This issue of the NASAP Journal combines three articles that focus on Latino/a students. What support this particular group of students might need to be successful in college? Rosemary Craven Lamb and Walter Brown investigate factors that predict the persistence of Latino males in community colleges. They argue that best teaching practices that engage students and provide for student-faculty interaction along with college support increase cumulative grade point averages of Latino students. Another form of support, parental, is discussed in “Education Is First”: Latina/o Students Share Their Parents’ College Expectations and Perceptions of HBCUs.” Taryn Ozuna Allen, Estee Hernández, Robert T. Palmer, and Dina Maramba use the concept of familismo to explore how parents of Latina/o students might affect student’s college choice. Bianca Ortiz and Donald Mitchell, Jr. explore ways to provide financial support to Latino/a students in public higher education.

Continuing the theme of student support, we included the article Donald Mitchell, Jr. and John Gipson, who inquire how student involvement in fraternities and sororities affect academic and social life of African American students. Their findings suggest that, although involvement in fraternities and sororities does not seem to affect grade point average, it is associated with involvement in student organizations and on-campus employment. As the authors who contributed to this issue demonstrate, ways to ensure student success in college are many, from academic support to campus life involvement.

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Editor

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“Education Is First”:
Latina/o Students Share Their Parents’ College Expectations and
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by
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Abstract
This qualitative, phenomenological study investigated the college choice process of Latina/o students enrolled in two Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) in Texas. The current study uniquely examines Latina/o parents’ words of advice (consejos) on higher education and perceptions of HBCUs. Through two one-on-one, semi-structured interviews, 17 Latina/o participants shared their college going experiences. Using familismo as the guiding theoretical framework, the findings suggest that parents highly valued college and encouraged participants to pursue a college degree. Upon matriculation in an HBCU, however, participants perceived varying levels of parental support. While some participants’ parents were enthused about their child’s enrollment in higher education, others were skeptical of the value and quality of an HBCU. Recommendations for practice are offered.

Keywords: Latina/o students, Historically Black Colleges and Universities, college choice, familismo
“Education is First”:
Latina/o Students Share Their Parents’ College Expectations and Perceptions of HBCUs

According to the latest U.S. Census, Latinas/os constitute the largest population of school-age children of color (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2014), and in Texas, the location for this study, they make up the majority of school-age children (Texas Education Agency [TEA], 2014). This rapidly growing population is also influencing higher education institutions, as more Latina/o students enroll in college (Fry, 2011). This demographic reality has led some HBCUs, particularly in Texas, to actively recruit Latina/o students (DiMaria, 2005; Roach, 2005). Some Texas HBCU leaders maintain that their unique campus community and supportive learning environment equip them to address the educational needs of Latina/o students (Roach, 2005), many of whom are first-generation college students (Santiago, 2007).

Parents are a key influence in promoting college going among first-generation college students (McCarron & Inkelas, 2006). Existing research suggests that parental aspirations toward a college degree play a positive role in Latina/o students’ decision to attend college, even when controlling for parental level of education (Arbona & Nora, 2007; Cabrera & La Nasa, 2000; Spera, Wentzel, & Matto, 2009). However, when Latina/o parents have not experienced the college choice process themselves, they are often unfamiliar with the necessary steps to pursue a college degree (Ceja, 2006; Perez & McDonough, 2008). Tornatzky, Cutler, and Lee (2002) found that language barriers as well as the approachability of school administrators hinder parents from fully participating in college decision-making. Instead, parents support students in the college-going process through financial and emotional support as well as consejos (advice) to motivate students (Ceja, 2006; Valdez, 1996).

This qualitative study addresses a critical gap in higher education research by investigating the role of parents in Latina/o students’ college going and enrollment in HBCUs. Prior HBCU research has examined the
college choice process of Black students (Freeman, 1999a; McDonough, Antonio, & Trent, 1995) and White students (Conrad, Breier, & Braxton, 1997), but few studies have explored Latina/o students and their decision to enroll in HBCUs (Palmer, Maramba, Allen, & Going, 2015; Palmer, Maramba, Yull, & Ozuna, in press). Using the cultural value of *familismo* (family closeness and loyalty), this study intently focused on Latina/o parents’ expectations for college and parents’ perceptions of HBCUs.

**Literature Review**

The purpose of this section is to first provide a general overview of literature on the college choice process and then literature relevant to the college choice process of students who choose to attend HBCUs. Specifically, it will focus on literature pertaining to African Americans’ college choice process at HBCUs and White students at HBCUs to demonstrate the need for additional research on Latina/o students who enroll at HBCUs.

**Overview of the College Choice Process**

Scholars have composed several models to explain the college choice process for students (e.g., Chapman, 1981; Hossler & Gallagher, 1987; Kotler, 1976). Hossler and Gallagher (1987) proposed the most prominent model of college choice when they conceptualized a three-stage college choice process. The first stage of Hossler and Gallagher’s model is predisposition, which involves students making the decision to continue their education beyond high school. Once students decide to enter college, they generally turn to friends, teachers, parents, counselors, and extended families for better information to facilitate decision-making. Finally, students begin to narrow their selections of institutions based on perception and assessment of institutional quality, financial aid package, and the availability of academic programs in the courtship stage (Hossler & Gallagher, 1987).

While Hossler and Gallagher’s (1987) college choice model is currently the most widely cited in the college choice literature, others have proposed models to inform the ways students make decisions about attending college. For example, Kotler (1976) explained that the college selection
process consists of seven stages, which start with the students’ decision to attend college, and conclude with course registration. Similarly, Ihanfeldt (1980) described the college choice process as a series of categories that students go through that includes candidates, applicants, admitted students, matriculating students, and alumni. Moreover, Chapman (1981) proposed a three-stage college choice model that consists of students’ decision to enroll in college, the process of applying to college, and being admitted and matriculating into college. Litten (1982) later expanded Chapman’s model by adding environmental factors to the institutional and student factors originally included in Chapman’s model.

**African American Students’ College Choice Process at an HBCU**

Freeman (1999a, 1999b) found race, family, and financial aid were key influences in the college choice process of African American students. Freeman (1999a) revealed the importance of pre-college diversity experiences in a student’s decision to enroll in an HBCU. For example, African American students who attended high schools where they were the racial majority sought the opportunity to broaden their experiences by attending predominantly White institutions or more diverse colleges. They perceived their enrollment in non-HBCUs as an opportunity to learn about diversity more broadly and to educate others on their culture. However, African American students who attended White high schools viewed HBCUs as an avenue to learn more about their own cultural background and history, which were information and knowledge devoid in their high school education. Freeman (1999b) emphasized the importance of race and cultural affirmation in secondary education and asserted that high school students wanted greater cultural presence in their secondary schools.

In addition to affirming cultural heritage and traditions, studies highlight the important role of families, campus climate, and financial aid in the successful experiences of African American students. For example, McDonough, Antonio, and Trent (1995) and Tobolowsky, Outcalt, and McDonough (2005) found African American students to be heavily influenced by family members who were HBCU alumni and parents who
valued HBCUs. McDonough et al. (1995) further revealed that African American students’ religious beliefs and understanding of the academic quality of HBCUs informed their decision to enroll in HBCUs. Financial aid was also found to either propel or limit college participation for African American students enrolled in HBCUs (Freeman & Thomas, 2002; Sissoko & Shiau, 2005).

**White Students’ College Choice Process at an HBCU**

Brown and Stein (1972) studied White students enrolled in five HBCUs in North Carolina. Findings from their study revealed that White students selected an HBCU primarily due to convenience or financial aid. Though all respondents indicated a level of reservation when they enrolled in an HBCU, the majority of participants did not feel a special orientation session was critical to their academic success (Brown & Stein, 1972). To expand on this study, Brown (1973) conducted a second study and included 15 more HBCUs in the Southeastern portion of the United States. He found that the primary reasons the White participants selected an HBCU were location and cost. Brown also noted that over half (54%) of the White participants indicated they felt comfortable sharing their comments and thoughts in the classroom (Brown, 1973). Nevertheless, he noted few of the students resided on campus or participated in on-campus activities, and a majority of participants reported no contact with Black students after leaving the campus (Brown, 1973). In addition, Conrad, Brier, and Braxton (1997) conducted a qualitative study to understand White students’ enrollment in HBCUs. The authors conducted interviews and focus groups and found academic course offerings, financial support, and institutional characteristics motivated the students to enroll.

In sum, the review of HBCU literature reveals that the majority of the literature focuses on the college choice process of African American students and White students. While African American students enroll in HBCUs because of prior relationships and for cultural support, White students pursue their collegiate career in HBCUs because of lower cost,
proximity to their home, and unique program offerings. This literature prompts further research to explore a substantive shortcoming in the literature: Latina/o students enrolled in HBCUs.

**Theoretical Framework**

Typically, discourse around populations of color—particularly first-generation students—stems from a deficit perspective: it expects populations to assimilate to the dominant (i.e., White) culture and has even gone as far as to characterize Mexican American values as a “cultural deficiency” (Aguirre & Baker, 2000). These traditional Latina/o values include *familismo* (family closeness and loyalty), *personalismo* (the value placed on maintaining personal relationships), *respeto* (consideration for the sensibilities and needs of others), *machismo* (qualities of bravery, courage, generosity, respect for others, protection of and provision for loved ones), and *marianismo* (the centrality of the strong, virtuous mother in the family) (Marin & Marin, 1991; Santiago-Rivera, Arredondo, & Gallardo-Cooper, 2002).

This study focuses on *familismo* as a cultural resource in the college choice process for Latina/o students. Collectivism and the emphasis on community decision-making, stemming from a student’s familial relationships, are sources of capital. Collectivism as a cultural value differentiates Latinas/os from the individualistic and competitive culture of the American mainstream (Holleran & Waller, 2003). It involves empathy, subordinating personal interests in favor of group needs, and group conformity. Although group conformity sacrifices the individual to some extent, it also provides a sense of belonging and confers respect for the group. *Familismo* is rooted in collectivism and places the family at the center of a student’s psychosocial world (Holleran & Waller, 2003). Because of this deference for family, parents bear influence in Latina/o students’ educational experiences, regardless of whether or not they attended college.

**Methods**

We employed a qualitative, phenomenological research design (Creswell, 2014) to understand the lived experiences of 17 Latina/o
students who decided to pursue a postsecondary degree in Texas HBCUs. A phenomenological approach seeks to understand the essence of a phenomenon and “describes the meaning of the lived experiences for several individuals about a concept or the phenomenon” (Creswell, 1998, p. 51). Phenomenology asks participants to offer a retrospective account of their experiences and to ascribe meaning to those experiences (Patton, 2002). The findings from this study are based on a larger, on-going research study examining the K-16 educational experiences of Latina/o students enrolled in Texas HBCUs. For the purpose of this paper, we sought to understand the role of familismo and parental support in the college-going process of Latinas/os enrolled in HBCUs. The guiding research questions for this study were as follows:

1. How do Latina/o students enrolled in HBCUs describe their parents’ higher education expectations?
2. How do Latina/o students enrolled in HBCUs describe their parents’ perceptions of HBCUs?

**Site Selection**

After receiving IRB approvals, we employed purposeful sampling (Maxwell, 2005) to select the institutional sites for this study. Maxwell (2005) defines purposeful sampling as “a strategy in which particular settings, persons, or events are selected deliberately in order to provide important information that cannot be gotten as well from other choices” (p. 88). After researching the eight, four-year Texas HBCUs, we selected one institutional site (Perry University – a pseudonym) in spring 2012 and selected another institutional site as a follow-up to the study in spring 2013 (Castañeda College – a pseudonym). The purpose of the follow up study was to expand the initial study and gather more data on Latina/o students enrolled in HBCUs. These HBCUs were selected because of their increasing enrollment of Latina/o students and commitment to campus diversity. To protect the sites’ confidentiality, the authors can share that the institutions are four-year, baccalaureate granting institutions located in urban areas. Most recent data reveals the Latina/o student enrollment at Perry University
and Castañeda College ranged between 5 and 20 percent (U.S. Department of Education, 2013).

**Participant Selection**

For the larger study, we received students’ contact information through the help of campus administrators. In order to participate, students needed to identify as Latina/o and be enrolled in their current first to fifth year of college. In total, over 100 Latina/o students at Perry University and Castañeda College were contacted via email, and 18 students who responded met the selection criteria. Each participant received a pseudonym to protect his or her confidentiality.

In total, 17 participants were included in this study. The majority of the participants (n=11) identified as male. Most participants (n=9) attended Perry University. The participants’ academic majors included fine arts (n=1), business (n=8), natural sciences (n=3), and liberal arts (n=4). One participant was undecided. Participants were classified as freshman (n=3), sophomores (n=5), juniors (n=6), and seniors (n=3). The majority (n=15) of the participants were first-generation college students. For more information on the participants in this study, please see the Appendix.

**Data Collection**

Data collection began in spring 2012 at Perry University and began in spring 2013 at Castañeda College. At each site, the participants were interviewed using Seidman’s (1998) phenomenological approach to in-depth interviewing. Although Seidman suggests utilizing a three-part interview series to understand participants’ lived experiences, other researchers (Martinez, 2010; Reddick, 2011) have shortened the interview process to two interviews when confronted with scheduling conflicts or challenges. Thus, students in this study participated in two one-on-one, semi-structured interviews. The purpose of the first interview was to understand each student’s life history and K-12 educational background. This interview provided an opportunity to build rapport and to understand the experiences that led the participants to higher education and to an HBCU, specifically. The second interview focused on the students’ transition to college and first-
year experiences at their respective HBCU. These interviews ranged from 15 minutes to 90 minutes. Because it was so brief, the 15-minute interview was excluded from analysis. Thus, only 17 interviews were included in data analysis.

**Data Analysis and Trustworthiness**

Each interview was digitally recorded and transcribed verbatim. We reviewed the transcripts independently, and then we discussed the emerging themes and subthemes throughout the analysis. We employed a general inductive approach (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Thomas, 2003) and created matrices of codes (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014) to discuss and finalize our findings. The concept of *familismo* and the research questions guided our analysis. Each participant and institutional site received a pseudonym to protect his/her/its confidentiality.

**Trustworthiness**

To promote trustworthy data, we conducted member checks (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and asked participants to review their transcripts to ensure their narrative was accurately represented. The participants were then able to edit their transcripts as necessary. In addition, we debriefed with peers who are experts on Latina/o college students’ college choice process as well as scholars who have examined HBCUs. These discussions helped limit the researchers’ biases and provided an opportunity to receive important feedback (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

**Limitations**

Although this study contributes to our understanding of the influence of parents on Latina/o students enrolled in an HBCU, it has two key limitations. First, this study solely addressed the role of parental support in Latina/o students’ college going. It does not offer insight into the role of other personal relationships (e.g., siblings, community members, or extended family members) on their college decisions. Second, this study focused only on two institutional sites in Texas. Latina/o students enrolled in HBCUs outside of Texas may describe different experiences in their college choice process. We sought to address these limitations by conducting indepth interviews to provide a rich description of the students’ experiences.
Findings

Findings suggest that parents prioritized higher education as a familial and cultural value and demonstrated their commitment through consejos (words of advice) in their student’s educational pursuits. In this section, we share findings regarding parental expectations of a college degree, as well as perceptions of their student’s enrollment in an HBCU.

Parental Expectations of Higher Education

It was very clear to these students that their parents expected them to go to college, as evidenced by both parental encouragement and direct communication of their expectations. Students received messages about parental sacrifice for their families, which they then internalized as an expectation to go to college. Peter shared that his parents earned their GEDs after they immigrated to the United States, and they placed a very high value on education, especially since they did not immediately finish high school. He shared, “They told us never to stop going to school. It was always important in my family…it’s always been a priority in the family. Education is first.” Peter’s parents distinctly conveyed their wishes: “Never stop going to school,” as they themselves had to do.

Similarly, Ernest cited his parents’ support of his collegiate pursuits. He said, “Oh, they’re like really strong in school. You know, you can’t drop out. You gotta finish high school. You gotta go to college. You gotta get yourself a degree.” When Ernest encountered challenges, his parents advised him to “‘look at the mirror,’ you know, ‘see us. Look at us, how we struggle to get you guys through.’” By earning a college degree, Ernest could “be someone in life’ and honor his parents’ sacrifices. Both Peter and Ernest’s testimonials suggest deference to their parents, honoring their struggles to provide for their families, and a resultant commitment to earn their college degrees. A college degree is not a singular endeavor, but a responsibility to the collective family.

Family messages communicated that an education was a cultural value and the key to financial stability. Ernest’s parents communicated the value of a college degree and its importance in solidifying a future career,
instead of a series of jobs. Lorenzo shared the following:

For Latin families, school is very important so my—I always get talks with my aunts and uncles and my grandma and my mom: ‘School’s very important. You have to build a good foundation now so when you go to college, you can graduate and get a good job, get your money.’

Mark communicated a similar message, also leaning on Latina/o cultural values, when he stated, “Like, you know, most, most Hispanic parents or most other parents, you know: you go to school, you get an education, you get a job. It’s kind of like that.”

Since the majority of the participants were first-generation college students, their parents could not directly offer college advice. However, participants cited the value of emotional support throughout their college going experience. To Sandra, this type of support was more important than financial resources:

We don’t have a lot of money and we don’t have a lot of resources so they gave me what they had, which is love, support, and time… I know some families have all the resources and all the money to pay for the kids… to go [to] the school they want to after high school, [but] they don’t get the same support that I did, and that’s what I really appreciate from my family.

In addition to these words of encouragement, parents openly and directly communicated college as an expectation. Andres shared, “My parents always just looked forward for, to me getting an education.” Mark said, “Well, my parents were always encouraging me to go, to finish school, go to college.” Rebekah, too, revealed, “My parents always told me to go to college.” Even when Emily did not want to go to college, her parents maintained steadfast in their expectation: “Yeah, like right after high school, I honestly didn’t, like, I didn’t want to do college, like, I wanted to be a missionary.” Emily completed missionary work after high school, and when she wanted to stay for a longer period of time, her parents insisted, “You’re coming back. You’re doing school.”

Our findings reveal that students were motivated to pursue a college
degree because they internalized their parents’ sacrifices to provide for their families. Students shared that education is a Latina/o cultural value, and it is viewed as an asset to the student and the entire family. Through direct messages of “don’t give up” and “stay in school,” parents communicated support of a college degree. These perceptions align with national data, which indicate that an overwhelming majority of Latina/o parents expect their students to enroll in college, regardless of their level of educational attainment (Santiago, Calderón Galdeano, & Taylor, 2015).

Parental Reactions to Texas HBCUs

Findings indicate that neither the students nor their parents were immediately cognizant of the institution’s status as an HBCU. When prompted to share their parents’ perceptions of HBCUs, several students admitted that they themselves were previously unaware of what the distinction meant, which may be associated with their status as first-generation students. Students described varying levels of support for their enrollment in HBCUs.

Some parents placed emphasis on earning the college degree over the institution. Cathy’s mom supported her decision and indicated no preference toward or away from Perry University: “My mom said as long as I liked it, she was okay with it. She agreed with me.” Cathy later reiterated that her mother “didn’t want to choose a college” for her. For example, Peter indicated his parents were unconcerned with his decision to enroll in an HBCU:

The way we see it, it doesn’t matter how we get it done as long as we get it done. So it’s like, that’s how I feel, you know. I don’t, it could be Harvard or (Castañeda College). To me, it’s my education that I get and what I get out of it.

Likewise, Vera’s parents “just told [her] to get an education,” supporting her journey “through everything and, you know, financially as well,” but left the decision of where to enroll to her. Other students made similar statements of “It was my choice” and shared that their parents supported their choices.
Any uncertainties about Perry University and Castañeda College were assuaged with campus intervention. Specifically, Fernando noted participation on a campus tour, which helped provide his parents with context about Perry’s campus culture: “They saw the dress code—about business casual—and my parents liked that idea, ‘cause they looked really mature. They were professional at what they were doing.” Students cited one-on-one conversations with senior-level campus administrators as bearing influence on their parents’ perceptions and on their eventual enrollment. Additionally, Mark’s parents were swayed to say, “As long as you’re getting your education, we’re good,” once they learned of the campus’ commitment to culture and student support.

Two students, Lorenzo and Matthew, communicated that the idea of moving away from home was of primary concern for enrolling in an HBCU. For Lorenzo, it was his mom who “didn’t want me to live away from the house, as any mother would probably feel,” but ultimately respected his decision to live in the residence hall. Matthew shared that his mom was traditional—“my mom still thinks that I’m not going to leave the house until I get married”—and expressed worry about living on campus:

So she was kind of like, ‘Well, it’s really good for you,’ you know, ‘It’s good that you’re going to school, but do you really want to,’ you know, ‘leave the house? Are you going to be okay?’ You know, most protecting moms do that, but they were supportive overall. Once he explained the benefits of living in a residence hall, both parents were more at ease.

Some parents voiced concern over selecting a Texas HBCU, and racism was evident in some comments. Ernest shared his parents’ impressions of Castañeda College: “When they saw it, they was like, you know, ‘You’re going to the hood,’ you know, ‘trying to better yourself? What are you doing going there?’” Ernest’s comments suggest a perception that an HBCU was less favorable or desirable than “green and bright” institutions in glossy brochures. Levi, too, disclosed that his parents had applied stereotypes in their evaluation of HBCUs, citing negative portrayals
of African Americans in the news and in entertainment.

Our analysis also denotes gender differentiation between two sets of parents, in which mothers tended to be more indifferent or supportive of a participant’s decision to enroll in a Texas HBCU, and fathers asserted more disapproval or unease. In his response, Ernest highlighted the differences:

My dad was weird about it. He was like, ‘So you’re going to a Black people’s school?’ And I was like, ‘Basically.’ And then my mom was like, ‘Oh, well. You act Black. You hang around with Black people anyway, so.’ They’re cool. They’re cool with it, I mean, they have Black friends too, so.

Ernest suggests that despite initial disapproval, his father supported his decision to enroll at an HBCU, perhaps in relationship with his mother’s exhibited nonchalance. Likewise, Sandra’s parents also differed in their reactions to Castañeda College:

My dad was kind of scared, because he’s not so used to [socializing] with African Americans, so when he saw it was an HBCU, he’s like, ‘Okay. It’s your choice but okay.’ My mom, like, she doesn’t mind. She works with all kinds of people, so she’s like, ‘Wherever you want to go, that’s your choice, and I support you.’

Sandra’s father’s discomfort was offset by her mother’s unwavering support. In both cases, the differentiated support from either parent confirms adherence to traditional cultural norms for mothers (i.e., marianismo, emphasizing caring and giving) and fathers (i.e., machismo, emphasizing strength and protection) (Marin & Marin, 1991; Santiago-Rivera, Arredondo, Gallardo-Cooper, 2002).

Above all, the pursuit of the college degree was most important among parents, which took precedence over the institutional type. Students confirmed they bore the final say in selecting the institution that was right for them, which demonstrates a departure from traditional values of familismo. In this regard, students revealed their independence, rather than deference or conformity. When parents were apprehensive about HBCUs, campus administrators, who communicated with care and professionalism,
alleviated concerns about enrolling in a Texas HBCU.

**Discussion and Implications**

This study builds upon our limited knowledge of the educational pipeline in Texas and documents the particular role of HBCUs in educating Latina/o students. The main findings of the study include the following: 1) parental expectations of higher education and 2) parental reactions to Texas HBCUs. The following is a discussion of these findings and to reinforce the need to understand the role of parental influence for Latina/o students on attending college.

First, the participants indicated that overall, their parents expected that their children attend college. Prior research has found that Latina/o parents with limited college experiences are unable to offer specific strategies to assist their children in the college-going process (Ceja, 2006). Our findings, however, reveal that although parents were generally unfamiliar with higher education in the United States, they more than made up for that knowledge gap via their emotional support. This continual support and encouragement from parents is important to acknowledge. As the Latina/o college-going student population continues to exponentially grow, it behooves educators and administrators to equip parents with the tools they and their students need to adequately prepare to begin their college careers.

Second, in our study, it appears that parents had various reactions about HBCUs mainly because many were not familiar with such institutions. According to the students, parents have three general responses to their enrollment in an HBCU: contentment, apathy, or skepticism. While most parents were grateful for this opportunity to participate in a form of higher education, others were unaware of the history or mission of HBCUs. Some did not know their child would attend a predominantly African American institution. Still other parents were unsure of their child’s enrollment in a “Black school”; these parents felt HBCUs provided a lesser quality education.

There are a number of ways that higher education institutions can further assist with providing such tools for both parents and students
themselves to learn more about HBCUs. First and foremost, it is important that any dissemination of information be in a language that is supportive and cognizant of the population. For example, informational brochures and activities should be bilingual, both in Spanish and English. HBCUs could also create institutional materials for parents to learn more about the history of the institution. Second, it is clear from the findings that there continues to be limited knowledge about HBCUs themselves. The sharing of knowledge about HBCUs is vital and can occur through various mediums. One such way of increasing information is via bilingual or Spanish-language websites catered to both parents and students. Online content could help provide a more accurate picture of HBCUs and campus life. Also helpful and informative are outreach programs at high schools that are, themselves, conducted by HBCU staff. Staff might also include peer educators and college counselors at the high school level who can reach out to students as well as parents. In addition, peer educators and counselors—Latina/o college students who themselves have had to navigate the college-selection process as first-generation low-income students—can provide more direct advice on navigating the college transition.

Our findings also pointed to how it was important for some parents to feel reassured about their student attending an HBCU. One avenue that can further help parents feel more comfortable with their student’s decision is conducting bilingual parent orientations. These parent orientation sessions should still include information about the history and purpose of HBCUs and the benefits of attending an HBCU. This opportunity may help parents who still have reservations. Latina/o students who are currently attending HBCUs can also be pivotal in discussing their experiences at the institution’s orientation. Activities and programs such as this one may also help better facilitate communication between parents, students and the institution.

**Conclusion**

The Latina/o population is increasingly represented across the country. HBCUs are reaching out to the Latina/o community in the state,
but limited empirical study has examined the Latina/o student experience in HBCUs. Fully understanding the breadth of Latina/o students’ educational experiences is particularly important in Texas, which has a growing Latina/o population and is home to nine HBCUs. This study builds upon our knowledge of the educational pipeline in Texas and documents the particular role of HBCUs in educating Latina/o students. It also reinforces the need to further understand the role of parental influence for Latina/o students attending HBCUs. The findings of the current study indicate that there are a number of implications for campus programs, policies and initiatives at other HBCUs and to help inform education policy and practice and HBCU policy and practice.

References


educational attainment: Relations to ethnicity, parental education, children’s academic performance, and parental perceptions of school climate. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 38*, 1140-1152.


Appendix
Appendix

Participants’ Pseudonyms and Backgrounds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant (Pseudonym)</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>College/University</th>
<th>Major</th>
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<td>M</td>
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<td>Junior</td>
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<td>No</td>
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Student Engagement Factors that Predict THE PERSISTENCE of Latino Males in America’s Community Colleges

by

Dr. Rosemary Craven Lamb
Dr. Walter A. Brown, Jackson State University

ABSTRACT
The purpose of this quantitative study was to determine the extent to which student engagement factors predicted the persistence of Latino males in America’s community colleges. The conceptual framework was developed from Chickering and Gamson’s (1987) Seven Principles for Good Practice and Kuh’s (2001, 2003, 2009) Student Engagement Theory. Student engagement factors were measured using 20 survey items from the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE). Persistence was measured with students’ cumulative grade point averages. The sample of 3,783 full-time community college students included Latino males aged 18-24 from 48 states. Data for this study were used with permission from the Center of Community College Engagement, The Community College Survey of Student Engagement (2007), the University of Texas at Austin. Three standard multiple regressions were run to measure the extent active and collaborative learning, student-faculty interaction, and college support for learners predicted cumulative grade point averages. Results revealed that active and collaborative learning, student-faculty interaction, and college support for learners significantly impacted Latino males’ cumulative grade point averages.

Key Words: Latino males, community college, persistence, cumulative grade point averages, student engagement, active and collaborative learning, student-faculty interaction, college support for learners, CCSSE
Introduction

While the nation is undergoing a change in demographics, community colleges are facing the unique challenge of low student persistence rates, particularly for Latino students (Page, 2013). Although the number of Latinos pursuing higher education has increased over the last ten years, college persistence rates for Latinos lag far behind African-Americans, Whites, and other ethnicities (NCES, 2012). Crisp and Nora (2010) found that Latino community college students are less likely than White students to persist toward completion of an associate degree. While the overall national average of 25 to 34-year-olds to attain an associate degree was 41% in 2009 (NCES, 2012), 66% of associate degree earners were White, 13% were African American, and 12% were Latino (Davis & Bauman, 2011). Saenz and Ponjuan (2009) further explained that of the associate degrees earned by the Latino population in 2009, only 38% were earned by Latino males, compared to 62% earned by Latina females. Saenz, Lee, Kim, Valdez, Bukoski, and Hatch (2010) confirmed a persistence gap in their analyses of Community College Survey of Student Engagement data for 2007, 2008, and 2009 by finding that among 21,673 Latino participants from 636 community colleges nationwide, Latino women persisted at a higher rate than Latino men.

Prior studies at four-year institutions have demonstrated the more engaged college students are with faculty and staff, peers, and the college environment, the more likely students are to persist toward graduation (Astin, 1984; Pace, 1984; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1977; Tinto, 1975). However, research is limited on the persistence of students of color at two-year institutions (Greene, Marti, & McClenny, 2008) and more limited on the factors that impact the persistence of Latino male students (Crisp & Nora, 2010).

Statement of the Problem

Research suggests that students who demonstrate the least amount of engagement are at a greater risk of dropping out of college (Saenz, Hatch, Bukoski, Kim, Lee, & Valdez, 2011). Moreover, research also
indicates that student learning, persistence, and college degree attainment are strongly intertwined with student engagement (Center for Community College Student Engagement, 2014). Numerous empirical studies have been conducted at four-year institutions documenting the correlation of student engagement with student persistence (Strayhorn, 2012), yet very little empirical research has been conducted for this same phenomenon at two-year institutions, particularly for the Latino male population (Crisp & Nora, 2010).

One study in particular has shown that student engagement is linked directly to the success of students in a community college setting, but this research focused strictly on students involved in multicultural student organizations. Researchers tested the extent to which student interactions with faculty, peers, and student organizations contributed to the learning success of students involved in ethnic-specific organizations. Using a community college experiences questionnaire, researchers collected data from 239 students from 12 different community colleges (Lundberg, 2014). Students self-reported their learning through five domains, including education, intellectual skills, science and technology, personal development, and career preparation. Researchers found that the strongest predictor of student success was frequent interaction with faculty, with student-peer interaction as the second strongest predictor (Lundberg, 2014).

Another study used survey data from the Center for Community College Student Engagement to test for student involvement in the community college environment across several student-level domains. This study included 663 community colleges and over 320,000 students (Saenz et al., 2011). Using data-mining techniques, researchers analyzed survey responses to discover a parsimonious number of natural clusters to reveal a naturally occurring typology of engagement patterns. This study included 13 individual survey items with a 4-level ordinal response scale. Participants responded to questions about the college classroom, active learning activities, behaviors, and support for learning in the community college environment (Saenz et al., 2011). Results indicated that support
services had a direct correlation with highly engaged students; findings also revealed that collaboration among peers were strongly correlated to a higher level of engagement (Saenz et al., 2011). However, this study did not predict or account for the variation among ethnic groups, nor did it test student engagement variables for possible persistence patterns.

A similar study investigated whether active learning communities significantly increased the level of faculty and peer interaction of community college students enrolled in developmental English. Using a quantitative non-experimental correlation design, the study used self-reported data on a student questionnaire (Wilmer, 2009). Researchers conducted an independent t-test on each of the five subscales of the Institutional Integration Scale to determine a statistically significant difference in the level and type of interaction experienced by learners. The results of this study indicated a significant difference in the level of peer interaction, the level of faculty interaction, but not on the level of faculty concern, level of academic and intellectual development, and level of institutional and goal commitment in students participating in a learning community, compared with students not participating in a learning community (Wilmer, 2009). Findings from the study were limited to community college students enrolled in development English courses.

Another study by Gibson and Slate (2010) found that demographic factors, measured by age and first-generational status, played a significant role in student engagement for community college students in Texas. Researchers analyzed over 40,000 responses from the Community College Survey of Student Engagement. Findings revealed statistically significant differences in the student engagement of first-year community college students by age category and by first-generation status, compared to other students (Gibson & Slate, 2010); however, the study did not reveal the effect student engagement may have on minority students or on community college persistence.

Using a framework of social and cultural capital, another research study examined successful African American and Latino community
college students to determine the factors that impact the persistence patterns of students of color. This study used focus group interviews with 22 students at one urban community college to answer the research questions (Sandoval-Lucero, Maes, & Klingsmith, 2014). Findings revealed that the relationships and interactions that students had with friends, family, faculty, and college staff positively impacted the persistence of students in the community college. Three major themes emerged that contributed to the success of the research participants: relationships with faculty, family support, and campus support (Sandoval-Lucero et al., 2014). Although this study provided empirical data for students of color, findings were limited to one urban community college and could not be generalized to other populations.

Crisp and Nora (2010) examined the impact of a set of theoretically-derived predictor variables on the persistence and transfer of Latino community college students; this study was limited to students who transferred to Historically Hispanic Institutions. Researchers tested the amount of time students spent with faculty outside of class and time spent with academic advisors, grade point averages of students during the first year of college, and student enrollment in developmental courses. The researchers used logistic regression to test the conceptual framework on an existing set of quantitative persistence data drawn from a national sample of Latino students (Crisp & Nora, 2010). Researchers then evaluated the regression models through an examination and interpretation of overall fit and diagnostic statistics. Findings from this study revealed that parental education levels, social integration of Latino students in the environment, enrollment in developmental courses, attendance at Historically Hispanic Institutions, and grade point averages all had a significant impact on the students’ persistence at community colleges and on students’ transfer to Historically Hispanic Institutions (Crisp & Nora, 2010). However, limited research has been conducted that addresses student engagement factors that influence Latino males at community colleges.
Purpose of the Study
The purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which student engagement factors predict the persistence of Latino males in the nation’s community colleges. This research sought to understand if student engagement factors, defined on the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) as active and collaborative learning, student-faculty interaction, and college support for learners, have an effect on the persistence of Latino males enrolled in America’s community colleges. For this study, persistence was measured with students’ cumulative grade point averages.

Research Questions
The following research questions guided this study:
1. To what extent does active and collaborative learning predict persistence of Latino males enrolled in the community college as indicated by cumulative grade point averages?
2. To what extent does student-faculty interaction predict persistence of Latino males enrolled in the community college as indicated by cumulative grade point averages?
3. To what extent does college support for learners predict persistence of Latino males enrolled in the community college as indicated by cumulative grade point averages?

Conceptual Framework
The conceptual framework for this research study was developed from Chickering and Gamson’s (1987) Seven Principles for Good Practice and Kuh’s (2001, 2003, 2009) Student Engagement Theory. Chickering and Gamson (1987) stated that the more engaged students are in the seven activities, the more likely they are to persist and graduate from college. Chickering and Gamson’s (1987) seven principles include the following: (a) student-faculty contact, (b) active learning, (c) prompt feedback, (d) time on task, (e) high expectations, (f) experience with diversity, and (g) cooperation among students. According to Chickering and Gamson, the principles for
good practice are effective for many different kinds of students, including Latino students. Effective learning is collaborative and allows students to share ideas and respond to the reactions of others, which sharpens thinking and deepens understanding (Chickering & Gamson, 1987). Additionally, students who have meaningful interactions with faculty have an enhanced intellectual commitment and are more encouraged to persist to graduation (Chickering & Gamson, 1987). Kuh’s Theory of Student Engagement (2003, 2009) addresses two concepts. First, engagement is student driven, and students who invest time and energy into studying and taking part in other purposeful activities (e.g., student organizations, group study, and conversations with faculty) achieve higher levels of engagement. Second, engagement is institution driven; colleges and universities should be purposeful in the services and activities provided to students and maximize opportunities for engagement (Kuh, 2001, 2003, 2009).

Research Methodology

This quantitative study used data from the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) to examine the extent of student engagement factors. Data included 20 survey items that comprised the three CCSSE benchmarks of active and collaborative learning, student-faculty interaction, and college support for learners. Pearson correlation tests were conducted to examine the strength and direction of relationships among the active and collaborative learning, student-faculty interaction, and college support for learners engagement benchmark constructs. Three standard multiple regressions were run to measure the extent to which active and collaborative learning, student-faculty interaction, and college support for learners predict cumulative grade point averages for the research sample.

Research Sample

The sample for this research study encompassed a three-year cohort of students from the United States who identified themselves as male, Latino, ages 18-24, and full-time on the CCSSE in 2012, 2013, and 2014. The sample collected during these years included colleges across the nation that participated in the CCSSE administration. Courses selected for
administration at the colleges were randomly selected from an electronic data file containing credit classes (Center for Community College Student Engagement, 2014). During 2012, 2013, and 2014, over 400,000 community college students representing 684 institutions and 48 states completed the CCSSE. Of the 2014 CCSSE cohort, 42% were male, 72% were enrolled as full-time, 63% were 18-24 years old, and 12% were Latino (Center for Community College Student Engagement, 2014). The Center of Student Engagement provided the researcher with a 25% random sample (n =108,509) from the 2014 cohort. Once the researcher filtered out all other variables, the sample for this study included 3,783 full-time Latino male students, ages 18 to 24.

**Research Findings**

To answer research question one, a Pearson correlation was run to assess the relationships among the active and collaborative learning benchmark variables. As shown in Table 1, significant correlations among all of the active and collaborative learning benchmark variables were observed at the p < .01 or p < .05 level.

Table 1

*Active and Collaborative Learning Correlation Matrix*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>QUEST</th>
<th>PRES</th>
<th>PROJ</th>
<th>GROUP</th>
<th>TUTOR</th>
<th>COMM</th>
<th>IDEAS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
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<td>.246**</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>PROJ</td>
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<td></td>
<td>.274**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>.275**</td>
<td>.414**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TUTOR</td>
<td>.213**</td>
<td>.124**</td>
<td>.146**</td>
<td>.311**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM</td>
<td>.170**</td>
<td>.231**</td>
<td>.188**</td>
<td>.302**</td>
<td>.338**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDEAS</td>
<td>.268**</td>
<td>.150**</td>
<td>.245**</td>
<td>.300**</td>
<td>.225**</td>
<td>.174**</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPA</td>
<td>.195**</td>
<td>.075**</td>
<td>.059**</td>
<td>.083**</td>
<td>.172**</td>
<td>.040*</td>
<td>.108**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. QUEST* = asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions; *PRES* = made a class presentation; *PROJ* = worked with other students on
projects during class; GROUP=worked with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments; TUTOR= tutored or taught other students (paid or voluntary); COMM=participated in a community-based project as a part of a regular course; IDEAS=discussed ideas from your readings or classes with others outside of class (students, family members, co-workers, etc.); GPA=cumulative college grade point average.

*p < .05. **p < .01.

A standard multiple regression was then run to determine the extent to which the active and collaborative learning benchmark predicted cumulative grade point averages for Latino males. The regression analysis generated a model which contained seven independent variables and yielded the following: [R² = .052, R² adj = .051, F(7, 3721) = 29.37, p < .001]. This model attained a R² = .052, accounting for 5.2% of the variance in the dependent variable of Latino males’ cumulative grade point averages. The overall F (7, 3721) was 29.37 (p < .05), which was statistically significant. As indicated in Table 2, a review of significance levels (p < .05) for each variable revealed that four of the seven variables significantly contributed to the model.
Table 2

Active and Collaborative Learning Multiple Regression Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Std.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>4.660</td>
<td>.100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions</td>
<td>.217</td>
<td>.028</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Made a class presentation</td>
<td>.065</td>
<td>.026</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worked with other students on projects during class</td>
<td>.004</td>
<td>.028</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worked with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments</td>
<td>-.007</td>
<td>.028</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutored or taught other students (paid or voluntary)</td>
<td>.208</td>
<td>.029</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participated in a community-based project as a part of a regular course</td>
<td>-.046</td>
<td>.032</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with others outside of class (students, family members, co-workers, etc.)</td>
<td>.072</td>
<td>.024</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Note. Dependable variable = cumulative college grade point average.  
*p < .05. **p < .01.

Specifically, the four items included “asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions” (β = .132, t (3779) = 7.64, p < .001); “made a class presentation” (β = .044, t (3767) = 2.54, p = .011); “tutored or taught other students (paid or voluntary)” (β = .126, t (3759) = 7.10, p < .001); and
“discussed ideas from your readings or classes with others outside of class” 
(β = .052, t (3766) = 2.97, p = .003). A review of p values also showed that 
three of the active and collaborative learning variables did not contribute 
to the significance of the model: “worked with other students on projects 
during class” (β = .002, t (3754) = .135, p = .892); “worked with classmates 
outside of class to prepare class assignments” (β = -.005, t (3761) = -.238, 
p = .812); and “participated in a community-based project as a part of a 
regular course” (β = -.026, t (3751) = -1.446, p = .148).

To answer research question two, a Pearson correlation was run to 
assess the relationships among the student-faculty interaction benchmark 
variables. Significant correlations among all of the student-faculty 
benchmark variables were observed at the p < .01 level as shown in Table 3.

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student-Faculty Interaction Correlation Matrix</th>
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<tr>
<td>Variables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DISCUSS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAREER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDEAS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEEDBACK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTHER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. EMAIL=used e-mail to communicate with an instructor; 
DISC=discussed grade or assignments with instructor; CARE=talked 
about career plans with an instructor or advisor; IDEAS=discussed ideas 
from readings or classes with instructors outside of class; FEED=received 
prompt feedback (written or oral) from instructors on your performance; 
OTHER=worked with instructor on activities other than coursework; 
GPA=cumulative college grade point averages.

**p < .01.
A standard multiple regression was then run to determine the extent to which the student-faculty interaction benchmark predicted cumulative grade point averages for Latino males. The regression analysis generated a model which contained six independent variables and yielded the following: \[R^2 = .025, R^2\text{ adj} = .023, F(6, 3667) = 15.53, p < .001\]. This model attained a \(R^2 = .025\), accounting for 2.5% of the variance in the dependent variable of Latino males’ cumulative grade point averages. The overall F (6, 3667) was 15.53 \((p < .001)\), which was statistically significant.

As shown in Table 4, a review of \(p\) levels \((p < .05)\) for individual variables revealed that only three of the six variables contributed to the significance of the model. Specifically, the three items included “discussed grades or assignments with an instructor” \((\beta = .047, t (3763) = 2.28, p = .022)\); “talked about career plans with an instructor or advisor” \((\beta = .047, t (3752) = 2.36, p = .018)\); and “received prompt feedback (written or oral) from instructors on your performance” \((\beta = .051, t (3760) = 2.87, p = .004)\).

A further analysis of \(p\) levels also showed that three of the student-faculty interaction variables did not contribute to the significance of the model: “used e-mail to communicate with an instructor” \((\beta = .029, t (3746) = 1.521, p = .128)\); “discussed ideas from your readings or classes with instructors outside of class” \((\beta = .028, t (3752) = 1.345, p = .179)\); and “worked with instructors on activities other than coursework” \((\beta = .034, t (3723) = 1.819, p = .069)\).
Table 4

**Student-Faculty Interaction Multiple Regression Results**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>5.008</td>
<td>.094</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used e-mail to communicate with an instructor</td>
<td>.042</td>
<td>.027</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussed grades or assignments with an instructor</td>
<td>.071</td>
<td>.031</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talked about career plans with an instructor or advisor</td>
<td>.067</td>
<td>.028</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with instructors outside of class</td>
<td>.041</td>
<td>.031</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Received prompt feedback (written or oral) from instructors on your performance</td>
<td>.079</td>
<td>.027</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worked with instructors on activities other than coursework</td>
<td>.054</td>
<td>.030</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note.** Dependable variable = cumulative college grade point average.

* *p < .05. **p < .01.

To answer research question 3, a third Pearson correlation was run to assess the relationships among the college support for learners benchmark variables. As depicted in Table 5, significant correlations among the seven independent variables were observed at the \( p < .01 \) level; however, significance was not found among two independent variables and the dependent variable: “providing the financial support you need to afford your education” (\( r (3736) = .029, p = 0.08 \)) and “career counseling” (\( r (3698) = .017, p = 0.30 \)).
Table 5

College Support for Learners Correlation Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>SUPP</th>
<th>CONT</th>
<th>COPE</th>
<th>SOC</th>
<th>FIN</th>
<th>ADVIS</th>
<th>COUN</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CONT</td>
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<td>.469**</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COPE</td>
<td>.426**</td>
<td></td>
<td>.517**</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOC</td>
<td>.473**</td>
<td>.531**</td>
<td></td>
<td>.680**</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIN</td>
<td>.332**</td>
<td>.265**</td>
<td>.345**</td>
<td>.367**</td>
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<tr>
<td>ADVIS</td>
<td>.214**</td>
<td>.155**</td>
<td>.196**</td>
<td>.201**</td>
<td>.154**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COUN</td>
<td>.161**</td>
<td>.161**</td>
<td>.214**</td>
<td>.218**</td>
<td>.151**</td>
<td>.513**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPA</td>
<td>.110**</td>
<td>.064**</td>
<td>.069**</td>
<td>.060**</td>
<td>.029</td>
<td>.070**</td>
<td>.017</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. SUPP=providing the support you need to help you succeed at this college; CONT=encouraging contact among students from different economic, social, and racial or ethnic backgrounds; COPE=helping you cope with your non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.); SOC=providing the support you need to thrive socially; FIN=providing the financial support you need to afford your education; ADVIS=academic advising/planning; COUN=career counseling; GPA=cumulative college grade point averages.

*p < .05. **p < .01.

A standard multiple regression was then run to determine the extent to which the college support for learners benchmark predicted cumulative grade point averages for Latino males. The regression analysis generated a model which contained seven independent variables and yielded the following: \( R^2 = 0.016, R^2 \text{ adj} = 0.015, F(7, 3668) = 8.74, p < .001 \). This model attained a \( R^2 = 0.016 \), accounting for 1.6% of the variance in the dependent variable of Latino males’ cumulative grade point averages. The overall \( F \) (7, 3668) was 8.74 (\( p < .001 \)), which was statistically significant. As shown in Table 6, a review of \( p \) levels (\( p < .05 \)) revealed that only two of the seven
variables contributed to the significance of the model. Specifically, the two items included “providing the support you need to help you succeed” ($\beta = .074$, $t (3747) = 3.74, p < .001$) and “academic advising/planning” ($\beta = .072$, $t (3712) = 3.71, p < .001$).

Table 6

**College Support for Learners Multiple Regression Results**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>5.211</td>
<td>.096</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing the support you need to help you succeed at this college</td>
<td>.118</td>
<td>.032</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouraging contact among students from different economic, social, and racial or ethnic backgrounds</td>
<td>.022</td>
<td>.027</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping you cope with your non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.)</td>
<td>.052</td>
<td>.030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing the support you need to thrive socially</td>
<td>-.017</td>
<td>.033</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing the financial support you need to afford your education</td>
<td>-.010</td>
<td>.022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic advising/planning</td>
<td>.122</td>
<td>.033</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career counseling</td>
<td>-.026</td>
<td>.031</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Dependable variable = cumulative college grade point average.

*p < .05. **p < .01.
A further analysis of p levels also indicated that five of the college support for learners variables did not contribute to the significance of the model: “encouraging contact among students from different economic, social, and racial or ethnic backgrounds” ($\beta = .017, t (3749) = .805, p = .421$); “helping you cope with your non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.)” ($\beta = .040, t (3747) = 1.700, p = .089$); “providing the support you need to thrive socially” ($\beta = -.013, t (3734) = -.531, p = .596$); “providing the financial support you need to afford your education” ($\beta = -.008, t (3736) = -.444, p = .657$); and “career counseling” ($\beta = -.016, t (3698) = -.819, p = .413$).

Analysis of Findings

The findings of this study largely support the existing literature on community college students, where frequent interaction with faculty and active and collaborative learning are considered the strongest predictors of student persistence (Crisp & Nora, 2010; Fiebig, Braid, Ross, Tom, & Prinzo, 2010; Hagedorn, Chi, Cepeda, & McLain, 2007; Ingram & Gonzalez-Matthews, 2013; Keim, McDermott, & Gerard, 2010; Lundberg, 2014; Sandoval-Lucero et al., 2014). The findings of this study also concur with previous studies that have indicated that effective college support services positively impact the persistence of community college students (Cunningham, Cardenas, Martinez, & Mason, 2006; Greene et al., 2008; Tovar, 2015). Researchers found in a previous study of 663 community colleges that support services were directly correlated with student engagement (Saenz et al., 2011). The current research study extended Saenz et al.’s (2011) findings because Saenz et al. did not disaggregate findings for different ethnic groups.

A qualitative study on learning communities in community colleges indicated that one predictor of student persistence was the social involvement of students, including the active involvement in the classroom and student interaction with peers (Barbatis, 2010). These results are
empirically supported by the results of the data analysis for this study, where items under the active and collaborative learning benchmark were found to be directly correlated with cumulative grade point average. This research study also supported Hooker’s (2011) findings that community college students’ persistence rates improved after participating in active, collaborative learning groups. Similarly, in the current study, the engagement in classroom collaborative learning activities, such as asking questions in class, participating in class discussions, and making class presentations were determined to be statistically significant predictors of cumulative grade point average, all of which support the findings from the community college body of literature (Lundberg, 2014; Saenz et al., 2011).

A review of the literature also revealed that a qualitative study conducted to determine the factors that impact persistence among African-American and Latino community college students indicated that relationships with faculty, family support, and campus support were the major contributors to the success of the research participants (Sandoval-Lucero et al., 2014). Findings from this study indicated that student-faculty interaction and college support for learners were directly correlated to student success as measured by cumulative grade point average. However, the Sandoval-Lucero et al. (2014) study was limited by its scope, which only included students from one community college. The current study provided quantitative support and extended the research of Sandoval-Lucero et al. by providing a national study applicable to the generalized Latino male population.

Specific items in the current study relating to student-faculty interaction were also determined to be statistically significant predictors of persistence as measured by cumulative grade point average, namely, discussing grades or assignments with an instructor, talking about career plans with an instructor or advisor, and receiving prompt feedback from instructors on performance. These findings confirm Chickering and Gamson’s (1987) research on the importance of active learning, instructor interaction, and students’ receiving timely feedback from faculty. However,
the research questions of the current research study did not address pre-college factors, including the impact of family, first-generation status, and English as a primary language. Findings revealed that over one-half (2073; 54.8%) of the 3,783 samples marked English as their native, first language and 1,493 (39.5%) of the 3,783 samples were first-generation students.

One contradiction was observed between the literature and the findings of this study. Taggart and Crisp (2011) found that community college students engaged in community service learning have a higher persistence rate. In contrast, results from this research study indicated that participating in a community-based project was not a statistical significant predictor of persistence. The findings of this study were consistent with the findings of Pedersen, Meyer, and Hargrave (2015) who found that results were mixed for female and male college participants. For males, in particular, involvement in community projects did not indicate a substantial difference in academic success in the college classroom (Pedersen, Meyer, & Hargrave, 2015).

Another contradiction was confirmed between the literature and the findings of this study. According to Berrios-Allen (2011) and Clark, Ponjuan, Orrock, Wilson, and Flores (2013), Latino males are most likely to drop out or stop studying because of cultural expectations to enter the workforce and support family. Similarly, Ojeda, Navarro, and Morales (2011) stated that Latino males’ academic performance and persistence are negatively affected by a lack of finances. Tinto (1993) also theorized that students are more likely to depart from college when they are financially limited. In contrast, based on the results of the data analysis for this study, helping the student cope with non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.) and providing financial support needed to afford education were not found to be statistically significant predictors of persistence. Although studies have indicated that financial aid promotes students’ persistence (Kuh, 2001, 2003, 2009; Tinto, 1993), some researchers have also found no relationship between financial aid and persistence in research studies on community college students (Cofer & Somers, 2001; Dowd & Coury, 2006;
Kuh (2009) asserted that the college experience encompasses various experiences and college support conditions. As such, the CCSSE instrument requires students to rate the extent to which their respective colleges help them cope with the non-academic aspects of being a student, such as helping them adjust and thrive socially. The CCSSE also requires students to rate how the college emphasizes contact among students from various backgrounds (Community College Center for Student Engagement, 2014). Surprisingly, however, these two independent variables for this study were not found to be statistical indicators of persistence. The Latino culture, which emphasizes familial commitment and employment obligations, especially among Latino males, might serve as a hindrance for male Latino students to successfully integrate and adapt to the college environment, which would also have an effect on their engagement, which, in turn, affects persistence (Nora, 2006).

Studies by Cunningham et al. (2006), Jenkins (2007), and Tovar (2015) revealed the interactions of Latino community college students with counselors, advisors, and other institutional agents to be significant factors in academic success and persistence. The CCSSE instrument requires students to indicate how often they utilized career counseling and advising services. Advising was found to be a significant factor in predicting students’ cumulative grade point averages. Conversely, career counseling was not determined as a factor of persistence, yet “talked about career plans with an instructor or advisor” was determined to be a statistical significant factor of persistence, similar to the findings of Henriksen (1995). Henriksen (1995) revealed that Latino students were not aware of the counseling services available at the community college; as a result, the students did not utilize the counseling services.

Additionally, findings of this study revealed that 45% of the respondents in this study spoke English as a second language, and 40% were first-generation students. Berrios-Allen (2011) purported that when English is not the primary language spoken at home and when students are the first
to attend college, Latino students may have greater difficulty integrating and persisting in postsecondary education due to communication barriers in the classroom, with faculty and staff and with other students. Gibson and Slate (2010) also found that demographic factors, including first-generation status, played a significant role in the engagement of students enrolled in community colleges in Texas. Though the current study did not use English as a second language or first-generation college status as predictor variables, both of these results were significant findings.

Lastly, it was observed that while the results of the multiple regression analysis procedures conducted for this study indicated that the models wherein active and collaborative learning, student-faculty interaction, and college support for learners were found to be statistically significant, the $R^2$ values indicated that the variance was less than 5%. Although this research study included a large sample size ($n = 3,783$), the low variances may also be a result of other factors affecting cumulative grade point average as a representation of persistence.

**Recommendations Based on Results**

Findings from the multiple regression analyses revealed that active and collaborative learning, student-faculty interaction, and college support for learners predicted cumulative grade point averages of Latino males enrolled in America’s community colleges. Nine of the 20 student engagement independent variables contributed to the overall statistical significance of the multiple regression models. As a result of the findings from the study, the researcher has several recommendations for addressing the persistence issue of Latino males enrolled in two-year institutions.

As noted earlier, active and collaborative learning was the strongest predictor of persistence for Latino male students. Making class presentations, tutoring other students, and discussing ideas from readings or classes were all shown to be significant persistence variables for Latino males. As a result, it is recommended that community colleges foster a learning environment that promotes academic engagement and frequent opportunities for collaboration among students’ peers.
Findings from this study also revealed that student-faculty interaction was a predictor of persistence of Latino males enrolled in two-year institutions. Students who discussed grades and assignments with faculty, talked about career plans with a faculty member or advisor, and received prompt, written and oral feedback on performance had higher grade point averages. Results indicated that the academic success of Latino students is predicated on the relationships Latino males have with community college faculty. As such, it is recommended that community colleges provide faculty with professional development and support needed to understand the direct impact interaction may have on the persistence of Latino males. It is also recommended that faculty and college personnel make a concerted effort to develop a rapport with Latino male students and provide frequent feedback to Latino males.

Results from this study also indicated that college support impacted the persistence of Latino males. Providing the support needed for students to be successful and academic advising and planning were found to increase Latino males’ grade point averages. As a result, it is recommended that two-year institutions provide focused support systems to help male Latino students assimilate more fully into the college experience, navigate the cultural environment of college, and cope with stressors that might contribute to college completion. Additionally, since family plays a significant role in Latino males’ lives, community colleges should make a strong effort to engage parents of Latino students in the college environment through campus tours and regular events. Such efforts may assist in bridging connections between community colleges and Latino families and aid in the academic success and persistence of Latino males in postsecondary education.

**Implications for Policy**

This study highlighted the need to increase student engagement in order to close the persistence gap and ultimately increase degree attainment for Latino males enrolled in America’s community colleges. Findings from this study indicated that active-collaborative learning, student-faculty interaction, and college support for learners have a significant impact on
persistence of Latino males enrolled in America’s community colleges.

As indicated in the study’s findings, college support programs have a positive influence on Latino males’ persistence. A large percentage of Latino students are first-generation students. Although Latino families may aspire for their children to attain a college degree, parents without college experiences may have difficulty guiding and assisting their children. The body of literature also revealed that Latino students begin college with limited prior knowledge of how to persist and have little experience on how to cope with stressors that contribute to college completion. Findings of this study also indicated that the more Latino male community college students interacted with faculty, the more students’ cumulative grade point averages increased.

As a result, state and federal policy makers should imply that community colleges should conduct an assessment of the current student learning and support environment and make necessary changes in order to meet the needs of Latino males. Additionally, because federal and state agencies are demanding that colleges increase retention and completion rates, policy makers should also imply that more support programs tailored for Latino males and finances to fund such programs be a priority in state and federal plans and budgets.

**Implications for Practice**

Based on responses collected for this study, “providing the support you need to help you succeed” and “academic advising/planning” were determined to be significant predictors of persistence for Latino male community college students. As found by previous researchers, Latino students are often less likely to seek assistance from community colleges, which may be because existing programs are not sensitive to the specific cultural needs of the Latino population, in particular the male Latino population. Given this study’s findings, community college leaders should imply that institutions should address the unique needs of Latino male students through effective college support programs as a means to increase students’ persistence and completion rates. Community college leaders can
also imply that institutions should review current strategies and develop approaches to enhance the engagement of Latino males into the college environment.

Because male Latino students may find it difficult to seek assistance throughout their tenure in community colleges, the student services departments of two-year colleges might conduct sessions to reach out to the male Latino community to strengthen the relationship between the college and male Latino students. Colleges might expand advising and counseling positions and programs, particularly at community colleges with low student support service personnel-to-student ratios. Mentoring programs for Latino males might also be implemented. To ensure success of student support programs, community colleges might also provide professional development for faculty, staff, and student service personnel on the unique barriers Latino males encounter.

Based on the literature review, community college leaders might also imply that early intervention programs should be implemented in order to increase student engagement and retain male Latino community college students. Intervention programs may be social as well as academic to enable Latino males to be fully immersed in the college experience. One example of an intervention program for Latino community college students is LUCERO, a retention program located in Michigan at Lansing Community College. Intervention for LUCERO includes student engagement activities such as mentoring, advising, career planning, and weekly meetings with college faculty and staff (Cunningham et al., 2006). Community college support programs tailored for Latinos might allow males to develop relationships with the college, faculty, and peers, while celebrating diversity and the Latino culture.
Conclusion

Latino males face challenges that impede their persistence toward degree attainment in America’s community colleges. Results from this study revealed that Latino male community college students have higher grade point averages when they are actively engaged and working collaboratively with peers. Additionally, faculty interaction and college support also significantly impacted cumulative grade point averages and the persistence of Latino males enrolled in community colleges.

Several limitations were included in this research. This study focused on three of the five benchmarks on the Community College Survey of Student Engagement and individual questions conceptually related to the benchmarks. As a result, the purpose of this research study was different from the original purpose of the CCSSE survey and sought to uncover information about a specific population. The study was also limited to the 20 questions under the benchmark constructs. Additional student engagement variables may have impacted the overall multiple regression models and provided insight into the persistence factors for Latino male community college students.

Despite these limitations, results from this study illuminate the impact student engagement has on the persistence of Latino males enrolled in the nation’s community colleges. One critical finding revealed in this study is that many Latino males are the first in their families to attend college. A review of the literature revealed that Latino families play a powerful role in the success of Latino males. As such, community colleges should make a concerted effort to involve Latino families in the campus environment. Further, all three benchmarks – active and collaborative learning, student-faculty interaction, and college support for learners – showed a statistical significance in predicting cumulative grade point averages. Further, this research underscores the possibility that student engagement may assist in closing the attainment gap for Latino males enrolled in America’s community colleges.
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A Multi-institutional Analysis of Greek Affiliation and Academic/Involvement Outcomes for African American College Students
by
Donald Mitchell, Jr., Grand Valley State University
John Gipson, Purdue University

Abstract
The academic and social outcomes of college fraternities and sororities remain unclear. The purpose of the present study was to investigate the characteristics and experiences of African American college students (AACSs) attending seven institutions across the United States, using Greek affiliation as the primary measure of comparison. Quantitative data were used to explore how Greek affiliation influences various academic and social involvement outcomes for AACSs. Findings suggest that involvement in fraternities and sororities is not associated with grade point average, among other academic outcomes. Findings also suggest that involvement with fraternities and sororities was associated with involvement in student organizations and on-campus employment.

Keywords: African American college students, educational outcomes, fraternity Greek-lettered organizations, sorority
Introduction

The low retention and graduation rates of African American college students (AACSs) have been longstanding issues (Planty et al., 2009; Wilson, 2007). Perhaps this is because it is well documented that institutions, particularly predominantly White institutions (PWIs), are not fully meeting the needs of some African American students. For decades, research has documented that African American students often feel social isolation and discrimination (Feagin, Vera, & Imani, 1996; Fleming, 1984; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005); have less satisfactory relationships with faculty (Allen, Epps, & Hannif, 1991); feel left out of curricula (Fleming, 1984); feel excluded from campus activities (McClure, 2006); and report they have inadequate social lives (Wilson, 2007) on predominantly White campuses. Moreover, racial microaggressions, which are “subtle insults (verbal, nonverbal, and/or visual) directed toward people of color, often automatically or unconsciously” (Solórzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000, p. 60) also permeate PWIs and influence students’ sense of belonging. In contrast, African American students at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) often feel they are satisfied, engaged, and well adjusted (Allen et al., 1991; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Reason, 2009). Still, many African Americans students are successful across institutional types as they become more socially integrated.

Researchers have indicated that African American students actively search for out-of-classroom experiences to get involved at PWIs (DeSousa & Kuh, 1996; Sutton & Kimbrough, 2001). These experiences include faculty involvement and interaction (Astin, 1984; Chickering & Gamson, 1999; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Tinto, 1975, 1993, 2007); living on campus (Astin, 1984; Chickering, 1974; Gellin, 2003; Lopez-Turley & Wodtke, 2010; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005); and involvement in student organizations (Guiffrida, 2004b; Harper & Quaye, 2007; Littleton, 2002; Sutton & Kimbrough, 2001). Perhaps one of the most salient findings is that African American students actively search for minority or cultural student organizations to get involved at PWIs (Sutton & Kimbrough, 2001;
One specific cultural activity where research has proliferated since the 1990s involves the experiences and educational outcomes of African American students in Black Greek-lettered organizations (BGLOs) (Harper, 2008b; Kimbrough, 1995; Kimbrough & Hutcheson, 1998; Mitchell, 2012; Patton, Bridges, & Flowers, 2011).

**Purpose of Study**

The purpose of this study was to investigate characteristics of undergraduate AACSs attending master’s-level and research institutions across the United States (US), using Greek affiliation as the primary measure of comparison. The significance of this study includes the following: (a) it captures the experience of both male and female undergraduate AACSs, which is lacking in the emerging literature; and (b) it is one of the first studies to quantitatively and purposefully explore the academic outcomes of students in BGLOs. Unfortunately, a universal survey or database that identifies students involved in BGLOs does not exist, as larger studies of Greek affiliation have ignored the uniqueness of BGLOs (McClure, 2006). Thus, similar to Patton et al. (2011), the researchers assumed that the students involved in Greek-lettered organizations within this study were overrepresented in BGLOs, given the overwhelming narrative that African Americans who are in fraternities and sororities, particularly at PWIs, are time and again involved in BGLOs.

Three main research questions guided this study:

- Is there an association between involvement in Greek organizations and academic outcomes (i.e., grade point average [GPA], hours per week studying alone, hours per week studying with friends, number of faculty interactions, and retention/persistence) for AACSs?
- Are there associations in the amount of time spent participating in various educational practices (i.e., student organization involvement) and Greek affiliation for AACSs?
- Is there an association between employment and Greek involvement for AACSs?
African American College Students

While the experiences of African American students are well documented, the achievement/opportunity gaps between African Americans and their racial and ethnic counterparts persist. These gaps could be attributed to African American students’ increased likelihood of being first-generation college students (Choy, 2001); identification as low-income individuals (Smith, 2009); previous attendance in an underfunded or low-performing school district, which often leads to low academic preparedness (ACT, 2011; U.S. Department of Education, 2011); or lack of family support, which often ties back to the student’s first-generation status (Thayer, 2000). All of these are tied to historical and persistent inequities in the United States. Given these common experiences, or what Astin (1993) and Tinto (1975) call inputs and pre-college characteristics, African American students often leave institutions prior to degree completion (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005).

While the African American pipeline issue is well documented, researchers have, in fact, noted African American students’ successful navigation on many campuses despite the abundance of literature that highlights the contrary. Recently, scholars (e.g., Bonner, 2010; Griffin, 2006; Guiffrida, 2004a, 2004b; Harper, 2005, 2008a, 2012; Harper & Griffin, 2011) have begun investigating the experiences of high-achieving AACSs, documenting the ways in which they succeed. However, a majority of this research about high-achievers has focused on African American male students (e.g., Bonner, 2010; Harper, 2005, 2008a, 2012; Harper & Griffin, 2011). Nevertheless, a common theme that has emerged about high-achieving African American students is involvement and a sense of belonging (Guiffrida, 2004b; Harper, 2008a). Perhaps these findings are unsurprising; researchers (e.g., Astin, 1984; Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, Whitt, & Associates, 2010; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005) have stated that the amount of time and effort students place on co-curricular activities that encourage academic success does matter during college.

Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) noted, “[T]he level of student
involvement and integration in any of the components of an institution’s academic and social systems can be a critical factor in students’ persistence decisions” (p. 426). Indeed, Tinto (1975) theorized that academic integration and social integration, defined as “the extent to which individuals share the normative attitudes and values of peers and faculty in the institution and abides [sic] by the formal and informal structural requirements for membership in that community or in subgroups of it” (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005, p. 54), predispose students to remain in college. As such, researchers began focusing on educational outcomes associated with minority and, more specifically, African American student involvement (e.g., Davis, 1991; Fischer, 2007; Guiffrida, 2003; Hausmann, Schofield, & Woods, 2007; Nagasawa & Wong, 1999; Patilla, Trevino, & Gonzalez, 1997; Sutton & Kimbrough, 2001).

**African American College Student Involvement**

Sutton and Kimbrough (2001) noted how important social integration through extracurricular involvement is for African Americans attending PWIs. Similarly, Fischer (2007) found that formal on-campus ties had significant positive effects on GPA and college satisfaction for African American students attending PWIs. In addition, she found that increased formal and informal on-campus ties significantly reduced college departure for African American students. Further, Hausmann et al. (2007) concluded that African American students who reported more peer group interactions and peer support reported a greater sense of belonging, which Strayhorn (2012) argues is important, yet often overlooked, in predicting postsecondary outcomes.

Reason (2009) suggested that subcultures are important for underrepresented groups in some higher education contexts. He noted that these subcultures help students negotiate the differences between their cultures and dominant cultures in potentially hostile environments. Support for this idea can be seen in the work of Guiffrida (2003), who found that African American student organizations were safe spaces for students to learn about and connect with their cultures. In addition, others have
emphasized the relationship of African American students being engaged in formal social integration (e.g., participation in university recognized student organizations) with the positive effects this formal integration has on GPA and persistence (Mayo, Murgaia, & Padilla, 1995; Sutton & Kimbrough, 2001).

However, Guiffrida (2004b) suggested that, while participation in African American student organizations is helpful for students, overinvolvement can be harmful to academic achievement. Subsequently, because of the limited research on academic outcomes associated with BGLO involvement, Guiffrida’s analysis of the fine line of involvement versus overinvolvement has been anecdotally assigned to BGLOs.

**Black Greek-lettered Organizations**

Today, there are nine college BGLOs. They are housed under an umbrella organization called the National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC) (Ross, 2001). The member organizations of the NPHC are Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.; Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.; Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc.; Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc.; Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.; Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc.; Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc.; Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc.; and Iota Phi Theta Fraternity, Inc. What follows is a brief summary of scholarship documenting educational outcomes associated with BGLOs.

In one of the earliest empirical studies on BGLOs, Kimbrough (1995) learned that 74.1% of the students involved in BGLOs participated in two or more student organizations and held at least one leadership position, as compared to 44.2% of the non-Greek students included in the study. Furthermore, 63% of students involved in BGLOs believed they developed leadership skills as a result of fraternity or sorority involvement.

Kimbrough and Hutcheson (1998) found strong evidence that suggests, even after controlling for extracurricular involvement in high school, a higher percentage of students involved in BGLOs were in student government, academic honor societies, residential hall assistant groups, residential hall governments, Black student groups, and student
ambassador groups. In addition, students involved in BGLOs held more elected leadership positions than non-Greeks at a significant level. Students involved in BGLOs also self-reported higher leadership potential. While the findings associated with BGLOs and student engagement are well documented, literature related to academic outcomes associated with BGLOs and African American students are inconclusive and, collectively, minimal at best.

According to Harper (2000), after examining the academic standings reports for all fraternities and sororities from 24 predominantly White colleges and universities with enrollments ranging from 2,300 to 44,000, nearly 92% of the BGLO chapters had lower GPA averages than the overall GPA average of all students involved in all fraternities and sororities at each institution in the study. Harper explained that the results of his investigation could be attributed to academic distractions, which include excessive programming and chapter commitments, pledging and hazing, participation in cultural step shows (see Kimbrough, 2003, for definition of step show), involvement in other organizations, lack of resources, and poor advising. Yet, his investigation did not report controlling for other variables that may hinder African American students’ GPAs at predominantly White institutions, such as the college environment, income, high school GPA, and first-generation college status. In addition, researchers have documented that African American students’ GPAs often fall below the averages of their racial/ethnic counterparts (Fischer, 2007). On the contrary, Sutton and Kimbrough (2001) found that BGLO affiliation had positive effects on GPAs as they investigated the trends of African American student involvement. However, their study did not focus on BGLO members but African American student involvement more broadly, including Greek affiliation as a byproduct.

Harper (2008b) qualitatively investigated the effects of BGLO membership on classroom engagement in predominantly White classrooms by interviewing 131 students. He found that the factors that influenced classroom engagement positively for BGLO members were
underrepresentation (small number of African Americans in the classroom), voluntary race representation (speaking for African Americans), collective responsibility (a sense of responsibility to represent African Americans and their fraternity or sorority), and teaching styles (engaging and interactive pedagogy). The factors that negatively affected participation were forced representation (questions posed to students about the “African American experience” as if the student could speak for the entire race) and teaching styles (pedagogy that fails to engage students). Patton et al. (2011) found that BGLO involvement had significant positive effects on student-faculty involvement, and active and collaborative learning, at both predominantly White institutions and HBCUs.

Not only do BGLOs appear to positively influence classroom engagement, active learning, and collaborative learning, they also appear to positively affect persistence towards graduation at PWIs. Mitchell (2012) qualitatively explored the influence of BGLOs on the persistence of 12 African American students at a PWI. He found that relationships/connections, increased social lives, gaining community and administrative experiences, academic monitoring, and leadership development influenced persistence in positive ways. He also noted that other academic outcomes, such as GPAs and completed assignments, might be negatively affected because of overinvolvement, as suggested by Guiffrida (2004b) in his study on African American student involvement. Given these mixed findings, additional research documenting the successful paths of African American students and the academic outcomes of BGLOs is needed.

**Method**

This study utilized a survey instrument designed by the researchers to investigate student involvement at seven masters-level and research institutions across the United States. Permission to conduct the study was granted by the Institutional Review Board(s) at each participating institution.

**Participants**

A random sample of undergraduate students self-identifying as African American within institutional records systems were invited to
voluntarily participate in this study. An invitation to participate was sent by various institutions and a reminder was sent one week later. The invitation informed students about the anonymous nature of the survey, how to contact the researchers, that GPAs were not disclosed to the researchers, and that participation was voluntary and could be ceased at any time.

**Demographics**

One hundred seventy-five (24.2%) students identified as men, 544 (75.2%) as women, three (0.4%) as transgender, and one (0.1%) as other. Class standing was as follows: 196 (27.8%) freshman, 144 (20.4%) sophomores, 164 (23.3%) juniors, and 201 (28.5%) seniors. Students reported the following ages: 399 (55.3%) 18-20, 171 (23.7%) 21-23, 44 (6.1%) 24-26, 18 (2.5%) 27-29, and 89 (12.3%) 30 or above.

**Data Analysis**

Due to the nature of cross-tabulated data, the sample sizes ranged from 434 (number of employed students) to 726 (total) students. Also, due to the nature of the reporting software and survey, responses to individual questions that were determined to be invalid or skipped were not included in the results rather than completely excluding data of students who did not respond to all questions.

Responses to various questions were analyzed to investigate the association between different variables and Greek affiliation for AACSs. Since categorical variables were utilized, Pearson Chi-Square analyses were performed using IBM SPSS Statistics 22 to determine significant and non-significant statistical associations. The alpha level was set at .01.

**Results**

**Academic Outcomes**

The data suggested there was no statistical association between Greek-lettered organization involvement and hours studying alone per week for the students in the study, $\chi^2 (4, N = 724) = 1.839, p = .765$. Further, the data suggested there was no statistical association between Greek-lettered organization involvement and hours studying with friends per week for the students, $\chi^2 (4, N = 723) = 5.960, p = .202$. The data also suggested there
was no statistical association between Greek involvement and grade point average for AACS included in the study, $\chi^2 (3, N = 668) = 0.419, p = .936$. In addition, there was no statistical association between Greek-lettered organization involvement and students considering leaving an institution (retention/persistence) for the population, $\chi^2 (1, N = 724) = 0.097, p = .756$. Finally, the researchers found no statistical association between Greek-lettered organizational involvement and the number of hours involved with faculty outside of the classroom for students in the study, $\chi^2 (4, N = 726) = 4.871, p = .301$. Collectively, the data supported the null hypothesis—that there is no association between academic achievement and Greek-lettered organization involvement for AACS.

**Social Involvement**

The data suggested that there was a statistical association between hours involved in student organizations per week and Greek-lettered organization involvement for AACSs involved in the study, $\chi^2 (4, N = 724) = 30.033, p < .001$. Further, the data suggested that there was a statistical association between hours involved in cultural student organizations and Greek-lettered organization involvement for AACSs in the study, $\chi^2 (4, N = 713) = 22.854, p < .001$. The data also suggested that there was a statistical association between hours per week involved in non-cultural student organizations and Greek-lettered organization involvement for AACSs in this study, $\chi^2 (4, N = 717) = 27.310, p < .001$. In all areas, the data suggested that AACSs involved in Greek-lettered organizations were more likely to be involved for more hours per week than AACSs not involved in Greek-lettered organizations. Figures 1-3 depict the significant social involvement findings.
Figure 1. Hours involved in student organizations per week, by percent.

Figure 2. Hours involved in cultural student organizations per week, by percent.

Figure 3. Hours involved in non-cultural student organizations per week, by percent.
Employment

The data suggested that there was a statistical association between Greek-lettered organization involvement and employment type for AACSs within the study, $\chi^2 (3, N = 721) = 12.757, p = .005$. Specifically, AACSs in Greek-lettered organizations were more likely to be employed (73% vs. 57.3%); students were more likely to be employed on campus (41.0% vs. 25.6%). However, the researchers found that there was no statistical association between Greek involvement and hours employed per week for students who were working, $\chi^2 (4, N = 434) = 0.408, p = .982$; the majority of employed students (55.5%) worked 16 or more hours per week, regardless of Greek involvement. Figure 4 displays students’ various employment types, by percent.

Figure 4. Employment type, by percent.

Table 1 displays summaries of all of the Pearson Chi-Square analyses conducted for this study.

Table 1
Summary of Pearson Chi-Square Analyses

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>$\chi^2$</th>
<th>p-value</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Academic Outcomes</strong></td>
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<td>Considered Leaving</td>
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<td>0.419</td>
<td>0.936</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hours studying alone</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>724</td>
<td>1.839</td>
<td>0.765</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hours studying with friends</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>723</td>
<td>5.96</td>
<td>0.202</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Number of faculty interactions outside of class per semester**

|                | 4 | 726 | 4.871 | 0.301 |

**Social Involvement**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>4</th>
<th>724</th>
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<tr>
<td>Student organizations*</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural student organizations*</td>
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<td>713</td>
<td>22.854</td>
<td>&lt; .001</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-cultural student organizations*</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>717</td>
<td>27.31</td>
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</table>

**Employment**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>3</th>
<th>721</th>
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<tr>
<td>Employment type*</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hours employed per week</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>434</td>
<td>0.408</td>
<td>0.982</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. *p < .01

**Discussion**

The first research question explored if there was an association between various academic outcomes and Greek affiliation. The researchers found there was no association between time spent studying and Greek affiliation for the AACSs included in the study. The researchers also found there was no association between GPA and Greek affiliation. Collectively, these findings are inconsistent with previous studies (e.g., Guiffrida, 2004b; Harper, 2000; Mitchell, 2012), which indicated that Greek affiliation may negatively affect GPA and other academic outcomes for AACSs because of overinvolvement. The findings in this study add to the literature by offering some of the first quantitative evidence regarding the non-association of GPA and Greek affiliation for AACSs.

The researchers also found no association between students considering leaving an institution (i.e., retention/persistence) and Greek affiliation, and no association between hours spent with faculty outside of the classroom and Greek affiliation. These findings are inconsistent with previous findings where AACSs have reported Greek-lettered organizations connected them to the institution and to faculty outside of the classroom (e.g., McClure, 2006; Mitchell, 2012; Patton et al., 2011) and should be further explored.
The second research question explored if there were any associations in the amount of time spent participating in various types of involvement and Greek affiliation for AACSs. More specifically, the researchers explored differences in involvement in various types of student organizations. The researchers found that Greek-affiliated students were more involved in student organizations across organizational types. This finding is consistent with the findings of Guiffrida (2004b), Harper (2000), Mitchell (2012), and Patton et al. (2011), who all reported that African American students in Greek-lettered organizations are more actively engaged on campus.

The third research question explored the association between employment and Greek affiliation for AACSs. The researchers found those involved in Greek-lettered organizations were more likely to be employed and work on campus. Research relating to the experiences of students of color suggests that off-campus employment negatively influences persistence to graduation (Choy, 2001; Nora, Cabrera, Hagedorn, & Pascarella, 1996; Oseguera, 2005-06). More broadly, as Tinto (1993) suggests, “[E]mployment not only limits the time one has for academic studies, it also severely limits one’s opportunities for interaction with other students” (p. 269). Further studies about employment and academic outcomes are warranted, given that researchers found no association between various academic outcomes and Greek affiliation, even though Greek affiliation was associated with employment.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

Based on the findings and research approach used in this study, the researchers have several recommendations for future research. While the present study confirmed some findings associated with Greek affiliation and social outcomes for AACSs, it also highlighted inconsistencies in relation to academic outcomes associated with Greek affiliation. These inconsistencies highlight the need for more quantitative, multi-institutional studies investigating academic outcomes associated with Greek affiliation, and BGLO affiliation in particular. First, larger-scale studies, along with more sophisticated statistical analyses, would be useful to determine if
there are broader implications for these findings across diverse institutional contexts. Second, qualitative research building upon the recommended quantitative studies may provide researchers and scholars with a more robust understanding of Greek affiliation and academic/social outcomes, enhancing their ability to make broader recommendations for practice.

References


Donald Mitchell, Jr.


Donald Mitchell, Jr.


Funding Undocumented Latino/a Students in Public Higher Education Institutions in the United States

by

Bianca Ortiz, University of Richmond
Donald Mitchell, Jr., Grand Valley State University

Abstract
While undocumented students are provided free access to a K-12 education, many undocumented students access U.S. higher education with no financial assistance. In this article, the authors evaluate three state-level policy alternatives—state DREAM Acts, state aid using “dummy” Social Security numbers, and state partnerships with Hispanic-serving institutions—to determine which alternative might be the best option for providing undocumented Latino/a students with financial support. The authors conclude by offering a policy recommendation and suggestions regarding implementation.

Keywords: access, affordability, Latino/a, policy alternatives, undocumented
Introduction

Undocumented students face financial impediments that hinder their access to public or state-supported higher education institutions in the United States (US) (Passel & Cohn, 2009). Undocumented students are foreign nationals who enter the US without authorization, or they enter legally but remain in the US without authorization (UCLA Center for Labor and Research and Education, 2007). Although there are no federal or state laws that prohibit the admission of undocumented immigrants to U.S. colleges and universities, policies differ at the institutional level. However, under Federal Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965, undocumented students were, and still are, deemed ineligible for federal assistance in their pursuit of a postsecondary education (Drachman, 2006). Thus, the current funding situation is problematic due to the lack of comprehensive policies that enable undocumented students to afford a postsecondary education. Perhaps, with state support, accessibility to public higher education institutions may improve the educational pursuits of undocumented students. However, state initiatives for undocumented students do not come without criticism.

The use of tax dollars to provide undocumented students with financial support evokes a tremendous amount of pushback from some U.S. citizens and lawmakers. According to Kobach, “taxpayers [in California] pay in excess of $100 million every year to subsidize the college education of thousands of illegal aliens” (as cited in Blume, 2011, p. 40). As Kobach highlighted, funding postsecondary education for undocumented students can be costly for states. Furthermore, criticisms of funding noncitizens often stem from concerns that institutions will become overburdened or that such funding is possibly unlawful (Blume, 2011). In addition, the DREAM Act has been positioned as a partisan bill that generates political opposition (Blume, 2011). With these concerns in mind, this article addresses three ways in which higher education institutions can support undocumented students financially as U.S. and higher education demographics continue to shift.
The Fiscal Landscape for Undocumented Students

In the 1981 *Plyer v. Doe* decision, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in favor of providing undocumented youth with the legal right to a K-12 public education. The Court stressed that denying K-12 education to undocumented children amounted to creating a “lifetime of hardship” for individuals (Frum, 2007, p. 83). Although the *Plyer v. Doe* ruling created and protected the opportunity for undocumented youth to receive a public K-12 education, there has not been any similar ruling allowing undocumented youth to obtain financial assistance for higher education (National Association for College Admission Counseling, 2007). According to Frum (2007), the linkage between education and social mobility is vital for society to understand. Frum argued that, within the current U.S. economy, a college education is the “ticket” to social and economic mobility. Using the same logic that the U.S. Supreme Court used to rule in favor of Plyer, Frum advocated for funding for undocumented students at the postsecondary level.

As previously mentioned, undocumented students cannot legally receive any federally funded student financial aid, which includes loans, grants, scholarships, or work-study (Blume, 2011). Similarly, in many states, undocumented students are not eligible for state financial aid. Since undocumented students are not considered residents in a traditional sense, they are categorized as nonresidents and pay nonresident or out-of-state tuition at many colleges and universities (Salsbury, 2003). Salsbury (2003) has argued that undocumented students are noncitizens due to their inability to show proof of citizenship and permanent residency; therefore, they are classified as nonresidents, even if they have resided in a particular state for a long time. Because each state differs, there is no set formula for proof of residency. But, many require proof that cannot be attained by undocumented students, such as driver’s licenses and Social Security cards. This complicates the situation when undocumented students do not meet residency requirements and, therefore, have to apply to college as nonresidents of the state in which they have resided.

Tuition rates for undocumented students are often three times as
high as tuition rates for in-state residents (Feder, 2006). Nevertheless, some states do grant eligibility for state financial aid to undocumented students who qualify for in-state tuition, relying on their ability to regulate how residency is defined (Salsbury, 2003). Since 2001, 17 states have allowed undocumented students to pay in-state tuition: California and Texas in 2001; New York and Utah in 2002; Washington, Illinois, and Kansas in 2004; New Mexico and Nebraska in 2009; Maryland and Connecticut in 2011; and Colorado, Minnesota, and Oregon in 2013 (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2013). Hawaii, Oklahoma, and Rhode Island allow in-state tuition rates for undocumented students through their respective Board of Regents who govern the state institutions (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2013; Reese, 2013). But overall, the present funding landscape has not provided feasible funding solutions for undocumented students, educational reformers, or institutional administrators as the struggle between state and federal regulations continues and demographics change in higher education.

**Demographics and Enrollment Trends**

According to Passel and Cohn (2009), in 2008, approximately 1.5 million undocumented youth under the age of 18 were living in the United States: 65,000 of these youth graduated from high school, approximately 37,000 were Latinos/as, and 13,000 of them enrolled in college or universities. In 2007, the Admission Trends Survey included a question that asked colleges and universities if they received applications from undocumented students (National Association for College Admission Counseling, 2007). The results of that survey revealed that 71% of 312 public four-year institutions received applications from undocumented students.

For instance, in Texas, after the passage of House Bill 1403, a law allowing undocumented students to receive in-state tuition and compete for state financial aid, enrollment of undocumented students increased by 10 times (Gonzales & Kohli, 2008). Despite these efforts, due to the absence of aid from the federal government and their inability to pay out of pocket,
financial barriers are key factors preventing undocumented students from obtaining higher education. This policy environment is compounded by the poverty often experienced by undocumented Latino/a families.

According to Passel and Cohn (2009), undocumented Latino/a immigrants are more likely to live in poverty, have lower incomes and education, and hold lower-skilled jobs than the documented Latino/a population. In addition, 20% of undocumented immigrants live in poverty as compared to the 13% of legal Latino/a immigrants. Furthermore, 39% of undocumented children live below the poverty level as compared to 17% of native-born children (Frum, 2007). Undocumented immigrants have an average household income 40% lower than either native-born or legal immigrant families (Frum, 2007).

Collectively, these statistics indicate that undocumented Latino/a immigrants are more likely to come from households with low-socioeconomic status. Because of these data, it is feasible to suggest that undocumented students are more likely to come from households with low socioeconomic status as well. It is important to understand the relationship between students coming from improvised backgrounds and the financial burden of higher education, because they are tied deeply to equity and access.

**State-Level Policy Alternatives**

This article presents and compares three state-level policy alternatives that might increase access for undocumented students to state colleges and universities through financial assistance. The goals of this policy analysis were to show possibilities for (a) increasing funding for undocumented students, and (b) increasing programs and support for state-funded institutions, while (c) maintaining funding equity for the economic benefit of the state.

These goals are intended to address the low educational attainment of Latino/a students, which has been deemed a “crisis” (Pérez, 2010, p. 21) across all levels of educational attainment (Gándara & Contreras, 2009). Although undocumented students make up a fraction of the general
Latino/a population, documenting effective strategies to assist Latino/a undocumented students also can supplement policies to aid first-generation, U.S.-born Latino/a peers (Pérez, 2010).

**Alternative #1: State DREAM Acts**

Statewide DREAM Acts are the first alternative. These can be modeled after the California Development, Relief, and Education of Alien Minors (DREAM) Act and Assembly Bill 2083, which provides undocumented students who currently qualify for in-state tuition with the opportunity to compete for state financial aid (Gonzales & Kohli, 2008). According to the RAND Corporation, the economic benefits that California receives from undocumented students enrolled in its colleges is $15 million per year in net tax revenue from an estimated 1,620 such students (Gonzales & Kohli, 2008). In addition, RAND indicated that Mexican immigrant women with a college degree pay $5,300 more in taxes and cost $3,900 less in government expenses each year compared to a high school dropout with similar characteristics (Gonzales & Kohli, 2008). Thus, making it feasible for undocumented students to attend colleges and universities not only creates social equity for this population, but it also generates more tax revenues for the state. With a college education, undocumented students would decrease social service expenditures, while contributing to economic benefits for the state (Blume, 2011).

Another outcome of this policy option is the increased development in human capital, bridging the gap between supply and demand for the future workforce. The Bureau of Labor Statistics estimated that high-demand occupations include careers in computer science, medical fields, and education—careers that all require an educated citizenry (Gonzales & Kohli, 2008).

Tables A1 and B1 (see appendix for Tables) indicate the possible reduction in state social services—particularly for unemployment—and the potential for increased tax revenues if undocumented students were provided sustainable financial pathways into higher education. This shows that it is in the interest of the United States to improve the pathways for DREAM
Act legislation, thus increasing the benefit to the overall economy (Ojeda, Takash, Castillo, Flores, Monroy, & Sargeant, 2010). Although Tables A1 and B1 indicate the potential positive economic effect if all undocumented students in the United States were to pursue higher education degrees, it can be implied that individual state DREAM Acts could receive increases in tax revenues from the incomes generated by undocumented students who graduate.

Of course, this is a regulatory policy, and adoption would be based solely on its feasibility (Fowler, 2004). If implemented, economic impact and human capital development would be factors. Another factor would be affordability (i.e., costs associated with the policy). Administrative operability also would be a concern because the policy requires additional roles for administration and staff. Further, procedures and training must be developed for administration and staff so they become familiar with admissions and financial aid processes, as well as means to support and retain undocumented students. In addition, there may be opposition from taxpayers and legislators, as financial assistance from the state may burden taxpayers.

Ultimately, this policy is politically feasible if carefully developed. California was able to extend in-state tuition to undocumented students due to the language lawmakers used in defining residency. Therefore, the policy is more likely to survive a challenge from the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 (Salsbury, 2003).

Alternative #2: FAFSA Application with “Dummy” Social Security Number

The second policy revolves around the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) application and the required Social Security number that is used to determine a student’s expected family contribution (Blume, 2011). This policy alternative allows institutions to utilize the FAFSA application to determine students’ financial needs by allowing undocumented students to use 000-000-000 as their Social Security number. (Texas and New Mexico allow students to use 000-000-000 to determine need-based
financial aid.) This approach thus provides undocumented students with financial assistance, rewarding the bulk of the assistance to students with the most need.

According to Blume (2011), “States that award financial aid to undocumented students would theoretically benefit from an increase in educated workers and the workers’ subsequent increase in tax payments to the state” (p. 48). As with the DREAM Act option, Blume has argued that there would be an economic benefit from educating undocumented students; they would be an investment from which the state could reap future benefits. These educated students would generate more revenue than if they were not pursuing a postsecondary education.

This policy alternative also is a regulatory policy, and affordability, economic impact, and administrative operability would all be salient factors for implementation. The implementation of this policy would allow for institutional autonomy, as institutions would have the option to participate or not. However, a chief concern regarding this policy is its affordability. In California, legislative analysts estimated it would cost about $2.8 million to extend state, need-based financial aid to approximately 2,000 undocumented students (Blume, 2011). Delivering state need-based financial aid to undocumented students could potentially be bureaucratic, costly, and inconsistent, since the state would rely on self-reported information from undocumented students and their families (Blume, 2011). And once again, political feasibility would be a concern.

**Alternative #3: State Partnerships with Hispanic-serving Institutions**

Partnerships between the states and public Hispanic-serving institutions (HSIs) comprise the third policy alternative. This option allows undocumented students to gain state financial assistance, based on their family’s expected contribution, through state-HSI partnerships. In addition, these partnerships give students the opportunity to pay in-state tuition prices.

HSIs are important to consider because they enroll half of Latino/a students pursuing degrees in higher education (Krueger, 2012). Furthermore, HSIs pay close attention to the cultural and academic development of Latino/a
students and their communities as part of their missions, which is often missing at predominantly White institutions without HSI status (Hurtado, Milem, Clayton-Pederson, & Allen, 1998). Exploring the role of social and environmental factors on postsecondary academic success, Perez, Cortes, Ramos, and Coronado (2010) reported that undocumented Latino/a students benefitted from supportive relationships with friends. Furthermore, Perez (2010) discussed the importance of undocumented student peer support. When undocumented students associate with academically successful undocumented peers, it has positive effects on persistence and motivation. In addition, undocumented peer relationships foster community solidarity and common identities (Center for Higher Education Policy Analysis, 2001; Perez, 2010). The aforementioned findings give credence to HSI-state partnerships.

Creating policies that allow for in-state tuition rates and state financial assistance for undocumented students at HSIs would likely increase enrollment of undocumented Latino students. In turn, this would create more tax revenue for the state as the students become productive contributors to a state’s economic and civic life; they are more likely to reside in a state that has provided them with opportunities. In a review of policies for undocumented immigrants and students, Krueger (2012) noted that Texas’ House Bill 1403 increased the likelihood of undocumented students enrolling in public colleges, ultimately creating more tuition revenue. Krueger also indicated that a number of studies concluded that the overall fiscal impact of undocumented immigrants on state economies was positive.

As with the other two options, this policy alternative is a regulatory policy. If implemented, affordability, economic impact, and administrative operability would, once again, be concerns. The administrative operability of this policy is a concern because administrators and staff would be required to take on additional roles. However, the policy might be well-received since HSIs aim to assist first-generation, low-income, Latino/a students in higher education. This policy alternative is politically feasible because it
would only be affecting HSIs, not all public universities. Thus, legislation regarding undocumented college students would not change statewide.

**Evaluative Criteria**

We used four evaluative criteria to assess the anticipated outcomes of the three proposed policy alternatives: (a) economic impact, (b) affordability, (c) administrative operability, and (d) political feasibility. Each policy option was assessed and ranked based on its probable effect on the identified criteria (Patton & Sawicki, 1993). Economic impact was measured by how well each policy would influence state economies. Affordability was measured by assessing the financial outcomes of implementing a policy alternative. Administrative operability was measured by forecasting the manpower or human capital needed to initiate, implement, and sustain the proposed policy alternative.

Lastly, political feasibility was measured by rating the likelihood of a proposed policy alternative receiving support from major stakeholders. Political feasibility was evaluated using the PRINCE analysis. Filipovitch (2005) explained that the PRINCE analysis (a) acknowledges stakeholders and their stances, (b) explores how concerned stakeholders are with the existing problem, and (c) examines how much power each group possesses.

**Evaluation of Alternatives**

The three proposed policy alternatives were evaluated and ranked using scores of 1, 2, or 3 (with 3 representing the highest ranking) for each criterion, and then added to get a final score. Affordability was multiplied by two because projected costs are essential within the current fiscal climate in the United States, particularly with declining state aid for higher education across the country. As mentioned previously, political feasibility was ranked using the PRINCE analysis (see Tables C1-C3). We used numerical scores ranging from -3 to +3, with a negative score representing projected political opposition. The overall policy scores identified the dominant, or best, alternative by ranking each policy proposal against the others, using the established criteria. The policy with the highest overall score was chosen for recommendation.
Recommendation and Implementation

Based on the literature reviewed and our comparative analysis, the recommended policy alternative is state partnerships with HSIs. Its overall score was 15 (see Table D1). It is critical for state legislators to include this policy as part of higher education appropriations. HSIs can help initiate the recommended policy by using networks of senior administrators, governing board members, and the community. Working with students, staff, faculty, and other stakeholders can increase support for the policy. The process can begin with one HSI in states considering the option—most likely at the institution that has the most undocumented Latino/a students or receives the most applications from undocumented Latino/a students. The decision to implement the proposed policy also can depend on the area in which an HSI is located; some HSIs may be located in regions that have larger populations of undocumented Latino/a youth. In addition, HSIs should work collaboratively to garner support from other HSIs to gain momentum with legislators. Showing solidarity across institutions can increase the leverage over other politicians and representatives.

Once the policy is implemented through state bills, funds should be dispersed to participating institutions based on estimates of currently enrolled undocumented students. In addition, HSIs should begin drafting recruitment and retention plans and discussing how the policy will be implemented at their respective institutions. Ensuring that participating institutions have retention plans and initiatives in place to support undocumented students is crucial to the success of partnerships and the expansion of partnerships at other HSIs. Addressing taxpayers’ concerns regarding tax dollars being spent on undocumented students can be difficult, but legislators and higher education representatives can build upon the support from President Barack Obama and his administration. President Obama has been an advocate and supporter of the DREAM Act, allowing undocumented students to receive work permits and protection from deportation for two years, with the possibility of renewal (Immigration Policy Center, 2010).

In any outreach effort promoting this option, it should be emphasized...
that undocumented college students increase tax revenue by spending money within the local economy and eventually having better jobs that generate increased taxable incomes. A study by the College Board found that, over the course of their working life, the average college graduate earns in excess of 60% more than a high school graduate, and workers with advanced degrees earn two to three times as much as high school graduates. Furthermore, the U.S. Department of Labor found that the wages of immigrants who benefited from the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act increased 15% over five years and that legalized immigrants moved on to better jobs (Immigration Policy Center, 2010). Researchers also have reported that in environments where undocumented immigrants feel supported, they are more likely to invest in their own educations, open bank accounts, buy homes, and start businesses (Immigration Policy Center, 2010).

Although undocumented graduates are not guaranteed employment after graduation due to the lack of comprehensive pathways to citizenship and legal work options, they can legally work as independent contractors. They are able to use a W-9 form and tax pins rather than Social Security numbers (Perez, 2010). Moreover, undocumented graduates have found some solace in organizations such as Educators for Fair Consideration (n.d.), a nonprofit organization established in 2006 in San Francisco with a mission to help undocumented students achieve their academic and career goals and actively contribute to society.

**Monitoring and Evaluating**

Participating HSIs should track the enrollment, retention, and graduation rates of undocumented students. This demographic information can serve as a tool for institutions to monitor the funding they receive from the state. Participating HSIs also should evaluate campus climates and support programs for undocumented students, which are important factors in retaining undocumented Latino/a students.

The proposed policy is intended to guide state legislators, policymakers, and institutional governing boards in decreasing the gaps between tuition costs and what undocumented students can pay to attend...
state-supported institutions. In comparison to the other alternatives, the recommended policy appears to offer the most benefits for states and has high potential to establish and maintain equitable postsecondary funding for undocumented youth, which will have greater benefits for their families and Latino communities throughout the US.

**Limitations and Conclusion**

There are certain limitations in this article. First, anticipated outcomes were informed by extant literature and data projections. Given this, outcomes associated with the proposed alternatives and the ultimate recommendation may differ in actual implementation. Furthermore, while we proposed these policies and an eventual recommendation, there is no certainty that undocumented Latino/a students will be hired and recognized as citizens after they graduate. Nevertheless, as U.S. lawmakers continue to examine legislative alternatives that will provide pathways to citizenship for undocumented citizens, states and higher education institutions can be proactive in making sure that once pathways are created, those receiving citizenship will immediately contribute to society as educated citizens.

**References**


Funding Undocumented Latino/a


Appendix A

Table A1

Unemployment Rates by Educational Attainment in 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational Attainment</th>
<th>Unemployment Rate (percent unemployed)</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Degree</td>
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<tr>
<td>Master’s Degree</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate Degree</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some College, no degree</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school diploma</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than a high school diploma</td>
<td>12.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Appendix B

Table B1

Estimated Income of Undocumented Students if DREAM Act Legalized Over 40-Year Period

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational Attainment</th>
<th>Estimated Income (in billions)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ph.D./Doctoral Degree</td>
<td>$40.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s Degree</td>
<td>$81.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td>$2,049.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate Degree</td>
<td>$1,278.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Impact</td>
<td>$3,450</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Appendix C

### Table C1

**“State DREAM Act” Alternative PRINCE Analysis**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholders</th>
<th>Stance</th>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Power</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(-3 to +3)</td>
<td>(1 to 3)</td>
<td>(1 to 3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>For</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration/Trustees</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty/Staff</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some Politicians</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some Taxpayers</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Against</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some Taxpayers</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some Politicians</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall Score</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table C2

**“FAFSA Application Social Security” Alternative PRINCE Analysis**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholders</th>
<th>Stance</th>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Power</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(-3 to +3)</td>
<td>(1 to 3)</td>
<td>(1 to 3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>For</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some Administration/Trustees</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty/Staff</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Against</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some Administration/Trustees</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some Taxpayers</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some Politicians</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall Score</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table C3
“State Partnerships with Hispanic-serving Institutions” Alternative PRINCE Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholders</th>
<th>Stance (-3 to +3)</th>
<th>Priority (1 to 3)</th>
<th>Power (1 to 3)</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administration/Trustees</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty/Staff</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some Taxpayers</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some Politicians</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Against</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some Taxpayers</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some Politicians</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall Score</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendix D

Table D1
*Overall Alternative Evaluation Scores*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Autonomy</th>
<th>Affordability (x2)</th>
<th>Administrative Operability</th>
<th>Political Feasibility</th>
<th>Overall Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State DREAM Act</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAFSA</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partnerships</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Affordability rankings are multiplied by two because of the current economy and recent cuts in state higher education appropriations.*
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