

Chico Living: Achieving a Community Atmosphere

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Abstract: For this project, we researched the topic of what causes first-year students to be drawn to the atmosphere of the Chico lifestyle. To find the answer to this question, we used our anthropologist's skills to interview first-year students on the Chico State campus. Using well-developed questions, we gathered evidence and find out the different opinions of first-year college students on campus. Through this research, we learned that stereotypes and expectations that were thought to be in Chico were false or different than expected. We conclude that the university should publicize this actual representation of Chico in order for first-year students to have the best college experience. This recommendation is useful to the campus because it can be used to provide information that has the capability to make a positive change on the Chico campus.

Research Question

- What aspect of the community draws first-year students to the Chico atmosphere?
- Important question because it allows for the opinions and perceptions of new first-year students to be accessed

Methods

- Interviews
 - As part of the interview, we gathered data pertaining to age, gender, hometown, and ethnicity. We obtained informed consent from all participants. We used methods of direct discussion with participants using a standard interview guide with the incorporation of follow-up questions in order to gain a more personal and detailed approach to the student's experience. We took detailed notes that were then analyzed to elaborate and distinguish common ideas throughout the various interviews.
 - We contacted freshman living in the dorms.
 - What we did with the data: After obtaining the data, we reviewed each interview and annotated the information so we could include personal and in-depth details that we may have not mentioned in the initial process.

Findings:

From what we gathered, some recurring themes included: (1) people do not feel safe when walking alone in the streets, (2) that most people decided to apply here because it was a “party school,” (3) how friendly they found the environment here, and (4) surprise regarding the homeless epidemic. A primary conclusion from the data was that it's good to go out and have fun on occasion, but it should not be a prime factor in how you decide to pick your school.

Results

- First-Year female students feel unsafe walking around the streets and campus alone at night.
 - People should not have to feel unsafe in their community and worried about always having to be accompanied at night.
 - The campus community should be aware of this issue and work towards finding better security and patrolling especially at night.
- Prioritizing school over social aspect of Chico
 - Less focus on having fun and going out, prioritizing time to work on school work
 - Students that receive financial aid felt it was very important to succeed in school since there are financial consequences for failure.

Recommendations

- Publicizing the reality of Chico
 - Identifying alternatives to partying such as school-sponsored events and nature
- Safety on campus
 - Better policing and lighting on campus to improve safety