Results of Validity Research on the
Inventory of Learning Climate & Student Well-Being

The validity of any assessment tool is difficult to establish. Only after years of research by different investigators does a complete picture of the validity of a tool emerge. At this point in the research process we can offer two forms of validity: content validity and predictive validity.

Content Validity. The *Inventory on Learning Climate and Student Well-Being* has been derived from the theory and research on human well-being of Ryff (1998) and Keyes (2007). It contains items and dimensions that manifest what these researchers theorize is positive mental health. Their research suggests that to flourish, people must have a) worthwhile, challenging and meaningful goals, b) the skills and knowledge to pursue their goals and dispatch life's daily tasks, c) social skills to form close, warm, trusting relationships, d) self-knowledge and skills to regulate emotions and exercise self-control, e) a social life that is meaningful and coherent, and f) a community that provides support and comfort.   We translated these general prescriptions for well-being into 16 specific dimensions of student well-being.

Predictive Validity.   As of February 2010, the *Inventory on Learning Climate and Student Well-Being* has been administered to over eleven-hundred students at three different institutions. Several cross section studies and one four-year longitudinal study have done using the *Inventory*. If this inventory can indeed identify students with positive mental health, it should show differences between students who are happy and those who are less happy, or students who are languishing compared to those who are flourishing, and students who have an unhealthy life style compared to those who live more healthily (e.g. binge drinkers compared to those who drink lightly). In Figures 1, 2 and 3 below the results of studies we have conducted are displayed. Using a repeated-measures analysis of variance, all of the results are statistically significant in the predicted direction. In the first study, students were asked to rate their own happiness on a 10-point scale. Contrasts between the 25% of the most and least happy students (N = 518) are displayed in Figure 1. The happiest students had stronger positive mental health than the least happy students. Flourishing and languishing was defined using positivity ratios (see Fredrickson & Losada, 2002). Shown in Figure 2 are languishing students with ratios less than 2.9 compared with the results of flourishing students with ratios greater than 4.3. (N = 230). Flourishing students had better mental health than languishing students. Finally, using the SALSA scale, students who drank frequently and at high levels (binge drinkers) were compared with those who drank infrequently at low levels (light drinkers), N = 414. As can be seen in Figure 3, binge drinkers had a weaker positive mental health profile than light drinkers. Together, these three studies support the assumption that the *Inventory on Learning Climate and Student Well-Being* has predictive forms of validity.

Fredrickson, B. L., & Losada, M. F. (2005). Positive Affect and the Complex Dynamics of Human
   Flourishing.. *American Psychologist*, 60, 678-686.
Keyes, C. (2007). Promoting and Protecting Mental Health as Flourishing: A Complementary Strategy for
        Improving National Mental Health. *American Psychologist*, 62 (2), 95-108.
Ryff, C. D (1998). Happiness is everything or is it? Explorations on the meaning of psychological well-being.
        Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 57, 1069-1081.

Figure 1: A comparison of most and least happy students on dimensions of well-being.
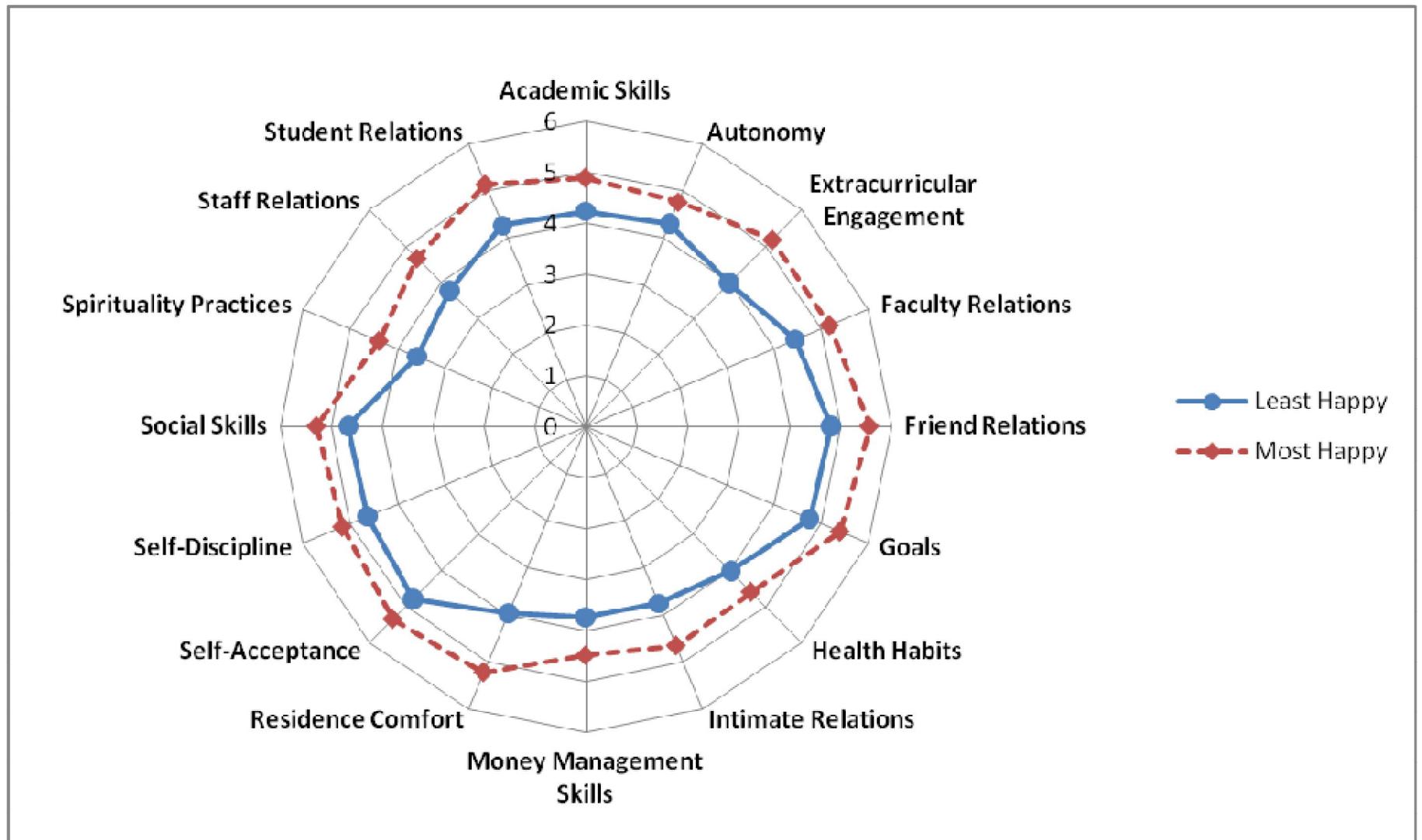
Figure 2: A comparison of languishing and flourishing students on dimensions of well-being.
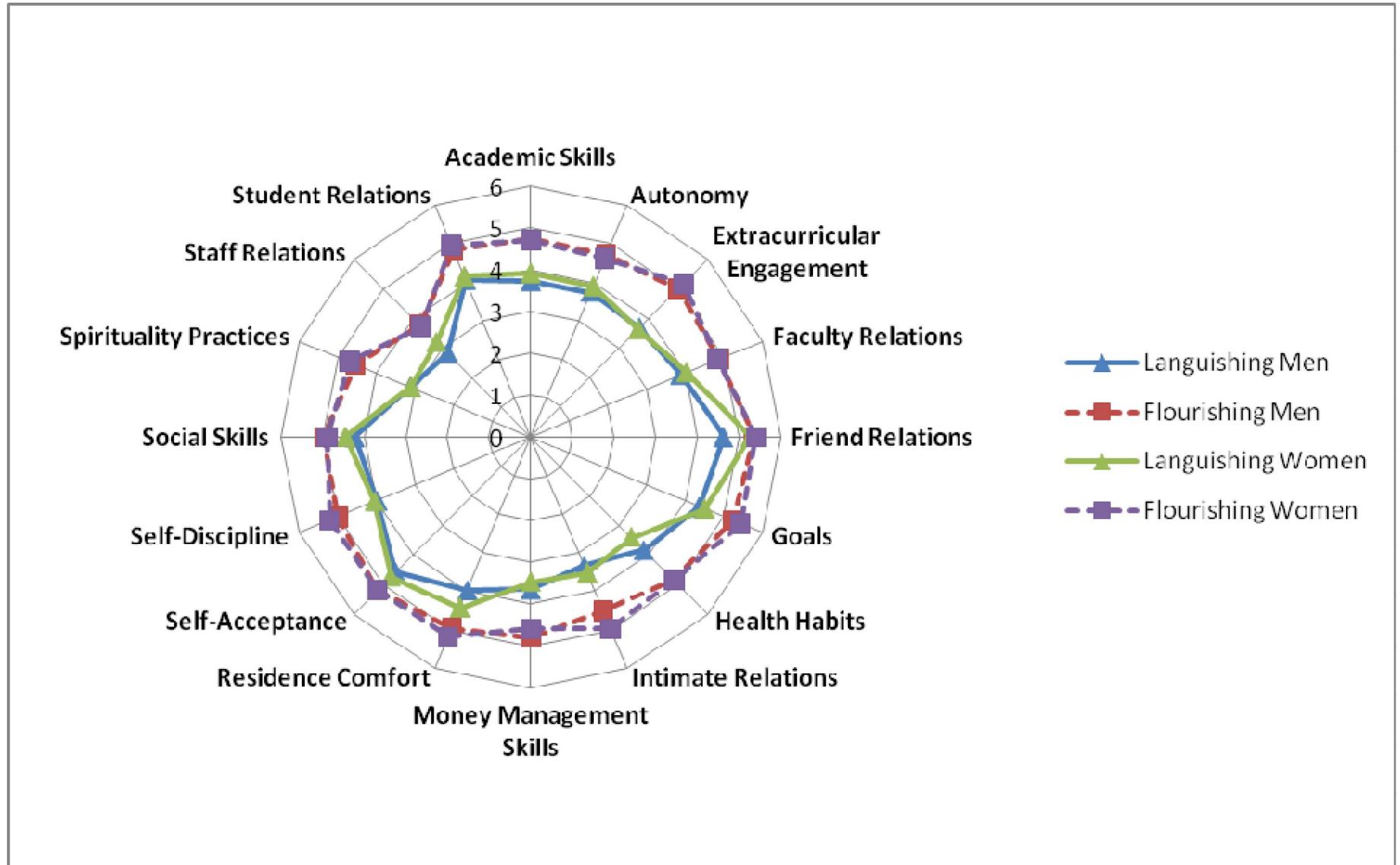
Figure 3: Contrasts of light and binge drinkers on dimensions of student well-being.