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The Role of Community College First-Year Experience Programs in
Promoting Transfer Among Latino Male Students

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Education

by

Mauro Ivan Peña

2017

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

The Role of Community College First-Year Experience Programs in Promoting Transfer Among Latino Male Students

by

Ivan Peña

Doctor of Education

University of California, Los Angeles, 2017

Professor Robert A. Rhoads, Chair

Latina/os are one of the fastest growing populations nationwide. In California, Latino males make up 33% of the total male population. While Latino males in the state are opting to pursue a higher education, only 18% are enrolled in public four-year institutions. Most Latino males begin their academic trajectory in community colleges and aspire to transfer to four-year universities. Unfortunately, community colleges are struggling to retain and transfer Latino males, and literature attributes this to both environmental and institutional factors. Although overall, Latino males struggle in community colleges, those who participate in First-Year Experience (FYE) programs have demonstrated higher persistence rates that in turn, lead to transfer. Multiple studies highlight how involvement in FYE leads to greater student academic success. While these studies document the overall success of Latina/o students, the number of

studies examining the role of FYE programs in facilitating transfer among male students is limited. This study aimed to address this research gap by examining the role that FYE program components have in promoting transfer among Latino male students.

A qualitative case study approach was used to examine the components in two FYE programs that promote transfer among study participants. Participants included four groups: current Latino male students, Latino male alumni, FYE counselors, and FYE coordinators. Data collection strategies, including semi-structured interviews, site observations, and data analysis, were used to build a greater understanding of how FYE program components promote transfer. Data were analyzed through a community cultural wealth perspective focused on positively highlighting the qualities that Latino male students bring to higher education settings. Findings suggest that the greatest challenges faced by Latino male students included help-seeking behaviors, frustration in the length of time it takes to transfer, and financial responsibilities. Results from the study also show that FYE program components that proved most influential in promoting transfer was not due to one single component, but rather, a set of interrelated components. Primarily, students and alumni identified familial and welcoming environments that helped them develop their help-seeking behaviors as most influential in preparing for transfer. Findings inform current FYE program practitioners on how FYE programs help promote transfer among Latino male students. Findings also have implications for educational leaders and policymakers who are trying to understand what FYE program components are most successful in promoting transfer and what components can be scaled up.

This dissertation of Mauro Ivan Peña is approved.

Robert Cooper

Cecilia Rios-Aguilar

Daniel Solorzano

Robert A. Rhoads, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2017

DEDICATION

Para mis padres que me enseñaron como soñar y luchar:

Mauro Peña Estrada y María I. Peña León

Para mi esposa que me ha enseñado hacia el camino de la felicidad con mucho apoyo y amor:

Michelle Nicole Peña Soto

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VITA

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Background

Recent estimates suggest that nearly 30% of the population in the United States (US) will be Latina/o by the year 2050 (Ortman & Guarneri, 2008). In California, Latinas make up 27% of the total female population, whereas their male counterparts make up 33% of the total male population (California Department of Finance, 2013). In addition to being one of the largest subgroups in the state of California, Latina/os are also the largest ethnic group in California community colleges with a total enrollment of 575,695, representing 34% of the total student population (California Postsecondary Education Commission [CPEC], 2011). Of the total Latina/o population enrolled in California higher education, 82% of Latino males attend community college and only 18% attend public four-year institutions (CPEC, 2011), reflecting the poor representation of Latino males in public four-year institutions.

The aforementioned data also suggest the high representation of Latino males enrolled in community colleges does not result in greater academic achievement, retention, or higher transfer rates. In fact, academic performance and college retention continue to be a problem among Latino males. The California Community College Chancellor's Office (CCCCO; 2013) reports that only 65% of Latino males enrolled in credit courses during spring 2013 passed with a grade of C or better. Furthermore, Vasquez Urias (2012) reported that 35.2% of Latino males will either leave without returning or will no longer be enrolled by year two. Although transfer and completion rates are low, 84% of Latino male students aspire to transfer to a four-year institution and complete a baccalaureate degree as reported by the Center for Community College Student Engagement (CCCSE; 2014).

What the data point to is the need to better understand what challenges and obstacles Latino males face in their pursuit of higher educational attainment in the form of transfer from a community college to a four-year university. Although research has shown the effectiveness of community college First-Year Experience (FYE) programs in improving student persistence and transfer rates, few studies have investigated how these program activities help Latino male students transfer to four-year institutions. This study bridges this gap by investigating how two community college FYE programs promote transfer to four-year institutions among Latino male community college students.

While the focus of this study is directed toward understanding the educational success of Latino males, the intention is not aimed to draw attention away from the barriers and challenges faced by Latina women and other women of color. Crenshaw, Ocen, and Nanda (2015) warned that research focused on young men of color should be careful in excluding women from the analysis and inferring that women of color are not at risk. In a time when higher educational research is overshadowed by the plight experienced by young men of color, it is important to not oversee the continued risks experienced by young women of color in pursuit of a higher education. Although Latina women enroll and earn college degrees at a higher rate than Latino men, they continue to face obstacles (Gloria, Castellanos, & Orozco, 2005). In fact, research has found that Latinas have lower degree completion rates than African American and White females (Rodriguez, Guido-DiBrito, Torres, & Talbot, 2000).

Additionally, researchers have found that family caretaking responsibility were more heavily emphasized on young women and resulted in young women missing out on academic and career building opportunities (Crenshaw et al., 2015). The caretaking responsibilities among

Latina women have also been attributed to lower college degree attainment rates (Gloria & Rodriguez, 2000). This study acknowledges the full scope of the educational crisis facing Latina/o students, but dives deeper to disaggregate and understand the educational plight specific to Latino men without taking attention away from the challenges faced by Latina women.

To begin, the literature attributes two sets of factors to Latina/o student academic success as it relates to transfer: environmental factors and institutional factors. Environmental factors are elements in a student's surroundings that contribute to a Latina/o student's ability to transfer, including familial responsibility (Alfonso, 2006), financial and employment responsibility (Arbona & Nora, 2007; Rendón, Jalomo, & Nora, 2011), and enrollment status (Nakajima, Dembo, & Mossler, 2012). Institutional factors are structures within an institution that either help or hinder the success of Latina/o students in higher education and include academic preparedness (Clark, Ponjuan, Orrock, Wilson, & Flores, 2013; Harris & Wood, 2014; Saenz & Ponjuan, 2011), developmental education (Solórzano, Acevedo-Gil, & Santos, 2013), faculty and staff interaction (Tovar, 2014), and sense of belonging (Hurtado & Ponjuan, 2005; Longerbeam, Sedlacek, & Alatorre, 2004).

Each of these factors requires key interventions that assist Latina/o students in transferring to four-year institutions. Community colleges have responded by implementing support services designed to mitigate negative environmental and institutional experiences of historically underserved populations. FYE programs are successful support services that are well documented and institutionally funded to support the success of community college students. While researchers have found that overall Latina/o students benefit from FYE programs, there is limited research that disaggregates Latina/os by gender and explores the programs' impact on

Latino male community college students. Thus, a key contribution of this study is to specifically examine the ways in which such programs may be helpful for Latino males.

In fact, FYE programs target first-generation low-income students with the goal of increasing retention, persistence, and transfer rates (Knight, 2003). While these programs vary in structure and design, they incorporate many strategies that research has found to be effective in promoting transfer (e.g., counseling support services, academic support services, learning communities). Brownell and Swaner (2010) posited that students who participate in FYE programs display more positive relationships with faculty and have greater knowledge and use of campus resources, greater campus involvement, and better time-management. Research has also shown that FYE programs result in greater academic success by providing students with academic and social skills during their first year of college (Borden & Rooney, 1998). Research has documented the success of learning communities that many FYE programs incorporate and found that they lead to higher grade point average and course credit accumulation (Moore & Shulock, 2007).

While FYE programs positively affect student achievement, studies fail to provide meaningful insight into the role they have in facilitating Latino male transfers to four-year institutions. Research has not specifically examined how FYE program components contribute to Latino male student transfer success rates. This study examines such programs through the perspective of community college students, alumni, and program practitioners. Researchers warn that failing to address the disenfranchisement of Latino males in higher education may pose a serious threat to both their future career development but also the entire culture in which this population exists (Clark et al., 2013), especially when we consider the fact that young Latino

males represent the fastest-growing employment pool and the most underutilized intellectual talent pool (Saenz & Ponjuan, 2009).

Overview of Study

With the preceding in mind, this study investigates how two community college FYE programs promote transfer to four-year institutions among Latino male community college students with a particular focus on how various components of such programs contribute to promoting transfer. A qualitative case study approach was used to examine how the FYE program components identified by Latino male students, alumni, and program practitioners promote transfer. This study examined the various FYE components to understand how and why they promote transfer among Latino male students.

In addition to studying the student and alumni perspectives, FYE program practitioners were also interviewed to broaden the understanding of the impact these programs have on Latino males. Documents on the FYE program were gathered to build a greater understanding of the program, and site observations were conducted to develop a more in-depth understanding of the components that promote Latino male students transfer. To better understand the underachievement of marginalized groups, such as community college Latino male students, this study was guided by frameworks focused on positively highlighting the qualities of this population while challenging systemic structures that increase educational inequality. The theoretical framework that guided this study is community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005).

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

1. According to community college First-Year Experience program Latino male alumni, Latino male current students, and program practitioners, what are the key program components and how do they promote transfer of Latino male students?
2. According to community college First-Year Experience program Latino male alumni, Latino male current students, and program practitioners, what are the program components that may not be promoting transfer of Latino male students and how can they be improved?
3. What observable cultural elements, such as culturally relevant activities and culturally responsive staff, of First-Year Experience programs help promote transfer of Latino male students?

Goals of the Study

The goal of this study was to uncover actionable and practical ideas from FYE programs that community college leaders can scale up to increase the number of Latino male students transferring to four-year institutions. Findings inform community college practitioners including counselors, advisors, and student services staff about how FYE program components influence the successful transfer of Latino male students and provide data to either validate or point out areas where these FYE program components are most successful in promoting transfer among Latino male students. In addition, this study provides policymakers with information about one of the most vulnerable student populations in California, how FYE program practices result in

greater transfer rates among Latino males, and which FYE program components can be replicated by other community college programs seeking to increase transfer rates among Latino male students.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

Educational leaders and other stakeholders have begun to examine the state of education among Latinas/os (Alfonso, 2006; Moore & Shulock, 2007) including enrollment (Contreras & Contreras, 2015; Crisp & Nora, 2010), completion (Harris & Wood, 2014; Saenz & Ponjuan, 2009), and ability to transfer (Vasquez Urias, 2012). Yet, few have examined the extent to which special programming supports the educational success of Latino males. In this chapter, I (a) review literature examining the state of education among Latina/os, with a central focus on Latino males; (b) highlight literature gaps within previous research; (c) demonstrate a need for this study examining the perceptions of key actors, such as First-Year Experience (FYE) students, alumni, and staff, and what they identify as effective components in FYE programs that promote transfer among Latino males; and (d) present the theoretical frameworks that guided this study.

The Latino Achievement Gap in Higher Education

Latina/o students are the largest minority group seeking higher education in the United States (US) (Fry & Taylor, 2013). In fact, the number of 18- to 24-year-old Latina/os enrolled in US colleges increased by 324,000 students between 2011 and 2012 (Gonzalez-Barrera & Lopez, 2015). However, the increased rate of enrollment among Latino/as is not reflected in baccalaureate degree completion. In 2013, just 15% of Latina/os in the US aged 25 to 29 reported having a bachelor's degree or higher (Krogstad & Fry, 2015). The National Center for Higher Education Management Systems and Jobs for the Future (2007) conducted a study and

found that of the 14% of Latina/os who graduated high school, only 11% earned an associate's degree, 7% earned a bachelor's degree, 5% earned a master's degree, and 3% earned a doctoral degree.

High enrollment and low educational attainment is heightened when specifically examining the community college system. Community colleges in the US serve 7.1 million students, accounting for almost half of all undergraduate students in higher education (American Association of Community Colleges [AACCC], 2014; Snyder & Dillow, 2011). Latina/os have the highest growth in enrollment in community colleges throughout the US (Gonzalez-Barrera & Lopez, 2015) and comprise 34% of the total community college student population in the state of California (CPEC, 2010). Yet, among the total Latina/o student population, Latino males appear to be slipping through the cracks. Several researchers note the overrepresentation of Latino males in community colleges (Harris & Wood, 2014; Saenz & Ponjuan, 2009; Vasquez Urias, 2012). In 2006, the National Center for Educational Statistics reported 82% of Latino males enrolled in higher education attended a community college. In a more recent study, Wood and Harris (2013) found 70.2% of Latino males begin their higher education academic trajectory in community colleges. Although Latino males enroll in community college in great numbers, their enrollment rates are not synonymous with degree completion and transfer rates to four-year institutions.

In fact, Latino males attending community college are among the least likely to transfer to four-year institutions (Saenz & Ponjuan, 2011; Vasquez Urias, 2012). While 85% of Latino male students who attend community colleges aspire to transfer to a four-year institution, only 14.6% graduate from a community college in three years, compared to 22% of White men and

24% of Asian men (Snyder & Dillow, 2011). CCCCCO (2013) reported that the average six-year transfer rate among Latino males is only 31% compared to the state average of 41% and 55% for Asian American men, respectively. Vasquez Urias (2012) found that 12.9% of Latino males will leave community college and not return after their first year, and 35.2% will leave and not return by the second year.

Ensuring the degree attainment of Latino males is critical to the viability of the US economic system. Moore and Shulock (2007) posited that low rates of higher education degree attainment paired with growing population trends could negatively impact the income trends of state economies. They suggest that drops in income below the national average are a result of the Latina/o diminished earning power. A study by Excelencia in Education (2014) predicted that to stay globally competitive, Latina/os will need to earn 5.5 million more degrees in higher education by 2020. In response to the threat of the economic climate, the following sections examine the factors that impede and support the timely transfer and degree completion of this growing student population.

Factors Impacting Latina/o Degree Attainment Rates

Researchers have identified several indicators that impact Latina/o student higher education degree attainment rates (Alfonso, 2006; Arbona & Nora, 2007; Clark et al., 2013; Harris & Wood, 2014; Hurtado & Ponjuan, 2005; Longerbeam et al., 2004; Nakajima et al., 2012; Rendón et al., 2011; Saenz & Ponjuan, 2011; Tovar, 2014), including familial responsibility, financial and employment responsibility, enrollment status, academic preparedness, faculty and staff interaction, and sense of belonging. I have aggregated these

indicators into two categories, which will be referred to as environmental factors and institutional factors that determine the successful transfer and four-year degree completion of Latino men in community college. This section provides an in-depth discussion of the indicators identified by researchers using the broad categories of environmental factors and institutional factors.

Environmental Factors

Environmental factors comprise identifiable elements in a student's surroundings that influence their academic success. Research shows that environmental factors such as familial responsibility (Alfonso, 2006), financial and employment responsibility (Arbona & Nora, 2007; Rendón et al., 2011; Wood & Harris, 2015), and enrollment status (Nakajima et al., 2012) contribute to a Latina/o's ability to transfer.

Familial responsibility. Marin and Marin (1991) defined familismo as the Latina/o cultural value of loyalty, commitment, and dedication to family. Familismo is an important component for Latino male students' culture and identity, representing their ability to fulfill family responsibilities. In most cases, family responsibility is interpreted as one's ability to work and economically support parents and family members. Mirandé's (1997) survey of 186 Latino males found that survey respondents perceived men to be "unmanly" if they failed to fulfill familial obligations.

Although commitment and responsibility are positive attributes among Latino males, their commitment to family does not go without consequence. A 2010 qualitative study of 570 Latina/o participants found that family socioeconomic conditions forced students to work a substantial number of hours, which led to limited academic and social participation in college

(Crisp & Nora, 2010). It can be inferred that familismo is both an asset and a hindrance in a Latino male's ability to transfer to a four-year university. However, this last study does not disaggregate Latina/o data by gender and, therefore, does not fully account for Latino males who continue to transfer at lower rates compared to their Latina counterparts.

Financial and employment responsibility. Financial responsibility associated with their familial responsibility to provide their families with financial support is another indicator that influences a Latino male student's transfer success. Therefore, limited financial aid results in a negative academic impact. Various studies have documented the detrimental impact that a lack of financial aid funding has on the persistence and degree attainment rates among Latina/o students (Paulsen & St. John, 2002; St. John, Cabrera, Nora, & Asker, 2000). A study by Dowd, Pak, and Bensimon (2013) found that financial aid policies that subsidized tuition rates were the key factor that enabled Latina/o students to transfer and attain their degrees. More recently, Wood and Harris (2015) found that availability of financial aid among males of color was an integral factor in their decision to continue their enrollment in higher education (Wood & Harris, 2015).

Lacking financial stability, Latino males attending community college turn to work as a means to support themselves and their families. In fact, research shows that 60% of community college students work 20 hours per week, and 25% work 35 hours or more per week (Johnson, Rochkind, Ott, & DuPont, 2009). Researchers found that full-time employment is negatively associated with successful and timely transfer to four-year institutions (Alfonso, 2006; Arbona & Nora, 2007; Nakajima et al., 2012). They also found employment responsibilities are more heavily emphasized among Latino males than Latina females, posing a challenge to their

academic success and leading to greater rates of departure from higher education (Saenz & Ponjuan, 2009). In response to such challenges, research suggests that community colleges need to redefine and adjust student interventions to address the specific economic needs of the Latino male population (Harris & Wood, 2014; Saenz & Ponjuan, 2009; Vasquez Urias, 2012). Such adjustments might include an increase in federal and state financial aid in the form of grants, scholarships, and work study to help retain this student population.

Enrollment status. Financial constraints and economic need leads many Latino males to work and a reduction in number of enrolled units, which then leads to greater exit points for students (Saenz & Ponjuan, 2009). The reduction in the number of units they enroll in occurs in an environment where research shows that enrolling in more units and working less results in greater academic success rates (Alfonso, 2006; Crisp & Nora, 2010). In fact, community college students enrolled in a course load of at least nine units are 35% more likely to complete a degree (Alfonso, 2006). A second 2012 study found that full-time enrollment among Latino males resulted in higher degree completion rates (Vasquez Urias, 2012). While evidence points toward the importance of course load, only 46% of Latina/o students were enrolled full-time at California community colleges (Contreras & Contreras, 2015).

Institutional Factors

Institutional factors comprise structures within a college or university that can help or hinder a student's success in college and include academic preparedness (Clark et al., 2013; Harris & Wood, 2014; Saenz & Ponjuan, 2011), faculty and staff interaction (Tovar, 2014), and sense of belonging (Hurtado & Ponjuan, 2005; Longerbeam et al., 2004).

Academic preparedness. Research has found that academic preparedness is the leading factor influencing Latina/o student success in community college (Clark et al., 2013; Harris & Wood, 2014; Saenz & Ponjuan, 2011). Studies have also found community college students who begin in remedial courses are less likely to transfer to four-year institutions when compared to students who placed into college-level courses (Adelman, 2006; Hagedorn & Cepeda, 2004). Yosso and Solorzano (2006) found that Latino male students are more likely than Latinas to be placed in remedial classes. Moreover, Latino males also have a more difficult time passing community college courses in general. A CCCCO (2013) study of 113 community colleges found that only 65% of Latino men who enrolled in credit courses passed with a grade of C or better.

Faculty and staff interactions. Student interactions with faculty and staff also play an important role in persistence and completion rates of college students (Astin, 1975; 1985). Recent research identifies the impact of those interactions on Latina/o community college student achievement (Tovar, 2014). For example, Bensimon and Dowd (2009) found that academic success rates of Latina/o community college students increased when students had positive relationships and interactions with college staff. Clark et al. (2013) identified that connecting Latino males with positive role models had a positive association with academic performance. A recent study of 30 community college students and six faculty and staff focus groups found that both students and staff acknowledged that personal connections between student and faculty lead to greater academic success rates (CCCSE, 2014). The specific research on role models underscores the importance of faculty and staff mentorship in supporting Latino male student academic achievement.

Sense of belonging. As with faculty and staff interaction, sense of belonging and social support positively influences Latina/o persistence and rates of academic success (Gándara & Contreras, 2009; Longerbeam et al., 2004; Nora & Cabrera, 1996). Researchers describe sense of belonging as an individual's perceived belief of their value within a social system (Anant, 1966) and the frequency of social interaction as a motivating force to achieve a goal (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). In educational research, sense of belonging has long been associated with academic achievement (Hurtado & Carter, 1997; Rendón, 1994). Among Latina/o students, attending a college campus that fosters a greater sense of belonging has been directly attributed to student success (Hurtado & Ponjuan, 2005). Research has found that first-generation students and Latina/o students are placed in marginalized groups in college, resulting in a diminished sense of belonging that impacts academic achievement (Rendón, 1994). While much research exists around institutional factors such as Latina/os' sense of belonging, little research explores the influence of sense of belonging exclusively on Latino males (Vasquez Urias, 2012). This research gap points again to the importance of disaggregating data based on gender and exploring the factors that lead to the successful transfer of Latino male students.

Data Limitation

With the aggregation of the Latina/o population and limited knowledge of the Latino male experience, existing community college services may fail to invest in special programs that specifically target the unique needs of Latino male students to ensure their academic success. While the reviewed studies demonstrate the impact of environmental and institutional factors on college students, none discuss the unique issues/factors that Latino male community college

students face. Some studies, as aforementioned, fail to disaggregate findings by gender status, making it difficult to address the needs of Latino male students. Ultimately, the lack of data on factors specific to Latino males results in a research void that prevents community colleges from implementing data-driven interventions. This study sought to uncover data on the role community college FYE programs activities have in helping Latino male students transfer to four-year institutions.

First-Year Experience Programs

A number of support services have been designed to help community college students overcome environmental and institutional barriers to attain a community college degree and transfer to a four-year institution. This section presents background knowledge toward understanding First-Year Experience (FYE) programs, programs specifically designed to help students transfer to four-year institutions.

FYE programs began in the 1960s as freshman seminars at the University of South Carolina by Paul P. Fidler and John N. Gardner. These seminars were successful in meeting the goal of helping first-year students make a smooth transition into college and became a model for other institutions including community colleges (Hunter, 2006). In community colleges, FYE programs target first-generation low-income students with the goal of increasing retention, persistence, and transfer rates (Knight, 2003). While these programs vary in structure and design, they incorporate many strategies that research has found to be effective in promoting transfer (e.g., counseling support services, academic support services, learning communities).

Moore and Shulock (2007) documented the success of learning communities that many FYE programs incorporate. Learning communities integrate courses and build an academic community in order to increase student academic engagement (Knight, 2003). The course instructors intentionally design overlapping themes that involve interweaving lectures, readings, and assignments. FYE programs' small learning communities create a structure in which students are able to develop stronger connections with course instructors and their peers. Some FYE programs create strong communities by incorporating social activities outside the classroom, such as field trips, talent shows, and banquets, to bridge the gap that students may feel with program staff and faculty. Brownell and Swaner (2010) posited that students who participate in FYE programs display more positive relationships with faculty and have greater knowledge and use of campus resources, greater campus involvement, and better time-management. Students participating in FYE programs also display a higher level of social engagement on campus when compared with students who did not participate in FYE programs (Taylor, Moore, & Lindblad, 2003).

FYE staff and faculty from different disciplines work closely by meeting on a regular basis to plan curriculum and share students' academic progress. This model ensures that staff and faculty know the different issues that arise in their learning communities and are prepared to address issues their students may be facing. FYE instructional faculty work closely with FYE counseling faculty to help address personal or academic issues they see arise for any particular student. Many FYE programs mandate that students meet with a counselor once or twice per semester to review their academic and personal progression through the first year. Some FYE programs also require or encourage students to attend workshops that expose them to skills

necessary to succeed academically such as time management, stress management, working in groups, and transfer requirements. Research on FYE attributes the structure and support services in these programs to resultant greater academic success by providing students with the necessary academic and social skills to succeed during their first year of college (Borden & Rooney, 1998). Additionally, Moore and Shulock (2007) found that enrollment in FYE programs led to higher grade point averages and course credit accumulation.

A recent study designed to measure the relationship between Latina/o student transfer readiness and participation in an FYE program at a California community college found that FYE students had higher degree attainment and persistence rates than non-FYE students (Mosqueda, 2010). Mosqueda also found that FYE students transferred to a four-year university and were more likely to get involved in campus organizations when compared to non-FYE students (Mosqueda, 2010). FYE students reported learning about transfer through counselors and having a higher level of interaction with instructional and counseling faculty than non-FYE students. This study helped uncover some specific academic benefits attained by Latina/o students participating in a community college FYE program.

Conclusion

The literature review synthesized relevant research on Latino students relating to transfer and degree attainment. The literature reviewed also provides context on the Latina/o achievement gap in higher education. This section showed that although the number of Latina/o students attending college has steadily increased in recent years, the proportional representation of Latino males transferring to four-year institutions continues to fall behind (Saenz & Ponjuan,

2009). Discussion included the identifiable factors that impact the transfer rates of Latina/o students and highlighted how there is still a gap in discovering the specific factors impacting Latino males. Studies were reviewed that examine FYE programs as promising initiatives that resulted in greater transfer rates among Latina/o students. However, studies on FYE programs failed to recognize how interventions influence the academic achievement of Latino males.

Although recent studies provide promising ideas for increasing rates of transfer and degree completion, many questions remain to be explored. What are the key FYE program components and how do they promote transfer among Latino male students? What are the FYE program components that impede transfer among Latino male students and how can they be improved? What observable cultural elements, such as culturally relevant activities and culturally responsive staff, of FYE programs help promote transfer among Latino male students? These questions require further exploration pertaining to the implementation of initiatives designed to increase transfer and degree completion rates among Latino males.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework that guided this study is community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005). Community cultural wealth (CCW) uncovers the types of wealth and knowledge Latino male students bring to the community college setting. CCW also counters much of the deficit-framed narrative in higher education regarding marginalized student populations such as Latino male students.

Community Cultural Wealth

CCW builds on Bourdieu and Passeron's (1977) social capital theory. Bourdieu affirms that economically dominant groups in society possess and inherit knowledge and skills he refers to as social and cultural capital (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). According to Bourdieu (1986), these dominant groups use their social and cultural capital to maintain power and pass it down to their future generations. Cultural capital is exercised in three forms including embodied, objective, and institutionalized states (Bourdieu, 1986). Embodied state refers to the process of how cultural capital is integrated or embodied into one's mind and body. Objective state is when cultural products and symbols in one's surrounding can be consumed, such as art and music. The final form in which cultural capital is exercised is through the institutionalized state, which refers to statuses awarded to an individual by institutions, such as degrees or titles, to legitimize cultural capital.

Scholars such as Yosso (2005) have built on Bourdieu's social capital theory to show how other economically disadvantaged groups in society can also hold and inherit knowledge and skills of value. In fact, Yosso and Garcia (2007) depicted Bourdieu's model as a description of how "society replicates white, middle-class culture by rewarding very specific forms of knowledge, skills, abilities, and networks" (p. 153). Yosso (2005) contended that Bourdieu's social capital theory takes a deficit-minded approach toward marginalized groups. In response, Yosso (2005) introduced the community cultural wealth model to highlight the assets of traditionally marginalized populations and explains how these populations can also possess and pass down valuable knowledge. Yosso (2005) defined community cultural wealth as an "array of knowledge, skills, abilities and contacts possessed and utilized by Communities of Color to

survive and resist macro and micro-forms of oppression” (p. 77). She introduced six forms of CCW—aspirational capital, linguistic capital, familial capital, social capital, navigational capital, and resistance capital, outlined below:

- *Aspirational capital* – having resiliency and the drive to meet short- and long-term goals (p. 78).
- *Linguistic capital* – encompasses the communication skills that are acquired through speaking more than one language (p. 78).
- *Familial capital* – a deep commitment to family and community. Social capital is the ability for individuals to utilize their networks and community resources to achieve a goal (p. 79).
- *Social capital* – includes the network of people and community resources (p. 79)
- *Navigational capital* – the ability for marginalized groups to maneuver through institutions (p. 80).
- *Resistance capital* – an oppositional skill that is developed from living in marginalized communities (p. 80).

In this model, Yosso outlined the cultural wealth communities bring to the educational setting and provides examples of how this cultural capital can empower communities. She asserted that the main goal of identifying cultural wealth is to “transform education and empower People of Color to utilize assets already abundant in their communities” (p. 82). To transform education and empower Latino male students, I argue that community college leaders must recognize and embrace the cultural wealth that traditionally underrepresented communities such as Latino males bring to the institution. In this study, I incorporate CCW to examine the extent

to which FYE program components promote or hinder the different forms of CCW exhibited by Latino males.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Purpose of the Study

This study examined the perceptions of what key actors see as effective components in First-Year Experience (FYE) programs that assist in the promotion of transfer among Latino males. Although research has shown the effectiveness of community college FYE programs in improving student persistence (Brownell & Swaner, 2010; Knight, 2003), few studies have investigated their role in helping Latino male students transfer to four-year institutions (Vasquez Urias, 2012). Studying the student, alumni, and staff perspective is critical in understanding the impact of community college FYE programs. Identifying effective services and strategies that positively influence Latino male transfer rates will help community colleges develop and scale up viable programming. This chapter outlines the methodology employed in this study. I begin by presenting the research questions that guided the study. I then describe the research design and data analyses conducted. Lastly, I discuss potential ethical concerns and steps I took to reduce those risks.

Research Questions

1. According to community college First-Year Experience Program Latino male alumni, Latino male current students, and program practitioners, what are the key program components and how do they promote transfer of Latino male students?
2. According to community college First-Year Experience Program Latino male alumni, Latino male current students, and program practitioners, what are the program

- components that may not be promoting transfer of Latino male students and how can they be improved?
3. What observable cultural elements, such as culturally relevant activities and culturally responsive staff, of First-Year Experience programs help promote transfer of Latino male students?

A Qualitative Case Study Design

A qualitative case study design was employed to examine the FYE components identified by current students, alumni, and FYE program staff as having the greatest impact in promoting transfer. This study utilized a comparative case study design because it provides a rounded description and analysis of a single site (Creswell, 2014; Merriam, 2009). Yin (1994) described a case study as “an empirical inquiry that: investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used” (p. 23). Therefore, I employed several techniques to collect data from multiple sources to capture a more in-depth analysis of the phenomenon being studied—in this case, FYE programs.

Methods

In this section, I discuss the key facets of the methods I employed, including: site selection and rationale, access to research setting, sampling and rationale, data collection strategies, data management and analysis, and ethical concerns.

Site Selection and Rationale

The sites selected for this study are two large California community colleges that serve a large proportion of Latino male student populations. The selected sites met the following criteria: (a) over 50% of the student population was Latina/o, (b) over 40% of the student population was male, (c) offers FYE programs that target underrepresented student populations, (d) has a strong track record of persistence rates that lead to transfer, and (e) the FYE program is well established and has been operating for at least 10 years. These criteria allowed for a site analysis that corresponded to the type of institutions Latinos typically attend. Like most California community colleges, the colleges are both Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI), with at least 25% of their full-time course-credit students identifying as Latina/o. At both sites, at least 45% of the student population identify as first-generation college students. Additionally, the two selected sites have demonstrated a strong track record in preparing students for transfer, which will assist me in identifying the role that FYE components have in promoting transfer among Latino males.

The first site, Portlake College (a pseudonym), had a full-time student enrollment count of 19,163. Of those enrolled, Latina/os made up 48% of the student population and 48% of that population also identified as male. Sixty-nine percent of enrolled students were 24 years old or younger, which were the main target ages for the Portlake College (PC) FYE program. The college consistently ranks among the top 10 in transfer institutions in California. During the 2014-2015 academic year, PC ranked 8 among 113 community colleges in transfers to California State Universities and Universities of California, with a total of 1,468 transfers.

PC was specifically selected because of its persistence and retention success. While specific transfer data are not tracked by this or other FYE programs, persistence and retention rates are strong indicators of transfer. Since its inception in 2000, the PC FYE program has presented strong persistence and retention rates that help lead to student transfer. PC FYE students have third-semester persistence rates of 72%, compared to 49% of non-program participants. Participating students are almost twice as likely to complete the college-level English course sequence with 69% completing the sequence, while non-participants at PC have a 29% completion rate for the same sequence. Additionally, PC FYE program was also selected for its long-standing partnerships with four-year universities that help strengthen student access to four-year university representatives.

The second site, Bridgetown College (a pseudonym), was selected because it mirrors the PC student population and also offers similar persistence and retention data that lead to transfer. Of those enrolled, Latina/os made up 66% of the student population and 50% of that population also identified as male. A slightly lower number of enrolled students than at PC, 53%, are 24 years old or younger. Bridgetown College (BC) also ranks among the top 15 in transfer institutions in California. During the 2014-2015 academic year, BC ranked 14 among 113 community colleges in transfers to California State Universities and Universities of California, with a total of 1,105 transfers. While slightly lower than PC, the transfer rates are still high when compared on a statewide level.

BC FYE program began in 2006 as a comprehensive program focused on improving student preparation, retention, and transfer preparation. Program participants display third-semester persistence rates of 68%, compared to 57% for non-participants. When looking at

course completion, BC FYE students outperform non-participants by more than 10%. In fact, 78% of BC FYE students will successfully complete a course, compared to 67% of non-participants taking the same course. Like the PC FYE program, BC was selected as a site because it also maintains strong partnerships with four-year universities that help expose their students to transfer.

Access to Research Setting

Both sites have long-standing FYE programs that boast successful student data and were open to grant me access to study their program. Coordinators for both programs expressed concern for data on community college Latino males that present a dire picture on their future academic success. They also acknowledged that their FYE programs had components that promoted transfer among their students and were interested in a study that would help them uncover those activities and components that are most influential on Latino males. Coordinators allowed me access to current students, alumni, staff, and program data and were available to answer questions that came up throughout the study.

While neither site was my current place of employment, my current role as Transfer Center Director at Mt. San Antonio College facilitated my access to both sites. As a Transfer Center Director, I have relationships with the colleges' Transfer Center Directors and I have extensive knowledge about the administrative structure of community colleges. As a result, my current role allowed me to better navigate their community college leadership structures and understand institutional verbiage, state mandates, and funding structures of the two FYE programs.

Sampling and Rationale

The overall purpose of this case study was to examine the role that FYE program components have in promoting transfer among Latino male community college students. According to Kvale and Brinkman (2009), the number of participants in studies varies between 5 and 20 participants and based on this recommendation, I selected to interview a total of 20 participants for my study. The 20 participants included four distinct participant populations including: current Latino male FYE students, former Latino male FYE students, program FYE counselors, and FYE program coordinators. Specific selection criteria were developed for each participant population that was based on the purpose of the study. In this case, the purpose was to examine the role of FYE program components in promoting transfer among Latino male students. I employed a purposeful sampling technique to select current student and alumni participants. Purposeful sampling was employed because it allows for in-depth study of “information-rich” cases where we can learn a lot about the central issue being studied (Patton, 2002, p. 230).

Specifically, a typical case sampling technique was used to identify the average FYE student or alumni based on the established criteria. Criteria were developed in cooperation with both FYE program coordinators and through the review of literature on FYE programs to determine typical criteria of FYE Latino male program participants. Criteria included students and alumni who were classified as first-generation college students with low-income status and students who placed into remedial levels of math or English. Patton (2002) explained, “When employing typical case sampling, it is crucial to attempt to get broad consensus about which cases are typical-and what criteria are being used to define typicality” (p. 236).

Student and alumni contact information was obtained from each of the FYE program coordinators. Each FYE program coordinator provided a recruitment list of 10 current students and 10 alumni participants. The recruitment list included student first and last name, email, and phone number. A solicitation email was sent to current students (see Appendix A) and alumni (see Appendix B). Student and alumni participants were also notified that they would receive a complimentary \$30 Amazon gift card for their participation. The gift cards were meant to provide students with a small compensation for the time they committed to the study. Interested respondents were sent an Informed Consent form via email and received a follow-up within two days to answer any questions they may have had about the study and to coordinate an interview date. Only three current students and three alumni responded from Portlake College and four current students and one alumnus responded from Bridgetown College within three weeks of the initial recruitment email. As a result, a second recruitment list of 10 current students and 10 alumni participants meeting the identified criteria was requested from Portlake College, a recruitment list of 10 alumni participants was requested from Bridgetown College, and the recruitment process was repeated.

The first population consists of eight current FYE Latino male students, four from each site. Current FYE students were selected because they could provide information on the specific FYE components in which they are participating and that they find most helpful in preparing them to transfer. The following participation criteria were established for this population: (a) self-identify as male; (b) self-identify as Chicano, Latino, and/or Hispanic; (c) attended only one community college; and (d) participates in the FYE program being studied.

The second participant population was Latino male students who completed the FYE program and who were referred to as “fast-track” students because they met transfer requirements within three years. The following participation criteria were established for this alumni population: (a) self-identify as male; (b) self-identify as Chicano, Latino, and/or Hispanic; (c) attended only one community college; (d) participated in the FYE program being studied; (e) transferred and is currently a junior or senior attending a four-year university; and (f) classified as a “fast-track” transfer student who transferred within three years.

The aforementioned selection criteria strengthened the trustworthiness of the study. Students currently participating in the FYE program provided a unique opportunity to understand the specific FYE program components they found most useful in preparing them to transfer. Additionally, criteria that identified current students and alumni who only attended one community college for the entirety of their community college education ensured no other institution was involved in influencing their preparation towards transfer. Securing students who transferred from community college within three years provided the best example of transfer within the ideal time frame. Also, curbing the population to junior or senior year status was purposefully designed to ensure that Latino male students could recall their experience in the community college FYE program in which they participated. Lastly, collecting data from two FYE programs in two different colleges provided ample opportunity to collect enough evidence to achieve saturation.

The third population studied consisted of one FYE program counselor from each site. FYE program counselors were recruited through a solicitation email (see Appendix C). Interested respondents were sent an Informed Consent form via email and received a follow-up

within two days to answer any questions they may have had about the study and to coordinate an interview date. The counselor from Portlake College and Bridgetown College responded within two weeks of the initial solicitation email. Counselors provided detailed descriptions on the interactions they had with Latino male student participants. Because counselors meet with students regularly and develop trusting relationship with students, they were able to identify and corroborate many of the same challenges and opportunities that Latino male students and alumni shared. Counselors were also able to provide background knowledge behind the development of specific FYE program components designed to prepare students to transfer.

In addition to FYE counselor participation, both FYE program coordinators agreed to participate in the study. FYE program coordinators are generally responsible for leading and managing the program staff. Additionally, coordinators work with college administrators to design and implement FYE programs. As a result of working closely with college administrators, coordinators provided great insight into the support the college provides to the FYE program. Additionally, their role as coordinators provided me with a greater understanding of the college culture, especially as it relates to the FYE program and Latino male students. Including various perspectives helped control bias that may have resulted from merely relying on the Latino male student perspective.

FYE program counselor and coordinator interviews helped provide multiple sources of data and triangulation of the study. Moreover, program staff provided in-depth information that allowed for a more thorough understanding of program components and increase the overall integrity of the study by including multiple perspectives. Selecting a sample that accounts for the student, alumni, and staff perspective allowed me to capture differing views on the impact of

FYE programs. I interviewed eight current students, and eight alumni (Table 1). I also interviewed two FYE program counselors, and two FYE program coordinators (Table 2). In total, the study involved 20 participants.

Table 1

Current Student and Alumni Participant Demographics (N=16)

Names (pseudonyms)	FYE Program	Participant Type	Gender	First Generation	Years at Institution	# of Hours Worked	Four-Year University Type
Santiago	PC	Student	M	Yes	1	0	N/A
Sebastian	PC	Student	M	Yes	1	32	N/A
Matias	PC	Student	M	Yes	1	24	N/A
Alejandro	PC	Student	M	Yes	1	0	N/A
Samuel	PC	Alumnus	M	Yes	2.5	12	Private
Diego	PC	Alumnus	M	Yes	3	20	Public
Benjamin	PC	Alumnus	M	Yes	3	8-40	Public
Tomas	PC	Alumnus	M	Yes	2.5	0	Private
Joaquin	BC	Student	M	Yes	1	36	N/A
Gabriel	BC	Student	M	Yes	1	0	N/A
Luis	BC	Student	M	Yes	1	12	N/A
Mark	BC	Student	M	Yes	1	40	N/A
Agustin	BC	Alumnus	M	Yes	3	15	Public
Emiliano	BC	Alumnus	M	Yes	3	35	Public
Felipe	BC	Alumnus	M	Yes	2.5	20-40	Public
Chris	BC	Alumnus	M	Yes	3	20	Public

Table 2

Counselor and Coordinator Participant Demographics (N=4)

Names (pseudonyms)	FYE Program	Participant Type	Gender	First Generation	Years at Institution
Patricia	PC	Coordinator	F	Yes	17
Yazmin	PC	Counselor	F	Yes	3
Anabel	BC	Coordinator	F	Yes	2
Joseph	BC	Counselor	M	Yes	6

Data Collection Strategies

The study incorporated three different data collection strategies to fully understand how current participants and alumni perceived FYE program activities that promoted transfer.

Creswell (2014) highlighted the value of a researcher's ability to use his or her five senses while observing a phenomenon and outlined a number of advantages to the collection of data with different methods. Data collection strategies for this case study included: (a) interviews, (b) site observation, and (c) document review.

Interviews. Semi-structured interviews with program alumni and FYE staff were to gain an in-depth understanding of the FYE components that promoted transfer. According to Merriam (2009), there are three types of interviews: (a) highly structured interviews, (b) unstructured or informal interviews, and (c) semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews were employed with program alumni and staff to facilitate flexibility in engaging in

informal conversations with participants while simultaneously ensuring consistency across interviews (Creswell, 2014).

To address the experience of students who were, at the time of the study, attending the community college and participating in the FYE program, I incorporated walking interviews. Harris (2016) detailed how walking interviews are advantageous for researchers exploring in-depth issues related to the experience for students of color. Walking interviews is “a form of in-depth qualitative interview method that, as the name implies, is conducted by researchers accompanying individual informants on outings in their familiar environments” (Carpiano, 2009, p. 264). Because walking interviews utilize the environment to prompt conversation and reflection, I was able to gather specific FYE experiences that students recollected while conducting the walking interview at their community college.

To avoid conflict with the class schedules and or work responsibilities of student participants, I prescheduled interviews on a date and time students and alumni identified as most convenient. All student and alumni interviews took place in late March and early April 2017. To ensure privacy and convenience, the interviews were conducted in a private office at the community college or university the student was attending. I reviewed the study’s purpose, confidentiality agreement, and informed consent before commencing the interview. The identity of each study participant is protected by using pseudonyms. Other individuals mentioned by name during the interviews were also assigned a pseudonym to conceal their true identity. Each participant was informed that the interview would last about an hour. To ensure accuracy of interviews, each interview session was audiotaped and transcribed

Student interview protocols were strategically aligned to the research questions. The protocol consisted of seven main questions with various sub-questions regarding the student and alumni experiences while in the community college FYE program. The types of interview question I asked included the following themes: (a) pre-college career aspirations, (b) experience while in the FYE program, (c) perceived influence of FYE program on their transfer success, (d) and participant recommendations for improving FYE program (see Appendix D for student interview protocols).

FYE counselor and coordinator interviews took place April 2017 because both FYE coordinators identified this time period as more convenient for them and their staff. To ensure privacy and convenience for FYE staff, the interviews were conducted in their private office at a date and time they identified. I reviewed the study purpose, confidentiality agreement, and informed consent before commencing the interview. The FYE staff and other individuals mentioned by name during the interviews were assigned a pseudonym to conceal their true identity. Each FYE counselor and coordinator was informed that the interview would last about an hour. To ensure accuracy of interviews, each interview session was audiotaped and transcribed.

FYE counselor interview protocols consisted of eight questions while the coordinator interview protocol consisted of 10 questions (see Appendix E). Questions focused on their perceptions on how their FYE program promotes transfer among Latino male students. I interviewed FYE staff to get different perspectives. The types of interview question asked staff included: (a) perceptions about the population being served, (b) what they reported are the factors that may inhibit the academic success of Latino males, (c) description on how the FYE

program promotes transfer among Latino males, and (d) suggestions on what additional activities FYE programs can incorporate to promote transfer among the population being studied.

Site observations. Site observations provide a researcher with an opportunity to examine a phenomenon in real time and within its particular context. I conducted site observations of four FYE program workshops, two at each site. The goal of these observations was to gather data on the activities that promote transfer among Latino males. A secondary goal of these observations was to document the relationship Latino male students were able to establish with FYE program staff and other students.

I observed as a nonparticipant/observer. Creswell (2014) defined a nonparticipant/observer as a site observation strategy wherein “the researcher is an outsider of the group under study, watching and taking field notes from a distance” (Creswell, 2014, p. 167). Approaching site observations as a nonparticipant/observer provided me with the opportunity to focus on recording data without directly involving myself in the activity; therefore, it allowed me to pay greater attention to my surroundings and avoid missing key information.

Additionally, I used a site observation protocol (see Appendix F) to guide how I observed the settings and the data I captured at each setting. The observation protocol ensured that I accounted for both descriptive and reflective observations that were directly related to my research questions. The protocol consisted of a list of key details that I looked for during the site observations. Focusing on specific details outlined in my observation protocol resulted in a more guided observation experience and minimized the potential of overlooking key information.

Merriam (2009) described the procedure for collecting site observation data as consisting of three stages: (a) gaining entry involves gaining confidence and permission to access the site,

(b) actual data collection, and (c) the procedure for exiting the site so it is not done in an abrupt manner that disturbs the program altogether. I observed two FYE program workshops at each site and built rapport with program staff. Merriam (2009) suggests a few strategies to build rapport, including finding a common ground with participants, being friendly, and showing interest in the activity. The workshops are open spaces where I was unnoticed by student participants. As suggested by Patton (2002), it is important to know “how to separate detail from trivia and utilize rigorous methods to validate observations” during the observation (p. 230). My goal through these observations was to observe how comfortable students felt interacting with FYE staff and other students, as well as to capture information regarding how welcoming the space was for Latino male students.

Capturing information as it occurred allowed me to develop a greater understanding of the different FYE program components that may turn out to be impactful in promoting transfer for Latino male students. Second, site observations allowed me to capture data that would otherwise go unnoticed—FYE program components that promoted transfer awareness among students. Finally, site observations were useful to explore topics that may have been uncomfortable for Latino male participants to discuss during a one-on-one interview. Qualitative researchers have also found that what participants say during interviews is not always what actually happens (Creswell, 2014). Therefore, observations provided the opportunity to triangulate the data and capture what is actually happening in that phenomenon.

Document review. Creswell (2014) maintains that there are a number of advantages to collecting and reviewing documents. Documents provide data that are important for the study with minimal burden to participants or programs. Additionally, the documents I collected served

as written evidence related to transfer promotion that I then discussed with interview participants. To help me gain a stronger understanding of how the two FYE programs are designed and structured, I collected qualitative documents. Documents included program reports, policies, procedures, news articles, recruitment material, event flyers, surveys, and archival data that describe the FYE program, processes, and student demographics. The data were retrieved from the institutions' Institutional Research Office, FYE program website, and directly from the FYE program coordinators.

I printed and coded individual documents to develop a greater understanding and background on each FYE program. Each FYE program had a binder in which I stored documents, divided into different themes. The collection and review of documents also required that I take important steps to determine their authenticity and accuracy (Merriam, 2009). Therefore, I made sure the documents came from a reliable source and had been vetted by program staff to ensure their accuracy. Merriam (2009) suggests that researchers ask themselves key questions to ensure the documents' reliability. Some of the questions I asked myself included: Who drafted this document and what was its purpose? What were the sources of information used to draft the document? For whom was this documented drafted and under what circumstances?

Data Management and Analysis

Data analysis was conducted by using procedures described by Creswell (2014) comprising a six-step approach: (a) organizing and preparing data for analysis, (b) reviewing data and recording general thoughts, (c) developing a qualitative codebook that defines codes,

(d) generating descriptions and thematic categories, (e) utilizing narrative analysis to present data, and (f) interpreting the qualitative findings.

Interviews were transcribed and coded to identify the themes related to the purpose of the study. I developed a qualitative codebook using Quirkos, a qualitative data gathering and analysis tool, to help me define the codes and help me keep the codes organized. I used this coding process to generate descriptions and thematic categories. The thematic categories were then used to present the essence of participants' experiences. I conducted member checks to ensure accuracy of interviews. Member checks involve the sharing of interview transcripts with participants, with the goal of ensuring that data captured accurately reflects participant responses (Maxwell, 2005). Each participant received a copy of their interview transcripts and were provided with an opportunity to review and comment on the accuracy of the transcripts.

I used descriptive coding methods to analyze the site observation field notes collected from each site. First, I typed up my field notes from each individual site observation. Second, I re-read my field notes and scanned for important and reoccurring thoughts. Field notes were categorized into different themes. I looked for patterns that described the FYE program components that proved most successful in promoting transfer among Latino male students. I also incorporated member checks with program coordinators to ensure that I accurately captured the information from the site observation.

Furthermore, I carefully reviewed, coded, and analyzed all the documents and annotations for each site. Themes that emerged from my document analysis were categorized. The themes were categorized in a manner that captured key information relating to FYE program components that promote transfer. To ensure the accuracy of findings, I re-read the data and

thematic categories collected from semi-structured interviews, walking interviews, site-observations, and documents. Through this process, I identified patterns and utilized the multiple sources to triangulate and present the findings.

Ethical Concerns

Federal human subjects research guidelines and the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) Institutional Review Board (IRB) Application Form provide an ethical roadmap for conducting the FYE program case studies. I adhered to IRB guidelines to ensure the safety and privacy of my participants. First, I ensured that each participant understood the purpose and procedures of my study before agreeing to participate. Participants received a printed consent form that detailed: (a) the purpose of the study, (b) procedures on how the study would be conducted, (c) information regarding voluntary participation, and (d) information regarding their freedom to opt out of the study without any repercussions at any time. The consent form ensured that participants were both informed about the study and felt comfortable participating in the study. I reviewed the consent form with each participant, made sure they fully understand what it meant to consent, and answered any questions they had about the study before beginning any interview.

Additionally, the privacy and identity of individuals are protected with pseudonyms for each site, FYE program, and study participants. I notified participants that pseudonyms would be created to help protect their identity. Pseudonyms allow participants to feel more comfortable during interviews and site observations without any threat of consequence. Furthermore, personal identifiers that might compromise a subject's identity were not used in writing the

results. Finally, all collected material, including interview audiotapes, transcripts, and participant information, were collected and stored in an electronically protected storage system to prevent anyone from accessing the information. Upon completion of the study, all interview audiotapes were destroyed and only interview transcripts and field notes with pseudonyms were safely stored in electronic files.

In addition to interview ethical concerns, there were also ethical issues I needed to consider and address relative to conducting site observations. For one, I did not record identifying information during any site observations in order to protect the identity of both the FYE program students and staff. Second, site observations took place in an environment that was unfamiliar to me, making my presence evident and disruptive if special caution was not taken. I ensured the utmost sensitivity to my research setting and ensured that my presence did not disrupt the activities observed. I was specifically sensitive to issues of age, class, cultural background, and gender of my participants during site observations.

Finally, my role as Transfer Director for a community college allowed me to understand the power imbalance that may exist between each student research participant and myself. Special consideration was taken in my role as an employee of a community college. While I do not oversee or have any position of authority over either of the FYE programs being studied, I understand that I may have been perceived as an authority figure among the student participants. I took a series of preemptive measures to ensure that my role did not compromise my data collection methods and findings. I enlisted support by providing participants with a thorough review of my study and shared my experience as a former Latino male transfer student as the motivating factor for conducting the study.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

Introduction

This study sought to understand the extent to which two different First-Year Experience (FYE) programs promote transfer among Latino male community college students. To accomplish this goal, FYE program components including, but not limited to, cultural elements were examined to uncover their role in promoting transfer. A total of twenty individuals participated in semi-structured interviews for this study—ten from each site—as my first point of analysis. Each site included the following participants: four current Latino male FYE program students, four Latino male FYE program alumni, one FYE program counselor, and one FYE program coordinator.

In addition to semi-structured interviews, I conducted four site observations as my second point of analysis. Two observations were conducted at each site to develop a greater understanding of the role that cultural elements of the program had in promoting transfer. Lastly, my third point of analysis involved FYE program document analysis, such as yearly reports, website information, and promotional material. Data were analyzed through Creswell's (2014) six-step approach that included: (a) organizing and preparing data for analysis, (b) reviewing data and recording general thoughts, (c) developing a qualitative codebook defining codes, (d) generating descriptions and thematic categories, (e) utilizing narrative analysis to present the data, and (f) interpreting the qualitative findings.

Utilizing a comparative case study approach, findings emerged from semi-structured interviews, site observations, and program document analysis. This chapter begins by

highlighting themes that emerged at each site and provide findings from each point of analysis.

Main themes include: challenges asking for help, the long journey to transfer, work and financial constraints, the importance of approachable and culturally responsive staff, and the importance of program autonomy and institutional support.

The first theme, “challenges asking for help,” is supported by findings that show how students struggle to develop help-seeking behaviors. The second theme, “the long journey to transfer,” is supported by student and staff commentary on the frustration students experience regarding the time it takes to transfer and staff’s acknowledgement of barriers that prevent student timely transfer. The third theme of “work and financial constraints” is reinforced with findings that present Latino males’ responsibilities to work and the subsequent impact on academics. The fourth theme, “the importance of approachable and culturally responsive staff,” is revealed by findings that show how students are more likely to seek help through supportive environments like FYE. The last theme, “the importance of program autonomy and institutional support,” is backed by findings that show how greater institutional support results in better FYE programming. I end by discussing how FYE program components promote or hinder the different forms of Community Cultural Wealth (Yosso, 2005) exhibited by Latino males.

Case Studies

Portlake College First-Year Experience Program Background

The Portlake College First-Year Experience (PC FYE) program began in 2000 and was originally funded through a Title V grant until 2005. As a result of being funded through Title V

and having to maintain thorough reporting data to continue to be funded, the program developed a very strong data-driven culture. In fact, the program had a full-time researcher assigned to the program during those first five years. The embedded researcher allowed the PC FYE program to capture much data and develop components that best suited the population they were serving. As a result of reporting successful outcomes as a Title V funded program, the college completely institutionalized the program when the Title V funding came to an end in 2005. Since then, the program has continued to have a strong relationship with its institutional research office and continues to practice a culture that is very data driven.

Transfer is a big emphasis in this program, although that emphasis has developed over time. Initially, the goals of FYE were to focus on student first-year retention rates. As the program began reporting pronounced successes with those initial goals and students in the program began to increasingly reflect transfer as a goal, the program goals evolved. The program has since established goals emphasizing transfer, especially because, as program coordinator Patricia stated, “95% of the students who are surveyed for our program, their educational goal is to transfer. Because the students we are working with want to transfer, PC FYE is transfer-heavy.” As a result, the program embeds a transfer message in various practices and activities such as having students complete a college admission essay in their English class, only offering courses that are transferrable or are focused on accelerating students out of remedial course work, and providing mandatory transfer-related workshops.

On average, the program serves 800 first-year students and another 800 continuing students. The program does not have a low-income requirement nor does it give preference to students from certain ethnic backgrounds as it did when it was a Title V grant from 2000 to

2005, which required it to focus on Latina/o or Hispanic student populations. An important distinction between the PC FYE program and other FYE programs is that it serves students in both their first and second years.

Upon admission to the program, students are required to participate in a day-long mandatory orientation that includes workshops on the transfer pathway. Along with a student orientation, the program also offers a parent orientation in which parents are informed about the programs expectations, college culture, and the best ways by which parents can support their son or daughter while in the program. Students who qualify for financial aid are also required to participate in an intensive financial aid and financial literacy training program during the summer before they start school. Additionally, the program mandates that students attend college as full-time students (12 units or more). The program also requires students who place into remedial courses to participate in math and English acceleration courses through FYE. In return for meeting program requirements, students receive priority registration, which allows them to register for classes before most other PC students, and they have the ability to register for the most sought-after classes and schedules.

During the school year, students are required to participate in a number of program components designed to help them succeed in college. Students are required to participate in courses taken in cohort style learning communities. Patricia shared, “At least 50% of their course work is taken in a cohort style.” The program also requires that first-year students participate in two mandatory workshops or two university tours per semester. Both first-year and second-year students are also required to meet with their FYE counselor at least once per semester. FYE also practices an early alert system in which students who have missed class or

have not submitted an assignment during the first two weeks of class are required to attend an intervention session with their counselor. Students are also encouraged but not mandated to attend tutoring sessions with supplemental instructors (SI). Although, the program coordinator did share that next year, the SI sessions will be a requirement for all students.

Bridgetown College Background

The Bridgetown College (BC) Bridge Forward program, as it was first known, was started in 2006 with funding from a five-year grant. BC Bridge Forward was modeled from the work of a BC staff member's dissertation project. When the grant period ended, the college provided funding to continue the program. Three years ago, the current director helped merge two separate programs focused on the success of first-year students into one single program, which is now referred to as the BC First-Year Experience (FYE) program. The first program, Bridge Forward, catered to students who were attending BC on a part-time basis while the second program, Freshman Program, catered to students who were attending on a full-time basis. Other than the student unit load, the program services were basically the same. The BC FYE program has gone through a number of staffing changes through its different iterations since 2006, including three different program coordinators.

The program has also gone through structural changes that have altered the focus of the program. While the program emphasizes transfer as a goal, it is still in the process of developing a reporting mechanism to capture greater transfer data from current and alumni students. The program has a stronger focus in helping students acclimate and navigate the college setting in order to meet their goal of increasing retention rates among first-year students. On average, the program serves 600 first-year students on an annual basis. The program coordinator stated that

its target populations include recent high school graduates from the surrounding community, which comprises traditionally low-income, first-generation, and underserved populations.

There are many similarities in program components between PC and BC FYE programs, including learning communities comprising various cohorts of students and mandatory meetings with counselors. Students take courses in a cohort model with a focus on either math or English. Each math or English course is paired with a counseling college life skills course focused on helping students navigate the college setting. BC FYE students are required to meet with a counselor at least once per semester to review educational planning goals and academic progress. In addition to meetings with an FYE counselor, the BC FYE program is distinct from PC in that it requires students to also meet with their academic coach, an intern who is a current counseling graduate student, at least once per semester. Students are required to attend two BC FYE workshops and one non-BC FYE workshop per semester. BC FYE students are also mandated to attend 25 hours of tutoring with a SI for either math or English.

Although, there is much similarity between PC and BC FYE program components, a few differences exist. One major difference is that BC FYE is open to students who attend BC on a part-time and full-time basis, quite different from PC that requires students to attend college on a full-time basis. Another difference is that while the BC FYE program also does university tours, it is not mandatory for students to attend a certain number of them. BC FYE students are also mandated to attend 25 hours of tutoring with an SI for either math or English, while at PC FYE it is not mandatory. Although, the PC FYE program coordinator did share that in the past SI sessions were mandatory and she is reconsidering a return to that model for the next academic year.

Theme One: Challenges in Asking for Help

Students, alumni, and program staff reported that Latino males experience challenges in practicing help-seeking behaviors. Current FYE program students from both sites expressed difficulties in asking for help during their first year of college. They attributed many factors to their challenges in asking for help: fear of not being perceived as masculine enough, pride, and familial responsibility associated with masculinity.

Portlake College FYE. Six out of eight PC FYE student participants and alumni provided commentary on the challenges they face when it comes to asking for help. The first challenge males attribute to difficulty in asking for help is rooted in societal perceptions of masculinity. Latino male participants resisted asking for help because they associate help-seeking behaviors with being emasculate. This was exemplified by Santiago in dealing with a stressful situation involving his family fighting deportation proceedings against the sole provider of his home, his father. Santiago, a current FYE student, was working with his mother to navigate the complicated legal system to find the best way to keep his father from being deported. However, he did not seek support from the FYE program:

I don't like talking about my family issues with other people. Being raised as a Latino, like my dad wasn't a touchy feely guy. So I said, "oh well, I'm gonna be like my dad." I'm not gonna talk about my feelings or ask for help.

Santiago's approach to seeking help exemplifies how a Latino male student, despite his hardships and lack of knowledge on navigating the legal system, refuses to ask for help because his father, the male figure in his life, models those behaviors.

Similarly, pride also contributes to males' inability to seek help. Regarding asking for help in academic settings, Matias explained, "Yeah. I've wanted to, but it's kind of like my pride

holds me back, like, 'No, don't do that, you'll seem weak or something.'” Even though Matias knows FYE is an academic resource, he associates asking for help with seeming weak in front of staff and other peers so avoids it.

The third factor inhibiting Latino male help-seeking behavior is rooted in familial expectations. An example of this can be seen through Benjamin who lost his father in a car accident during his first year in college.

I tried to be the strong one in my family. Like try to be the rock for everyone. So I know when that was going on . . . And I could see it on my mom's face. So, I would be there for her. Then I think my brothers picked up on that. Then they'll also be part of that. And then they saw, I guess. I wouldn't say they didn't see me bothered by it, but of course, you know, it bothered me. But, I guess I didn't show that emotional side of me, but it did get to me, but I pulled myself to the side and just let it out.

Benjamin articulated the responsibilities that were indirectly placed on him with the passing of his father. Being able to pick up on unspoken social cues from his mother, he assumed the role of the rock in the family, refusing to display vulnerability in front of his mother and sibling and carrying everyone through this grieving time period.

Despite the narrative that led six of the eight male participants to associate asking for help with emasculate behaviors, one participant discussed help-seeking behavior as a way of being, a means of survival, or an action needed to achieve a goal. Samuel, a senior in a four-year university, countered the narrative associating help-seeking behaviors as emasculate with his analysis on how males, especially Latino, are different from women.

Women have this connection between them, between other people. They're willing to talk about things. Males don't do that. Males tend to be quieter about these things. I share my problems. It's not going to show that I'm weak. I think there is a lot of social construct with that. Especially Latino culture can force males to be a certain way and tell them they're supposed to do things for themselves. I don't think that's true. I think it's

okay to ventilate your problems. It's okay to be vulnerable. It's okay to go to people when you need the help.

Samuel does not view help-seeking behaviors as emasculate, but rather as a necessary feature in connecting with others. Moreover, he associates male behaviors as a social construct imposed by cultural expectations. Samuel is distinct in his view of masculinity but it is a view that developed over time and resulted from his unique challenge of coming to the US from Cuba as a young teenager and being forced to ask for help in order to adapt to a new society.

Although current student experiences and feelings about asking for help are rooted in perceptions of masculinity, alumni shared how FYE helped students overcome barriers that prevent information seeking. One way participants developed their help-seeking behavior was through challenges they faced in life that forced them to seek out support, such as Samuel, who immigrated to the United States (US) from Cuba during his sophomore year in high school. His ability to confront his challenge of asking for help came to fruition through his experience as an immigrant student.

I was like, “hey, my survival mode has to turn on and my survival mode is to learn from other people.” I don’t know the answer to anything. I was not born in this country; my family doesn’t know anything about how this country works. My survival mode is literally asking for help. I think that’s something that kind of like the environment forced me to shape into asking for help. (Samuel)

Faced with learning a new language in a new country, Samuel was forced to disregard his insecurities with masculinity and become vulnerable to seek help and support from his teachers.

Another way participants expressed their ability to develop greater help-seeking behavior was through the support services offered through the FYE program. Benjamin, an alumnus of the FYE program, described his behavior months after his father’s passing:

I went to see a counselor, tell 'em about my situation, and you know, they made me, I guess, get in a better position. They helped me put myself together. I started to think, like, future wise, and like my dad will always be here. You know, just have that in my mind. And I told 'em what my dad had told me, and was like, "I think you should do, you know, continue with school, and then just keep going, and make him proud."

The passing of Benjamin's father prompted him to seek support from FYE counselors, and Benjamin categorized FYE counselors as the support needed to assist him with seeking help and continuing his education. It was the FYE counselor's words of encouragement that to this day help him stay motivated and continue to practice his help-seeking behaviors at the four-year university.

In addition to the experiences shared by student and alumni participants, FYE program staff also acknowledged that first-year Latino males have difficulty asking for help, especially when compared to women. Patricia, the coordinator of the program, also counsels students and corroborated students' self-reported reluctance to ask for help, "I find that they [Latino males] take a little bit longer to ask for help, with counselors or something." The coordinator recognized the challenge that Latino males have in seeking help from program staff. FYE program counselor Yazmin shared similar concerns about male students of color and their hesitancy to ask for help:

A lot of times men of color I've noticed, don't necessarily seek out the help, because that's something that they haven't learned how to do. It's not like in their nature . . . I can't say their nature, but they're more hesitant to ask for help when they need it versus women of color will often times say, "Hey, I don't understand this," or "I need help here."

An important distinction was made by this counselor when she compared her male students' help-seeking behaviors to those of her female students. FYE female students do not struggle as much as their male counterparts to seek help when they need it.

FYE program staff noted that Latino males are also less likely to take advantage of program components designed to help them through the first year, compared to their female counterparts. Program coordinator Patricia shared an example of how such hesitance negatively impacts their matriculation process.

When they [Latino males] come into the community college not a lot of them are taking advantage of programs like Summer Bridge or things like that; the Latinas are! They're [Latina females] heavily enrolled in them or whatever. So, the Latino males, they take a little bit longer to matriculate, to get the steps completed.

This failure to participate in program components can delay Latino males' matriculation process and prevent them from benefiting from those FYE program components and other special programs.

While FYE program staff acknowledged a lack of participation among Latino male students, they also recognize the responsibility they have as program staff to reach out to Latino males. Even though, as Patricia noted, "our students don't know how to act like they're in college, including our Latino males, . . . you gotta go to them, they're not gonna come here, you gotta go to them." This approach signals that the program recognizes their responsibility to reach out to students who do not participate and have identified strategies to work with Latino male students.

Bridgetown College FYE. Similar to the students attending PC, six of the eight BC participants also shared experiences and feelings about asking for help. However, three of the four alumni were able to articulate how FYE helped them overcome barriers that prevent information seeking. Current and former BC FYE students expressed similar concerns about their inability to ask for help within an academic setting. Agustin, a former student who

transferred and is now attending a four-year university, shared the anxiety he experienced when having to ask questions in his classes, including FYE classes:

There'd be times that I'd ask questions and I would have a little minor panic attack. My heart would start pounding. I would lose my breath a bit. It would sound like I'm getting emotional. I don't know if I'm just too passionate about the subject or I'm just stuck. I'm still trying to figure that out, 'cause I still do that sometimes.

Although Agustin was unable to pinpoint the source of anxiety surrounding his ability to ask questions, his awareness of it and his “figuring that out” has led to its improvement over time, which aligns to FYE staff’s initial analysis that students need time to learn how to be college students and ask for help.

Similar to Latino males at PC, five of the eight BC participants resisted asking for help because they associated help seeking with emasculate behavior. Participants related their interpretations of masculinity to what they perceive as the societal expectations placed upon them, and some of the participants expressed frustration about it.

I mean, I think males in general, because we're seen as the man . . . We don't need no help, we can do stuff on our own and all that. If you're seen asking for help they'll be like, “Oh he's weak. Like, he's not a man.” So pretty much, we just try to act all tough and everything, we don't need help and all that. But it turns out sometimes you actually do need help and it's hard for us to ask for help when everyone expects us to act in a masculine way. (Joaquin)

Student Gabriel concurred:

I know when I was raised, my dad would be like, “You can't ask for help,” because it just proves that you're weak or something. It's just like, if you ask for help you're weak, or if you ask for help you don't know how to do it, you know? And so, that's the problem there, is that you have to ask for help because it gets hard and it gets confusing. If you don't ask for help, what are you going to do?

Gabriel, like the other students from BC, struggled to identify the exact root of masculine behaviors that prevented them from asking for help while understanding how such behaviors could impede their ability to succeed academically.

Half the BC students and alumni expressed that the fear of peer judgment was a challenge to asking for help in academic settings. Current student Joaquin shared a time when he asked a clarifying question regarding the grade point average (GPA) requirement for an institution while attending a transfer workshop along with how he felt afterward. “I don't remember exactly how I asked the question but . . . I did feel like, ‘Aw damn I shouldn't have just asked that.’ I should've just looked it up myself, like not ask for help.” Joaquin had a valid question, but the fear of judgment by both his peers and staff was so strong it resulted in him beating himself up for asking because the answer could be accessed without asking for help.

In response to male challenges to seeking help, the BC FYE program created dialogical workshops where men could discuss issues specifically affecting them, including the concept of masculinity. In one workshop, current students such as Luis shared examples of how they are challenging masculine behaviors that prevent them from developing their help-seeking behaviors.

I wish I would have known to be able to express myself earlier and not be afraid to ask questions or get help. I was afraid for a very long time. It was because my emotions then, my fear of showing emotions kept me from getting help. I made myself a promise when I found out I was going to have a baby boy. I'm going to be different. I don't want him to feel like I felt. If he's my son, I know he's going to be very emotional. I want to embrace that and show him, “Hey, you feel a certain way, say it. You have a question, ask. Don't be afraid to get help.”

Luis is overcoming his challenge of seeking help by learning to express himself and show his emotions. At the same time, his new responsibilities as a father and becoming an example for his son are allowing him to develop his own help-seeking behaviors.

Another pathway in dismantling the fear of help seeking can be seen through Gabriel's experience regarding FYE resources.

I think that they (FYE) put the resources out there and it's our responsibility to take advantage of them. I know that there's a lot of shy Latino males in the program that won't really come out to events or workshops and they'll just kind of be like, "Oh well, I need help but I don't want to ask." And they need to also see that they (FYE) will not judge them and that they are here to help them.

Gabriel explained that the FYE program provides easy access to workshops and resources for Latino males. However, Gabriel's realization may not be easy for other students to understand until they themselves have moved beyond masculine stereotypes that prevent them from asking for help.

Similarly to staff at PC FYE, both BC FYE staff members acknowledged that first-year Latino males have difficulty asking for help, especially when compared to Latina women.

Joseph, a male counselor for the FYE program, noticed a stark difference between Latino males' and Latina females' help-seeking behaviors:

I think for female Latina students there's an aspect of collectivism, maybe. Like, "Oh, I'm gonna hear what I'm going through, and in sharing I'm gonna get my answers." With guys, guys don't like sharing. You have to kind of pick apart at their comments, and then get to the real point. . . I think it manifested as a fear of showing weakness thing and I'm not sure if it's gender thing or if it's a Latino thing, but you have to teach them to have help-seeking behaviors because "who wants to ask for help? That looks weak, right?" We have to teach them how to ask for help.

Thus, the program staff at BC FYE also recognize the issue of males not asking for help directly and have developed specific techniques to get more information out of the students in order to

help them. As a Latino male himself, Joseph is able to make sense of Latino male student actions and offer direct experience on how it is not weak to ask for help or seek out support. Such acknowledgment and direction can be crucial in the development of help-seeking behaviors among Latino males seeking to succeed in their academics. Thus, students receive the actual help they need with their academics along with further expansion of their help-seeking behaviors.

Theme Two: The Long Journey to Transfer

Another barrier faced by Latino males who are pursuing a transfer goal is the length of time it takes them to transfer to a four-year university, as illustrated in the various experiences and observations noted by students and staff. Students experienced a lack in motivation and growing frustration in the length of time it takes to transfer. Similarly, all four staff members from both sites mentioned how Latino males are more susceptible to prematurely exiting out of college due to prolonged transfer timelines perpetuated by required completion of basic and developmental courses. This section discusses how Latino males cope with the prolonged transfer process and how FYE staff interpreted and addressed this challenge.

Portlake College FYE. The primary frustration expressed among all Latino male alumni participants is the time it takes to complete required courses prior to transferring and is especially present among three of the four PC FYE students who placed into remedial course levels. Benjamin, an alumnus of the FYE program and current junior at a public four-year university, discussed his challenges with remaining motivated to transfer. “The challenging thing is just how to stay focused. Even though it's like a two-year college, and you want to transfer to a four-

year, it's hard to get motivated sometimes with how long you are here.” Although Benjamin only attended community college for three years, he remained frustrated with being placed in remedial math, leading to a longer time to complete his transfer requirements.

Yeah, after my second year, I kind of had that feeling like, “Oh, I need to get out of here.” I got frustrated because it was taking a while. I wasn't able to take college level math when I got here, even though I was one or two points away in the placement test, so I was bummed out about that.

Benjamin's experience was not an isolated one. Rather, his story is one example expressed and affirmed by the other two alumni from this site who placed into remedial courses.

Both FYE staff members also acknowledged that Latino males display a greater level of frustration than non-Latino male students regarding the time it takes to transfer. They cited Latino males' attitude as impatient with a strong desire to get a faster return on investment in education, as exemplified in Patricia's interpretation of the Latino male experience.

I feel like a lot of them [Latino males] still need immediate, instant gratification, they want to be done now. So, the whole concept of, this is not something that's going to happen overnight, it's gonna take a lot, a lot of my Latino males time to understand . . . They get really impatient, with that. They've got two years here, three years there, then two more years at the university . . . they want to see something now.

Moreover, she discussed the many milestones Latino males must accomplish in their path to completing a degree in higher education. Patricia remembered a student who aspired to be a pilot:

I have a student right now who actually was admitted to . . . he applied to Cal State and he got admitted for the Aviation program but, they don't have any flight time, so in order to get the flight time we did some research together . . . he's gonna have to transfer to Conifer Community College, because they have an aviation program and he can get a lot of flight hours for free. He wants to be a pilot, they have to have, at the minimum 10,000 hours of flight time. So he's gonna go over there [Conifer Community College]. But he was getting really discouraged 'cause he was like, “I've already been at [Portlake College] for three years, now I gotta go to Conifer to go get the flight time, and then decide if I

want to go to Cal State later on.” He got a little discouraged 'cause he realized college was going to take more time.

Patricia’s recollection contributes to her understanding of the frustration Latino males face when confronted with several requirements, milestones, and time needed to achieve their goals.

Program reports support the assertions made by FYE staff, calling attention to the negative impact that remedial coursework has on student retention. Three program reports document how spending more time taking remedial level course work results in more exit points for students. In fact, FYE staff members such as Patricia recognize that placement into remedial courses decreases the likelihood of transfer. “The more steps students have to take in developmental, the less likely they are to get into transfer-level classes, the less likely they are to be transfer ready, the less likely they are to be transfer prepared.” Developmental courses are the courses students take when they place below college level. The purpose of developmental/remedial courses is to provide students with appropriate scaffolding and supports to perform and produce college-level coursework. In other words, with the assistance of remedial coursework, students will have the skills and abilities to read, write, and solve problems at the expected college level. However, as exemplified in Patricia’s comments, students placed into developmental or remedial courses are less likely to transfer.

In response to discouragement felt by Latino males in the community college, FYE staff are beginning to explore different pathways to remediate the problem. Patricia explained:

A transfer strategy for our student is to use multiple measures, because the quicker you can get them out of developmental education and into college level of classes, the better they're gonna do, because we know that the pathway . . . has too many exit points for our students.

Multiple measures is a state mandate requiring community colleges to utilize a set of parameters to determine the placement of students in math and English. The purpose for the implementation of multiple measures is to provide students with more adequate placement, as relying on community college placement test scores alone is not the best predictor of student academic success in the designated subject area. Parameters used to determine placement include: high school GPA, the last grade the student received for math and English, and community college placement test scores.

In addition to multiple measures, the FYE program staff also identified counseling practices to keep Latino male students motivated. Patricia shared:

You have completed some short-term goals you should be really proud of that. Not enough Latino males are told that. I find sometimes when I say that to them, they're like, "Oh, wow, thanks, nobody ever said that to me." They're not getting a lot of congratulations or pats on the back as they go along.

Program staff see the importance of incorporating counseling strategies that celebrate predetermined milestones. In turn, these celebrations help reinvigorate and motivate students through the long transfer journey. The FYE program is strategic with the creation of these small and achievable goals through its counseling strategies. Yazmin shared an example of how she implemented the milestone celebrations:

When I see students that are doubting themselves . . . Sometimes it's referring back to what are some of their strengths and what are some things that they've accomplished, so I really try to take an affirmative approach to my counseling. Even just starting like, "Wow, we've made it halfway through the semester, what an accomplishment," or "You're on your second semester of college regardless of maybe things haven't been going so well, but look at just the little things. You're still coming every day, you're still trying. I hear you're telling me you're going to study groups, you're doing the reading, you're doing all these things. You're totally amazing. Look at the growth that you've had in the time that you've been here."

These milestones also serve as a tool to affirm and celebrate progress. Celebrating students' achievements affirms their scholarly development and helps build their academic self-esteem.

Bridgetown College FYE. At the second site, little evidence surfaced in program documents and staff interviews regarding the length of time it takes to transfer. However, three of the four alumni did express the concerns they felt about the time it takes to transfer while they attended community college. Agustin, an alumnus from BC, stated:

Yeah. People kept saying that people don't transfer fast enough on two years or however long it takes because math and English are what keeps them from progressing in their education career. I was like, "All right. I'll just take that [math and English] and get those classes out of the way." That's what I did.

Agustin's approach to remedial courses differed from that of his peers. Rather than prolonging his time at the community college by taking several developmental courses, he targeted his attention on successfully completing required English and math coursework.

Program reports show that student placement into remedial courses reduces the likelihood of student transfer to a four-year institution. The issue of remedial courses affecting time to transfer did not come up in any BC FYE participant interviews. This is not to say that the BC FYE program does not qualify remediation as an important issue as it relates to the length of time it takes to transfer; they do have programming in place to help support students in remedial courses. In fact, the BC FYE program has a summer component designed to help students get ahead by completing remediation in math or English during the summer.

Additionally, the program coordinator Anabel clarified that the program also has mandated SI for students who are in math remedial courses:

The math cohort students have to meet and do SI hours, for 25 hours a semester for tutoring. I'm changing it for this academic year for 2017/2018 year and now English students also have to go to the writing center for 25 hours per semester.

SI is an example of another form of FYE program intervention designed to help students progress out of remediation and into college-level coursework in their path to transfer.

Contrary to discourse and conversations surrounding pathway to transfer present in the PC culture, there was no mention at BC FYE of the implementation of multiple measures as a practice to support Latino male transfer pathways. This is partly due to the fact that PC is further along in the implementation process of multiple measures and also that the PC FYE program serves as a pilot for multiple measures implementation. It is important to note that piloting multiple measures through an FYE program requires a great deal of support and trust from the institutions. Therefore, the fact that discussion on multiple measures did not come up during the interviews with BC FYE program staff does not mean they do not recognize the potential of multiple measures to ensure that students experience a shorter length of time preparing to transfer.

Theme Three: Work and Financial Constraints

The third theme that emerged from the data was working while attending college and financial constraints. Twelve of the 16 student and alumni participants worked at least part-time while attending college. Nine of the 16 student and alumni participants who worked at one point or another averaged 20 or more hours per week while attending community college. In fact, one current student and two alumni shared that they worked full-time, or 40 hours per week, while attending community college. All students had different motivations for working while they

attended community college, but all seven BC students who worked expressed familial financial constraints as the main motivation to work. Nonetheless, the affects work had on student academics was consistent among both sites. Furthermore, seven of the eight alumni also shared how financial constraints influenced their transfer decision.

Portlake College FYE. Two of the four current students reported working at least half time while enrolled in school. Matias worked 24 hours per week, while Sebastian worked 32 hours per week. Santiago and Alejandro did not work.

Additionally, three of the four alumni also had work responsibilities while they participated in the FYE program. Benjamin worked 8 hours per week during the school year, and up to 40 hours per week during the summers. Samuel was one of the few participants in the study who worked on campus as a tutor and worked an average of 12 hours per week. Diego worked an average of 20 hours per week and Tomas did not work while he participated in FYE.

Three of the five FYE program student and alumni participants who worked stated their motivation to work was to provide economic support to their immediate family. Sebastian, a current Dreamer student who started working after high school graduation, described how he took some time off from school to work and save money to attend college, despite his desire to attend PC straight out of high school:

What motivates me to work is just that my mom has been struggling being alone since my dad left us. So it kind of just makes me want to get my own stuff. I don't want to ask anything from my mom because she has already done so much for me. And not only that but also I want to help her out a little bit. So from whatever I get I give her some. That's mostly it.

Sebastian shared how he did not feel comfortable asking his mother for financial support for college because he witnessed her struggle financially on a daily basis; he was motivated to work

to not only pay for his own academic expenses, but because he also wanted to provide financial support to his mother.

Benjamin, a FYE alumni, discussed how his motivation to work came from a necessity to provide financial support to his family after the passing of his father. “Realistically, I knew that that's one income that wouldn't come into my family after he [dad] passed away. So, I knew money was gonna be a problem down the line. So, I think my only option was to just to find work and help my mom financially.” Benjamin felt he had no other choice but to work and provide that financial support to his family at that time.

FYE students who were motivated to work to provide financial support to their families also recognized the affect their employment had on their academics and involvement in college-related activities. Matias described his struggle with working and going to school: “The only thing is I just don't pay much attention in class sometimes because I have to be worrying about going to work right after school and all of that. So it's just I have to be constantly thinking about work.”

Sebastian explained how he believed his academic experience would be different even outside the classroom if he did not have work responsibilities:

I think it would be different. I would be joining more clubs, I would be doing more programs, I would be looking into stuff. But I would also be a little bit more focused too if I didn't have to work. But also I would be feeling bad because my mom would be paying for some of my stuff and I don't really want that.

While, Sebastian listed the benefits and additional opportunities he would have had if he did not have to work, he was quick to remind himself that not working would also mean his mother would have to financially support him. Despite their distraction from school, both students

acknowledged how important it was for them to work and provide their family with financial support.

Three of the four FYE program alumni also explained how finances played a role in their transfer-related decisions. Upon transfer admission to various universities, alumni carefully reviewed their financial aid award letters and considered their finances before committing to any institution. Their decision to attend a specific university was driven by their financial aid award packages, as Diego explained, “I mean, financial aid was very big thing for me. I was like, I really want to go to school but how am I going to pay for this? What are my options to paying? I mean, my family doesn't have the money to pay for that! What are the options out there for me?” Though Diego ultimately based his decision to attend a public university on the financial aid package that covered most of his tuition and expenses, he had struggled to determine what his financial options were before considering any other factors related to his decision to attend that university. Thus, finances are important for Latino males who come from low-income backgrounds, even when deciding what university they will attend.

In addition to student and alumni experiences, program staff also acknowledged how full-time student employment influenced students’ ability to both succeed academically and transfer.

PC FYE program counselor Yazmin described her observations of working students:

What I've seen in the first-year students, some of the biggest challenges are working while they're going to school, but almost always . . . Prior to working at FYE, I worked with probation students. Most cases, like when students are on academic or private probation it was because of work. I know specifically for African-American and Latino male students, a lot of times they are also trying to support their families. I see it a lot in the men from those populations.

FYE program coordinator Patricia offered her observation that Latino males have heavier responsibilities to work when compared to her other students: “They also, I think, have a lot of, I mean, all of our students have a lot of responsibilities that they're dealing with and they're juggling, but, I definitely find that Latino male students, sometimes carry a heavier burden than other students.” Both Patricia and Yazmin validated the Latino male experience shared by students regarding feelings of having to carry a greater responsibility to work than other FYE students.

Another economic barrier highlighted by the program staff is how financial aid is distributed at community colleges. The term “financial aid assistance” was also mentioned in all the marketing material analyzed and appeared on the website four times. FYE program staff discussed how the current formula used to allocate financial aid distributes most of the funding to students at four-year institutions, ultimately hurting Latino male students who attend community colleges. Patricia explained that financial aid distribution policies need to take into account that many of these Latino male students are having to attend college while they are also expected to provide their low-income families with financial support.

We need to figure out ways of how to better support Latino males financially. Because, people say, “Oh, it's \$46 a unit, it's super cheap.” It's not cheap! It's not cheap to Latino males because, in most cases, my Latino males who are coming here are having to pay the utility bill, are having to pay half of the rent, and if they had a bigger award package here at the community college, they might not have to do all those things. How community college students are funded is really backwards because they're the ones who need the most support, they need it here at this level. I get that the UCs cost more, I get that the Cal States cost more and that's why they don't give as much aid here, because you need it at your next institution, but you do need a lot of aid here, because when our students don't have the money to help their parents or whatever, they leave altogether and go get a full time job, especially Latino males.

Providing Latino males and other students in dire economic situations with larger financial aid packages might help them focus more on their academics, as their financial situations might not force them to work as much.

Yazmin, the program counselor, echoed concerns regarding students' financial constraints:

I think another struggle for students especially students of color I see is just getting their books and yes, their financial aid in place, but the way the system is set up, like where they get the money two weeks after the semester starts can create a really slow start to the semester, because they're missing assignments, they're missing work. I wish, in a perfect world, there was some type of program where if a student needs a book, we could just get it immediately, have it there, be like, "You know what? Let's go get that book. Let's give you the tools to be successful."

Yazmin described how the current financial aid system may impede the academic success of Latino male students. As the school semester begins, students must buy the required material, even if their financial aid is not processed. Thus, the delay in financial aid and limited funds negatively affects students' ability to buy books and stay caught up with their coursework.

To remedy some financial problems, the FYE program implements a number of strategies to help students better deal with work and financial responsibilities, including hiring Latino males for work study positions. Working on campus, especially among those students most vulnerable to exit out, provides opportunities to engage with the campus community while at the same time, they earn money to help fill those financial gaps. Patricia understands the impact that on-campus employment has on her students and their decision to remain on track to pursue their academic goals: "Some of the things that we've done is we try to find them jobs here on campus so they don't have to work off campus. In fact, I hire a lot of them. I hire so many student workers, especially Latino males, because I don't want them to work off campus."

In addition to on-campus work, the FYE program also provides at least six financial aid workshops per academic year and one-on-one counselor meetings to help students manage their academic and work responsibilities. Students acknowledged that workshops on themes such as time management were provided to help them develop strategies to ensure their academics were not disrupted as a result of work responsibilities. The financial workshops PC created center around helping students understand how financial aid works so they can advocate for themselves. Yazmin explained, “Something that we started when I was an intern we've done for two consecutive years for students who are eligible for financial aid, we've created a mandatory financial aid and academic resource workshop during the summer.” Financial Aid & Scholarships Training (FAST), the workshop series Yazmin referred to, is one example of how this FYE program tackles the issue of finances and takes a proactive approach to teaching students about the financial aid process as well as how to get the maximum amount of financial aid to avoid exiting out of the program due to financial concerns.

In addition to financial aid workshops, counselors also individually meet with new students who are eligible for financial aid before the start of the semester to ensure that their financial aid paperwork is in order and that they receive their financial aid package in a timely manner. Patricia explained:

We check everyone's financial aid package before summer is over. If there's anybody who doesn't have their check yet, my office is on top of it. And they're talking to financial aid, “Hey, do you have a package for our student, what's wrong with the file?” We're on it.

Such program support helps ensure that students have all the resources they will need to be successful.

According to Patricia, one-on-one counseling is also used to help students juggle their work and academic responsibilities.

I had a student in here a couple weeks ago, who's struggling in one of his classes and his mom got laid off, and his dad is afraid to go to work because his dad's undocumented. And so, his dad's not working, so he took a job at a warehouse and he's not getting home until 1:00 am every night. So, of course he's gonna fall behind. So it's not academic, it's not that he's trying not to go to class and not doing the work, it's that this poor kid is having to work. So, in his case, I'm like, "We need a different pathway for you, we need a different plan, we need to lighten your load, we need to figure out if you're maxed out on your financial aid packet," so we had to create a new plan.

Program staff are flexible in their counseling strategies so they may work with students experiencing unexpected economic challenges and help them come up with a plan to ensure that they are able to continue to be successful in college. This type of one-on-one counseling support is especially important for low-income Latino males who do not know how to navigate college and are struggling to find the help they need to be academically successful in college.

Bridgetown College FYE. At the second case study site, respondents reported working more hours than students and alumni at PC. Out of the eight respondents, only one reported not working while attending college. In fact, five of the seven respondents who worked reported working 20 or more hours per week. One current student and one alumnus reported working full-time while attending community college. Among the students who reported working, many have varying work responsibilities while participating in the BC FYE program. Joaquin worked two jobs and averaged 36 hours per week. Luis had one job and averaged 12 hours per week. Mark worked full-time in a factory averaging 40 hours of work per week with an arduous schedule in which he started work at 10:00 pm and got off at 6:00 am. Gabriel was the only current student from this site who was not working while going to school.

In addition to current students, all four alumni reported working while attending community college. Agustin worked an average of 15 hours per week while he was attending BC. Felipe worked two jobs and at one point averaged 40 hours per week but cut those hours down to 20 after his first year. Emiliano worked 35 hours per week and Chris worked an average of 20 hours per week.

All seven respondents who worked reported that their motivation for working was due to family and or personal financial constraints. Like students at PC, students at BC reported their main source of motivation to work was to help support their families. Current student Emiliano explained:

My family's not really financially stable, so in whatever monetary way I can help out, I would. So half of my check would go to them and because . . . we weren't in the best of financial state and after all, my parents did bring me this far so it felt good to be able to help.

Emiliano's motivation to work made him feel good about helping his family, but it was paired with his parents' expectations of him working once he turned 18.

Well, yeah at first is was you have to work now that you're 18. You need to work, you're gonna find out that it's no longer easy, stuff's not gonna be handed to you. So, every Latino male in my family worked once they graduated high school and that's what I had to do.

Although Emiliano expressed satisfaction knowing he was helping his parents, but the pressure he felt to work 35 hours per week also prevented him from attending school and participating in academic-related activities.

Additionally, two of the eight students and alumni participants reported living on their own while they attended community college. These two participants stated they did not count on any financial support from their parents. Instead, they quickly learned what they needed to do to

take care of themselves financially. Both participants share that their source of motivation to work was to pay for their basic living expenses, as Felipe described, “to support myself. Making sure my bills, rent, gas, and groceries are paid.” Both males carried the heavy burden of learning how to be a college student and taking care of themselves financially at a young age.

All the students who worked also expressed difficulty managing their academic responsibilities. Mark, a current first-year student who lived on his own and worked full-time as a factory worker from 10:00 pm to 6:00 am, shared his typical sleep schedule, “usually two days I will sleep like around 8 hours a day and the rest of the days I sleep around 4 hours a day.” Although only enrolled in school part-time, Mark is enrolled in English and math courses through FYE. He shared that his greatest difficulty with working full-time and attending school is how he manages his time and gives himself enough to study.

Because of work I have to find a balance between sleep and study. I study as much as I can in the hallways here at school but I still feel that it’s not enough time. I’m just pretty much piecing parts of day together to give me enough time to study.

Mark understands the importance of developing his study habits, but with a full-time job, he struggles to find the time in the day to just sit down and focus on his academics.

Felipe, an alumnus now attending a four-year university, shared the financial and health-related struggles he faced while attending BC, as he was working up to 40 hours per week when he combined the hours from two jobs.

There was a period where I was pretty sick and in a lot of pain, and it happened during midterms, and that really sucked. One of my professors actually saw how bad I was . . . 'cause apparently I was pale and I was trying to finish midterms that week. I was like, “I’m gonna go to the doctor’s after I finish all my exams.” She [professor] saw me, and then, she’s like, “You’re sick.” And I’m like, “Yeah, I know.” And she’s like, “No, like, you’re really sick. You need to go to the hospital right now.”

The instructor forced Felipe to go to the campus' health services office where he was then taken to the hospital for an emergency surgery to remove his gall bladder. He was so focused on his academics and work that he lost sight of his health and it was not until his professor forced him to go see a doctor, and probably saved his life, that he realized he had to cut down on his work hours.

FYE students also discussed how program components helped them deal with managing their work and academic responsibilities. The program offers workshops on time management but also offers one-on-one counseling sessions with students. Felipe described how after his health scare, he went to talk to counselors to help him manage his time. "I guess I also realized the importance of going to counseling and having somebody to talk to. They helped me figure my scheduling. They were like, 'Okay, well, these are the classes, this is your work schedule. How do we make those line up?'" In this case, the FYE counselor helped Felipe develop a schedule that would prevent him from losing sight of his academics or falling ill again. Unlike PC participants, the BC FYE program students did not discuss any specific FYE financial aid workshop, other than the general financial aid workshops and counselor appointments, that helped them ensure they received adequate amount of financial aid. Although, program documents and the website did reveal that at least four financial aid-related workshops are offered each academic year.

In addition to student anecdotes, program staff also acknowledged that a large number of Latino male program participants have financial responsibilities that motivate them to work while they are attending college. Joseph stated, "I would say that almost all of 'em [Latino males] in my environment within the program. They almost all work or they have to work." The

fact that only one of the eight respondents reported not having to work coupled with Joseph's response shows that for many males, working while in college is not only the norm, but also the expectation.

Many FYE program staff try to understand the expectation to work. In fact, the program coordinator Anabel described how she works to ensure that her program works to support those students and their needs:

Through FYE, I would want to set restrictions on working hours but it's hard. If I could, I would set a restriction; but again, this is where mindfulness on my part has to come in. To understand that students have the experiences that require them to work, and miss hours some times. We try our best if the workshop's on time management, financial literacy, to really help them understand if there is a necessity for them to work. How do they couple that with coming to school full-time or part-time?

Working hours impact student academic performance and while Anabel understands the impediment work can have on academics, she also understands that many of her Latino males have no other option but to work. Hence, the FYE program provides students with the resources to help them learn how to manage their time and maintain the motivation to pursue their academic goals. It is difficult to say if this is enough to keep students engaged in their academics.

Program staff also acknowledged how financial constraints and working responsibilities limit a student's opportunity to transfer. Anabel stated:

The transfer process does look different to the Latino males in the program. If there is even a transfer process at all. The transfer process to a UC, or an out-of-state school or a school out of the area, is less in conversation for the males in some respects. The work commitment prevents them from thinking beyond the local area.

It can be difficult for FYE programs to counsel and advise students when it comes to the transfer process due to a student's financial constraints. In turn, the program staff are required to take all

of the economic challenges and financial responsibilities that surround their Latino males into account when they are counseling them about their transfer options. FYE program counselor Joseph provided:

I have a student right now that got accepted to Berkeley, UCLA. He's waiting on Pitzer. He got accepted to every UC he applied to, every Cal State he applied, and he's like, "Oh, I think I might just go to Long Beach 'cause it's cheaper."

For many Latino males, transfer options are not about what university is the best fit, but rather what option is the least expensive, will ensure their ability to continue to work at the same workplace, and will allow them the opportunity to continue to provide financial support to their family.

Theme Four: The Importance of Approachable and Culturally Responsive Staff

An important approach that both FYE programs practiced was to hire staff and foster program environments that were approachable and culturally relatable to students. This can be seen through the various experiences and observations noted by students. Students described experiences with program staff that were welcoming as well as described creating personal relationships with staff that went beyond the FYE program. Similarly, staff discussed their purposeful approach toward creating a welcoming and culturally responsive environment in order to build a connection between them and students. This section discusses how Latino males reacted to the FYE program staff and environment and how FYE staff purposefully developed these spaces to foster trusting relationships with their students.

Portlake College FYE. Earlier discussion on transfer challenges experienced by Latino males evolved into examples of how the FYE program created a friendly environment that

helped students develop help-seeking behaviors. The notion of friendly and welcoming climates is supported the goal of the program as one that creates a “safe and welcoming environment,” as mentioned on the website. Six online documents discussed how the program works to create a welcoming environment for students. The impact of the FYE program staff is also evident in the numerous comments of praise made by students expressing how FYE staff went out of their way to help them. Santiago described his regular interactions with Javier, one of the program counselors:

I just can't believe how friendly Javier is. You can walk in their FYE office on a bad day and he'll be like, “Oh hey Santiago, how are you doing?” And like, “How is it going in your classes? Are you doing good? Do you need help?” He's just overall one of the friendliest people I've ever met.

These interactions are instrumental in helping Latino male students feel comfortable enough to approach the FYE staff and seek support during challenging academic or personal situations. Another example to support the notion of how impactful program staff interactions with Latino males can be was offered by program alumnus Samuel:

I remember at first she [Patricia] would just be walking around the center and she would just be like, “Hey, Samuel,” and I was like, “Wow, she knows my name!” She pays attention to things. She doesn't just come to work and do her work, her job. She really cares and wants us to succeed.

Merely calling a student by name made a lasting impact on Samuel and began to sow a seed of trust between him and the program coordinator.

A second point Latino male students made was how well they could relate to program staff, which not only gave students the courage to seek help, but also gave them role models to look up to. Samuel described how he felt when he learned the FYE program director was a Latina:

I found out about FYE and I saw Dr. Patricia's card, and the fact that I saw that it was a Latino last name it made me so happy. It's insane. I was just like finally. I don't know why but it was so comforting to see that. I was like, this is a Latina. She's a doctor. She's running this program. I mean. I felt that I could learn from her. I just wanted to meet her. I was really excited to meet her.

It was impactful for Latino males to see other Latina/os in leadership positions and they yearned for Latina/o role models from which to learn.

Sebastian mentioned, though, how it was not necessarily that staff were of Latina/o background, but that they were friendly and culturally receptive to students:

It was a nice environment. Even the non-Latino staff that were there, they were just amazing. It was just, and I think it's the way she, Patricia, hires people and what she looks for in people is that they are supportive of all students. I mean, her secretary was Asian; she was amazing. She was funny, she always kept a relaxed environment which was nice. You come from these classes and you're dealing with all this information and you would always go to the office and find a smile, or find people, "Hey, how's your day going?"

FYE coordinators also emphasized the importance of having approachable and culturally responsive environments for Latino male and other students to develop greater help-seeking behaviors. PC FYE coordinator Patricia is very strategic about the culture and environment of her program. The program office is colorfully decorated with university pennants and the program office also has round tables for student study space and five computers where students may work. Additionally, Patricia offers a strong student-centered approach not only guided by her genuine care for her students but also by what her 17 years of experience has taught her about community college students:

What people don't realize is that if a student has a bad interaction with someone at your institution, that might be enough for some people to decide to leave and not ever come back. I know cases where people have one bad experience with a counselor or an admissions person or a financial aid person and just say, "Forget it, I'm gonna give up."

Patricia's purposefulness in creating a welcoming culture is illustrated in how she takes a photo of every student in her program and has them share interesting facts about themselves. The photo and list of interesting facts of each student is shared with program staff, and rosters are provided to all faculty. Patricia explained how this plays out in FYE classes: "Our professors will look at that list and they'll go to an FYE class and our professor will be like, 'Hey, John, so how does it feel to be the oldest and the first to go to college' and they're just like, 'What? How did you know that?'" Such purposeful activity helps FYE program staff get to know students and connect with them in a way that allows students like Samuel, who was surprised to have Patricia call him by name, develop a trusting relationship with them.

FYE counselors, such as Yazmin, also use similar strategies to connect with students and develop trusting relationships with students:

When I start a counseling session, I usually check in. I start by checking in with the student saying, "How's the semester treating you so far?" Usually by that response, I get a sense, okay, things are going really good, or things are going so-so. I try to get to how are things really, because sometimes they'll be like, "Oh, things are good," but they get the sense that, "Oh, she really cares about what's going on in my classes." They leave with that sense and they're like, "Okay, if she cares, then I should care some more too."

Her goal during these counseling sessions is not only to fulfill the needs a student has for that particular counseling session but to also develop a long-term professional relationship of trust with her students. She described how she follows up with students, "When we follow up with them like, 'Hey, how did that test go?' They're like, 'Oh, my gosh. You remembered,' or just little things." Those little things are what the Latino students mentioned earlier as having an impact on how FYE creates an environment that makes it easier for them to ask for help. The PC

FYE program has purposefully designed these strategies to create help-seeking behaviors among all its students, including Latino males.

The PC FYE program staff is also made up of diverse individuals. One full-time counselor Javier is a Latino male, the other counselor Yazmin is an African American female.

The third counselor Patricia, a Latina, plays a dual role as counselor and program coordinator.

Patricia discussed her hiring practices:

By accident, I've hired a lot of people who are first gen, I wasn't trying to hire first gen people but I have. Javier is first gen. Yazmin is first gen. I'm first gen, and an immigrant, so, that has definitely been helpful as well. Also, I would say 80% of the people who work in this office were, with the exception, I think, of Noe, were community college students.

As described earlier by Latino male students, having staff who are relatable and not only look like the students but come from similar backgrounds helps students develop greater help-seeking behaviors.

Yazmin built on her notion of the importance of working with Latino male students and helping them combat the struggles they face by returning to her experience as an African American woman:

I think that when I work with men of color, I would say both African-American and Latino males, it does change a little bit. For me, being an African-American woman and going to a predominately Latino and African-American high school, I just saw so many adversities that students of color face, specifically like African-American and Latino men, and I know that they need that extra bit of encouragement, because as soon as I step out my door, there are so many forces combating their success.

Having similar backgrounds not only helps PC FYE students connect with staff but also allows staff, who have first-hand experience witnessing the challenges faced by males of color, develop strategies to best support this student population.

Bridgetown College FYE. BC FYE program students also had many positive remarks about their experiences interacting with FYE program staff. Six of the eight current and alumni participants reported that their interactions with FYE program staff helped them feel as if they are part of a larger FYE family. Mark, a first-year student explained, “Here it's more like the FYE faculty and staff is your family. People who know what you’re doing versus at high school. Whereas here they care, they have the ability to really help you feel like family.” Mark went as far as to say that the FYE staff is a family to him. His sentiment was shared with all the other current students who also felt the FYE program creates a communal family-like environment where it is easy for them to connect with staff.

Students also expressed an ability to connect with staff and faculty who are not only Latina/o, but who have also faced similar struggles in life. Luis explained how he felt about FYE faculty members: “Well they actually make me feel more comfortable going to the office hours. If I see someone, maybe they have struggled or they are like me, I feel more connected to them and I actually feel comfortable going [to] their office hours and asking for help.” Having FYE faculty foster safe spaces assists students in learning how to exercise those important help-seeking behaviors that will allow them to receive the support they need to be academically successful.

In addition to students connecting with FYE program staff who share similar demographics, students also found FYE to be a space where they felt accepted through the various cultural activities and the welcoming space provided. Students, such as Luis, shared how they come to the FYE offices during their down time just because they felt so comfortable there, “I’m very comfortable here in FYE offices. It's like coming home after classes. Sometimes I

just come in here and just throw my backpack down and lay around. It feels like a big family here.” The BC FYE program has created a welcoming environment that students compare to their own homes, which opens up spaces for FYE program staff to get to know students and build a trusting relationship that will allow students to open up to them when they come across challenges.

Program staff also create other culturally responsive activities to help students feel at home and challenge any self-perceptions students may have about not belonging in college. One of the first activities Gabriel participated in with the FYE program fostered a sense of belonging and connection:

In the beginning of the year, they have this introduction party and at that party they invite a DJ and the song that kept playing was El Caballo Dorado [Golden Horse], which is that dance and I was like, oh my God, they would play this, because so many people like Hispanics they would play that song and I know that them just playing that song was what brought everybody together. Like, “Oh, you know this song? I know this song.”

El Caballo Dorado is a group that performs a popular song among the Mexican community that involves a dance similar to country line dancing. The song, titled “No Rompas Mas Mi Pobre Corazon” [Don’t break my poor heart], is a traditional song played at Mexican weddings, baptisms, birthday parties, and other large family gatherings. Playing this song for FYE students was a symbolic gesture for students who know this song because of family parties. Playing songs with which students can identify makes a statement: FYE is like a family away from home.

The FYE coordinator emphasized the importance of having an approachable and culturally responsive environment for Latino males and other students to develop greater help-seeking behaviors. Similar to PC FYE staff, the BC FYE staff strives to create an environment

where students feel welcomed like they belong. As you walk into the program office, you cannot miss the large posters displaying pictures of program staff with a narrative of where they are from and the college or university they attended. The program office wall is lined with flags from various Latin American, Asian, and Middle Eastern countries along with a rainbow gender equality flag. This type of inviting environment is designed to allow students to not only buy in and participate in program activities, but to also help them develop trusting relationships with the program staff. Program coordinator Anabel supports this theme of creating a welcoming environment and shared how they waste no time in letting students know what FYE is trying to accomplish: “I know that from the moment that we meet students, in the welcome sessions and orientations. I talk about transparency and effective communication and wanting to help them be successful.” This effective communication is bridged through various strategic practices including staff sharing their own personal stories with students.

Program staff are also encouraged to share their “testimonios” [personal testimonies] with students to help students relate and connect with program staff, as Anabel explained:

I share my testimonial, my personal testimonial, which might be their testimonial. I do that strategically because one I'm a believer in sharing testimonial and personal stories because that's the way I was trained. I feel my gut tells me that in hearing my story being this kid from Washington Heights, coming from certain backgrounds, they then begin to see themselves in me and in my team. They begin to hopefully understand that we're here to help them.

She knows that telling her personal story and how she grew up in the local community can impact the lives of students and help establish a trusting relationship with students.

Program counselor Joseph also explained how important it is to develop that trusting relationship with students as well as his approach:

I like to get to know the students but I want them to know who I am, too. So that they see that I could relate to them even if they're from a different ethnicity, different social class. I'll still find a way to relate with them 'cause I wanna make sure that we can have dialogue at any moment because when you need me, I wanna be able to like, "Let's get to the point. I can help you with this."

Joseph knows how to connect with his Latino male students and shares that sometimes they just need someone to be direct with them but still supportive in helping them find solutions to their problems.

Theme Five: The Importance of Program Autonomy and Institutional Support

A critical factor in how effectively FYE program components can help promote transfer among Latino male students is the level of institutional support and autonomy they receive. Institutional support provides programs with the staffing and financial support to ensure that program components and adequate staffing is provided to cultivate the academic success of participating students. Institutional autonomy provides programs with the trust and space to develop innovative practices to help promote the success of participants. A stark difference emerged between the PC FYE program data and that from BC.

This section begins with commentary from student participants sharing how staffing support affected students' perspectives on the program. Second, program staff from both sites provided commentary regarding their staffing. Lastly, program staff shared how their overall ability to function autonomously impacts their ability to develop effective program components that promote transfer. This section discusses the extent to which the level of institutional support each site received affected their ability to promote transfer among Latino male students.

Portlake College FYE. As mentioned earlier, the PC FYE program has two full-time counselors, including the program coordinator who serves a dual role as a counselor and regularly meets with students. Additionally, the program has five adjunct counselors who work on a part-time basis with the FYE program. Counseling staff at PC FYE ensure that students are able to meet with them without having to wait for weeks. The availability and accessibility of counseling support is evident to Latino male participants who participated in the study. In fact, participants found a greater deal of support from counseling staff and six of the eight current students and alumni cited the availability of FYE counseling staff as a positive factor, especially when they compared their experiences with peers who did not participate in FYE. Samuel stated:

I think it's in terms of information, in terms of having access to counselors, in terms of just showing up and being like, hey, I'm having trouble with this class or I don't know what to do. I felt it was easier to get help than going to the general counseling office and having less of a chance to see someone or something. The PC FYE counselors are always there for you. The availability is pretty much flexible if you need them after school, I mean, after your classes, before classes, or in between. Like, I have about five counselors there. So, they're always there.

Studies have found that community college students who are provided with greater accessibility to counselors are more likely to persist and transfer to a four-year university than other students (Summer, 2003; Willett, 2001). Thus, by providing students with easier access to counselors, the FYE program has already increased the possibility of student transfer.

PC FYE program staff also expressed similar reactions to the level of staffing support the program counts on. FYE staff felt that as a result of having adequate support through staffing, they are able to meet more regularly with students and are able to develop a strong working

relationship over time that allows them to see the student develop over time. Yazmin shared her perspective on the consistency of staffing:

I think that having that consistency is so important and having students being able to know, “Okay, I’m going to have this person review my educational plan for me the whole way through.” I’ll be there at the end when they need a letter of recommendation for who’s seen them grow and develop.

The trusting relationships a counselor is able to build with students requires a great deal of interaction with them and any disruption in staffing can hurt the relationship-building process.

A second key feature of the PC FYE program, illustrated through the interviews, was the level of autonomy they have in the hiring process, including with counselors and instructors. Rather than having staff assigned to work for the program, as is the case in other FYE programs, the PC FYE program coordinator has the ability to recruit interested staff and vet them through a more formal recruitment process. Program coordinator Patricia explained how “all the faculty are selected by me and my faculty coordinator.” This ensures that faculty who are both passionate and interested in teaching for the FYE program get selected rather than assigned based on seniority. In addition, the process also ensures that instructors are not forced to teach for the FYE program that expects much more from their instructors including multiple curriculum planning meetings, three FYE program staff meetings per semester, and an all-day off-campus faculty retreat. Patricia further explained:

We asked the Dean, “What do you think about this person, do you think this person would be a good fit?” So, we then invited them to come to our brown bag and so we’re gonna provide them with lunch, we’re gonna talk about our program and what have you, and then see if there’s classes that they’d be willing to teach.

The ability to hire instructors who have gone through a formal vetting process is a win for the instructors interested in teaching for the program as well as for the participating students, as the faculty members are more likely to be an adequate fit for the FYE program.

The PC FYE program also counts on having great respect and autonomy from campus leadership, so much so that they have been designated as a pilot program for the math portion of the multiple measures project for the entire campus. Multiple measures, as previously mentioned, is designed to offer students greater opportunities to be placed in college-level courses. Patricia explained the exclusivity of FYE's use of multiple measures, "FYE is the only program on campus that's using multiple measures and we're a pilot right now by the math department." PC campus leadership has given the FYE program enough autonomy to allow them to experiment with the multiple measures project to provide the campus with a plan on how to scale up their multiple measures pilot with the entire campus.

Bridgetown College FYE. While the PC FYE program counts on a great deal of institutional support and autonomy, BC FYE program students and staff painted a starkly different picture when it comes to the support and autonomy they receive. Participating students who spoke highly of FYE program staff and the services they received also shared how they felt about the accessibility of program staff. Three of the eight students and alumni discussed the issue of counseling staff availability and staff turnover. Gabriel shared:

I know that they care and spend a lot of time with us but I feel like they're kind of understaffed, if I'm being honest. I signed up to make an appointment with a counselor and it's not until next Wednesday, you know? So, I think something that BC FYE could do more, maybe hire more people or get more help because I feel like they're a little understaffed.

Gabriel acknowledged that the counseling staff are doing good work but shared his frustration on how long it takes to see a counselor. The BC FYE student experience is starkly different than the PC FYE student experience in that at PC, they can walk into the office and speak to a counselor at that moment. For many students, having to wait a week or even two weeks to meet with a counselor can be the difference between resolving their issue in a timely manner or exiting out of college because they were not able to meet with a counselor to help them find a solution to their problem.

As mentioned previously, BC FYE has three part-time counselors split to make up one full-time position. Not only is the staffing limited when trying to support 600 FYE students, but it also creates a situation where there is a lack of consistent counselor with whom the student is meeting. Program coordinator Anabel shared her frustrations: “I have three counselors but it's 1.0, one full-time position . . . which to me has been problematic. It gets a bit interesting, because students begin to build rapport and so sometimes they want to come see the same counselor and are not able to because they are not available.” Rapport building is disrupted as a result of not having the adequate staffing support to ensure that counselors are available for students. Joseph, a program counselor, shared some of the concerns with lack of staffing, even going back to how the program was two years ago when he was the only counselor assigned to the program.

It was just me. It was just me and the director, and the director was a part-time director. So she was only directing for about, I think, 16, 18 hours a week. Because she was a full-time math faculty member. Yeah, so we were grassroots, man. We were really grassroots.

While he stated that things have gotten better by assigning two additional part-time counselors, it is still not enough to provide the level of support required by the FYE student population. The FYE staff are struggling to meet the demands of students, and institutional support in terms of funding is limited.

In addition to a lack of institutional support to increase staffing levels, the program also struggles with a lack of autonomy to select and hire its own program staff. Program coordinator Anabel explained the lack of support she receives to do her own vetting:

I am not involved in the selection of the counselors. The selection of the counselors comes from the chair of counseling and he or she dialoguing with their counseling team. To see who wants to be placed in FYE, who has an interest. I come and present the program, as the person has to have an interest in it.

While counselors have the ability to express interest, the placement of counselors into the FYE program is driven by the dean of counseling who sometimes is required to use seniority. In other words, a new counselor who may be a good fit and expresses interest may be prevented from being placed into FYE by the hiring of a veteran counselor who may not be the best fit but is interested in being placed in the program.

Anabel expressed her frustration with how the district assigns staff to her program but also spoke to how she has been expressing her concerns to campus leadership to get the appropriate level of staffing to ensure the success of her students.

Yeah some of the areas of the challenges, areas of growth. I can't really do much about that because that's how the district does things, seniority, priority lists and how the BC FYE classes are given to individuals. I can put in my preferred, but it's not guaranteed. I also need a little bit more staff support, more consistency. That would also help us too, to be able to create more programming, we need some stability as well.

Anabel has been with FYE for almost two years now and expressed how she has been learning more about how the college works. She now feels she is in a better place to speak out and voice her concerns with campus leadership to provide greater support to the program. Anabel was optimistic that campus leadership would listen to her concerns regarding staffing and provide her program with more support. Staffing is a vital component of the program, and the lack thereof has proven to be a concern to both students and program staff. It is vital for FYE programs to have the appropriate level of staffing and autonomy to vet program staff in order to ensure students have the best level of support in their path towards academic success.

Integrated Findings – Leveraging Community Cultural Wealth Through FYE

In this section, I discuss how FYE program components promote the different forms of community cultural wealth (CCW; Yosso, 2005) exhibited by Latino males. Yosso (2005) described CCW as an “array of knowledge, skills, abilities and contacts possessed and utilized by communities of color to survive and resist macro and micro forms of oppression” (p. 77). The framework comprises six forms of capital, or wealth, that communities bring to the educational setting, including: aspirational, linguistic, familial, social, navigational, and resistance. I present each capital to show how FYE programs recognize the wealth brought by Latino male students and how the program leverages that wealth to promote transfer among them.

Aspirational Capital

Yosso (2005) defined aspirational capital as, “Having the resiliency and the drive to meet short and long-term goals” (p. 78). Despite the educational inequalities confronted by students at

both PC and BC, the FYE programs at each respective campus helped support Latino males' aspirational capital, such as their goal of transferring, through various program components subsequently discussed. Findings report that FYE programs provide promising practices on what institutions can and should be doing to adapt to and meet the needs of their incoming student populations, including Latino males. Furthermore, the FYE programs use specific components and practices, such as counseling sessions and high expectations, to build on Latino males' aspirational capital of pursuing a higher education degree.

All 16 Latino male students and alumni who were interviewed through this study expressed a strong desire to pursue a goal of attaining a higher education degree. Sebastian explained his goal to attain a degree, "I don't want to be going to a job every day of my life. I'd rather have a career where I do what I love doing and it makes me happy." Sebastian understands what the difference is between having a job and having a career. He knows that to pursue a career in a field that will make him happy, he will need to attain a degree beyond a high school diploma. Eleven of the sixteen Latino males in the study expressed a desire to obtain a degree in order to pursue a career.

Latino males were driven to succeed for various reasons but a common source of motivation stemmed from the aspirational capital their parents helped them build through their own desires to see their sons attain a higher education degree. Fourteen of sixteen Latino male participants expressed that their aspirational capital to attain higher education was influenced by their parents' own struggles. BC student Joaquin's parents' own aspirational capital and desire for their son to aspire to more than they had the opportunity to experience helped motivate Joaquin to continue his education:

And they [parents] always told me, “I want you to do better in education so you won't have to live the life I'm living, so you won't have to go through the struggles I'm going through.” So she always told me, “Are you doing good in school? You better be doing good. Focus more on your school than your job.” So education is very important in my house.

Another BC student, Luis, explained how his parents made it clear to him that he had to pursue higher education, “Since grade school, they've [parents] been telling me that I should always try to be better than them. And that education's probably the only way to make it here.” During high school, his parents went as far as to take him to their own places of work for a day so he could see how difficult life would be as a laborer just like them, his father a baker and his mother a seamstress. Although Luis's parents were immigrants who did not speak the language or know how to navigate the US educational system, they knew that if their son were to gain a better opportunity than them in the US, it would only be through higher education.

Although parents had a vital role in fostering aspirational capital among 14 of the Latino male participants, the FYE program was able to nurture and turn that aspirational capital into clear educational plans to achieving their goals. All 16 Latino male participants were able to clearly identify and present examples of how FYE program activities and staff helped validate their goals of attaining a higher education degree. This validation and support was done through different methods including the high expectations and transfer culture set by program staff, as BC alumnus Chris explained:

When I started with the FYE program, they already were trying to plug in that mindset, “What's your next step? Where you gonna transfer? What are your plans?” So I felt like they were already thinking more long-term like, “What's your plan? Five-year? Ten-year?” . . . which I think was cool, was good, 'cause you wanna think further down the line. And then, that helped motivate me and believe in my goals.

Chris captured what many of the participants from both sites experienced in relation to the expectations and culture of transfer that was alive at each site. For Chris, like many of the other program participants, these high expectations helped support and validate his aspirational capital to continue his education at a four-year university.

A second form of support FYE programs provided to help build on students' aspirational capital was the university tours purposefully designed to help Latino male students picture themselves at the universities they were visiting. Twelve of the 16 students and alumni shared how the FYE programs helped them aspire towards reaching a goal of transferring to a four-year university. BC student Joaquin explained how although he had aspirations to attend a four-year university before the FYE program, the program helped him look at other transfer possibilities that he did not believe he could reach. Joaquin was empowered by the university tours:

I think they [university tours] opened my eyes even more to possibilities, 'cause I thought I probably won't get accepted to this university, I'll probably just end up going to Cal State, but it actually opened up my eyes, like damn, I could actually get into these universities if I try. FYE would tell me, "If you do your work you could actually get into it." So it opened up my eyes, and I'm more awake in class, I'm more focused on the lessons and everything. It was actually a big help.

University tours and other FYE program activities helped Latino male students stay motivated and continue to pursue their academic goals, thereby supporting students' aspirational capital.

Linguistic Capital

Latino male students come to community college with multiple forms of knowledge, and some also come with linguistic capital that is nourished during the FYE program. "Linguistic capital encompasses the communication skills that are acquired through speaking more than one

language” (Yosso, 2005, p. 78). These skills also include communication styles acquired through their experience growing up in diverse communities. Through FYE program culture and unique program practices, such as testimonials, the program is successful in capturing linguistic forms of capital that Latino males possess.

Latino male students express a greater sense of belonging in FYE programs and 10 of the 16 participants cited speaking or hearing the Spanish language spoken by program staff, which contributed to them to feeling like they belonged in college. An example is illustrated in PC alumnus Samuel’s discussion of the difference in his trusting relationships with Mrs. Abernati, his Caucasian high school teacher that proved very supportive in his path towards college, and Patricia, the Latina FYE coordinator.

I feel that Patricia was more relatable. Even though Mrs. Abernati was an excellent person, and I had a great time with her, but there was something about Patricia that sometimes you make jokes in Spanish, or you laugh about something that only Latinos would understand. It’s nice to have that connection.

Although Samuel found a supportive relationship with both Mrs. Abernati and Patricia, he was able to further develop his relationship with Patricia due to speaking a common language. FYE program staff sought opportunities to speak a language with students to which they could relate and help build a stronger trusting relationship with their students.

The BC FYE program also used a linguistic form of capital known as “testimonios”, or testimonials, to connect with Latino male students. Pérez Huber (2009) described testimonials as, “A verbal journey of a witness who speaks to reveal the racial, classed, gendered, and nativist injustices they have suffered as a means of healing, empowerment, and advocacy for a more humane present and future” (p. 644). BC FYE program coordinator Anabel described how

important testimonials are for her personally and how she imbeds them in her program to have staff connect with FYE students and students connect with one another: “I’m really big on testimonials because my family, my mother is a storyteller. I’m a storyteller. Storytelling is critical because it creates trust. I share my testimonial, my personal testimonial which might be their testimonial.” Offering her own testimonial and having staff tell their own testimonial is used as a means to bridge any divide students may feel with program staff, thereby creating a greater sense of belonging and trust among Latino male students in the program.

Familial Capital

Familial capital is a form of capital that is strong among Latino male students, and findings show how FYE components allowed them to use their familial capital to build community among the FYE program staff and their peers. Yosso (2005) defined familial capital as, “A deep commitment to family and community” (p. 79). FYE programs created a sense of community that allowed Latino males to build close bonds with both FYE staff and their peers. Thus, FYE programs promote the cultural intuition and familial capital of Latino males’ commitment and investment in a community. In this case, the investment displayed by Latino males is towards their peers and the FYE program staff.

Both FYE program coordinators expressed an understanding of the impact that community building within the program can have on Latino male students, and staff purposefully develop program activities to build and support it. PC coordinator Patricia explained some of the activities in which all FYE students participate:

They [FYE students] do a challenge course as well, before the start of the fall semester. They do field trips throughout the semester. We do a lot of group work, so that's the other thing that FYE students, that I kind of warn them before they come into our program, there's no room in our program where you could be a loner.

Patricia's statement about no room for loners is not meant to turn students away but instead serves as a reminder to students that they will connect or learn how to connect with their fellow students. In fact, seven of the eight Latino male alumni participants from both sites cited the peer support as an important factor that helped them stay motivated throughout their transfer journey.

An example of how FYE programs help Latino males display and practice their familial capital is through the development of a cohort model to simulate a community environment where Latino males are able to not only seek support but also provide support to their peers. Fourteen of the 16 participants mentioned the community they developed in FYE as being instrumental in helping them succeed academically while in the FYE program. Benjamin used his knowledge of community building to open himself up for support and motivation from his peers:

We have like a cohort that consists of, say, 25 to 30 kids that we have classes with for the first year. So I think with that, like building friendships from the beginning, I think it just helps it. Helps me keep motivated. We get each other's number, and we help each other with homework, or even study for tests.

In light of the difficult circumstances he faced with his father's passing, the cohort helped Benjamin find a community of support to assist him in pursuit of his transfer goal.

Latino males in the BC FYE program had similar experiences of community building with the cohort model. BC alumnus Felipe explained his experience during the FYE program:

For the first semester or two, you were in a group, or you were in several classes that were gonna be a lot of the same students. So that, in a sense, gave you like a cohort feel like, these are my people. This is my network. We all were gonna like study together and like work and focus together.

Felipe was able to establish a network that was instrumental in helping him stay motivated and successfully transfer to a four-year university. FYE was able to recognize the familial capital and knowledge in community building with which Latino male students come to college. The FYE program's ability to create cohorts to help students develop their network proved to be a source of success and motivation for seven of the eight alumni.

Social Capital

FYE programs are able to provide instrumental counseling and peer support to help students learn how to build on their social capital and navigate through community college. "Social capital is defined as the ability for individuals to utilize their networks and community resources to achieve a goal, including networks of people and community resources" (Yosso, 2005, p. 79). Latino male students often relied on their social capital to build lasting friendships with cohort members that proved influential in helping them stay motivated and engaged. FYE program coordinators connect Latino male students with their various partnership networks that students would then use to build their social capital and help them access the resources at four-year universities.

In addition to how FYE programs strengthen students' familial capital through the cohort model, the program also uses the model to help develop Latino male students' social capital. Sebastian explained how he utilizes his social capital to develop peer support groups that keep him focused and remind him of upcoming deadlines:

I have two FYE friends right now, for most classes, so they're always telling me, "you should get to know this" or "don't forget to do this" and all that. And I thank them for all that because they remind me. Because I'm a very forgetful person at that. So that's what helps me stay on track.

Both FYE programs have created a space where students' social capital can be used to help support their academic progression and pathways to transfer.

Furthermore, FYE program staff have also purposefully created partnerships with four-year universities to continue to build their students' social capital by exposing them to people who can continue to help them beyond the FYE program. PC FYE coordinator Patricia explained the reasoning behind expanding students' social networks:

There are some resources that four-year partners can give my students, so I think that creating those local partnerships with your Cal State, with UCs, with the private universities helps our students because you're able to offer them a lot more resources and services. So I think partnerships are really key for students.

The partnerships offered through FYE programs help students expand their knowledge and social networks so they can reach their academic and professional goals.

Navigational Capital

FYE programs also help Latino male students enhance their navigational capital by helping them learn how to maneuver their way through the community college. Yosso (2005) defined navigational capital as, "The ability for marginalized groups to maneuver through institutions" (p. 80). FYE programs purposefully design themselves and provide environments and social interactions to help Latino male students further develop their navigational capital.

FYE program staff recognized that often times, community college settings were not designed with the success of Latino male students in mind. As PC alumnus Tomas stated, "We

don't belong in many of these intuitions. We're creating our own space, right? There is no pathway for us to get there. We have to find it ourselves.” Students sometimes feel like they do not belong in higher education, but they can use their navigational capital to find their way around, and despite the odds, be academically successful. All 16 Latino male student participants self-identified as first-generation college students; therefore, FYE programs need to adapt and create environments and social interactions that enhance students’ navigational capital to be successful in helping them.

Fourteen of the 16 FYE students and alumni were also able to identify how important it was to learn how to use their navigational capital to maneuver their way through community college. PC alumnus Samuel shared his perspective on how success is not always about being smart:

I think that's the key in college, just knowing. I feel that college it's not even sometimes about being smart, it's about utilizing the resources and knowing people. That's something that, you're going to have really smart people who don't utilize resources and they take the longest route to get to where they need to be. They get lost in the way because they don't ask for help, or they don't realize resources are available.

FYE programs recognize the value of students’ navigational capital and design activities to help them develop this knowledge of maneuvering their way around unknown academic environments.

FYE program activities students cited as having been impactful in helping them navigate the community college setting include meetings with counselors, campus tours, and workshops. Eleven students and alumni discussed how FYE counselors helped them develop educational plans including their courses and length of time it would take them to transfer. PC alumnus Benjamin mentioned some of the resources provided by counselors:

They helped me do a roadmap. They gave me resources, a handout listing all schools [universities]. Telling me what classes I need to transfer over. The counselors also gave me other information about other schools. Like what programs they're known for, and stuff like that. It's just, they made it really easy . . . their main goal is to get you to transfer.

Although being the first to attend college, PC alumnus Benjamin felt the FYE program helped simplify the complicated transfer process and create a fluid transfer transition for him from community college to the four-year university. Many other Latino male students shared his experience and, despite being first-generation college students, they were able to build their navigational capital with the support of the FYE program.

In addition to counseling sessions, the FYE programs also designed workshops. PC FYE coordinator Patricia explained the specific course PC designed for FYE students' navigational capital development:

Because our students, for the most part, are the first in their family to go to college and so they don't understand the terminology and they don't understand the culture and they're trying to learn it. It's called Navigating the Transfer Process, human development 107. That's a class that our students also enroll in and it's part of their learning community. So, when I say they get transfer curriculum, they actually get transfer curriculum.

At PC, transfer curriculum is imbedded in most activities in which students participate. The goal in the end is that the FYE program provides resources and opportunities for students to build on their knowledge of the transfer process. Although transfer requirements are complicated, with the help of the FYE program and their own knowledge on navigating complicated structures, Latino male students are able to learn what it takes to successfully transfer to a four-year university.

Resistance Capital

The last form of CCW discussed is resistance capital. Yosso (2005) defined resistance capital as, “An oppositional skill that is developed from living in marginalized communities” (p. 80). The BC FYE program specifically helps reinforce a student’s resistance capital by offering workshops on social justice-related topics. But both FYE programs help build on Latino males resistance capital by showing them how to advocate for themselves despite systems of inequality, such as a lack of financial aid, that may hinder their academic success. Latino males in both programs also learned how to identify and combat certain contexts in higher education, such as the imposter syndrome, that attempt to marginalize them in higher education settings.

FYE program staff deliberately create spaces and activities to discuss social justice-related issues as a way to empower students and help them combat issues of inequality they may face in higher education. BC FYE coordinator Anabel explained:

I'm very strategic about having, race “platicas” [discussions], and events around consciousness and awareness around being a person of color. I'm really big because my research focused on this, on empowering students of color. To be out there and empower students to recognize that they're about to go into white supremacist structures and empower them.

Anabel recognizes the challenges associated with the sense of belonging students of color experience in higher education settings. Therefore, she has developed practices such as race discussions and workshops wherein she brings in experts in different fields to expose students to issues they might face.

Discussions and workshops around difficult issues exposed BC students to issues that could build upon their resistance capital and empower them to challenge systemic practices that sometimes discourage them from continuing to pursue their academic goals. The impostor

syndrome, a term coined by clinical psychologists Clance and Imes (1978), is used to describe high-achieving individuals who internalize feelings of self-doubt and convince themselves that they did not earn their success. BC alumnus Emiliano mentioned how his exposure to the concept of impostor syndrome by FYE program staff has helped him combat feelings of self-doubt:

I learned about the impostor syndrome at FYE. At first I had no idea what this was, so then they mentioned it in FYE and I thought, oh okay this is probably just them [FYE staff] being scared for us because this is our first time in an unknown environment. But then I relayed it back to high school and how I had those same feelings of not belonging and I thought, hey, that sounds like me. And that's when I learned more along the lines of what impostor syndrome was, that it's real, but it's a normal feeling that I can learn how to work through to get by.

Through FYE, Emiliano not only learned what the impostor syndrome was but understood it was a feeling experienced by many other students and something he could fight through.

FYE programs also created numerous partnerships that helped students connect with university representatives but also helped them learn about social justice-related issues that then became driving forces to keep them motivated towards their career goals. Through his FYE director, Samuel was connected to a dental school preparation program that helped make him more competitive for dental school but, more importantly, helped Samuel find his passion in dentistry:

At the [University Pre-Medical Enrichment] Program I did a lot of work with farm workers and learned about the lack of access they have to dental care. I really learned about the importance of seeing myself as a global citizen in a way. I feel that's the price of getting an education. The more you know and the more knowledge you have, the more you have to give back. I feel that individual success has no value. I think success is where you bring people along with you. I think that it has a lot more value.

The FYE program was able to connect Samuel to a program that helped him learn about the overall impact his future career as a dentist could have on marginalized communities. More so, this experience helped him find his passion and pursue a career in dentistry rooted in social justice with an end goal of helping others. This experience, thus, served as a means by which he learned about his deeper desire to help others, and he used it to motivate himself.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I examined the role that FYE program practices and activities have in promoting transfer among community college Latino male students. Utilizing a case study approach involving a total of twenty semi-structured interviews, four site observations, and program document analysis, five major findings emerged from the two FYE programs studied. Based on analysis of the data, I was able to identify transfer challenges confronted by Latino male students and how the FYE program components help students tackle those challenges. Current and former Latino male students identified seeking out help, length of time to transfer, and financial responsibilities as the main challenges to transfer. The FYE program components acknowledged by FYE students, alumni, and staff as promoting transfer were not due to any single component, but to an interrelated set of components driven by FYE staff who create trusting and caring environments for students. Generally speaking, participants attributed much of their transfer success to the FYE program culture that created a familial and welcoming environment. This culture in turn helped many of the participants develop their help-seeking behaviors that allowed them to take advantage of program services designed to help them prepare for transfer.

This study also provided evidence of how FYE program components promote six forms of capital outlined in Yosso's (2005) CCW model. Both FYE programs take an anti-deficit approach to promote transfer among Latino male students, which allows students the opportunity to exercise and build on their already existing CCW. The following chapter presents a discussion on the findings and provides suggestions for future research, as well as the implications that this study has for community college practitioners, policy, and research.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

Introduction

This study investigated how two community college FYE programs promote transfer to four-year universities among Latino male students. Research shows that 82% of Latino males enrolled in higher education institutions are enrolled in community colleges (CPEC, 2011). In spite of high enrollment, up to 35% of Latino males enrolled in community college will exit the community college without completing a degree by year two (Vasquez Urias, 2012).

Educational scholarship attributes two sets of factors, environmental and institutional, with preventing Latino males from being successful in higher education. Institutions have implemented First-Year Experience (FYE) programs to target low-income students with the goal of increasing their retention, persistence, and transfer rates (Knight, 2003). Studies have documented the success of FYE programs for Latina/o students in general, but studies examining the role that these programs play in promoting transfer specifically among Latino male students are non-existent. As this population continues to grow, it will be essential to further understand the specific programs and activities that best support the promotion of transfer among this population.

Interest in this topic stems from my work as a community college practitioner who sees how difficult it is for institutions to understand and support this specific student population. More so, I am interested in discovering the specific FYE program components that proved most and least impactful in the promotion of transfer. As the purpose of this study was to examine the FYE program components that promote transfer, I employed a qualitative case study approach.

This method was most appropriate for this study, as it allowed me to investigate a contemporary phenomenon utilizing multiple sources of data (Yin, 1994). Case studies are also appropriate to study phenomena where the boundaries are not clearly evident and require a more in-depth analysis (Yin, 1994). Specifically, 20 study participants were interviewed, four site observations were conducted, and 18 program documents were analyzed. Study participants comprised four separate FYE groups: current students, alumni, counselors, and coordinators. All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed into digital files. Digital files were uploaded to the qualitative data analysis program Quirkos. Transcribed interviews were then closely reviewed and general thoughts were recorded and used to develop data codes.

Data analysis consisted of incorporating Creswell's (2014) six-step approach: (a) organizing and preparing data for analysis, (b) reviewing data and recording general thoughts, (c) developing a qualitative codebook that defines codes, (d) generating descriptions and thematic categories, (e) utilizing narrative analysis to present data, and (f) interpreting the qualitative findings. Guided by Yosso's (2005) community cultural wealth model, the coding process of all transcribed interviews, site observations, and data analysis allowed for the emergence of major themes discussed in the findings section. The community cultural wealth (CCW) framework was selected to analyze the FYE program components through an anti-deficit perspective to understand how FYE promotes a Latino male student's CCW.

This chapter begins with a summary of key findings and a discussion on how the findings substantiate previous research. I then present the implications that findings have for practice, educational leadership, and future research. I continue by presenting some of the limitations of

my study. I end by providing some final thoughts that highlight the significance of this study and a plan for how I will disseminate study findings to the larger educational community.

Summary of Key Findings

Five major themes emerged from the analysis of the data: (a) challenges in asking for help, (b) the long journey to transfer, (c) work and financial constraints, (d) the importance of approachable and culturally responsive staff, and (e) FYE program autonomy and institutional support. Findings revealed that prior to FYE program participation, Latino male students struggled to engage in help-seeking behaviors. Overall, Latino males expressed that they struggled to manage their work and school responsibilities. FYE programs incorporate different practices to help Latino male students develop those help-seeking behaviors that result in a greater ability to seek out support and prepare for transfer. Program staff also encountered challenges as they relate to program staffing and autonomy to implement activities to support the promotion of transfer among Latino male students. Results of this study are consistent with previous research on Latino male students and Latina/o students in general and are presented in greater detail below.

Challenges in Asking for Help

Findings suggest that Latino males struggle with asking for help and attributed many factors to their challenges in asking for help: fear of not being perceived as masculine enough, pride, and familial responsibility associated with masculinity. Participants in this study discussed being raised to think that masculinity is associated with doing things on your own, inhibiting personal feelings, and not asking for help. Furthermore, study participants expressed

how their male role models, primarily their fathers, illustrated and helped develop their views of masculinity. The primary struggle in asking for help was associated with a fear of how others would perceive and judge them as emasculated men.

Findings are supported by previous studies that found gender playing a significant role in help-seeking behaviors among Latino males. A quantitative study by Stanton-Salazar, Chavez, and Tai (2001) of 1,187 Latino male students' help-seeking behaviors found that males consistently report lower levels of confidence in support services, are less willing to share personal problems, and exhibit a decreased desire for academic support. Latino males' diminished reliance on others results in smaller support networks to help them get through difficult challenges. This is important, especially when considering research that finds that females have larger support networks and are therefore more likely to ask for help (Stanton-Salazar et al., 2001). Latino males' unwillingness to seek out support begins their downward trajectory in higher education and makes it difficult for institutions to engage them.

The Long Journey to Transfer

This study also found that Latino male students experienced a lack in motivation and growing frustration in the length of time it takes to transfer. Much of these feelings were rooted in their initial placement into remedial math and English courses. Students grew frustrated when they saw their developmental academic plans and realized how long it would take them to get to college-level coursework. Similarly, all four staff members from both sites mentioned how Latino males are more susceptible to prematurely exiting out of college due to prolonged transfer timelines perpetuated by required completion of basic and developmental courses. FYE staff

members also shared a distinct difference in how Latino males experience college compared to Latinas. Staff noted that Latino males and other males of color continue struggle to see the long-term investment they are making in their pursuit of a higher education. Latino males going into their second and third years often compared themselves to other friends who were not attending college, working full-time, and who, as a result of working, had access to more dispensable financial resources. These Latino males questioned whether or not it was worth the time and effort to continue pursuing their higher educational goals.

Findings related to the growing frustration in the length of time it takes to transfer are supported by prior research related to remedial course placement. Research shows that community college students in remedial courses are less likely to transfer and more likely to experience feelings of burnout (Adelman, 2006; Hagedorn & Cepeda, 2004). Many of the Latino male students experienced these same frustrations and feelings of burnout. The difference for these Latino male students was that FYE program staff were cognizant of these frustrations. FYE programs developed successful initiatives to help lessen the length of time it takes to transfer, such as multiple measures and by celebrating benchmarks such as completing 30 units of transferrable coursework.

Work and Financial Constraints

Findings showed that most of the Latino male students and alumni worked while they attended community college. In fact, many worked more than 20 hours per week. Data revealed that students' and alumni's work responsibilities had a negative impact on their study habits and overall academics success. Despite acknowledging the negative consequences of working while

attending college, many of the respondents shared that their families relied on their earnings for economic support. Therefore, these males did not see another way of handling their economic situation other than working while attending college. Although alumni successfully transferred, they noted that if they did not have to work as much, they might have had a more manageable and less strenuous academic experience. The financial instability experienced by many of the participants also calls to question current financial aid funding structures that do not provide students with enough financial assistance to prevent students from having to work more than 20 hours per week.

Findings related to student employment are supported by research documenting that 60% of community college students work at least 20 hours per week (Johnson et al., 2009), supporting the findings that showed that many of the Latino males in the study relied on work earnings while they attended college. Also supported by previous research was the fact that many of the study participants, including FYE staff, noted that work responsibilities interfered with their ability to actively engage (Crisp & Nora, 2010). While the Latino male alumni in the study successfully transferred, numerous research studies documented a correlation between limited financial support and lower persistence and degree attainment rates (Paulsen & St. John, 2002; St. John, et al. 2000). The Latino male alumni in this study were successful in transferring to a four-year university despite their lack of financial support, and many of them attributed their success to the FYE program support structures.

Approachable and Culturally Responsive Staff

Findings suggested that Latino males' help-seeking behaviors were improved as a result of FYE program staff and components that helped create welcoming and trusting environments. Furthermore, participants described experiences in FYE that helped them create familial-like relationships with program staff and students, which allowed Latino males to become vulnerable and open to the idea of seeking support and guidance from program staff. For many of the participants, this was their first experience putting themselves in these vulnerable positions but it resulted in important lessons. Welcoming environments were purposefully designed and executed to help FYE Latino males open up and develop a trusting relationship with program staff. This was aided by program staff and faculty who were also people of color and first-generation themselves.

The finding of approachable and culturally responsive staff is supported by research that has found that academic success rates of Latina/o community college students increase when students are able to develop positive relationships and interactions with college staff (Dowd, 2008). Latino males were able to develop positive and trusting relationships with FYE staff as a consequence of the staff adopting recognizable cultural behaviors that were valued by the Latino male students. In addition, long-standing research has documented that college staff and faculty interactions play an intricate role in persistence and completion rates of college students (Astin, 1975; 1985). The FYE programs' design of purposeful activities in order to build connections among staff and students, such as the PC FYE roster with pictures and student facts, allowed for the development of this trust. Trust fostered by participants in the program then contributed to a willingness to seek out support from the FYE and develop their help-seeking behaviors.

FYE Program Autonomy and Institutional Support

This study also found that the extent to which the level of institutional support each site received affected their ability to promote transfer among Latino male students. For example, BC FYE had limited counseling staff that prevented students from meeting and developing a lasting relationship with an academic counselor. This was as a result of the program relying on three part-time counselors to do the work of supporting an FYE program with students that required more interventions and support than traditional college students. These limitations resulted in students recommending that the program have more counselors available. Lack of staffing was not as prominent at PC FYE, and students noticed the accessibility of counselors and the lasting relationships they were able to build with the FYE counseling staff. A second finding related to institutional support was evident when one compares PC FYE to BC FYE. PC FYE had much say in who was hired to work and teach for the FYE program, whereas BC FYE relied on institutional leaders to determine who would work for the FYE program. This in turn resulted in less buy-in and a difficulty for the program coordinator in terms of getting the best professionals available to work for the program.

Community Cultural Wealth-Integrated Findings

The last area of my findings discusses how FYE program components promote the different forms of CCW (Yosso, 2005) exhibited by Latino males. Yosso (2005) defined CCW as an “array of knowledge, skills, abilities and contacts possessed and utilized by communities of color to survive and resist macro and micro forms of oppression” (p. 77). The first CCW

supported by FYE programs is their ability to further the drive that students have to meet short- and long-term goals, referred by Yosso (2005) as aspirational capital. All alumni and student participants expressed a strong desire to continue to pursue their goals of attaining a degree. FYE programs' counseling components help build on Latino males' aspirational capital by setting high expectations and working with students to keep them motivated to meet those expectations.

A second form of CCW captured by FYE programs is linguistic capital. FYE program culture and activities, such as testimonials, help capture and build on a student's linguistic capital. The BC FYE program purposefully incorporated testimonials as a way for staff to connect and build rapport with students. Students reiterated the role that their FYE program took in strengthening their linguistic capital by sharing experiences they had speaking with and connecting with program staff in their native language of Spanish. Linguistic capital was supported by FYE programs and allowed for a greater sense of belonging and trust building among the Latino males in the program.

Third, familial capital, or the CCW that involves a deep commitment to family and community, is supported through FYE programs by creating a strong sense of community allowing Latino males to build close bonds with FYE staff and their peers. Program staff acknowledged the impact that community building within FYE has on Latino male students and worked to create spaces within FYE that replicate that community and familial-like environment. Students and alumni expressed how the cohort model helped create a greater sense of community and helped build on this CCW.

The fourth form of CCW supported by FYE programs is social capital. Social capital is the ability of individuals to use their networks and resources to achieve a goal and is supported by FYE program creation of cohort environments that help build lasting friendships among students and allows students to stay engaged and motivated. Students and alumni shared how they utilized their social capital to build lasting friendships in FYE that allowed them to stay motivated and engaged through some of the most difficult times. Similarly, program staff worked to build a student's social capital by exposing students to four-year university partners that facilitated the transfer process for students. These partnerships helped expand students' knowledge and social networks to achieve their transfer goals.

The fifth form of CCW FYE programs help develop is a student's navigational capital or the ability for marginalized groups to maneuver through institutions. FYE programs are purposefully designed to provide environments and spaces of social interaction where Latino male students further develop their navigational capital. Examples shared by students and alumni included: meetings with counselors, campus tours, and workshops. FYE program staff also imbedded transfer workshops and curriculum to help students learn how to navigate and maneuver through the complicated transfer process.

The last form of CCW supported by FYE programs is resistance capital or the oppositional skill developed by living in marginalized communities. Resistance capital is supported through FYE programs by reinforcing this capital through workshops that acknowledge resistance and social justice-related topics. Through FYE, students learn how to advocate for themselves and their communities. Students and alumni expressed how through FYE, they learned about various social justice-related issues in their community and were

encouraged to pursue fields to help give back to their communities upon completion of their degrees.

Study findings show how FYE program components intentionally and successfully promote the six forms of capital outlined by Yosso's (2005) CCW model. Through this approach, FYE programs promote an anti-deficit model that looks to build the academic and personal self-esteem of Latino male students. This in turn creates FYE program environments that allow students to feel welcomed and develop trusting relationship with program staff.

Implications of Findings

Findings from this study show how FYE programs are strategically designed to help promote transfer among their students. Although, both FYE programs were not specifically designed for Latino male students, a number of FYE program components, including counseling support, were identified as components that help promote transfer among them. More specifically, Latino male participants reported familial-like welcoming environments in FYE programs that helped them develop their help-seeking behaviors that then led to receiving the support to prepare for transfer. Results from this study are important, especially when so many Latino males throughout California are struggling to enroll and complete a higher education when compared to other ethnic and gender groups.

Findings have implications for current community college FYE programs that are seeking strategies for outreach and engagement of Latino male students in their program. Additionally, findings also help inform educational leaders in higher education who are trying to understand the factors that prevent and encourage Latino male students to get involved in FYE programs and

prepare for transfer. Some of the practical uses of findings about how FYE programs promote transfer among Latino males by community college FYE program staff and educational leaders are briefly described below. This study also informs research and theory and the need to direct more theoretical attention to Latino male students and the ways they engage in help-seeking behaviors.

Implications for Practice

There are several implications of how FYE programs promote transfer among Latino males for practitioners in higher education. FYE programs need to think more specifically about Latino male students and the challenges they face in asking for help. They can also understand more about the implications that having welcoming staff and environments has on Latino male students. FYE programs could look into developing specific activities such as group dialogues centered on issues of masculinity in order to help Latino male students deal with some of the barriers that prevent them from seeking help. Based on the study findings, FYE programs should work to provide Latino males and other underrepresented student populations with the opportunity to work on campus, as working on campus results in greater retention and persistence rates (Astin, 1975; Nora, 1990).

In addition to FYE programs, student affairs professionals in community college settings can also benefit from this study because it highlights the various challenges encountered by Latino male students. Student affairs professionals can utilize this study to learn and understand more about the specific challenges experienced by their male student populations, especially as they relate to help-seeking behaviors. This study can help student affairs professionals

understand how vital it is for staff and programs to create welcoming environments that help engage Latino male students. Professional development opportunities should be enhanced on college campuses to include discussions on the impact of welcoming environments and effective counseling strategies that meet the needs of Latino male students.

A third implication for practice is a need to focus greater efforts on developing mentorship opportunities for Latino male students. Many of the males in the study lacked male role models, and incorporating male mentorship programs could help Latino males learn how to navigate higher education and how to prepare for transfer. While most Latino males expressed that the gender of FYE program staff was not a factor in dissuading them from seeking support from FYE, Latino male participants did note how their masculine behaviors were shaped by their fathers or other adult males. Incorporating Latino male mentorship programs would provide students with the mentorship to challenge their perceived notions of masculinity and help develop their help-seeking behaviors.

Implication for Educational Leadership

Findings suggested how the promotion of transfer often meant that Latino male students had to learn how to adapt to the community college and FYE program environment in order to develop their ability to seek support. While studies have found that FYE programs result in greater academic success (Moore & Shulock, 2007; Taylor et al., 2003), FYE programs are not able to reach all students and not all community colleges have FYE programs. Therefore, it is important for educational leaders to benefit from this study by developing a greater understanding of the challenges faced by Latino male students. Educational leaders can then go

out and develop specific educational programming and campus practices, such as creating welcoming environments to enhance the engagement of their Latino male student populations. This in turn requires educational leaders to be reflective and engage in discussion with their staff on the importance of having college cultures that adapt to the student populations they serve, rather than require the changing student populations to adapt to a college culture that has not always been successful in supporting underrepresented students.

Another implication for educational leaders involves the issue of funding and staffing for programs. Establishing an FYE program needs to be paired with appropriate levels of staffing and support staff. FYE programs that support underrepresented student populations, many of whom place into remedial courses, are first generation, and are low income, need more counseling and staffing than programs that support general student populations. Many of these students come to college requiring more support and interventions. Therefore, educational leaders need to understand that FYE student populations must have adequate staffing and counseling to engage student populations that need more of the one-on-one support.

FYE programs employ very distinct practices, such as learning communities and supplemental instruction, that require greater collaboration among program counselors, coordinators, and professors. For this collaboration to be successful, there has to be buy-in from all stakeholders and willingness to work with the underrepresented student populations that participate in FYE programs. This then requires FYE programs to vet and make sure that program staff, including counselors and professors, understand the FYE student population and are prepared to provide additional support to these students. One of the FYE programs lacked the ability to vet staff in the hiring process, which prevented them from having staff that had

completely bought into the program. It is important that educational leaders provide the needed flexibility for FYE programs to not only have greater autonomy in their hiring practices but also the autonomy to experiment with practices that can best help their specific student populations.

A final implication for educational leaders involves how financial aid is distributed on college campuses. Findings suggested that the biggest hurdle experienced by Latino male students involved a lack of financial support to pursue a higher education. Many of the study participants found themselves working more than 20 hours per week to provide themselves and their families with financial support. Their extended work hours prevented them from getting involved on campus and spending more time studying and taking classes. Financial aid in community college is seen as an afterthought because educational leaders and policy makers view a greater need to provide financial aid when students transfer to the more expensive four-year universities. This policy hindered many of the Latino male students in my study. Educational leaders and policy makers must rethink how financial aid is distributed in community colleges. Different funding formulas must be developed to ensure that students who are forced to work 20 or more hours because of their socioeconomic situations are provided with the financial aid to enroll in college full-time. Additionally, educational leaders should also focus on developing more thoughtful criteria in terms of how work study is provided. Latino male students can benefit from more well-paid, on-campus work study positions that will allow them to meet financial needs but also expose them to work on campus.

Implication for Research and Theory

A final implication to consider as a result of this study is the effect it has on future research and theory. Hence, future research should implement quantitative methods to study the experience of Latino males in FYE programs and other support programs. A study with a larger sample of students can establish more generalizable findings. This research can help uncover other practices that can be scaled up to ensure that more community college Latino male students are meeting their goal of transfer. Additional research must be conducted before we can conclusively state that FYE programs must include gender-specific cohorts to support Latino male students.

Future research should also investigate the role that four-year universities have in creating holistic welcoming environments in which Latino male students can be successful. This study showed how effective community college FYE programs can be in creating welcoming environments for students, but it will also be important to understand what initiatives at four-year universities help support transferring Latino male students. Studying the receiving institutions' welcoming environments will allow us to understand more about the benefit the participants in this study identified as instrumental to their success in community college. It will be important to understand how effective welcoming environments at receiving institutions are at helping Latino males progress through higher education.

Finally, more theoretical attention should be given to the ways in which Latinos engage in help seeking. A theoretical framework that addresses Latino males' help-seeking behaviors is needed to further understand the challenges faced by this growing population. A gender-specific theoretical framework specifically examining Latino males' help-seeking behaviors will allow

practitioners a lens to help them develop particularized programing to assist this student population in being successful in community colleges and four-year universities. This gender-specific theory can lay the foundation for studying the unique help-seeking behaviors of Latino males in educational settings.

Limitations of the Study

Creswell (2014) stated that limitations help identify strengths and weaknesses of a study that affect the interpretation of results. In this section, I outline some of the limitations of this study to provide the reader with clarity about how to interpret the findings.

The first limitation is that this study was limited to a small number of Latino male students from two community college FYE programs. Hence, it is not possible to generalize these findings to other community college Latino male students on a statewide or national level, mainly because there were only a total of eight current students and eight alumni who participated in the study. Although the findings cannot be generalized, findings can at least function as a springboard for discussion and future research on Latino male students' experience in FYE programs.

Second, the study involved participants who self-selected to participate in the study. Therefore, self-selection bias may exist as a result of FYE students opting to participate. Self-selection bias may negatively impact the internal validity of the study (Creswell, 2014) and cannot be generalized to the larger Latino male student population. Perhaps, rather than participant self-selection, working with FYE programs to randomly select student participants might have resulted in a more representative and generalizable study, but the numbers in the

sample most likely would also need to have been increased. Although self-selection bias may have occurred, the findings still paint an important picture of the Latino male experience in FYE programs.

In addition, all but two of the 16 student and alumni participants were of Mexican origin. One alumni participant was of Cuban descent while another was of Salvadoran descent. On the one hand, although the majority of study participants were of Mexican origin, California has a diverse group of Latina/o student populations and not accounting for such diversity results in the further inability to generalize findings. On the other hand, Mexican Americans are the largest Latino/a population in California and so in some sense oversampling Mexican-origin students is an arguably a good idea.

The final limitation to highlight is that of my own bias as a researcher. Although I was careful in not allowing my own personal biases to affect the study, I am aware that a researcher's bias cannot completely be eliminated. As a Latino male who formerly participated in an FYE program while attending community college, it is possible that my past experiences in some ways may have shaped the study design and my interpretations. Although my experience in FYE programs was positive, I worked to control any bias from entering the interpretation of my research findings, at least at conscious level. Maxwell (2005) stated that while it is not possible for us to completely rid ourselves of our bias, it is important to use it productively without letting our bias affect our research. Instead, I used my experience as a former FYE program participant to connect with students through this experience and understand more about their individual experiences. Hence, in this regard my past FYE experience may in fact be an advantage.

Despite the limitations of the study, the narrow focus provides a platform for future studies seeking to understand the role of FYE programs as it relates to Latino male students. This study might be useful for educational practitioners, educational leaders, policymakers, four-year university partners, and Latino male students themselves to make sense of the challenges they face while preparing for transfer to a four-year university.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to uncover the FYE program components that promoted transfer among Latino male students. Findings revealed that Latino males experienced challenges in asking for help, they grew frustrated with the length of time it took to transfer, and financial responsibilities resulted in working many hours that prevented them from being more active in campus activities. Additionally, findings suggest that the most promising practices in preparing Latino males for transfer rely on the development of help-seeking behaviors among students. Findings show that participants' ability to develop those help-seeking behaviors was reinforced by FYE programs that created welcoming and trusting environments that allowed Latino males to ask for help. Lastly, findings suggest that FYE programs are most successful when allowed to function with appropriate levels of institutional funding and a certain level of autonomy.

Student and alumni participants encountered various life challenges that could have prevented them persisting at or transferring from a community college. Through their participation in the FYE program, they found a family away from home. Latino males were able to learn how to interact with higher education professionals and more importantly, seek out their

support in times of need. Although, both FYE programs that were studied did not have specific male cohorts, one of the FYE programs did see the need to open up a space for dialogue surrounding masculinity. This dialogue provided the Latino male participants a space to hear from others who also felt the same fear with regard to help seeking. These important dialogues need to become regular activities not only in FYE programs but throughout higher education in general. Continuing to ignore the fact that Latino males are not being successful because they have yet to develop their help-seeking behaviors presents a dire picture of a future society where a large sector of its population is left out of higher education. Yet, this study also showed how FYE programs are implementing promising practices that shift Latino male help-seeking behaviors and engaged Latino male students to work toward academic success.

APPENDIX A

FYE Current Student Recruitment Email Script

Hello [student name],

My name is Ivan Peña, a graduate student in the Education Leadership Program at the University of California, Los Angeles. Because you are a First-Year Experience Latino male student, I would like to invite you to participate in my research study to determine if and how the First-Year Experience program is helping you prepare for transfer to a four-year university.

I am looking for participants that fit the following criteria:

- Self-identify as male
- Self-identify as Chicano, Latino, and/or Hispanic
- Attend only one community college
- Currently in the First-Year Experience Program

As a participant in the study, you will be asked to participate in a 60-minute interview. My goal as a researcher is to protect you from any harm as a result of participating in this study. Any information you provide will be protected and not identified to you. You will be assigned a pseudonym rather than using your name to further protect your identity.

The information gained through this study will help community college administrators and other researchers understand how and why First-Year Experience programs have been successful in helping Latino male students transfer. The information you provide will also provide the First-Year Experience program with information on how to improve the program.

If you decide to participate in this research study, you will receive a \$30 gift card. Please respond to this email or call me (626) 222-7134 to confirm your participation. If you have any questions now or in the future, please contact me at ivanmpena@ucla.edu or by cell (626) 222-7134.

Thanks for your time and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Ivan Peña

APPENDIX B

FYE Alumni Recruitment Email Script

Hello [student name],

My name is Ivan Peña, a graduate student in the Education Leadership Program at the University of California, Los Angeles. Because you are a First-Year Experience Latino male alumni and transfer student, I would like to invite you to participate in my research study to determine how and why the First-Year Experience program helped you transfer to a four-year university.

I am looking for participants that fit the following criteria:

- Self-identify as male
- Self-identify as Chicano, Latino, and/or Hispanic
- Attended only one community college
- Participated in the First-Year Experience Program
- Transferred and currently attending a four-year university

As a participant in the study, you will be asked to participate in a 60-minute interview. My goal as a researcher is to protect you from any harm as a result of participating in this study. Any information you provide will be protected and not identified to you. You will be assigned a pseudonym rather than using your name to further protect your identity.

The information gained through this study will help community college administrators and other researchers understand how and why First-Year Experience programs have been successful in helping Latino male students transfer. The information you provide will also provide the First-Year Experience program with information on how to improve the program.

If you decide to participate in this research study, you will receive a \$30 gift card. Please respond to this email or call me (626) 222-7134 to confirm your participation. If you have any questions now or in the future, please contact me at ivanmpena@ucla.edu or by cell (626) 222-7134.

Thanks for your time and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Ivan Peña

APPENDIX C

FYE Staff Recruitment Email Script

Hello [staff name],

My name is Ivan Peña, a doctoral student in the Education Leadership Program at the University of California, Los Angeles. Because you are a First-Year Experience [Coordinator or Counselor], I would like to invite you to participate in my research study to determine how and why First-Year Experience programs help Latino male students transfer to a four-year university.

I am looking for staff participants that fit the following criteria:

- Currently work for a First-Year Experience program as a [Coordinator or Counselor]

As a participant in the study, you will be asked to participate in a 60-minute interview. My goal as a researcher is to protect you from any harm as a result of participating in this study. Any information you provide will be protected and not identified to you. You will be assigned a pseudonym rather than using your name to further protect your identity.

The information gained through this study will help community college administrators and other researchers understand how and why First-Year Experience programs have been successful in helping Latino male students transfer. The information you provide will also provide the First-Year Experience program with information on how to improve the program.

Please respond to this email or call me to confirm your participation. If you have any questions now or in the future, please contact me at ivanmpena@ucla.edu or by cell (626) 222-7134.

Thanks for your time and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Ivan Peña

APPENDIX D

Student Interview Protocols

Current Student Interview Protocol

1. Let's start by talking about your background.

- a. Tell me about your background.
- b. Where did you attend high school?
- c. How supportive do you feel your high school was in preparing you for college?
- d. Why did you decide to continue your education after high school?
- e. Is education important in your family? (CCW)
- f. Was your family supportive about your decision to attend community college? If so, how did they support you? (CCW)

2. Now let's talk about your transition to community college and how you learned about the First-Year Experience Program. (RQ 1)

- a. What were your educational goals when you first decided to attend community college? (CCW)
- b. How did you learn about the First-Year Experience Program?
- c. What motivated you to apply to the First-Year Experience Program?
- d. How well did the First-Year Experience Program help you with your transition from high school to college?
- e. How well has the First-Year Experience Program helped you increase your knowledge to navigate community college.

3. Let's talk about your time in the First-Year Experience Program (RQ 1) (RQ 2)

- a. What are some of the academic challenges you are facing while in the First-Year Experience Program?
- b. Has the First-Year Experience Program helped you overcome these academic challenges? If so, how? (CCW)
- c. What additional First-Year Experience Program services do you believe could be help you overcome these academic challenges? (CCW)
- d. What are some of the personal challenges you are facing while in the First-Year Experience Program? (CCW)
- e. Has the First-Year Experience Program helped you overcome these personal challenges? If so, how? (CCW)
- f. What additional First-Year Experience Program services do you believe could be help you overcome these personal challenges? (CCW)

4. Let's talk some of the people you met in the First-Year Experience Program. (RQ 3)

- a. Is there anyone in the First-Year Experience Program that you have found particularly helpful in motivating you to transfer? (CCW)

- b. What does this person say or do that motivates you to transfer? (CCW)
- c. As a Latino male, how approachable and culturally responsive do you believe the First-Year Experience Program staff is with you? (CCW)
- d. How does this affect your ability to seek out support from them when you come across challenges? Please explain and provide an example. (CCW)

5. Let's talk about the First-Year Experience Program and the transfer process. (RQ 1)

- a. How well do you believe the First-Year Experience Program helps students understand the steps that lead to transfer? Please explain.
- b. Which First Year Experience Program events or activities do you think are preparing you to transfer and why?
- c. How well do you believe the First-Year Experience Program promotes a transfer culture among all First-Year Experience students? Please explain.
- d. How well do you believe the First-Year Experience Program promotes a transfer a culture specifically among First-Year Experience Latino male students? Please explain. (CCW)
- e. How might your experience have been different if you weren't in the First-Year Experience program?

6. Let's talk more about the First-Year Experience Program and the transfer process. (RQ 2)

- a. What improvements do you think the First-Year Experience Program can make to help students understand the steps that lead to transfer? Please explain.
- b. Which First Year Experience Program events or activities do you think are the least helpful in preparing you to transfer and why?
- c. What do you believe the First-Year Experience Program can improve on to promote a transfer culture among all students? Please explain.
- d. What do you believe the First-Year Experience Program can improve on to promote a transfer a culture specifically among Latino male students? Please explain. (CCW)

7. I have a few last questions for you.

- a. How do you feel about what you achieved this first year of community college?
- b. What advice do you have for Latino male students who will be starting the First-Year Experience Program next year?
- c. Do you have any final thoughts or comments that you would like to add?

Former Student (Alumni) Interview Protocol

1. Let's start by talking about your background.

- a. Tell me about your background.
- b. Where did you attend high school?
- c. How supportive do you feel your high school was in preparing you for college?
- d. Why did you decide to continue your education after high school?
- e. Is education important in your family? (CCW)
- f. Was your family supportive about your decision to attend community college? If so, how did they support you? (CCW)

2. Now let's talk about your transition to community college and how you learned about the First-Year Experience Program. (RQ 1)

- a. What were your educational goals when you first decided to attend community college? (CCW)
- b. How did you learn about the First-Year Experience Program?
- c. What motivated you to apply to the First-Year Experience Program?
- d. How well did First-Year Experience Program help you with your transition from high school to college?
- e. How well did the First-Year Experience Program help you increase your knowledge to navigate community college. (CCW)

3. Let's talk about your time in the First-Year Experience Program (RQ 1) (RQ 2)

- a. What are were some of the academic challenges you are facing while you were in the First-Year Experience Program?
- b. Did the First-Year Experience Program helped you overcome those academic challenges? If so, how? (CCW)
- c. What additional First-Year Experience Program services do you believe could have helped you overcome those academic challenges? (CCW)
- d. What are some of the personal challenges you faced while you were in the First-Year Experience Program? (CCW)
- e. Did the First-Year Experience Program helped you overcome those personal challenges? If so, how? (CCW)
- f. What additional First-Year Experience Program services do you believe could have helped you overcome those personal challenges? (CCW)

4. Let's talk some of the people you met in the First-Year Experience Program. (RQ 3)

- a. Is there anyone in the First-Year Experience Program that you found particularly helpful in motivating you to transfer? (CCW)
- b. What did this person say or do that motivated you to transfer? (CCW)
- c. As a Latino male, how approachable and culturally responsive did you believe the First-Year Experience Program staff was with you? (CCW)
- d. How did this affect your ability to seek out support from them when you came

across challenges? Please explain and provide an example. (CCW)

5. Let's talk about the First-Year Experience Program and the transfer process. (RQ 1)

- a. How well do you believe the First-Year Experience Program helped you understand the steps that lead to transfer? Please explain.
- b. Which First Year Experience Program events or activities do you think prepared you to transfer and why?
- c. How well do you believe the First-Year Experience Program promoted a transfer culture among all First-Year Experience students? Please explain.
- d. How well do you believe the First-Year Experience Program promoted a transfer culture specifically among Latino male First-Year Experience students? Please explain. (CCW)
- e. How might your experience have been different if you weren't in the First-Year Experience program?

6. Let's talk more about the First-Year Experience Program and the transfer process. (RQ 2)

- a. What improvements do you think the First-Year Experience Program can make to help students understand the steps that lead to transfer? Please explain.
- b. Which First Year Experience Program events or activities do you think were the least helpful in preparing you to transfer and why?
- c. What do you believe the First-Year Experience Program can improve on to promote a transfer culture among all students? Please explain.
- d. What do you believe the First-Year Experience Program can improve on to promote a transfer a culture specifically among Latino male students? Please explain. (CCW)

7. I have a few last questions for you.

- a. How do you feel about what you achieved as a transfer student?
- b. What advice do you have for Latino male students who are in a First-Year Experience Program and are interested in transferring?
- c. Do you have any final thoughts or comments that you would like to add?

APPENDIX E

FYE Staff Interview Protocols

FYE Counselor Interview Protocol

1. Let's start by talking about your background.

- a. When did you start working with community college students?
- b. When did you start working with First-Year Experience Programs?
- c. What drew you to work with community college students?

2. Tell me about the transfer goals of the First-Year Experience Program.

- a. Usually, how aware are your incoming students about the transfer pathway?
- b. What program components do you believe have the greatest role in promoting transfer among your students?
- c. Do you believe these components have the same impact in promoting transfer among Latino male students? Please explain.
- d. What do you believe, if any, is your role in increasing transfer rates among First-Year Experience students? Please explain.

3. Now let's talk about your specific role in the First-Year Experience Program.

- a. What specific services do you provide for students in the program?
- b. How is the approach you take to counseling different from non-First-Year Experience program students?
- c. How do you combat student self-doubt and reaffirm the importance of sticking to educational goals among your students?
- d. Are First-Year Experience Program counselors available to students after they have completed the first year?
- e. How important is it for you to be approachable and responsive to the student populations you serve?

4. Let's talk about the culture within your program.

- a. How do you work to create a trusting environment with students and what role of any do you believe this has on facilitating information-seeking by your students?
- b. What impact if any do you believe that being approachable and culturally responsive has on the success of your students?
- c. What types of professional development opportunities are provided to you that cultivate high aspirations and expectations among your students?

5. Let's change gears and talk about transfer.

- a. What do you believe are the biggest challenges in preparing students for transfer?
- b. How does the program help students overcome these challenges?

- c. Generally speaking, are Latino males more or less likely to transfer than their female counterparts in the program?
- d. Tell me more, why do you believe this is true?
- e. What are some of the challenges that Latino males face while trying to transfer?
- f. How does the program help students overcome these challenges?

6. I am interested in learning more about the support your program provides to Latino males students.

- a. What program components do you believe help promote transfer among Latino male students?
- b. How are the services you provide Latino males in the program different from the services that the college provides to Latino male students in the general student population?

7. Let's talk about the changes you think can be made to support more Latino males in your program.

- a. What could the program do more effectively to help Latino male students through the transfer process?
- b. What challenges do you face in implementing those additional resources to support Latino male students?
- c. How might you fix those challenges if you had the means to implement those additional resources?

8. To end our interview, I have two final questions.

- a. Overall, how do you feel about the programs counseling services ability to prepare Latino males to transfer?
- b. What you believe needs to happen in order for community colleges to promote transfer among Latino male students the way that First-Year Experience Programs do?
- c. Do you have any final thoughts or any last comments that you would like to add?

FYE Coordinator Interview Protocol

1. Let's start by talking about your background.

- a. When did you start working with community college students?
- b. When did you start working with First-Year Experience Programs?
- c. What drew you to work with community college students?

2. Now let's talk about the First-Year Experience Program.

- a. When was the program created and what were some of the reasons surrounding the needs to create the program?
- b. What services does the program provide?
- c. What kinds of students are targeted to participate in the program and how are they recruited?
- d. What responsibilities must the students meet to remain in the program?
- e. What are the transfer goals of your program?
- f. How does the program measure the success of these transfer goals?

3. Tell me about the transfer goals of the First-Year Experience Program.

- a. Usually, how aware are your incoming students about the transfer pathway?
- b. What program components do you believe have the greatest role in promoting transfer among your students?
- c. Do you believe these components have the same impact in promoting transfer among Latino male students? Please explain.
- d. What do you believe, if any, is your role in increasing transfer rates among First-Year Experience students? Please explain.

4. Tell me about the instructional and counseling components of the program.

- a. How do you select your instructors and how important is it for them to be approachable and responsive to the student populations you serve?
- b. How is the teaching and learning process in these courses different from non First-Year Experience program courses?
- c. How do you select your counselors and how important is it for them to be approachable and responsive to the student populations you serve?
- d. How are the First-Year Experience counseling services different from general counseling services?

5. I'm interested in learning more about the partnerships you have established with four-year institutions.

- a. How long have these partnerships been in place?
- b. What does each partnership entail and how well has it worked?
- c. How have the partnerships helped promote transfer among your First-Year Experience students?

6. Let's talk about the culture within your program.

- a. How does the program work to create a trusting environment with students and what role of any do you believe this has on facilitating information-seeking by your students?
- b. What impact if any do you believe that having approachable and culturally responsive staff has on the success of your students?
- c. What types of professional development opportunities are provided to staff that cultivate high aspirations and expectations among your students?

7. Let's change gears and talk about transfer.

- a. What do you believe are the biggest challenges in preparing students for transfer?
- b. How does the program help students overcome these challenges?
- c. Generally speaking, are Latino males more or less likely to transfer than their female counterparts in the program?
- d. Tell me more, why do you believe this is true?
- e. What are some of the challenges that Latino males face while trying to transfer?
- f. How does the program help students overcome these challenges?

8. I am interested in learning more about the support your program provides to Latino males students.

- a. What program components do you believe help promote transfer among Latino male students?
- b. How are the services you provide Latino males in the program different from the services that the college provides to Latino male students in the general student population?

9. Let's talk about the changes you think can be made to support more Latino males in your program.

- a. What could the program do more effectively to help Latino male students through the transfer process?
- b. What challenges do you face in implementing those additional resources to support Latino male students?
- c. How might you fix those challenges if you had the means to implement those additional resources?

10. To end our interview, I have two final questions.

- a. Overall, how do you feel about your programs ability to prepare Latino males to transfer?
- b. What you believe needs to happen in order for community colleges to promote transfer among Latino male students the way that First-Year Experience Programs do?

- c. Do you have any final thoughts you would like to add?

APPENDIX F

FYE Workshop Observation Protocol

Date:	Workshop:	Number of students:
Time:	Workshop length:	Location:
<i>Descriptive Notes</i>		<i>Reflective Notes</i>
What does the physical setting look like?		
How do participants interact with FYE staff?		
In what ways does the presenter build on students' cultural background or experience to present information?		
How does the presenter provide feedback to students?		
In what ways do student behaviors reveal their likely level of interest and engagement?		
How do students interact with each other?		
In what ways do student behaviors indicate that they are comfortable with each other?		

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