that gave a lot of . . . I guess I want to say appropriateness to the whole process. We didn't feel like we were being asked to give out judgments that were suggested by anyone else and in my case at least like the entire court was essentially student led. Not just student centered, but actually student led. (Symphony)

This notion of a student-led, school-based, youth court evoked a range of emotions. Jade, an Advocate/Advisor, was both frightened and excited:

You know, it was sort of, sort of a scary position to be in to know that something you do or something you say may affect—you know—the high

school career or even further of one of your peers. So it was interesting to me to be able to be in that position and get to know what that was like. I would say it's a very good thing to be able to have a student court within a school. You know, some schools may be harder to do that; fortunately, we have a small school so we were able to facilitate it more easily. (Jade)

The more members of the Student Court participated in decision-making, the more they got into "flow" with a particular Student Court mindset. Csikszentmihalyi (as cited in Schollaert & Leenheer, 2006), described flow as, "being completely involved in an activity for its own sake. . . . Every action, movement, and thought follows inevitably from the previous one, like playing jazz. Your whole being is involved, and you're using your skills to the utmost" (p. 165). Harley reported being in sync or flow with the Student Court mindset or frame:

You just get to that point when you enter the court mindset and you get into the court mindframe. You get the facts and it becomes as if the person is faceless in a sense. It just trying to get the facts and trying to get their mindset. Trying to understand what actually happened and making a decision based on that and not so much on your personal relationships [with the accused student].

The impact of UA's culture on the Student Court and its decision-making was evidenced in Chief Justice Bostic's narrative:

I think you have to look at the culture that we promote here and the type of students we want and the behavior we expect from them. And we kind of have to keep that in mind as we make our decisions. Our decisions if that were too and if our recommendation was to be followed and how that would affect our school environment.

This culture, he noted, required “a high level of ethical and academic performance.” In addition, the culture of UA required a high degree of responsibility on the part of students, especially when they were in attendance at Student Court hearings:

I also felt like it brought a whole lot more responsibility on to the students because their reputation was at stake in front of fellow students. Not that court members would ever have spoken out of turn or said anything that they weren't suppose to because of the confidentiality, but I do know that there were students who felt like they had even more reason to not be embarrassed by having to go before Student Court and not because anything would be said publicly, but just because the people would have to be in that room. I know that was a factor in several people's decision not to make stupid decisions. It was really good to be able to see that behavior improvement in some of them and sometimes it's just stupid stuff they decided not to do because they knew that other people would find out about their stupid stuff. That was great. (Symphony)

Case 002-F05

One of the early challenges the Student Court faced was utilizing what is often termed legal precedence. Perelman (1963) noted, “The rules of justice arise from a tendency natural to the human mind to consider as normal and rational . . . behaviour in conformity with precedents” (p. 86). Put another way, members of the Student Court wanted to decide similar cases in a similar fashion. However, just as each student is distinct and unique; so, too, was each Student Court case. From my experiences as founding principal-director of University Academy (UA) and faculty adviser of the Student Court, I observed that each case brought its own flavor, it its own tenor. Chief Justice Bostic

reflected: “It’s kind of interesting because all the cases are different in their own way. There are no black and white cases.” He continued:

I probably wish that some of the other students [who were not members of the Student Court] would have been able to hear and know the facts. Even if I went back in time and knew everything that I knew now, I still wouldn’t be able to tell them because as a member of the court I would still want everything to be confidential, but I wish they would have known so that they would have known. They still would have had faith in the court as a good representation of the school and justice.

Of all of the cases to be adjudicated by the Student Court, only one was cited by the majority of members and with detail. Six of the eight participants in this case study overtly or covertly referenced Case 002-F05 when sharing their perceptions of—and experiences with—the Student Court (see Appendix H). To recapitulate the case, tenth grader Mathias was alleged to have violated UA’s student handbook and honor code by plagiarizing extensive passages of web-based essays and articles for coursework in social studies and science. Mathias’ admission that he only copied a few short passages fueled the imagination of his peers. Bostic recalled being inundated once they handed down their recommendation:

So I had a lot people approaching me wanting to know why we said what we did and made the decisions that we made because the student hadn’t told them the same things that he had told us. It made everyone think that the Student Court wasn’t a good representation of the school and what the student body and what they felt. . . . We thought what we did was right, but the other students may have disagreed. So it kind of tore at the fabric of the school because we expected everyone to perform ethically and when

someone didn't and there was a lot of disagreement about what went on. It was harder as a result of that.

In Chapters I and V, I stated the challenge of making a life-altering decision about a peer. Paris shared:

We had a tenth grader who seriously plagiarized in his papers. He pretty much took text from the websites verbatim and it was just paragraphs of texts. It wasn't, obviously, a mistake where he forgot to reference something or forgot to cite something. It was, it was bad. In his case he came in knowing what he had done was wrong and that it was going to be enforced because—I mean—he really didn't have much of a defense for himself.

Paris was deeply troubled by Mathias' decision to plagiarize. She believed Mathias had made the decision in haste without consideration of the long-term repercussions and impact. She summarized her learnings as an Associate Justice:

What I've learned in the Student Court is that people make decisions for—like the things people do to essentially almost ruin their high school career—that decision takes place in like two seconds. It takes like two seconds of thought to say, “Well, I'm really tired, I'm really stressed out, I'm just going to copy and paste this. No one will ever notice.” I don't think it's really something deviant that goes through someone's head when they decide to cheat. It just, I think what happens is they don't think they are going to be punished and they think if they do they don't go through these steps in their head to realize what actually will happen.

The deliberation portion of the Mathias' hearing lasted almost twice as long as the typical twenty minute session. Bostic recollected:

[I]t was up to us in the hearing to actually figure out what was going on. So it was somewhat hard to get all the facts straight, but the student had cheated or plagiarized on several assignments and which is not performing up to the expectations. So in the deliberations we all pretty much agreed that he needed to be reassigned.

The five justices unanimously found Mathias in violation of the student handbook and honor code; they recommended that he be immediately dismissed from UA. I, too, struggled with what to do. Given UA's relationship with Gilman University, I knew that it was critically important for early college high school students to be able to navigate undergraduate studies without the close supervision of adults. I knew that the first two grade levels at UA were carefully designed to function as an incubator and as an oasis wherein students were encouraged to grow and learn. The ethical implications of plagiarism; however, were harder to dismiss. Plagiarism required more than a student confession and the granting of forgiveness. Gilman University professors—especially those who were opposed to the idea of high schoolers swarming “their” campus—felt that UA faculty and staff must ensure that those students who were advanced to university studies were—at a minimum—ethically responsible. Associate Justice Mikel recounted the difficulty in determining the outcome. For her, the entire process—from hearing the case and deliberating the facts to managing the results of their decision—was about leadership:

It was a hard decision at the time. Yes, it was. Yes, it had negative effects afterwards, but we had to set an example because nothing, nothing had

ever happened like this before and I remember discussing with other justices when we were in the deliberation after the case was presented to us. “If we were to let this slide we would be doing our students an injustice as a whole. . . . You don’t learn by plagiarizing.” So being able to make that decision knowing that kids, being kids, at that point they were going to disagree with it, but being able to make an educated decision like that and know that it’s for the better is leadership to me and sticking by your decision.

Once the Student Court made its decision, they returned to the chambers to share their recommendation with those assembled. One Associate Justice confessed:

I couldn’t even look at [Mathias] when Chumley read that we offered reassignment because it was—I mean—I think everyone, well most everyone at University Academy wants to stay at University Academy and it was kind of heart-breaking to know that—you know—this kid is probably a pretty good kid. I didn’t know him that well, but he decided to do something in like two seconds which would change at least an entire year of his life. (Paris)

I decided to wait to make a decision about Mathias. I needed time to think through what their recommendation meant to me and what my final decision would mean for the school community. Prior to this, I had upheld the recommendations of the Student Court, only making minor adjustments when their recommendations would unfairly penalize faculty or staff. For example, once when Chief Justice Chumley informed me that they were recommending three days of in-school suspension (ISS), I adjusted their recommendation. I did so because UA did not have an ISS teacher or an ISS classroom; therefore, a

faculty or staff member would have had to forgo planning time to serve as ISS teacher and would have had to use the school's only conference room as the ISS classroom.

In the end, I decided that I would alter the Student Court's decision and permit Mathias to remain at UA for the rest of the semester and then reassign him at the end of the semester. I determined that it would have less of an impact on his academics and that it would permit him time for social closure with his peers. Because UA is a small school, students historically developed close bonds with each other (Cushman, 2005; Jobs for the Future, 2008; Rohde, 2001).

Symphony recalled:

We were all students. We all had to report to the same people. We all go to the same classes in many cases. We were always there together and we were—you know—always with the same group because it was relatively small school. . . . You felt like your universe was a little bit tighter together because there were people around you all the time that could some way influence something if your behavior wasn't what it needed to be.

Several teachers had noticed minor problems with students citing sources that academic year. In the days leading up to Mathias' hearing, teachers spoke to students to remind them of the importance of giving credit to the hard work of others. The night before the Student Court heard Mathias's testimony, a self-described concerned student sent me an electronic message (Personal communication, October 4, 2005):

Mr. Burks, It's 11, I'm tired and I'm sorry if this doesn't make sense, but it is really irking me and I feel like I'm losing sleep over something that I shouldn't be. I have been talking to many of my fellow classmates as we have been observing the recent uproar of teachers regarding students cheating and/or plagiarizing. We all understand that this is a major concern because of the honor code and just our school in general. However, we also are currently on edge because of the rumors of certain people being in trouble because of this issue. It is **greatly** (emphasis is the student's) affecting how we do our work because we feel like that even if we know we would never cheat or steal anyone else's ideas; we will be accused of plagiarizing if we use any sources. (Even when we are explicitly instructed to do so.) (i.e., if a student uses a specific fact that is universally accepted and found on many websites, does that mean they plagiarized it?) I am, of course, speaking from a limited view point of a student but I believe that something should be said by someone to help us stop being so paranoid about just writing a simple paper or doing a project. I noticed that lots of students were complaining (myself included) and I decided that complaining wasn't going to get us anywhere and that someone should say something to you. I'm terribly sorry if that didn't make sense, I do hope that an end will come to this unfortunate matter, and I hope I have not said anything wrong or offensive.
Thank You, Evan Hudson

I consistently encouraged UA students to voice their perceptions and concerns directly to me without fear of retribution. We started this approach during the first week of UA's existence and it continued throughout my tenure. That morning I read and responded to Evan's heartfelt appeal (Personal communication, October 5, 2005):

Tony Burks/Faculty/Gilman University
10/05/2005 10:55 AM
To Evan Hudson/Students/Gilman University
Subject Clarity is a cool thing: A word about cheating and plagiarism

It is not at all a problem, Evan. Thanks for contacting me directly—it is better to get it from us as faculty and staff than peers. That's why your peers elected you as a member of the Student Council.

Now a quick word: one of my concerns is that some students think checking a few websites amounts to research. It's a cool tool, however, it doesn't compare to getting down and dirty with a book...enough about that, let me share some thoughts about your concerns.

We WANT you to use sources; however, we want you to use them appropriately. Without going into details—and given the confidential nature of a matter at hand—the uproar is completely justified. So instead of going into the specifics of a particular case, let me offer you an example of use and abuse:

THE EXAMPLE:

When you consult a source, you are expected to appropriately cite what you use. Let's say you read the following passage from my to-be-published book:

Preachin' John lived on a thriving plantation in the heart of the deep South. He had spent his early life enslaved in Georgia. Once he secured his freedom, he became a traveling preacher who believed in the power of dreams. Though Preachin' John loved Georgia dearly, he hated the oppression his people still endured in the state. He knew that he had to move elsewhere in order to survive. So Preachin' John thought long and hard, but not too long and not too hard, then fashioned a dream.

Then let's say you are working on a paper about the lives of people near the end of United States slavery. If you were to quote my passage directly, you'd merely slap quotation marks around it, and depending on the style (APA, MLA, etc.) document it:

"Preachin' John lived on a thriving plantation in the heart of the deep South....So Preachin' John thought long and hard, but not too long and not too hard, then fashioned a dream." (Cite source) and/or put my book in your bibliography.

Even if you paraphrase my story, you still have to cite me as a source:

Burks captures the story of Preachin' John...blah, blah, blah..then the citation of my book as a source.

The matter really gets out of hand when a student writes the following as her own:

Preachin' John lived on a production plantation in the the peach state. John spent his early life as a slave who wanted freedom. One day he paid his master and became a freedman. He traveled around Georgia given enslaved Africans hope. And though Preachin' John loved Georgia dearly, he hated the oppression his

people still endured in the state. He knew that he had to move somewhere else in order to survive. Preachin' John thought long and hard and decided he had to leave Georgia.

This student has taken my work as her own (AND I AM STEAMIN' MAD...wouldn't you be as the author?). There are no citations, no indications that the work was done by someone else (that would be me, again). A simple Google search would reveal that I performed this story at the National Storytelling Festival a few years ago. As long as you cite your sources, you are cool. As far as commonly known things (and using the example above): you are correct, you typically don't cite commonly known things. I've always said, when in doubt, just cite it.... But the BEST rule of thumb is to know your audience...in this case your audience would be your teacher or professor. Ask each teacher how he wants you to cite your sources; then do your best to follow their standards for THEIR class. You may luck up and each teacher/professor will use the same method and have the same rules; more often than not, you will have folk using various ways. So, always ask the person how they want you to approach sources and their citing.

In conclusion, there is soo much more to the story that you have. I will share your concerns with faculty and staff; once we work through some issues, [the College liaison] and I will spend some quality time with our student body working through a few more examples. And you are correct, you shouldn't be losing sleep over this at all. I do believe you are attuned to this matter and won't do it (NOT because you worry about being caught, BUT because you know it is not your work).

Thanks again and be well. tlb2

Evan responded to me later that evening (Personal communication, October 5, 2005):

Mr. Burks, You are the most amazing person ever. That made me feel a lot better about the whole situation, and it definitely makes a heck of a lot more sense. I did realize that I'm sure I was not getting the whole picture, as I shouldn't have been, but I did think it was something worth asking about. I think it would be a wonderful idea for sharing this with everyone, and I will definitely try to get everyone calmed down and reassure them that this whole thing is not a big conspiracy out to accuse everyone of anything.

Thank you for everything and I will do my best to help resolve the murmurs of disgust running through the underclassmen. :-) Now I'm going to catch up on that lost sleep. Ha-ha. Evan

I entered Fitzgerald Gates Hall a few days later for a morning assembly

and was transported back in time by almost four decades. Nothing in my graduate studies gave me an indication of what was unfolding. I was simultaneously proud and troubled by the reaction of the student community. Friends and associates of Mathias sported black armbands emblazoned with pithy quotes. “Down with the Man!” and “Save Mathias” were among the slogans that adorned hand-lettered shirts, hats, and skin. Students were debating who had been dismissed from UA over the years and why. When I asked what was going on, they told me that I had always taught them to speak truth to power and that they were doing so, “right then and there”. They stated that the Student Court and the administration had wrongly accused Mathias of plagiarism. I never thought that I would be classified as “the man” during my tenure as an administrator, but there I was, “the man” in the eyes of my students. One member of the founding court recounted:

[Mathias] started a whole propaganda movement after the fact of the case. [It] included armbands, T-shirts, [and] nasty e-mails to Student Court members . . . things being said to us. . . . It was really challenging. I guess part of the experience was learning that—you know—that you have to deal with the things that are unfair or you get in trouble and people get mad at you for things you didn't really do, but there's nothing you can do about it. So, in a lot of ways it was a lot of life skills experience. (Chumley)

These “life skills” were the essence of service to a school-based youth court. These “life skills” are essential for what happens once a decision has been made: decision-management (Fox, 1987; Manz & Neck, 1995).

Service and the Developing Self

I concur with Mishler (1991) who wrote, “How we arrange and rearrange the [interview] text in light of our discoveries is a process of testing, clarifying and deepening our understanding of what is happening in the discourse” (as cited in Riessman, 1993, p. 60). Each time I read a transcript or listened to a digitized audio recording, I reconfigured elements of my comprehensive study analysis. Such was the case when I determined the utility of Komives et al.'s (2006) conception of the “developing self” as a tool to analyze and further describe my findings relative to students' own sense of their growth and development as leaders. The conception of the developing self was explicated by the researchers in a grounded theory study regarding the development of a leadership identity. The conception included five properties:

- deepening self-awareness
- building self-confidence
- establishing interpersonal efficacy
- applying new skills
- expanding motivations (Komives et al., 2006)

I discussed my second research question (i.e., “How do members of a school-based youth court see themselves developing as leaders?”) via the five properties. Although students demonstrated growth and development in multiple properties, I chose to identify select, illustrative narratives to represent evidence of a student's growth and development within a particular property.

Deepening Self-awareness

Student leaders—as they begin to develop a leadership identity—are not typically as self-aware as they become in later stages of development. Their meaningful connections and interactions with students and adults enabled them to determine areas of strength and areas for growth. As they developed their leadership identity, they became skilled at discerning their strengths and weaknesses independent of others (Komives et al., 2006). For example, Chumley demonstrated a deepening self-awareness of leadership:

[W]ithin the court the role of Chief Justice is no higher than the role of any other justice and in terms of voting power, or it's not that they get any more power in making the decision. It's really just sort of leading the court. . . . So that they can sort of guide discussions and questions during the court proceedings and cause they would've seen—you know—what had happened before and they would know sort of where questions would start to get off track, which they did often. Justices would—you know—take great liberty with questions and go off on their own personal tangents and I sort of see the Chief Justice's job as keeping everybody on track and focused and just sort of overall supervising things and making sure that they're going smoothly or as smoothly as possible.

Chumley envisioned himself as a leader who avoided top-down leadership. This was key to his own sense of growth and development as a leader. Jade's deepening self-awareness of decision-making was evidenced by this observation:

For me personally it sort of gave me an insight into somebody who may have their or somebody else's educational career in their hands. You know it was sort of a scary position to be in, to know that something you do or something you say may affect—you know—the high school career or even further of one of your peers. So it was interesting to me to be able to be in that position and get to know what that was like.

Building Self-confidence

Student leaders—as they begin to develop a leadership identity—are not typically as self-confident as they become in later stages of development. Their meaningful connections and interactions with students and adults enabled them to transform self-doubt and/or low esteem. As they refined their leadership identity, they developed a positive self-concept and sought additional opportunities for growth (Komives et al., 2006). Bostic reflected on how they established the Student Court's identity—and in the process—built self-confidence in leadership as members of the school-based youth court:

I think [Student Court participation] really has helped me grow because I've realized it's not just about being able to find out secrets it's—and more importantly—it's about actually helping the students learn and helping the court develop. And through that process the court has sort of created an identity of its own.

Also, Harley reflected on the Student Court's role in building self-confidence in his decision-making skills as an advisor. In the weeks preceding this particular moment, he lacked confidence to advocate for students who appeared before the Student Court:

[W]hat we did this time is we talked about—you know—“how do you feel about what you did?” We actually went and got into their minds and started to really get a feeling of—you know—how they felt about it. How they would respond to it and what they would say in front of the justices and then we gave them advice based on how they felt. If they [told us what they] felt they regretted the most about the case, we would ask them to actually emphasize, [but] not telling them what to say. We would ask them to emphasize what they felt was particularly bad about what they did or to emphasize how felt they could actually have responded to it in a different way. This is different because we normally would go into the case and extrapolate evidence and this time we were saying, “You should look at this; use this as a strategy and technique of, of . . .” I guess our intent—well, my intent when I was doing it—was “You regret what you’ve done and its important that they understand that you regret what you have done because that could sway them from two days or 20 hours of said community service to maybe 15.” We actually started to advise “clients” in saying—you know—“Emphasize these aspects of what you feel, if you want to say something.” And, sometimes, the diction was really bad and sometimes they sounded more guilty than they were. On the spot it can be difficult to put together the rhetoric that you want to use and the word choices. Sometimes—you know—that doesn’t sound very remorseful at all and so we would say, “Think about what your actions are saying and think about how that is going to be construed by the justices and think about what they are going to interpret. So if you really want to show that you are remorseful really consider that. Really consider the words that you want to use. Really consider how you are going to describe the situation and really consider if you are going to get in there and smile the entire time versus a solemn [look] on your face and apologizing in front of the court” and things of that nature.

For the remainder of his tenure as an Advocate/Advisor, Harley demonstrated confidence of this ilk.

Establishing Interpersonal Efficacy

Student leaders—as they begin to develop a leadership identity—are not typically as interpersonally efficacious as they become in later stages of development. Their meaningful connections and interactions with students and adults enabled them to become equipped to work with people from different backgrounds with divergent viewpoints. As they established their leadership identity, they developed an appreciation for a diversity of opinions and ideas (Komives et al., 2006). For example, Symphony's interpersonal efficacy skills gave her insights into decision-making and perceptions as a member of UA's Student Court:

I got to see a lot about different sides of stories come through and how different people have different experiences even though the exact same thing happens to them. We had one particular case where a boy did something to a girl that would have been relatively okay if he'd done it to a boy, but in her case it was extremely offensive and not harmful personally but not good obviously. And he didn't understand until that day—I think—the difference between playing with guys and playing around with girls at school. I saw it. I saw the light bulb go off in his head when he realized that he can't treat everyone the exact same because other people have different feelings and experiences to bring to the table, which is good.

Applying New Skills

Student leaders—as they begin to develop a leadership identity—are charged with applying new skills they acquire. Their meaningful connections and

interactions with students and adults enabled them to experiment with group dynamics, delegation, decision-management, and public speaking. As they developed their leadership identity, they became skilled at discerning their strengths and weaknesses independent of others (Komives et al., 2006). For example, Mikel considered decision-making skills she acquired and how she applied them after leaving UA:

I looking back on it now—like I said—that was one of my best experiences throughout my four years at University Academy. . . . I do kind of pride myself now as a person who's able to talk and get along with many different people . . . Deal with people, because people are different and they are going to come at you differently. You're going to have to make decisions right then and there that may affect other people. I've had to do that since leaving court in my personal life and school life and with other organizations I've recently joined.

Mikel's understanding of growth and development as a leader resulted in transference of skills and practical application beyond University Academy.

Expanding Motivations

Student leaders—as they begin to develop a leadership identity—have far fewer motivations than they have in later stages of development. Their meaningful connections and interactions with students and adults enable them to redefine their initial reasons for involvement. As they refined their leadership identity, they expanded their motivations and became committed to their involvement (Komives et al., 2006). Lora discussed her expanding motivations for leadership as a member of the Student Court.

[Student Court] helped me to kind of learn who they were because not all of us were in the same grade and we didn't meet up all the time. So, it was a good social network. It's helped me get into schools. I got into State based off of it. I've gotten some scholarships. The conference that we did—explaining to the other people what a student court was and how to set one up in their schools that really helped. It looks good for leadership even though I didn't do that much.

I concluded from this reflection that Lora was equally interested in how she might benefit from the Student Court experience as well as how her service to the Student Court could benefit others. Her own sense of growth and development supported a blending of her academic and social as well as school and personal worlds. Bostic offered additional motivations:

I think at first I joined the court to learn mainly about the legal system and how to solve disciplinary problems, but I've realized that it's more than that. It's about developing yourself and the court members around you and try to help the student body as a whole.

Bostic's growth and development in this area included moving beyond to the obvious—an interest in the legal system—to something more esoteric—the development of one's self and of others.

Chapter Summary and Conclusion

In this chapter, I described and explored the articulated stories of members of a school-based youth court via the theme of Decision-making. I utilized data and artifacts from a specific Student Court case to further elucidate these articulated stories. Also, I used the conception of the developing self to

explore students' own sense of their growth and development as leaders (Komives et al., 2006). In the next chapter, I will present implications for further study and recommendations.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

This dissertation explored students' perceptions of—and experiences with—the Student Court at an early college high school in the southeastern region of the United States of America. In this chapter, I presented the findings of my research study and implications for further study. Additionally, I recapitulated the research problem, questions, and methodology.

Recapitulating Problem, Questions, and Methodology

As detailed in Chapters I and III, I decided to research this single case because few studies have explored school-based youth courts and their members. The significance of this study is that members of a “real-life” school-based youth court model were interviewed to ascertain their perceptions and thus gain some understanding of the implementation of this specific youth court model. Additionally, the chosen setting—University Academy—is unique in design and such research is likely to be beneficial to practitioners as they seek to establish more early college high schools.

I used a qualitative case study research design for this inquiry because it enables researchers to probe human and social issues in-depth to make sense of the stories we tell (Glesne, 1999; Rubin & Rubin, 1995). I specifically utilized a

narrative case study approach. The research questions of the doctoral research study were two-fold:

- How do members perceive their experiences on a school-based youth court?
- How do members of a school-based youth court see themselves developing as leaders?

From March 2007 to December 2007, I gathered information from multiple sources to describe a school-based youth court and its members' perceptions of their experiences (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The multiple sources included interviews (semi-structured), interview transcripts, documents (electronic messages, memoranda), archival records (i.e., discipline records, case abstracts), physical artifacts (photographs, drawings), and my personal notes. Interviews were held from May 2007 to August 2007. I offered the same prompt to each participant. All interviews were audio taped and transcribed. The average interview length was 18 minutes and 27 seconds. The longest interview lasted 39 minutes and 4 seconds and the shortest interview took 10 minutes and 48 seconds. I compared the typewritten transcripts to the audio recording to determine that they were correctly transcribed. I also re-read the transcripts to clarify and recast categories. I tested the categories by classifying responses from the pilot study. I then used the final categories to code the remaining

interviews. I used artifacts to confirm and verify what I heard in interviews; I also found artifacts to be additional sources of data.

Findings of Research Study

In Chapter III, I noted that members of the Student Court at University Academy articulated their thoughts about themselves, the court, and their peers via their storytelling. I categorized their narratives into five aspects which were further grouped according to two domains: self (leadership, decision-making, and perceptions) and court (process, history, and perceptions). Their stories expressed important values about leadership, perception, and decision-making, “remind[ing] us of our most important values” (Barrett & Fry, 2005, p. 49).

While it would be misguided to use this single case study as the sole basis for an understanding of student perceptions of their experiences as members of school-based youth courts across the nation, this study would suggest the following:

- School-based youth court members—with guidance and support—seemed capable of meeting established standards and thus seemed equipped for appropriately handling leadership responsibilities.
- A diversity of opinions and ideas on the part of school-based youth court members seemed to yield better school-based youth court decisions and recommendations.

- The demystification of school-based youth court protocols and procedures seemed to improve non-court member perceptions of the school-based youth court.
- School-based youth court members seemed to glean skills from their experiences in service to the court that seemed to transfer to their experiences in the wider community.

Furthermore, I used the information collected from both phases of the case study to develop and present a Student Court Member Orientation. Chief Justice Bostic and I introduced new members to the concept, cases, and process of UA's school-based youth court as noted in Appendix G.

As noted in Chapter V, Advocates/Advisors were largely self-taught and experienced on-the-job training (Greenwald, 2004). In retrospect, the Student Court positions warranted differentiated pre-service training and continuing education to ensure Student Court integrity and effective implementation of the school-based youth court model. An Advocate/Advisor bemoaned the limited access to essential training necessary for effective functioning as members of the Student Court:

We didn't have too many times that we had to convene as a court to try a student . . . maybe three or four, I can't exactly remember. The very first time that I did it I was very, I was really scared because I had no idea what I was doing. And nobody really helped me out, letting me know how to do things. I'd never been in that sort of situation where I had to defend somebody. I didn't really know the procedure and I didn't exactly know the strategies for defending somebody. One of the other advisors put me in

the position of trying to defend somebody and I didn't do a very good job of it because I wasn't very skilled at that time. So that experience was sort of nerve wrecking for me because I wasn't exactly sure what I was doing and the student eventually I think was expelled. I don't think that was my fault or anything like that, but—you know—I sort of slightly felt responsible, but not really. (Jade)

In the future, it may be beneficial for the Student Court at UA to provide differentiated training and continuing education with goals in mind that are similar to those utilized by the Pima County Teen Court (n.d.) which stated:

One of the goals of Teen Court in the Schools is to replace *punitive* sentences (i.e., out-of-school suspension, ISS, or detention) with *positive* or *constructive* sentences. The emphasis on the use of constructive consequences is more beneficial in changing the Minor's behavior. If a Minor is required to complete a sentence that is proactive and designed to teach rather than punish, there is a better chance a lesson will be learned. It is important that Teen Court students participate in the development of constructive sentences, in order for them to feel involved. In Teen Court, the constructive consequences decided upon by peers must be offer both *retribution* and *rehabilitation* to give the opportunity for the Minor to create a change in his/her behavior. (n.p.)

In addition to specific role training, Student Court members and the entire student body could benefit from refresher sessions on the importance of maintaining confidentiality about Student Court hearings. Associate Justice Paris reflected:

I would hear about the case through hearsay from people outside of the case like friends of mine who were not in the court a few days before Chumley would send us the e-mail. So it was really difficult for us to stay totally not biased because through like no fault of my own I'd already heard about the case in somebody else's words. So I would hear about it

from somebody at school and then I would get the e-mail from Chumley and then go in. Usually it would be something totally different than what I had heard.

Implications for Further Study

Further study seems warranted on Student Court decision-making and race/ethnicity. Associate Justice Mikel reflected on her experiences in the aftermath of a particularly difficult Student Court decision:

I'm a [student of color]. This [tenth grader was the same race/ethnicity as me]. It was kind of tough for me because this was our biggest case at that point and here it had to be [a] male [student of color] to break this rule. I am stickler for rules; I go by the rule book. So when he came up before us we asked very simple questions. "Did he or did he not plagiarize?" We asked him why. He claimed that he had a lot of stress on him and he needed to get the work done. That's why he did it. After [he was dismissed from UA] I guess students got the notion that Student Court was racist. They had shirts made saying that students were racist. And just to give a breakdown, the Student Court wasn't racist. We had ten members, four were African-American, four were White and we had one that was Hispanic and one that was of Asian descent.

Additionally, research seems warranted on Student Court decision-making and power. In the pilot study, one Student Court member reflected on her pre-service perceptions of the power wielded by court members:

So, we have a lot of power in our hands—though it's not like complete power, I think it's some sort of power, sort of unstated power. And I think our peers see that because after the one case last year where a student was found plagiarizing a paper in [social studies] . . . I wasn't on the court but I remember hearing a lot about how members of the court were so unfair and how they were racist or how they didn't treat the defendant, not defendant . . . I don't what he was called . . . the person coming before the

court. How they treated him unfairly and unjustly and how he shouldn't have been expelled. It just demonstrated the perceived power of the court. It is not really there, but it's sort of there. I don't know. (Karmelita)

While there have been a few studies on students who come before the school-based youth courts, there is no consistent body of research on notions of race or power and how they impact and inform Student Court decision-making and processes.

Chapter Summary and Conclusion

This dissertation explored students' perceptions of—and experiences with—the Student Court at an early college high school in the southeastern region of the United States of America. In this chapter, I recapitulated the research problem, questions, and methodology. I then presented the findings of my research study and implications for further study.

EPILOGUE

At the close of this research journey, I find myself contemplating an Asian saying a friend shared with me one Sunday morning, "May you live in interesting times" (Shapiro, 2006, p. 669). This quotation has taken on a fresh meaning as I transition into a new role as an assistant superintendent for one of the ten largest public school districts in the United States of America. My final thoughts center around connections between and among this research study, the cohort of 20 small high schools I support, my 16 storytellers, and the third Student Court at University Academy.

Small High Schools

Within the first three weeks of the academic year, my cohort of schools experienced more violence than I experienced at all of the high schools I have served since I began my career in education. These three situations are representative of several others that took place at other high schools within the Ridgeland Unified School District. During the first week, an altercation happened during the instructional day at one of the high school's I supervise. The School District's police department reported (Personal communication, September 4, 2008):

Today around 12:20 p.m., two students confronted another student at Franklin High School. One of the two suspect students used a pencil to

stab the other student three times (twice in the stomach and once in the back of the head). Staff members responded quickly and took control of the situation. The injured student was transported by paramedics to Grace Hospital for treatment. The suspect student is in the custody of School Police. For further details contact SGT. Agape.

I was contacted about two situations involving three high schools I supervise during the second week. The first matter was a disturbance at an athletic event that had implications for an upcoming game (Personal communication, September 11, 2008):

Heads Up: There was a fight after the Junior Varsity game today at Long. The fight involved a large group of mostly adult spectators but they are still sorting out who was involved. City Police was called, arrests were made and the helicopter was overhead dispersing the crowd. All of the principals were present at the Junior Varsity game vs. Franklin. To my knowledge the press did not arrive. Long's varsity game is at Franklin tomorrow. Extra precautions will be made for security.

The second matter—involving two teenagers and one adult—occurred off campus and after school (Personal communication, September 12, 2008):

At approximately 3 p.m. today, a 14 year old female Ridgeland High student became involved in an argument with another female non-student. During the incident, the Ridgeland High student was stabbed in the back. Her mother was near the fight and tried to intervene on her daughter's behalf. The mother was also stabbed. City Police and Ridgeland both responded to the incident. As the suspect was being taken into custody by City Police, she suffered a broken arm. The victims and suspect were transported to the hospital. City Police are handling the investigation.

I have found myself wondering about the correlation between student misbehavior and academic engagement. Specifically, I have wondered about the extent to which students engaged in inappropriate behavior as a result of disengagement from their classes and their schools. I wondered the extent to which the crux of my research study (e.g., student leadership development and student engagement) and the principles of small, autonomous schools espoused by Darling-Hammond (as cited in Sparks, 1997, n.p.) could make a difference for students and their schools. Darling-Hammond concluded:

Teachers need sustained, intensive relationships with students. They also need sustained, intensive relationships with other teachers in which they can solve problems and share knowledge. One of the conditions for teacher effectiveness that is vastly underappreciated in American schools is teachers' time with students. The old factory model assumed that relationships between teachers and students were not important. The most important thing was that teachers would deliver the curriculum more or less as prescribed by someone outside the classroom. We now know that teachers need to know as much about the child as they do about the subject matter and that creating longer and stronger relationships between teachers and students over more hours in the day and over more years makes a tremendous difference in the power of teaching. That is the norm in countries like Japan, Germany, Belgium, Luxembourg, France, and many others. Typically, teachers will spend at least two years with the same group of students, often for many more hours in the school day and for multiple subjects. (as cited in Sparks, 1997, n.p.)

Cotton's (2001) research on small schools also concluded that such schools are nurturers of communities that invite academic rigor and build student-teacher relationships. He stated, "Small schools foster a sense of belonging and minimize student alienation. This is especially important because students who feel

alienated from their school environment tend to lack confidence, self-esteem, and responsibility for self-direction” (p. 14). My hope is that we as educational leaders in schools and districts of varying demographics will recommit ourselves to supporting schools as places wherein all students are taught to care for each other and how to receive care and support. We need renewed emphasis on educators working to know all students, not just the shining stars and worst nightmares. We need community and district support so that students and educators may work to build and sustain a classroom climate of civility and trust and respect—even when class discussions become rife with opinions. Such is the work of leaders and leadership:

We believe that the value ends of leadership should be to enhance equity, social justice, and the quality of life; to expand access and opportunity; to encourage respect for difference and diversity; to strengthen democracy, civic life, and civic responsibility; and to promote cultural enrichment, creative expression, intellectual honesty, the advancement of knowledge, and personal freedom coupled with responsibility (Astin & Astin, as cited in Shields, 2004, p. 113).

Storytellers: Where Are They Now?

I did a seemingly strange thing when I became principal-director of University Academy: I gave each student my personal cellular phone number. I told them, “This number is for your use only. It ain't for your momma or your daddy or for anyone else. If you're having a difficult moment and need to talk, give me a call. If you're some place where you shouldn't be and need some

help, give me a call. If you're about to do something you might eventually regret, give me a call and I'll be your excuse for leaving or staying or stopping or going.” My students were respectful and appreciative of this gesture. Over the years I talked with students who were contemplating suicide. I have listened to students describe unrequited love. I have heard the pain of a death of a grandfather, the hurt of an impending divorce, and the impact of reassignment from UA. I have received midday and midnight calls; calls during the week and on weekends. I have received calls during Spring Break and Summer Break. One student even called me to share the good news of his first time! I took each call in stride knowing that what mattered most to them was that I listened to their stories. In my four and a half year tenure at UA, I received less than five prank calls. When I left the school, most of the calls stopped due to proximity.

I had knee surgery on August 31, 2007, and was confined to my home for two weeks with nothing to do but elevate my leg and stare at the ceiling. To prevent boredom, I established a Facebook profile. Facebook, a web-based social connectivity tool, reunited me first with students from my days at University Academy and eventually with students from all of my previous positions, as well as family and friends from around the world. My Facebook Friends became a support network who thoughtfully responded to my Facebook status updates such as “Tony is writing chapter one . . . prayers welcomed,” “Tony is in Myrtle Beach writing another chapter . . . funny how he can write more away than he

can at home!” and “Tony is stressing. His computer crashed yesterday and he lost everything!” It was no surprise that many of the former Student Court members responded to my appeal for updates on where they are and what they are doing.

Jade graduated from UA in May 2007 and is attending a university in the southeastern region of the United States of America where he is majoring in Music Performance (Personal Communication, October 23, 2008):

Volunteer work: Due to time constraints, I have found very little time to devote to volunteer work in any fashion. Professional Aspirations: I desire to be a professional musician in some capacity or another. I hope this helps out! Good luck with everything. Let me know if you need any more information (or anything more specific).

I thanked him for his response and asked him if he felt that his Student Court experience was beneficial. Although he confessed that the experience is not benefiting him now, he did indicate that the Student Court did impact his experience as a high school student (Personal Communication, October 23, 2008):

I really don't see any benefits to me now, having served on the court. It may be different for someone going into a different professional field, but as a musician, it hasn't necessarily affected my undergraduate experience. More than anything, the sort of community that it created enhanced my high school experience. That the students had such a contributinal (sic) role within the educational community really speaks highly of the type of school that University Academy is and the quality of the communal atmosphere.

Bostic graduated from UA in May 2007 and is attending a university in the southeastern region of the United States of America where he is double majoring in Economics and Political Science. He plans to graduate in December 2009. Although he did not continue his service to an organization similar to the Student Court as an undergraduate, he is exploring a legal career. He wrote, "Plan to attend law school; took LSAT last year and looking at schools including the Ivy League schools, [as well as] Duke, Georgetown, UNC" (Personal Communication, October 22, 2008).

Karmelita graduated from UA in May 2007 and is attending a university in the northeastern region of the United States of America where she is majoring in Human Evolutionary Biology (Personal Communication, October 20, 2008):

Volunteer work: I'm on staff for Model Congress, an organization which provides high school students with a US Congress/Supreme Court simulation.

Professional aspirations: MD and Masters in Public Health. I want to work in medicine (abroad at some point) and eventually go into international public health policy.

Beatrice graduated from UA in May 2006 and is attending a university in the southeastern region of the United States of America where she is majoring in Sociology and minoring in African American Studies. She will graduate at 10 a.m. on Thursday, December 18, 2008 (Personal Communication, October 20, 2008):

Sociology Club . . . we do lots of stuff that helps the community (fundraisers for humanitarian causes, volunteering at soup kitchens and Freedom House; a rehabilitation center for women who used to be on drugs, we also bring speakers to campus. Last year we had a guy that was exonerated from death row come and speak about his experiences). Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. (Health Resource Management and Economics Co-chair and Study Night coordinator) <-- this is probably unrelated to Student Court, but idk if you can use it or not. After I graduate I plan to work until August, then start grad school. I'm not sure where I'm going yet; still in the application process, but I am pursuing a Masters in Public Administration and I'd like to focus on urban development/municipal and/or state government planning. I'll keep you updated with that situation...the GRE is a big fear these days. Hope this helps you and I'll see you on December 18th!

Lora graduated from UA in May 2006 and is attending a university in the southeastern region of the United States of America where she is double majoring in Criminology and Political Science. She expects to graduate in 2010 (Personal Communication, October 20, 2008):

Aspire to become a lawyer (of either family or criminal law)
 Had several internships within law field (including the Attorney General's office in DC and the Legal Aid Society of Northwest NC)
 Volunteered with local law office (Unum Law Offices)
 Studying Abroad in Africa in the spring (crazy isn't it!!!) might intern with a law office over there

Chumley graduated from UA in May 2006 and is attending a university in the southeastern region of the United States of America where he is majoring in Business Administration. He expects to graduate in 2010 (Personal Communication, October 19, 2008):

Volunteer Work Related to Student Court: State Fellows, selective leadership and public service organization (4 year program). Professional: Pursuing a Masters in Accounting (2011) and going into International Business (???) Let me know if there is any other info that would help!

Karmen graduated from UA in May 2005 and earned an undergraduate degree in International Affairs with a concentration in Conflict and Security from a university in the eastern region of the United States of America (Personal Communication, October 20, 2008):

Professional work and/or career aspirations:
Congressman Patrick McHenry's Office, Staff Assistant
Freedom's Watch intern in the Policy and Grants division, as well as Political division
American Enterprise Institute intern for David Frum, former presidential speechwriter
I will likely transition within the next year into the intelligence community or contracting for defense/homeland security.

Symphony graduated from UA in May 2005 and is attending a university in the southeastern region of the United States of America where she is majoring in English and Secondary Education (Personal Communication, October 20, 2008):

Volunteer work you've done on campus that is related to or influenced by your service to the Student Court at Early College - None, really, I mostly volunteered as a Teacher's Assistant. Your professional work and/or career aspirations - I've worked in immigration law and now criminal law, essentially as a paralegal, though I'm not certified. Any thing you would like to add - Student Court gave me the basic foundation of a truth I'm still learning more about, even today in my daily work - no court can hand down real justice in its purest form - the different pieces of the judicial system can only work together and hope for the best.

Harley graduated from UA in May 2007 and is attending a university in the northeastern region of the United States of America where he is majoring in Chemistry and Physical Biology (Personal Communication, October 18, 2008):

Volunteer work you've done on campus that is related to or influenced by your service to the Student Court at UA: Model Congress Supreme Court and Senate Prep: I assist high students at a local Latin High School in preparing for the MC Supreme Court debates and the MC Senate discussions.

Your professional work and/or career aspirations: Medicinal Scientist (Clinician) - Somehow find a way to use medicinal practices to inform my research and vice versa. Currently, I am a member of a university lab group and have had the opportunity to coauthor one publication in the Journal of the American Chemical Society.

George graduated from UA in May 2005 and is attending a university in the southeastern region of the United States of America where he is majoring in Public Policy. He plans to graduate in 2009 (Personal Communication, October 27, 2008):

I was thinking about you the other day as I was working on my thesis and the nice, kind arguments we used to make to the school board (its focusing on school board politics). I am currently going through the law school application process, which will hopefully be done soon. I hope to attend either the University of Chicago, University of Virginia or Duke law schools. Currently, I am torn between studying law and business and criminal law. For a long time I have aspired of becoming a prosecutor and eventually a judge. Please let me know if there are any more specific questions you would like answered, and I'll get back to you.

Case 002-F05 was highlighted in this research study. Central to the case was Mathias. Despite his dismissal from UA, we reconnected a few years later

through Facebook. I contacted him to get an update on his world in his own words (Personal Communication, October 24, 2008):

So Mathias, where are you these days? You've graduated from high school, right? Where did you end up going? What's your major? What do you plan to do next? Lastly, when you left UA, what was the transition like? I'm finishing my dissertation. I wrote about the student court and my professors asked me to add a section about a student who came before the court for a case. Please advise. Thanks and be well. tlb2
Sent via Facebook Mobile

Mathias responded to my queries promptly (Personal Communication, October 24, 2008):

Hey Tony, it's definitely been a while indeed. Yes I graduated and am currently attending [a university in the southeastern region of the United States of America]. Right now I am intending on majoring in Political Science and Economics with a possible minor in Philosophy. After UA my transition was excellent. I embraced my new school even though it was far different from UA. It was definitely heart breaking to leave UA because it's the only place I saw myself attending high school but I came to terms with my situation and decided to make the best of it afterward. I must say I definitely felt prepared for whatever after UA though. Hope this helps and if more is needed I'll be glad to share more. Mathias

I asked for permission to share his update in this dissertation and explore his thinking about the public apology (See Appendix H) his parents requested he make (Personal Communication, October 24, 2008):

Thanks Mathias. I talked about your specific case and professors asked what was up with you. They were surprised that you are one of my

facebook friends. One more thing, any comments about the day you mom came to UA and you spoke during assembly about what happened?
Sent via Facebook Mobile

Mathias recollected (Personal Communication, October 25, 2008):

Well after the "speech," my mom was glad to get things over with and we had a long discussion about how I would have a hard time trying to get into the top colleges and what not. She also told me to make the best of the situation. But among my friends, everyone was just sad for the possibility of me leaving. But besides that, it was a normal day. I actually didn't find any significance in that speech. It did not really change anything and I knew it would not change anything but my parents wanted me to give it anyway.

The Student Court: Where Do We Go From Here?

One day, shortly after the start of the new academic year, I was crawling the world wide web in search of information about University Academy and found an update regarding its Student Court (Personal Communication, September 11, 2008):

UA's disciplinary system originally included the notable Student Court, a collection of students responsible for designating punishments to their fellows who had committed some error. The court was subject to strict supervision, and the school administration retained final authority. Because the student being tried had generally admitted to wrong-doing beforehand, the trials may be more accurately referred to as "hearings." A hearing functioned as a chance for the justices to hear testimony, view evidence if any was presented, and then make a recommendation of punishment, restitution, or other consequences as appropriate. Past recommendations included letters of apology, public apologies, community service hours, and loss of certain privileges. In the late spring of 2008, however, the role of the student court in disciplinary action was abolished. The student court now serves to present periodic mock trials on issues of questionable integrity to the student body.

I contacted my Facebook Friends to explore what this update meant. A few study participants sent me these responses:

I was disappointed to hear that the Student Court is no longer active - I had not heard much from anyone on it since I graduated. I would hope it could be reactivated in some form. It is a shame for such an idea to die out. (Bostic)

Hey Mr Burks!!! Hope you're enjoying your new location! I bet its a lot warmer than what it is here. Congrats on finishing your dissertation. I was really upset/disappointed to hear that Student Court doesn't exist anymore. Do you know what happened? (Lora)

hi mr. burks!!! how r u n ur new state?!? your status caught my attention . . . student court is inactive now? anywho hope all is well . . . im trying to make it past my first yr n law skool. (Mikel)

During this time, a current UA Student Court member confirmed the changes and suggested that I contact the current principal-director of UA for the most up-to-date information about the status and role of the Student Court. I contacted the principal by electronic mail (Personal Communication, October 18, 2008):

Hello! I defended my dissertation [a few days ago]. I have a few revisions to make and an epilogue to write. My professors specifically asked for an update on the Student Court and its members (kind of a "Where are they now?" segment). I've written the members to get short profiles of them and what's going on in their worlds. One member suggested that I contact you to get an update on changes with the Student Court. Any documents or info you provide will be appreciated.

The principal responded to my appeal for information (Personal Communication,

October 22, 2008):

Congratulations on completing your dissertation. I know it must feel good to almost be finished! The Student Court has evolved into more of an educational group and no longer meets to determine student discipline. The Student Court now provides presentations during seminar on topics like cheating/plagiarism, the code of conduct, etc. Many members have also become connected with and participate in the local teen court. They have enjoyed this experience which has allowed them to deal with a wider range of issues and students. Hope this helps and good luck!

I thanked him and asked for the names of students who were participating in the local juvenile system-based youth court. The principal informed me that of the 11 members who currently serve on UA's Student Court (they increased the number of Advocates/Advisors to four), one person (an Associate Justice) currently works with the local non-school-based youth court. The judicial branch of University Academy's student government system is no more. Indeed, "When a griot dies, it is as if a library has burned to the ground."

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Appendix A

Pilot Study Informed Consent/Assent Form

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT GREENSBORO
 CONSENT TO ACT AS A HUMAN PARTICIPANT: *Long Form*

Project Title: The Impact Of A School-Based Youth Court On Its Members: A Pilot Study of an Early College High School
 Project Director: Tony Lamair Burks II

Participant's Name: _____

DESCRIPTION AND EXPLANATION OF PROCEDURES: The purpose is to explore if and how service on a school-based youth court enhances your development as a member. As a study participant, you will be invited to be interviewed by the principal investigator. The principal investigator will host individual interviews with members of the court. During individual interviews, participants are able to respond to questions. Interviews will be audio taped and transcribed. You may withdraw as a participant at any time without penalty. Individual interviews are estimated to take 45 minutes. Individual interviews will be arranged such that they are conducted when current students are not in session (e.g., during quarterly breaks). You will be asked to use your own first name or chose your own pseudonym. The principal investigator is a graduate student working on a doctoral degree in educational leadership.

RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS: There are no known psychological, sociological, or physical risks associated with your participation in this study. The results of the study will be presented only in patterns that do not identify you by name or inference. All written documents (including transcriptions) about this study will be shredded and burned after three years. Audio tapes will be shredded, crushed, and melted after three years.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS: You may benefit from sharing your stories about service on a student court. Indeed, "Stories...reveal deeply held values, turning points, and amazing acts that give texture to culture" found in places like an early college high school. Although there are over 1000 student courts in the United States, little is known about the impact of youth courts on participants from justices and peer-advisers to clerks and accused students. Sharing your thoughts about student court will help others learn how student courts impact students.

CONSENT: By signing this consent form, you agree that you understand the procedures and any risks and benefits involved in this research. You are free to refuse to participate or to withdraw your consent to participate in this research at any time without penalty or prejudice; your participation is entirely voluntary. Your privacy will be protected because you will not be identified by name as a participant in this project. Data will be stored in a locked water and fireproof safe at 31 Tannenbaum Circle, Greensboro, NC, 27410-9686 during and until three years after the completion of the study, at which time they will be shredded, crushed, burned, and melted as specified above.

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro Institutional Review Board, which insures that research involving people follows federal regulations, has approved the research and this consent form. Questions regarding your rights as a participant in this project can be answered by calling Mr. Eric Allen at (336) 256-1482. Questions regarding the research itself will be answered by Tony Lamair Burks II by calling (336) 558-7808 or emailing tlburks2@gcsnc.com. Any new information that develops during the project will be provided to you if the information might affect your willingness to continue participation in the project.

By signing this form, you are agreeing to participate in the project described to you in this form.

Participant's Signature* _____ Date _____

**If the participant is under 18 years of age, complete the following:*

THE SECTION BELOW IS FOR USE ONLY BY PARENTS/GUARDIAN'S OF STUDENTS WHO ARE UNDER 18.

Participant's Name: _____ Participant is _____ years old

Custodial Parent/Guardian's Signature _____ Date _____

Custodial Parent/Guardian's Signature _____ Date _____

Appendix B

Pilot Study Interview Protocol

Having Their Say: The Impact Of A School-Based Youth Court On Its Members
A Pilot Study of an Early College High School

I'd like to ask you one question—one question only—about your experiences with the Student Court:

**“What is the story of your life
As a member of the student court?”**

Appendix C

Informed Consent/Assent Form

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT GREENSBORO
 CONSENT TO ACT AS A HUMAN PARTICIPANT: *Long Form*

Project Title: The Impact Of A School-Based Youth Court On Its Members: A Pilot Study of an Early College High School
 Project Director: Tony Lamair Burks II

Participant's Name: _____

DESCRIPTION AND EXPLANATION OF PROCEDURES: The purpose is to explore if and how service on a school-based youth court enhances your development as a member. As a study participant, you will be invited to be interviewed by the principal investigator. The principal investigator will host individual interviews with members of the court. During individual interviews, participants are able to respond to questions. Interviews will be audio taped and transcribed. You may withdraw as a participant at any time without penalty. Individual interviews are estimated to take 45 minutes. Individual interviews will be arranged such that they are conducted when current students are not in session (e.g., during quarterly breaks). You will be asked to use your own first name or chose your own pseudonym. The principal investigator is a graduate student working on a doctoral degree in educational leadership.

RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS: There are no known psychological, sociological, or physical risks associated with your participation in this study. The results of the study will be presented only in patterns that do not identify you by name or inference. All written documents (including transcriptions) about this study will be shredded and burned after three years. Audio tapes will be shredded, crushed, and melted after three years.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS: You may benefit from sharing your stories about service on a student court. Indeed, "Stories...reveal deeply held values, turning points, and amazing acts that give texture to culture" found in places like an early college high school. Although there are over 1000 student courts in the United States, little is known about the impact of youth courts on participants from justices and peer-advisers to clerks and accused students. Sharing your thoughts about student court will help others learn how student courts impact students.

CONSENT: By signing this consent form, you agree that you understand the procedures and any risks and benefits involved in this research. You are free to refuse to participate or to withdraw your consent to participate in this research at any time without penalty or prejudice; your participation is entirely voluntary. Your privacy will be protected because you will not be identified by name as a participant in this project. Data will be stored in a locked water and fireproof safe at 31 Tannenbaum Circle, Greensboro, NC, 27410-9686 during and until three years after the completion of the study, at which time they will be shredded, crushed, burned, and melted as specified above.

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro Institutional Review Board, which insures that research involving people follows federal regulations, has approved the research and this consent form. Questions regarding your rights as a participant in this project can be answered by calling Mr. Eric Allen at (336) 256-1482. Questions regarding the research itself will be answered by Tony Lamair Burks II by calling (336) 558-7808 or emailing tlburks2@gcsnc.com. Any new information that develops during the project will be provided to you if the information might affect your willingness to continue participation in the project.

By signing this form, you are agreeing to participate in the project described to you in this form.

Participant's Signature* _____ Date _____

**If the participant is under 18 years of age, complete the following:*

THE SECTION BELOW IS FOR USE ONLY BY PARENTS/GUARDIAN'S OF STUDENTS WHO ARE UNDER 18.

Participant's Name: _____ Participant is _____ years old

Custodial Parent/Guardian's Signature _____ Date _____

Custodial Parent/Guardian's Signature _____ Date _____

Appendix D
Interview Protocol

Testifying: The Impact Of A School-Based Youth Court On Its Members
A Study of an Early College High School

**I'd like to invite you to talk about your
experiences with the Student Court, please...**

**“Tell the story of your experiences
as a member of the Student Court”**

Appendix E

Interview Prompts and Conversation Stems

Testifying: The Impact Of A School-Based Youth Court On Its Members
A Study of an Early College High School

If you “draw a blank” and would like to have some additional prompts or conversation stems, please flip this page over.

Testifying: The Impact Of A School-Based Youth Court On Its Members
A Study of an Early College High School

ADDITIONAL INTERVIEW PROMPTS

1. Did you have a question in mind that you assumed I would ask you? If so, please share the questions and your response.
2. Tell me about your most engaging court case. What made it engaging?
3. What have you learned about yourself through service to the student court?
4. What did you used to think leadership was when you first joined the student court? What do you think it is now in that you have completed your years of service to the student court?

CONVERSATION STEMS

What comes to mind when you think of these?

OR

Please describe, reflect, explore these...

- Cases
- Process
- Precedent
- Initial perception of the court
- Current perception of the court
- Responsibilities
- Relationships with court members
- Relationships with peers
- Lessons learned
- Training
- Selection process

Appendix F

Honor Code

The Honor Code

*O*ur goal at University Academy is to help students achieve a level of excellence that could not otherwise be obtained. We encourage students to not only strive their hardest, but also to incorporate themselves into the community and to graduate with the skills needed to succeed in life. Through the values of dignity, honesty, integrity, diligence, responsibility, respect, and effort, we shall attain these goals.

We expect only the highest standards of values at University Academy. Whenever one violates a value in the honor code, the effect is not only detrimental to one's self but also to the community in general. It damages the true learning spirit and prevents one from acquiring knowledge, and it gives an unfair advantage against those who abide by the code. Such violations include, but are not limited to, bullying, lying, gossiping, stealing, and cheating. We insist on members of the school to be truthful with each other and to exhibit a high level of honesty and respect. Only thus can one work and learn without a sense of fear, and good faith can be maintained among students and teachers.

Because a violation of the code not only is detrimental to the individual but also to the school and community, a Student Court comprised of students is relied upon for evaluation and contemplation. We acknowledge that every case or situation is different and unique, so we reflect this in our court proceedings and decisions. Furthermore, the objectives of the Court are mainly educational rather than disciplinary. We understand that the people participating in the court are not yet fully mature, and we also understand that fundamentally honest students may still at times commit a violation of integrity. However, we believe in constructive judgments instead of corporal punishment. The idea behind the Student Court is that those who commit code-breaching acts not only learn that what they do is wrong, but also why it is wrong and alternative actions for the situation. We encourage those who come to the Student Court to learn from the court experience and to emerge from the proceedings with a more profound understanding of the nature of integrity and enhanced appreciation for the values put forth by the honor code.

We consider any suspected breach of the honor code as very serious, and we believe that they should be reported to the principal-director of University Academy. However, the case will be sent to the Student Court only in special cases. We respect the privacy of the individuals accused, so we strive to keep the information confidential. We also keep the proceedings closed to the public and keep witnesses' identities confidential. If a teacher or staff member suspects violation of the honor code, then the adult is obliged to report it to the principal-director of University Academy. Students are not required to do so, although it is strongly recommended, because we acknowledge the intense pain associated with choosing between loyalty to a friend and loyalty to the community. However, by defending a friend who may have made an error, it might have injured the friend more than helped, for she or he will not learn from the mistake.

As a member of the University Academy family, I honor academic and personal integrity. I uphold the values of dignity, honesty, integrity, diligence, responsibility, respect, and effort.

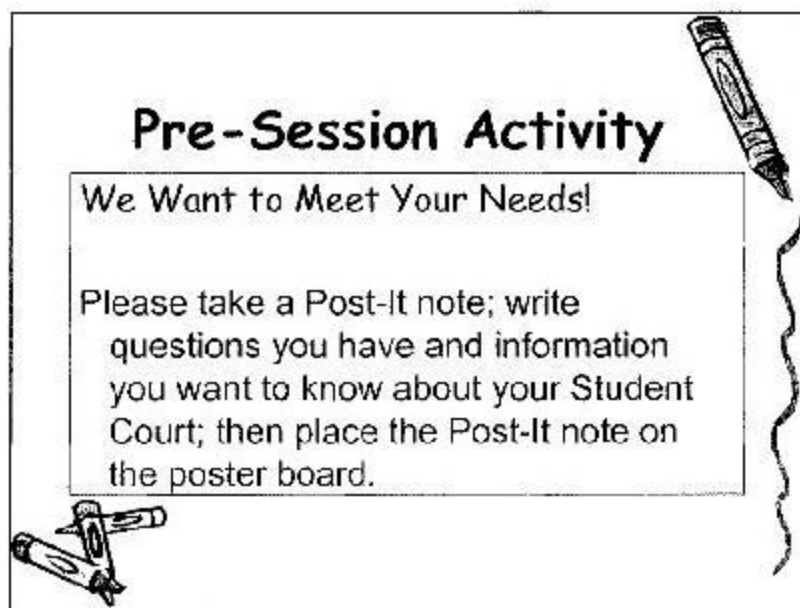
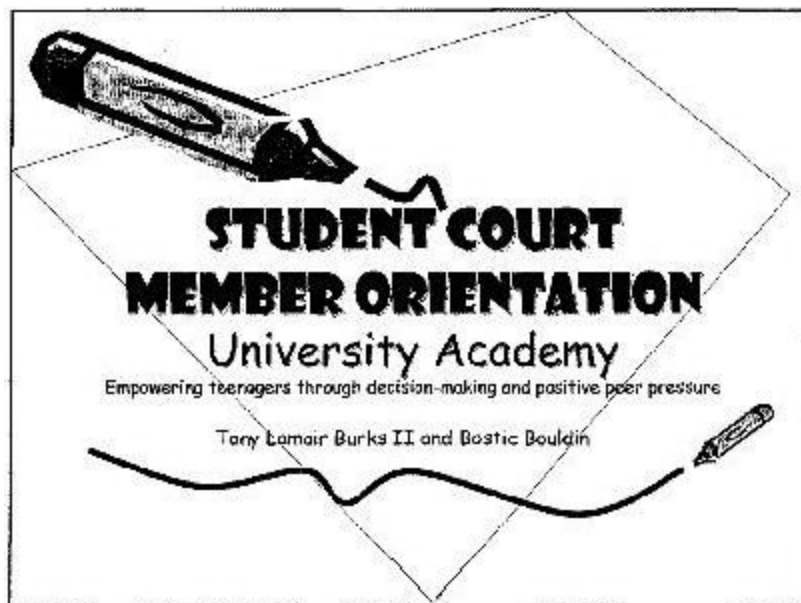
PRINTED NAME _____ Grade _____

Signature _____ Date _____

The above signature indicates that the individual has fully read and understood the Honor Code as the accepted standard for all interactions and coursework at University Academy.

Appendix G

Student Court New Member Orientation



Welcome and Introductions




Activities

- Take Off, Touch Down
 - Line Up Name Foot
 - Shoulder Partner/Face Partner
- 

Goals, Objectives, Outcomes



- Explore Student/Youth Court Models
 - hone/Refine Essential Court Skills
 - Polter County Schools Student Handbook, University Academy Standards, University Handbook
 - School Mission, Confidentiality, and Ethics
 - Restorative Justice (determining consequences)
 - Case Analysis (roleplaying)
 - Develop Student Court Member Code of Conduct
 - Have fun
- 

What is Student Court?

Changing a definition

- A program in which youth are sentenced by their peers?
- A student-operated organization that handles breaches of the student handbook and the honor code?
- [Your thoughts?]



Student Court Provides the School Community

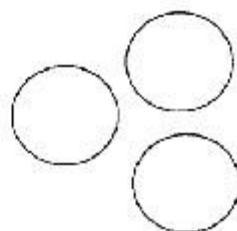
- An option on the continuum of services
- A way to hold students accountable
- A tool to build competencies
- A meaningful forum for youth to practice and enhance skills



Essential Court Skills

PCS Student Handbook, UA Standards, GU Handbook

Activity: *Life Cycle of a Group*



A Closer Look at Our Student Court

Slogan: *We're the only UA group that
doesn't look forward to meetings!*

Our Process

Highlights of a Mock Session: "And the
Academy Award goes to..."



Case 002-F05

(The Case of the Copy Cat)

- P. 1 E-mail from Teacher A
- MOCK SESSION - PART I**
- P. 2 Excerpt of paper submitted by Student A to Teacher A
 - P. 3 Excerpt of paper copied by Student A
- MOCK SESSION - PART II**
- Abstract of Case 002-F05



Essential Court Skills

School Mission, Confidentiality, and Ethics

Our Mission is to graduate confident, ethically responsible, lifelong learners who are prepared to succeed in higher education and in the changing world beyond.



Essential Court Skills

Restorative Justice

What does it mean?

How do you determine consequences?



Some Lessons Learned

Bouldin

- scheduling court sessions;
- court format;
- others...

Burks

- confidentiality;
- rumors and public relations;
- others...



Student Court Member Code of Conduct

What is expected of me as a member?
Why must it be in writing?



Burning Questions?



Appendix H

Case 002-F05 Essential Artifacts

When Will This Roller Coaster End? (I'm Getting Nauseous)

The Great Awakenings can be simply described as a revival of religious sanctity that went through the American Colonies between the 1730s and the 1770's. The revival was a part of a broader progression, an evangelical uprising taking place almost side-by-side on the other side of the Atlantic, most profoundly in most part of Europe. In all these Protestant cultures during the eighteenth century, a new "Age of Faith" rose to uphold the events of the Age of Enlightenment and also to repeat the view that being religious meant taking prize on feeling more than thinking, and depending on biblical exposure rather than human reason.

Religious eagerness rapidly spread from the Presbyterians of the Middle Colonies to the Puritans and Baptists of New England. By the 1740s, the clergymen of these churches were leading several revivals throughout those areas, using the same strategy that had contributed to the success of the Tennents. In emotionally powered sermons, all the more influential since they were delivered impromptu, preachers like Jonathan Edwards called-out vivid, terrifying images of the degradation of human nature and the terrors awaiting those who did not repent.

These early revivals in the northern colonies inspired some to become missionaries to those in American South. In the late 1740s, Presbyterian preachers from New York and New Jersey began teaching in the Virginia Piedmont; and by the 1750s, most members of a group called the Separate Baptists traveled from New England to central North Carolina and rapidly stretched out their influence to surrounding colonies. By the the American Revolution, their converts counted for about ten percent of all southern churchgoers.

The First Great Awakening also gained acceptance from the travels of George Whitefield. Although Whitefield had been ordained as a minister in the Church of England, he later joined forces with other Anglican clergymen who shared his thought, notably John and Charles Wesley. Together they led a movement to turn the Puritans which resulted in the founding of the Methodist Church in the eighteenth century. During his numerous trips across the Atlantic after 1739, Whitefield preached almost everywhere he could in the American colonies, drawing audiences so large that he was made to preach outdoors. Whitefield illustrated his message in dramatic ways. Gesturing dramatically, sometimes weeping openly or yelling out threats of hellfire, him and his men turned the sermon into a captivating theatrical performance.

The first Great Awakening left colonials polarized along religious lines. Anglicans and Quakers

gained new members among those who looked different of the revival's mass, while the Baptists made even more profound gains from the ranks of radical evangelical converts. The largest group of churchgoers remained within the Congregationalist and Presbyterian denominations, but they divided internally between advocates and opponents of the Awakening, known as "New Lights" and "Old Lights." Certainly, civil governments were drawn into the fiasco. In colonies where one denomination received state support, other churches lobbied legislatures for dis-establishment, an end to the ranks of Congregationalism in Connecticut and Massachusetts and of Anglicanism in the southern colonies.

However, by the end of the 18th century, many educated Americans no longer illustrated traditional Christian beliefs. In response to the secularism of the age, a new religious revival spread westward in the first half of the 19th century. This second religious revival in American history contained several kinds of activity, differentiated by locale and expression of religious commitment. In New England, the renewed interest in religion inspired a surge of social activism. In western New York, the revival encouraged the upheavalment of new denominations. In the Appalachian region of Kentucky and Tennessee, the revival strengthened the Methodists and the Baptists, and produced a new form of religious expression known as the camp meeting.

Different from the Great Awakening of the 1730s, the revivals in the East were known for the lack of hysteria. In turn, unbelievers were amazed by the "respectful silence" of those witnessing their faith. The evangelical enthusiasm in New England gave way to several interdenominational missionary societies, created to evangelize the West. Members of these societies not only acted as apostles of the faith, but civic leaders and particulars of the Eastern urban culture. Education societies instilled Christian education; most notable was the American Bible Society which was founded in 1816. Social activism inspired by the revival made way for abolition groups and the Society for the Promotion of Temperance, and also to efforts to reform prisons and care for those handicapped and mentally ill. The area from Lake Ontario to the Adirondack Mountains had been the pinnacle scene of many religious revivals in the past that it was branded as the "Burned-Over District." In 1821 Charles Finney experienced a religious epiphany and sought to preach the Gospel in the most part of western New York. In contrast to those in the past, his revivals were characterized by careful planning and remarkable showmanship

Other prominent religious denominations in America, the Mormons and the Seventh Day Adventists also formed in the "Burned-Over District". In the Appalachian region, the revival took on features kin to the Great Awakening of the previous century. Yet here, the main point of the revival was the camp meeting which was respectively defined as a "religious service of several days' length, for a

group that was destined to take shelter on the spot." Pioneers in populated areas sought to the camp meeting as a departure from the lonely life on the frontier.

Although the Great Awakenings are charged by religious ideals from throughout the world, the cycle of Great Awakenings appear to be different to the United States. This could particularly be because the United States is a haven for several unique denominations and sects, while still remaining largely a Protestant Christian. The absence of a single striving faith means that new ideas can be spread without having to slowly reform existing establishments from the inside. On the other hand, the established sects have enough honor that the pressure for new ideas escalate into a regular cycle of bloodless revolution.

Because religion has often been used to maneuver or justify morality, the Great Awakenings have posed influence on the politics of the United States. Joseph Tracy, the minister and historian who proclaimed this religious manifestation its name in his 1842 book "The Great Awakening", viewed the First Great Awakening as an indicator to the War of Independence. The abolition movement which was another important part of the wider Second Great Awakening, contributed to the American Civil War.

ch

1 The significant array of the California red-legged frog stretched out coastally from the area of Point Reyes National Seashore, Marin County, and inland from the surrounding area of Redding, Shasta County, in California southward to northwestern Baja California, Mexico.

2 In the mid-1800s, entire mountains were swept away by mining, and roughly every stream east of the Central Valley was obstructed with mud, silt, and rock, obliterating thousands of acres of frog habitat. It was an extraordinary environmental disaster, and led to a number of the first environmental laws.

3 Throughout the late 1800s and early 1900s, the California red-legged frog was collected for food in the San Francisco Bay area and the Central Valley, with roughly 80,000 frogs harvested yearly. As the frog became rarer, the marketplace for them declined. Bullfrogs were brought in California around 1896 to aid in fulfilling the demand for frog legs as the red-legged frog population decreased. As luck would have it, the local red-legged frogs rapidly became prey for the bullfrog, a threat to the red-legged frog's survival that carries on today.

4 At approximately the similar time the frog population began its decline, Central Valley wetlands and riparian habitats were being transformed to agricultural land. Streams were stripped of riparian vegetation and turned to channels. Livestock grazing took away vegetation cover and undercut the banks along stream banks, causing increased water temperatures and need of cover. These transformations resulted in a loss of more than 90 percent of notable wetlands, with the bulk of that loss happening prior to 1939. California red-legged frogs were removed from the Valley base by 1960. Those populations that lingered in the Sierra Nevada foothills were alienated from other populations and nearly eradicated from this area as a result of reservoir production, introduction of exotic species, and famine.

5 In Southern California, the creation of urban societies with its consequential infrastructure, including road construction, streams, and reservoir building, had an overwhelming impact on red-legged frogs. In a broad spectrum, this species has been destroyed from these counties although a small amount of populations still exist. A current population was revealed in East Las Virgenes Creek in near the Ventura and Los Angeles county border and neighboring Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area.

6 California red-legged frogs are moderately productive breeders, usually laying egg masses during or shortly subsequent large rainfall events from late December to early April. Females can lay between 2,000 and 5,000 eggs in a single gathering

7 The eggs hatch in 6 to 14 days and, just about 3.5 to 7 months later, the tadpoles grow into frogs. The maximum rates of mortality for this species take place during the tadpole stage; less than 1 percent of eggs hatched attain maturity.

Tadpoles and young frogs flourish on invertebrates, which they catch with their mouths. They hunt day and night. This stable action makes them visible, and more susceptible to predators. Almost half of the prey accumulation in the diet of adult frogs consists of Pacific tree frogs and California mice; insects are the most frequent prey items. Adults feed and are dynamic mainly at night.

The California red-legged frog is found primarily in wetlands and streams in coastal drainages of central California. Adult frogs use up much of their time on land,

55

Although I wish I was sitting up there in the seats instead of standing here in front of you, it's at the request of my parents not Mr Burks that you should listen to my voice. A number of you, mostly in the 10th grade, have heard what happened to me last week or have at least known a little. The truth is, friends, that you think you know but you have no idea. Yes, i know i said it was one sentence, a block of text, or anything sugar coated to make myself pityful but the truth is it was paragraphs and ranging from 50-90% of the papers i turned in. At this school, whatever you do dosen't hurt yourself but a community of people, and also word spreads out real quick. I will like to take this opportunity to apologize for misleading a number of you. And its not your fault if you have second thoughts about what kind of person i am. I should have not even said anything period about what went on and if i had i should have been upfront. But although i did do all these things you still stuck by myside. And I just like to say sorry and thank you at the same time not just to you but to teachers and Mr. Burks for still having faith eventhough i didn't make it as easy as it should have been.