Abstract
Emerging adulthood, classified by scholars as ages 18-26, is a period of evolution for parent-child relationships. This evolution is largely due to children moving to college, which causes communication with parents to fluctuate as children become more independent (Amen, 2015). The purpose of our study is to investigate the accuracy of parental perceptions of their child’s alcohol-related behaviors and their child’s actual alcohol-related behaviors (ARB). We hypothesized that parents would inaccurately estimate their child’s ARB. 51 student-parent dyads composed of university students and one of their parent/legal guardians completed two surveys assessing the student’s drinking habits and the parents’ estimates regarding their respective child’s drinking habits. Results showed that, while perceptions of ARB were inaccurate overall, parents were accurate in estimating ARB in terms of context. Results showed that, while parents had accurate perceptions regarding drinking context, their overall perception as well as perceptions for drinking quantity and frequency were inaccurate, supporting our main hypothesis.

Background
The parent-child relationship has long been the subject of psychological research. Various aspects of this important relationship have already been shown to have salient effects on factors such as the child’s college attendance (Corkin & Dawkin, 1981; Davis-Kean, 2005; Fan & Chen, 2001), the child’s substance abuse and depression (Ryan, Huebner, Diaz, & Sanchez, 2009), the child’s psychological adjustment (Figner & Miller, 2012) later in life. Given the relevant recency of its establishment as stage of development (Amen, 2000), however, little research has been done to examine the parent-child relationship in terms of emerging adulthood, specifically, the college-attending emerging adult. Research has already shown that parents tend to have an idealized view of their children in relation to other children. Napper, Grimaldi, and Labrie (2015) found that, when rating the likelihood of experiencing a severe consequence of alcohol use, parents rated their emerging adult children as less likely to experience severe negative consequences than a typical college student. This idealization could be a function of the change in parent-child relationship that occurs when the emerging adult moves to college. Being as the parent-child relationship has traditionally relied heavily on contact, which has been a function of geographic proximity (Figner & Yahlin, 2015), it is possible that the move to college could ignite a change in the relationship which inhibits the parents’ ability to accurately report on their child’s behavior. The current study sought to determine whether parents of emerging adult children seek to establish their personalities as being distinct from those of their parents and, in doing so, tend to move away from the family unit to establish their independence. This self-focus and accompanying decrease in family involvement could be a factor in parental perceptions of their child’s behavior being inaccurate. In addition, research shows that parents tend to have idealized views of their child’s behavior (Bylund, Imes and Baxter, 2005), which may explain an underestimation in drinking frequency and quantity. Our limitation of our study is that our sample size was lacking in diversity. Out of 51 parent-student dyads, only 7.9% of students and 9.4% of parents self-identified as a race other than “Caucasian/White.” In addition, the majority of parent-student participants were daughters (64.7%) and the majority of parent participants were mothers (70.5%). A future study could examine a more diverse sample, including a greater diversity of ages, which would allow for the examination of the possible relationship between the age of the student participant and the accuracy of the parent’s perception.

Method
Participants and Design
Participants consisted of college student/parent dyads (n = 51). The dyads were composed of 33 female undergraduate students and 18 male undergraduate students between the ages of 18 and 22 and one of their parents. Within-subjects experimental survey design was used.

Procedure
Participants were recruited through convenience sampling from various colleges in the United States. To determine college-student comfort level and willingness to participate and have their parent participate in a survey involving ARB, a pilot study was conducted in a central location on a local university campus. Following positive results from the preliminary study, students were contacted through mass emails containing four internet links: two survey links for students and two survey links for parents. The surveys sent out to the participants were designed to measure age of the students, parental perception of their child’s ARB as indicated by parents, and actual ARB as indicated by students. Each survey was identically structured apart from slight modification created to distinguish between the parental survey and the student survey.

The current study is to collect first-hand information from both the parents and students. This idealization could be a function of the change in parent-child relationship that occurs when the emerging adult moves to college. Being as the parent-child relationship has traditionally relied heavily on contact, which has been a function of geographic proximity (Figner & Yahlin, 2015), it is possible that the move to college could ignite a change in the relationship which inhibits the parents’ ability to accurately report on their child’s behavior. The current study sought to determine whether parents of emerging adult children seek to establish their personalities as being distinct from those of their parents and, in doing so, tend to move away from the family unit to establish their independence. This self-focus and accompanying decrease in family involvement could be a factor in parental perceptions of their child’s behavior being inaccurate. In addition, research shows that parents tend to have idealized views of their child’s behavior (Bylund, Imes and Baxter, 2005), which may explain an underestimation in drinking frequency and quantity. Our limitation of our study is that our sample size was lacking in diversity. Out of 51 parent-student dyads, only 7.9% of students and 9.4% of parents self-identified as a race other than “Caucasian/White.” In addition, the majority of parent-student participants were daughters (64.7%) and the majority of parent participants were mothers (70.5%). A future study could examine a more diverse sample, including a greater diversity of ages, which would allow for the examination of the possible relationship between the age of the student participant and the accuracy of the parent’s perception.

Hypotheses
1) Parents will inaccurately estimate the ARB of their child in terms of context
   - Parents will inaccurately estimate the alcohol use of their child when emotionally conflicted (angry, sad, fighting)
   - Parents will inaccurately estimate the alcohol use of their child in a romantic scenario (on a date, before sex, with his/her lover)
   - Parents will inaccurately estimate the alcohol use of their child around peers (parties, concerts, celebrations)
2) Parents will inaccurately estimate the ARB of their child in terms of frequency and quantity

Results
Drinking Context Scale; t(49) = 6.35, p < .528
- There was not a significant difference in the student scores (M = 15.73, SD = 5.73) and parent scores (M = 16.16, SD = 5.94).
- Emotional Conflict; t(50) = .932, p = .356
- Students reported the lowest likelihood to drink to be when they are sad with an average of 1.29 (SD = .61) and parents predicted the lowest likelihood for their child to drink to be when they are in a fight (M = 1.39, SD = .37).
- Romantic Scenario; t(49) = 4.20, p = .676
- There was not a significant difference in the scores for students (M = 5.10, SD = 2.11) and the scores for parents (M = 5.02, SD = 2.18).
- Parents predicted that the highest likelihood for their child to drink in a romantic situation is when on a date (M = 1.75, SD = .80) while students reported going on a date in the least likely romantic scenario for them to drink (M = 1.51, SD = .72).
- Surrounded by Peers; t(50) = 3.203, p = .002*
- There was a significant difference in the student scores (M = 3.14, SD = 1.40) and parent scores (M = 2.51, SD = 1.29)
- Students reported the highest likelihood of drinking to be when at a party with a group of friends (M = 5.14, SD = 1.40) and parents perceived the likelihood of their child’s drinking to be the highest when at a party (M = 2.51, SD = 1.29) as well.
- Drinking Context Questionnaire-Revised (DCQ-R); t(50) = 4.085, p = .000*
- There was a significant difference in the student scores (M = 15.73, SD = 5.74) and parent scores (M = 12.64, SD = 2.24).
- Combination of DCS and DCQ-R; t(100) = -2.401, p = .018*
- There was a significant difference between the student scores (M = 15.75, SD = 5.73) and parent scores (M = 14.53, SD = 4.79).

Discussion
The purpose of the present study was to examine the relationship between parental perception of their college-aged student’s alcohol related behavior and the actual behavior of the students. We predicted that parents would inaccurately estimate the ARB of their child’s behavior in both terms of context and terms of frequency and quantity. This prediction was not supported for context, was strongly supported for the combination of both context and frequency and quantity. For example, parents were accurate in predicting that their children would be most likely to drink at a party; yet, significantly underestimated the amount of alcohol consumed at the party. The significant mispredictions for frequency and quantity along with the underestimation of the peer scenario lead to an overall inaccurate perception. Collectively, the data suggest that parents are inaccurately predicting their child’s ARB. One reason for our findings may be that communication is lessened between parents and their children during college (Napper, Huner, Lac & Laffle, 2014). Indeed, emerging adulthood is marked by self-centeredness (Arnett, 2000). During this time, emerging adults seek to establish their personalities as being distinct from those of their parents and, in doing so, tend to move away from the family unit to establish their independence. This self-focus and accompanying decrease in family involvement could be a factor in parental perceptions of their child’s behavior being inaccurate. In addition, research shows that parents tend to have idealized views of their child’s behavior (Bylund, Imes and Baxter, 2005), which may explain an underestimation in drinking frequency and quantity. Our limitation of our study is that our sample size was lacking in diversity. Out of 51 parent-student dyads, only 7.9% of students and 9.4% of parents self-identified as a race other than “Caucasian/White.” In addition, the majority of parent-student participants were daughters (64.7%) and the majority of parent participants were mothers (70.5%). A future study could examine a more diverse sample, including a greater diversity of ages, which would allow for the examination of the possible relationship between the age of the student participant and the accuracy of the parent’s perception.