

Understanding the Experiences of First Generation Immigrant,
First Generation College Students Attending a Public U.S. University

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Abstract

This paper is a qualitative descriptive case study focusing on the relationships between first generation immigrant and college students and some of the many institutional and societal factors that contribute to their experiences at a U.S. public research university. The analysis identified common themes from the experiences of the nine participants, both positive and negative, regarding interactions with their peers, instructors and other university staff and their sense of belonging on campus. As the findings suggest, while there were a high number of negative interactions such as racism with peers, the participants also provided a number of ways in which instructors can create a classroom environment that could help mitigate those negative interactions such as allowing for small group discussions in class. Among the nine participants, all reported feeling a sense of belonging on campus but their responses provided insight into how complicated the concept can be. Ultimately, the findings from this descriptive study could help drive institutional improvements, future research and contribute to a more positive student experience for this population.

Immigrant students are a large population of undergraduate students on college and university campuses. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, over 12% of the total undergraduate population in the U.S. is immigrant students (Kim, 2009) and many U.S. born students have parents who were born outside the U.S. Specifically at the University of Minnesota, results from the 2012 Student Experience at a Research Institution (SERU) survey show that of students who responded, 8.4% were born outside the United States and approximately 20% have at least one parent who was born outside the United States (<https://www.oir.umn.edu/surveys/seru/public>, 2012).

Students who are the first in their families to attend college are becoming common among college students. Of the 1,864 first year students who completed a survey of student experience at one large public university, 401 were first generation college students (Soria & Stebleton, 2012). Among all students, parental education level has been shown to be a significant factor in determining whether a student will leave their university with a degree (Engle & Tinto, 2008, Horn, 2006). While there are several other factors such as income and lack of academic preparation, "... parents' education—specifically, having a parent with a bachelor's degree—remained significant even after controlling for other factors e.g. family income, academic preparation, parental involvement, and peer influence" when considering retention (Choy, 2001, p. 8). There is a strong connection between these other factors and parental education level. A survey of high school students from 1994 reported that "...high school graduates whose parents did not go to college tended to report lower educational expectations, be less prepared academically, and receive less support from their families in planning and preparing for college than their peers whose parents attended college" (Choy, 2001, p. 12). Students, whose parents had some college experience, but not a bachelor's degree, did not appear to have an advantage over those whose parents had no postsecondary education (Choy, 2001, p. 8). These findings highlight the importance of not just attending college but also graduating. Breaking the cycle and becoming the first in their family to obtain a bachelor's degree is necessary for creating new academic opportunities for future generations.

First generation immigrant students are unique among this larger group of first generation college

students in that they might be multilingual and possibly adjusting to a new cultural context, depending on their age of arrival. However, based on current research, it is unclear whether first generation immigrant college students have different needs than other non-immigrant first generation college students or if their experiences on campus are so different. Most studies discussing first immigrant students likely contain data that also includes first generation college students. Based on existing research it is difficult to address exactly how first generation immigrant, first generation college students are unique among the larger group of first generation immigrants. However, there is great variety within the larger group of first generation college students. For example, a number of first generation college students come from the rural U.S. Often times studies on first generation college students will note that these students are also often, immigrant students, but not entirely. It seems reasonable to expect the experiences of a first generation immigrant student to differ considerably from those of a student who grew up in the rural Midwest (along several generations before her), regardless of whether they are both first generation college students.

Many campuses promote or advertise the diversity within their student body. This is seen in mission statements and strategic objectives such as: “Recruit, educate, challenge, and graduate outstanding students who become highly motivated lifelong learners, leaders, and global citizens” and to “Recruit highly prepared students from diverse populations” (Huesman & Soria, 2010, p.7), which comes from a large, public research university in the U.S. Creating global citizens would apply to all who enroll but beyond that, the university makes a priority of enrolling students from a variety of backgrounds. However, this discourse does not always trickle down to support for those students that are responsible for bringing diversity to their campuses. Regardless of institution type (two and four year, public and private) low-income, first generation college students “were nearly four times as likely to drop out of college after their first year, compared with their peers” (Engle & Tinto, 2008, p 13). So while a quarter of freshmen do not return for their sophomore year, the reality is that the majority of these dropouts are first generation college students (American College Testing Program, 1999, as cited in Hoffman et. al., 2002, p. 227).

These statistics suggest that this population is faced with societal and institutional barriers to completing their degrees or are not being supported in tangible ways that lead to graduation. These barriers are complex and research is now starting to make an attempt at better understanding the wide range of experiences of this group.

Many universities are using a large-scale survey, in order to better understand their ever-changing student body. The Student Experience at a Research University (SERU) survey was developed in 2002 at the University of California – Berkeley and is now used by over 20 universities (Office of Institutional Research, <http://www.oir.umn.edu/surveys/seru>, 2012). Every spring, all enrolled undergraduate students at participating universities are invited via email and flyers posted around campus to take the web-based survey; however, participation is not mandatory nor compensated other than being entered in drawings to win cash and electronic prizes (2010 SERU Survey Info PDF, Stableton, personal communication, November 28, 2012). Students' are also encouraged to participate by reminding them that responding to the survey is their opportunity to make an impact on their campus. According to the SERU website (2013), responses have resulted in "Improved Academics and Student Support", "Developed a Clearer Picture of the Factors Driving Student Satisfaction and Success", and "Expanded Understanding of the Unique Experiences of our Diverse Students", which created a positive impact on the overall student experience (<http://www.seru.umn.edu/students-and-u-community/your-impact>). In addition to collecting institutional data, such as ethnicity, major, and parental income, the survey is built around three primary topics of interest: Academic Engagement, Civic & Community Engagement, and Student Life & Development. Each institution is also allowed to add a 'wild card' topic, which is determined by each institution (Office of Institutional Research, <http://www.oir.umn.edu/surveys/seru>, 2012).

There are innumerable reasons used by some researchers to explain why a first generation immigrant college student would not complete a degree. Perhaps similar to other non-traditional college students, first generation immigrant students often live fractioned lives in which one aspect does not compliment the other. They may juggle being a student while also working, taking care of family

members, and sharing household responsibilities (Jehangir, 2010). These competing roles, such as “caretaker, worker, daughter, and student” (Jehangir, 2010, p.3), might prevent a student from feeling truly accepted on campus, which has been found in self-reported data collected at one public institution. According to responses to the SERU survey, “... immigrant students’ perception of their sense of belonging and satisfaction is significantly lower than their non-immigrant peers’ perceptions,” (Stebbleton, Huesman Jr, & Kuzhabekovaet, 2010, p. 1). However, recent research reporting on the rich social and cultural capital these students have as resources suggest the reasons could be more complicated. For all these reasons, I am exploring social and institutional experiences, which contribute to first generation immigrant and college students’ sense of belonging in program at a large, public research university in the U.S.

Literature Review

Sense of Belonging

“Belonging is a complicated dance of giving and receiving. To belong is not only to be welcomed but also to feel that we have something to contribute. To belong is to find connection, to leave our mark and to be understood and valued for our unique contributions.”

Rashné Rustom Jehangir
 “Higher Education and First-Generation Students” (p. 119)

It is possible to argue that sense of belonging is in some way a driving force for all we do. As described by Baumeister and Leary (1995), who developed the belongingness hypothesis:

... people prefer achievements that are validated, recognized, and valued by other people over solitary achievements, so there may be a substantial interpersonal component behind the need for achievement. And the needs for approval and intimacy are undoubtedly linked to the fact that approval is a prerequisite for forming and maintaining social bonds, and intimacy is a denning characteristic of close relationships. The need to belong could thus be linked to all of them (p. 498).

This theory, first developed in the field of psychology, can be used to better understand employee-employer relationships, interpersonal relationships and now even the relationship of one student and the many people who make up a university.

Validation, recognition and being valued by others contribute to one's sense of belonging and as Hoffman, Richmond, and Salomone (2002-3) describe, "this subjective sense of affiliation and identification with the university community is known as sense of belonging" (2002-3, p. 228). While it is a fairly simple concept, it is complicated by the fact that it is subjective and built from a number of relationships, which interact with the past experiences of each individual. It is developed through countless relationships and has the potential to alter the perceptions of an individual, depending on the support and connection developed through each relationship – or lack of support and connection developed. These relationships develop from beyond one's immediate family and include our neighbors, friends, classmates, teachers, counselors, and even the larger institutions. An individual's sense of belonging within a given context or situation is not solely dependant on any one relationship, but rather the sum of all these relationships, and determined in an equation where not all parts or relationships are given equal value. This was seen in a large scale study of college students (including first generation college students) done by Pittman and Richmond (2007), which found that, "although attachments to parents and positive relationships with friends are important in individuals' adjustment, those who do not have a sense of connection to a larger group or community likely will experience increased stress and emotional distress" (2007, page 272). There is no one essential relationship that is responsible for creating a sense of belonging but rather a complicated blend, which can come from a multitude of interactions.

The value of each relationship will vary from person to person but there has been significant research done on understanding the potential value and benefits of a variety of different relationships. As argued in the belongingness hypothesis, a sense of belonging has a close relationship with motivation, so it is not surprising that a student's sense of belonging on campus is known to contribute to retention, especially beyond the first year (Baumeister & Leary, 1995, Hoffman et. al., 2002-3, Pittman &

Richmond, 2007, Soria, & Stableton, 2012). While sense of belonging can be a driving force behind one's success, a lack there of can also be a significant contributing factor to one's defeat.

There are a variety of terms, such as *fit*, *affiliation* and *mattering*, which can be used to refer to sense of belonging in some way. Overall, these terms are used to describe a student's process of becoming part of the college or university and "perceptions on the part of the student of shared values and support in the collegiate environment" (Hoffman et al., 2002-3, p. 228). Based on findings from the SERU survey done at a major Mid-western research institution, first generation college students reported lower levels of academic engagement compared to non-first generation students, which is used to describe a student's relationship with her instructors and classmates and is one factor which contributes to a student's sense of belonging on campus. Specifically, academic engagement included: bringing up ideas/concepts from different courses during class sessions, asking insightful questions in class, interacting with faculty during lecture sessions, and contributing in a class discussion (Soria & Stableton, 2012).

According to a thorough review of literature done by Pittman and Richmond (2007) and results from their own study, first generation college students do not consistently perform worse academically in terms of grade point averages, but this population does regularly "report lower perceptions of academic ability, feeling less prepared for the college experience, and experiencing difficulty with self-regulating the learning process, including making deadlines and concentrating on school-related subjects..." (2007, p. 273). This suggests that because first generation college students are not consistently performing lower than their peers, there must be factors other than grades, which contribute to their lower retention rates. This same review asserts that a strong connection to a college or university can help mitigate these other factors and even promote "... higher academic motivation, and lower attrition rates" (2007, p. 271).

Pittman and Richmond's research focused on the impact of a variety of factors on college adjustment among freshmen college students in their second semester. While this study did not focus on first generation college students, the participant pool (266 students) did include this population and their methods included questions that allowed them to discuss it as a contributing factor to sense of belonging.

The factors considered were demographics (which included parental education level), school belongingness (which included reflections on their current institution as well as their former high school), relationships with parents and friends, academic success and work orientation, self worth and perceived scholastic competency, and problem behaviors (such as aggression, anxiety, and depression). The findings of this study state that, "... a sense of school belonging may be a key component to a positive experience for late adolescents in college. College students who reported a greater sense of belonging at the university were doing better academically, felt more competent scholastically, had higher self-worth, and at a trend level, lower levels of externalizing problems [such as depression or anxiety]" (2007, p.283).

This study also shows that even a retrospective sense of belonging to the participants' high schools had an impact on their current academic performance (Pittman & Richmond, 2007). This highlights the lasting effect sense of belonging can have, even as individuals transition into new surroundings, at least early on in that transition (all participants in this study were college freshman and recent high school graduates). Although findings were not statistically significant, it was noted that relationships with friends appeared to be more relevant than sense of belonging. However, it may be helpful to view relationships with friends as part of an individual's sense of belonging rather than a competing factor. For example, students who reported having difficulty with friends also reported a lower sense of belonging on campus (2007, p. 285). One limitation of this extensive study is that it relies on self-reported data, which has varying accuracy especially when concerning topics such as grades and academic performance.

The importance of friendships aligns with previous research, which has shown that peer and instructor networking among first generation college and immigrant students is also an extremely important and valuable component to retention and successful integration into the campus environment (Kim, 2009, Jehangir, 2010, 2012, Soria & Stebleton, 2010, Stebleton et. al., 2010). In Jehangir's (2010) longitudinal study of low-income, first generation college students at a research university, creating peer networks through Multicultural Learning Communities (MLC) contributed to a greater sense of belonging on campus for participants and feeling engaged in their learning.

Unlike much of the research focusing on this topic, Jehangir's (2010) data came from weekly writing samples collected from freshman students participating in an MLC over seven years and reflective interviews with 24 of those students as juniors, seniors and recent college grads. Her work designing and teaching in the learning communities and her appreciation and respect for each student voice, shown by making it a prominent part of her work, offers a refreshing portrayal of this population compared to the, oftentimes cold statistics used to generalize a very heterogeneous population. While quantitative data is essential, it can leave too much to the interpretation of the researcher; it may not be best practice to use large scale quantitative studies to make recommendations based on numbers, without considering actual student input. Jehangir's approach puts the voice of the students' into the analysis.

According to Jehangir, "...learning-communities are one means of bringing together disciplinary, programmatic, curricular, and pedagogical approaches to connect disparate campus silos that do little to contribute to a cohesive learning experience for students" (2010, p.74). Her work makes a strong case for the impact an institution can make on students' sense of belonging and integration into campus by creating a connection between a student's peers, instructors and support staff. This highlights the complexity of relationships that go into creating connections with others; sense of belonging comes from classmates, faculty, coursework, and it is the sum of all these factors, which creates a meaningful experience to which each student can relate.

Learning-communities, a particular structure used at some universities, allow students to interact with the university community and the curriculum in a variety of ways, depending on the focus of the community. Jehangir (2010) describes three types of learning communities described in Jehangir's (2010) study were Curricular, Student-Type, and Living-Learning. Curricular learning-communities bring students together taking shared courses or in a common discipline, Student-Type learning-communities are built around some common feature of the students or their experiences (examples given by Jehangir are students of color, honors students and students with disabilities). Living-Learning communities are cohorts of students and faculty living together on campus in order to integrate coursework with their daily

lives (2010, p. 78). Jehangir reminds the reader that within Student-Type learning-communities there is still diversity but suggests that “marginalized” groups often need “a safe, welcoming, and protected environment where they can become acquainted with collegiate expectations” (2010, p. 79). The Multicultural Learning Communities were made up of low income, first generation college students, and were not restricted by race or culture.

Not only can these safe places create connections to the larger university community for students, but personal reflections by Jehangir’s (2010) participants showed that learning-communities could create a sense of accountability for students. This accountability comes from the sense of family built in their learning communities and shows that perceptions of belonging come from more than simply seeing yourself reflected in your peers. When asked about student-teacher relationships, the participants described how important they felt to their instructors – that they could go to them with problems outside the classroom, not for a solution but just as someone who will listen and care, and this in turn created in them a sense of responsibility to themselves and their campus community.

Jehangir (2010) also discusses, again through narratives of her participants, how the cultural and racial diversity within their learning communities actually contributed to their strong relationships. This diversity within the group of low-income, first generation students prompted discussion of similarities and differences, which ultimately created a greater self-awareness. The following quote from one student, Davu, articulates the value of a curriculum which promotes “self-reflection” (2010, p. 144), carried out in a communal classroom environment:

I think that, for me, it was just that the multicultural issues directed me toward my true qualities. It showed me the issues, and I finally found what I was interested in. What it did is, it literally showed me, showed the path, because I figured out who I was as a person, as a student, and you know, as a citizen. Just literally I figured out what I wanted to do, my first year or so. It paved a way for my major, what I wanted to do, the issues I cared about, or hold deeply, and just it brought

out my inner personality—so it helped me figure out myself.

(Jehangir, 2010, p. 144)

Davu's newfound self-awareness gave him a greater understanding of what his educational path would be; it created in him a connection between what he valued in life and his role as a student. This connection can ultimately lead to a greater sense of belonging or purpose for all college students, but especially first generation college students balancing multiple roles.

While Jehangir's (2010) study offers an ample collection of stories describing the positive impact of being part of the Multicultural Learning Communities, the experiences of these students beyond their cohorts offer a grim description of how a lack of belonging can play out. The sense of community felt in the MLC is made even clearer when compared with the lack of community felt by participants after leaving the MLC. They stated that their non-MLC instructors took less interest in them and that their knowledge was not valued by them. One student, Jarod, noted that in the MLC, he felt as though the *process* of learning was valued and this was not his experience in other classes. He was referencing a type of experiential and connected learning that also resonated with other participants. It is learning that is co-constructed and one that shares and values the process of learning and discovery.

Social and Cultural Capital

In addition to one's sense of belonging, it has been shown that factors such as social and cultural capital connect closely with a student's success in higher education (Hoffman et al., 2002-3, Stebleton et al., 2010, Wells, 2008). Bourdieu (1986) defines social capital as "the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance..." (1986, p. 248). Cultural capital is made up of the values or ideas created by a given group (Bourdieu, 1986). While these are two distinct forms of capital, it is worth noting that social capital cannot be considered independent of cultural capital, as it is the cultural (and economic) capital possessed by an individual or a group which determines the value of that relationship (Bourdieu, 1986).

Bourdieu (1986) describes a world without capital as being similar to a game of Roulette; it would be a world with "... perfect competition or perfect equality of opportunity, a world without inertia, without accumulation, without hereditary or acquired properties in which every moment is perfectly independent of the previous one..." (1986, p. 421). Clearly this is not reality; all future experiences are in some way shaped by one's past. He goes on to explain that capital "...takes time to accumulate and ...is a force inscribed in the objectivity of things so that everything is not equally possible or impossible" (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 241). This logic has been used to suggest that since social and cultural capital are often passed from parents to children, first generation college and immigrant students are at a significant disadvantage when it comes to having access to the capital valued in U.S. higher education. This view can be seen in one study of urban high school students, where most participants "perceived their social context as more of a barrier than a resource" (Sirin, et. al., 2004, p. 452). However there is a change in research to shift the lens of one lacking the dominant forms of social and cultural capital, such as parents with college degrees, to a view that demonstrates other less obvious but nonetheless valuable forms, such as parents who value education for their child because it was not accessible to themselves (Bigelow, 2007; Espinoza-Herold, 2007; Lubienski, 2003).

One study which found strengths rather than deficiencies, *Stepping beyond Sí Se Puede*, by Mariella Espinoza-Herold (2007), focuses on a Mexican American female student and how her relationship with her mother contributed to her resilience and motivation through *dichos* or cultural sayings. The participant was a high-school drop out, but at the time of the final interviews, had successfully moved on to graduate school. As noted earlier in this review, students with parents with lower educational levels also reported lower levels of parental involvement (Choy, 2001), however; Espinoza-Herold (2007) asserts that *involvement* is being defined in a limited way, such as attending school functions. The parents of Carla, the participant in Espinoza-Herold's (2007) case study, drove her to and from class when she was injured in a car accident; they excused her from some family get-togethers, so she could study. This is clearly the sort of parental involvement which directly contributed to

her academic success, but it is not an example seen in most research on parental involvement. While family attitudes and behaviors have been known to enhance psychological and emotional wellbeing, this structure had not been seen as a source of support for academic success until Valenzuela and Dornbusch's (1994) study of over three thousand Anglo and Mexican origin high school students. This study concluded that familism had a positive effect on the Mexican origin students, when their parents had at least a high school education. While it was not a significant factor for the Anglo students of this study, it was clearly an important form of social and cultural capital for some students.

This growing body of research argues that while many students face what is commonly perceived as challenges to their success they still receive support throughout their education. Support can come from a variety of relationships and this creates an opportunity for institutions to contribute to the social capital of their students. There are federally supported programs, such as TRiO¹, which exist in order to “support students from disadvantaged and underrepresented backgrounds in pursuit of a college degree” (TRiO Programs, n.d. <http://www.cehd.umn.edu/trio/default.html>). TRiO, is made up of programs which work with students through all stages of the college process and essentially act as one more relationship in what makes up a student's support system. Upward Bound works with high school students as they begin preparing for their college careers by offering classes in leadership, finding the right college and navigating the application process. Once students have been admitted to a university, TRiO Student Support Services (SSS) provides support for classes, financial aid, and balancing school and personal life. Also part of TRiO SSS is College English Transitions, which is available for first-year non-native English speakers. Lastly, the McNair Scholarship program provides support for students looking to continue their education, beyond a bachelor's degree. McNair Scholarships offer research opportunities to undergraduate students, one-third of which are underrepresented in graduate programs (McNair Scholarship, n.d., <http://www.cehd.umn.edu/trio/mcnair/default.html>).

¹ “TRiO is not an acronym but it refers to the number three, the original number of US federal programs to increase access to higher education for economically disadvantaged students.” (http://www.haskell.edu/trio/sss_faq.html)

Institutions need to better understand their student body in order to provide an environment which will foster success for all students. Considering the rich history each student brings with them shaping their unique experience, it is clearly a daunting task. This work hopes to continue a conversation², focusing on what social and institutional factors frame the academic experience of first generation college and immigrant students at a large, public research university in the U.S.

The Study

This study is a qualitative descriptive case study focusing on the relationships between first generation immigrant and college students and some of the many institutional and societal factors that contribute to their experiences at a public research university. The analysis will identify common themes from the experiences of the participants, both positive and negative, which could help drive institutional improvements and ultimately contribute to a more positive student experience for this population.

Research Question

Research Question: What are the perceptions of a small group (9) of first generation immigrant first generation college students at a large, public university regarding support from their peers, instructors and families?

The category of “first generation college student” varies from study to study. This definition can range from a student who is the first in their family to attend college, the first in their family to earn a bachelor’s degree, or even the child of a parent who did not earn a degree or attend college, regardless of whether their siblings have attended college or earned a degree (Jehangir, 2010, p. 14). Moreover, there seems to be a list of assumptions that go with the term “first generation”. These students are often also students of color, low income, or nonnative speakers of English – but not by default. Considering this, it is important to define terms for each study or unique group of focus rather than agreeing on a blanket term that could overlook the variation within a complex group.

² This conversation already exists thanks to the work of researchers in the Office of Institutional Research and Post Secondary Teaching and Learning at this particular university.

In the present study, the term *first generation immigrant* refers to a person who was not born in the country where they are now residents (the U.S.), regardless of age of arrival. The term *first generation college student* refers to an individual whose parents did not complete a bachelor's degree in any country. The term *support* is defined in terms of the respondents' answers to interview questions described below.

Description of Participants

All participants in the study met the following criteria: (a) they were enrolled in the large Mid-Western university where the study took place, (b) they were not born in the U. S. but were not international students, and (c) neither of their parents had obtained bachelor's degrees from any country. Some of the participants' parents had started college but did not finish, while others' parents did not complete high school. Some have immediate family members with some college experience or even some who hold college degrees from various countries. The participants come from a variety of cultural backgrounds, and depending on their age of arrival to the U.S., their educational experiences prior to and in the U.S. also differs greatly. Several of the participants took English as a Second Language classes during their middle and high school years; however, three identified as native English speakers. All of the participants earned diplomas from high schools in the U.S.

Table 1. Participants

Pseudonym	Native Country	Age of Arrival to U.S.	Year in School
1. Al	Somalia	12 years	Sophomore
2. Mia	Ethiopia	17 years	Senior
3. Mai Ly	Vietnam	6 years	Senior
4. Orna	Ireland	3 years	Junior
5. Pancho	Mexico	17 years	Senior
6. Zee	China	13 years	Freshman
7. Lorena	Puerto Rico	4 months	Sophomore
8. Condalisa	Liberia	9 years	Freshman
9. Sunisa	Thailand	2 years	Junior

Myself

According to some definitions, I am a first generation college student (though not a first generation immigrant). I was the first person in my immediate family to graduate from college, but I did have two siblings also attending college. I can relate to some of the common assumptions of first generation college students. I worked part-time and supplemented with student loans through my undergraduate degree, and as a graduate student I struggle to balance being the sole provider for my son, and continuing my education. I have an idea of what it is like to have to compartmentalize your life in theory, but to have the stresses from all aspects constantly running in the back of your mind – like most adults do. As Jehangir (2010) has pointed out, these different aspects don't generally work well with one another and instead they are often competing for priority and can leave one feeling inadequate in all aspects, rather than successful in any. However, there are things some of my participants have experienced that I can only begin to understand through their anecdotes. My experiences are that of a white student at a predominately white institution. I am a first generation college student but I am not a first generation immigrant. My story is different from those of my participants, but trying to make sense of my own experiences is what initiated my interest in this population. This process has also allowed me to better understand the wealth of people and resources I have available to me, which have greatly contributed to my success.

Instrumentation

A worksheet (Appendix A) was developed to elicit participants' responses, first in writing and then discussed orally with me during one on one, semi-structured interviews. The worksheet was made up of statements selected in the manner described below from the 2010 SERU survey, which had been administered to all undergraduate students (in 2010) at the institution where this study occurred. This worksheet was the reference for further questions described later in this section. The first set of statements on the worksheet was taken from the section on the SERU titled "Campus Climate for Diversity", shown below in Table 2. These questions asked the students to rate their agreement or disagreement with statements regarding their perceived level of respect on campus regarding issues with race, religion,

politics and class. The second set of statements on the worksheet was taken from the SERU section titled “Academic Engagement”, shown below in Table 3. This section asks students to rate how frequently they have had various interactions with their instructors³.

Table 2. SERU statements on “Campus Climate for Diversity” used on the participants’ worksheet

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I feel free to express my political beliefs on campus						
I feel free to express my religious beliefs on campus						
Students are respected here regardless of their economic or social class						
Students are respected here regardless of their race or ethnicity						

(210 SERU, p. 4)

Table 3. SERU statements on “Academic Engagement” used on the participants’ worksheet

	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Somewhat Often	Often	Very Often
Sought academic help from instructor or tutor when needed						
Communicated with a faculty member by e-mail or in person						
Talked with the instructor outside of class about issues and concepts derived from a course						
Interacted with faculty during lecture class sessions						

(2010 SERU, p. 4-5)

I prepared follow-up interview questions for each SERU statement (see Appendix B for a full list of follow-up questions), which were used to elicit the personal experiences of each participant relating to the topic of the SERU statements. For example, the follow-up questions used regarding the worksheet statement: “*Students are respected here regardless of their economic or social class*” were:

³ This section also asks questions regarding interactions with peers on campus. Statements regarding interactions with peers were removed from the final list of interview questions after a pilot interview. These statements were removed because follow up discussion of the the statements regarding campus climate for diversity was heavily focused on experiences with peers.

“Why did you say ‘participant’s response’?”

“Can you tell me about a time on campus when you felt aware of your economic or social class?”

“Did you feel like everyone involved in that experience was respected equally?”

Lastly in a section titled “Overall Satisfaction and Agreement” on the 2010 SERU, students are asked to answer whether they agree or disagree with the statement *“I feel like I belong at this campus”* (2010 SERU, p. 6). Participants in this study were asked the question *“Do you feel like you belong on this campus?”* but it was asked directly by the researcher and was not included in the worksheet.

Questions used in the interview regarding familial support were included based on prior research (discussed earlier in the literature review), which offered conflicting views on whether first generation college students receive support from their families in the decision to go to college and also, once they are enrolled.

Participant recruiting

Potential participants were informed of the study through a number of people on campus who work with first generation college and immigrant populations at the university. First, emails were sent to instructors of non-native sections of freshman writing classes and courses offered by the Post Secondary Teaching and Learning department, encouraging them to share the opportunity to participate with any students they thought might be eligible. Second, a variety of student groups and student services, such as TRiO advisors, were contacted and also asked to share the study with potentially eligible students. Lastly, undergraduate student employees who worked in the department where I also worked were contacted via email because a number of the student staff met one or more of the criteria. The text used to recruit potential participants can be seen in Appendix C. Snowball sampling was also used, as participants were encouraged to share the invitation to participate with friends and classmates.

Those interested in participating answered a secure online survey (see Appendix D), which determined whether they met all criteria in order to be eligible. I emailed all students who showed an interest but did not meet all criteria, and informed them that they could not participate in the study and

which criteria they did not meet⁴. I contacted students who met the required criteria to further discuss the study and to determine availability for the one-on-one interview. All interviews were held in a small room space in a campus building, which is often used for foreign language oral assessment and was equipped with a digital audio recorder. In addition to using an audio recorder, I video recorded each interview.

The majority of the participants (seven participants) had never met me prior to the interview and we had minimal email communication, which was regarding the logistics of the interview such as dates, times, and location. Two of the participants were student employees in a department where I also work, but we had never discussed their experiences on campus other than the topic of working on campus. While preparing the recording equipment, I made an effort to engage in small talk with each participant, trying to make them comfortable. This was important, considering the personal nature of some of the interview questions and that this was most of the participants' first time meeting me. Oral interviews were used to provide an opportunity for immediate clarification and mutual understanding between us [the participant and the researcher]. I also made an effort to refrain from rephrasing participant's answers in my own words, and instead tried to use the participants' exact language when asking for clarification. The issue of minimal prior relationships was a primary concern for me; however, it did not appear to hinder the interviews, as all participants shared invaluable stories and experiences. By the end of the interview, several participants capitalized on the experience by turning the tables and questioning me on my own experiences as a graduate student. It was a rewarding experience for me to become part of the larger social network on campus for each participant.

Interview Protocol

Each interview consisted of a brief introduction of my own roles on campus [alumni, current graduate student, ESL teacher and administrative staff member], a review of the topic of the study, and provision of informed consent (see Appendix E to view the consent form provided for each participant).

⁴ One person who appeared to meet the necessary criteria did later reveal that both of her parents held bachelor's degrees from their native country. This person was interviewed but is not part of the listed participants and her results were not included in this paper.

After giving consent, each participant was asked to complete in writing the worksheet with select statements from the SERU (see Appendix A). Once it was completed, the participant was interviewed using the full list of interview questions shown below (also available in Appendix B). The participants were asked to explain their answer for each item from the worksheet and to answer follow-up questions, which related to each statement. Questions that specifically addressed the research questions focused on support from family, and interactions with peers and instructors. These were:

Support from Family:

- Did your family support your decision to go to college? How so?
- Does your family support you, now that you are in college? How so?
- Do you talk about your classes or assignments with your family? Why or why not?

Interactions with Peers⁵:

- Can you tell me about a time when you did not feel free to express your political beliefs?
- Can you tell me about a time when you felt free to express your political beliefs?
- Can you tell me about a time when you did not feel free to express your religious beliefs?
- Can you tell me about a time when you felt free to express your religious beliefs?
- Can you tell me about a time on campus when you felt aware of your economic or social class?
- Did you feel like everyone involved in that experience was respected equally?
- Can you tell me about a time on campus when you felt that race was acknowledged in a disrespectful manner?
- Can you tell me about a time when you felt that race was acknowledged on campus but in a respectful manner?

Interactions with Instructors⁶:

- Do you feel comfortable approaching your instructor? What factors make you more/less comfortable?
- Can you tell me about a time when you needed help and you approached your instructor? What made you comfortable approaching that instructor? Was it a helpful experience?
- Can you tell me about a time when you needed help and you did not approach your instructor? Did it occur to you to ask them? If so, what stopped you? How did you resolve the experience?
- Can you tell me about a time when you needed to communicate with a faculty member but you did not? Why didn't you contact them?
- Can you tell me about a time when you communicated with a faculty member? Why did you contact them? Was it helpful? Why?
- Can you tell me about a time when you talked with an instructor outside of class about course content? How do you feel about that experience?
- Can you tell me about a time when you interacted with faculty during class? Why did you do this? How do you feel about that experience?
- Do you have a favorite teacher/class? Why are they your favorite teacher/class?

⁵ These questions were specifically directed to interactions with peers and were phrased to include any experience on campus; however, participant responses heavily focused on interactions with peers.

⁶ This is in addition to those listed above regarding interactions with peers.

- Have you ever had a difficult time working with a teacher? Why was it difficult? Was it ever resolved?

Data Analysis

Each interview was listened to several times and partially transcribed by the researcher. A substantial amount of each participant's responses were transcribed verbatim but not all. Any quotes used in this paper come from verbatim transcription. The primary interview questions were included in the transcription worksheet (Appendix F), and any follow up questions or prompts used by the interviewer were transcribed. Any summarized responses were done using the participant's words. After each interview was transcribed, the researcher entered all information into *Dedoose*, an online data analysis program. In this program, a new media file was created for each participant. The first set of codes assigned were question number, which allowed me to quickly view all responses to one question. All follow-up questions and responses were included under the primary question number.

In order to find common themes across all interviews, a two-step coding process was used, which was both deductive and inductive. After reviewing all data several times and considering the main topics for the interview questions (familial support, peer interactions, and instructor interactions, and sense of belonging) twenty-one primary codes were assigned, as shown in Table 4 (deductive).

Table 4. Primary codes and corresponding topic

Topic	Codes
Familial Support / Social Capital	Family as Motivation Personal Reasons as Motivation Student Services as Motivation/Support Lack of Family as Support Family as Support
Campus Climate	Perceived Appreciation of Diversity Aware of Student Groups / Services Birds of a Feather Negative Interactions with Peers Unaware of Insensitivity The Only One Like You / Feeling Different
Academic Engagement	Being Accessible Creating Community in/through the Classroom That Kid

Sense of Belonging	Yes, I Belong I Belong... now I Belong ... in some way
Other	Advice > Student Services Advice > Instructors Advice > FG Students Other

All items coded as *other* were then reviewed to determine if they could be assigned to any of the existing codes or if any new common topics became apparent (inductive). Table 5 shows the codes assigned from the original code of *other*.

Table 5. Additional codes derived from *other*

Topic	Codes
Campus Climate	other > I'm not that political/religious other > We're the same, We're students other > We have a global perspective
Academic Engagement	other > Contacting Instructors

To answer the first research question, I reviewed codes relevant to each topic in order to find common trends or themes. Results regarding the participants' perceptions of their familial support were found by searching the database for the following codes: *Family as Motivation*, *Personal Reasons as Motivation*, *Family as Support*, *Lack of Family as Support*, and *Student Services as Motivation/Support*. I soon realized that there is much overlap in interactions with instructors and peers. For example, experiences with instructors at times appeared to be effected by peer interactions. For this reason, peer and instructor interactions were considered together, but in terms of campus climate and academic engagement, in order to find similarities, differences and possible points of connection. Results regarding the participants' interactions with their peers and instructors regarding campus climate were found by searching the database for the following codes: *Perceived Appreciation of Diversity*, *Aware of Student Groups/Services*, *Birds of Feather*, *Negative Interactions with Peers*, *Unaware of Insensitivity*, and *The Only One Like You/Feeling Different*. Results regarding the participants' interactions with their peers and

instructors regarding academic engagement were found by searching the database for the following codes: *Being Accessible*, *Creating Community in/through the Classroom*, and *That Kid*.

To answer Research Question 2, I compared the findings of this small-scale qualitative analysis to the findings of other large-scale quantitative studies based on the 2009 and 2010 SERU surveys on the perceived campus climate, academic engagement and sense of belonging to determine whether the findings were consistent or contradictory in any way. This study cannot provide direct quantitative relationships with the large-scale studies but offer qualitative findings that could build off of their quantitative results. The findings from this study are being compared with three separate large-scale studies, one relating to each of the topics mentioned earlier (campus climate, academic engagement and the perceived sense of belonging). The participants in each of these studies are not identical to the participants in my study. The similarities and differences of the participants in the large-scale quantitative studies and the participants in my study will be made clear in the findings and discussion related to the second research question. The following codes were used to reflect on the participants' perceived sense of belonging: *Yes, I Belong*, *I Belong...now*, and *I Belong... in some way*.

Findings and Discussion

Each individual brings with them a rich history of experiences that contribute to their current perceptions; the methods used in this study did not allow for a full understanding of that history. This study is intended to be a preliminary understanding of the experiences of this population at one large public university, which could allow the students to set the course for future research.

Social Capital of First Generation Immigrant, First Generation College Students

It's common for research on first generation immigrant college students to reference the lack of social capital because their parents are not college educated or familiar with the U.S. education system (Sirin, et. al., 2004, Soria & Stebleton, 2012). However, as I mentioned in my review of the literature, this could be an oversimplified view of the variety of relationships these students have in their networks. According to my participants, they have received motivation and support from family, in addition to

counselors, high school teachers, and support staff on campus. Overall, the findings in this study were representative of more recent research (Bigelow, 2007, Espinoza-Herold, 2007, Lubienski, 2003), which provides an alternative to the deficit view on social capital. In the excerpt below, Condalisa describes the significance her family played in her decision to go to college:

I don't think it was really a choice not to go to college, in my family. Just cause my parents well my parent were like 'education is the key to success'. Also for myself I knew that like in this world nowadays you pretty much you have to go to college or else you're, I don't want to say nothing, but like the odds are kinda stacked against you if you don't have a college degree, so my dad's pushing me and me just knowing that what I want to do requires a college degree.

Condalisa, Q3, 3/27/13

This quote is representative of how most of the participants in this study answered the question “Why did you decide to go to college?” Almost all participants (7 of 9) referenced their families as a primary motivator. The excerpt above from Condalisa articulates the variety of relationships at play in the social capital of the participants. Her motivation came from her father as well as her perceived value of education in U.S. culture and this combination was a common occurrence among the participants. Of the participants that described their family as motivation, the reasons they gave were that it was important for them to be role models for younger siblings, to make their parents proud and to make up for missed opportunities of their parents or older family members. This demonstrates that just because someone did not go to college, does not mean they do not value education. None of these participant’s had parents who were college-educated but the majority of them were raised to see college as the “*key to success*” just like Condalisa (Q3, 3/27/13). Studies that reported lower levels of parental involvement among first generation college students (Choy, 2001) did not include the types of motivation my participant’s reported receiving from their families. Condalisa is also very aware of the fact that what she wants to do requires a college degree. This knowledge and her family support suggest that Condalisa has both social and cultural capital.

Student services also appear to be an important role in first generation immigrant and college

students' social capital. In addition to receiving support from their families, three participants described receiving support from college preparation programs or student support services in their high schools, while deciding on whether or not to go to college. In the excerpt below, from Orna, it is clear that high school staff played a critical role in filling in gaps of knowledge about college, where family could not help.

Just having teachers talk to me about and my school advisor would like check in with me about it [going to college]... and also that I took PSEO class and was like, oh this really is a possibility, like it became real to me and I was thinking that I could, that I really do want to go to college and I – I'm gonna try to go even if I ended up not being able to go, I would try it at least."

Orna, Q17, 3/8/13

While only three make an explicit reference to high school support staff or college readiness programs, six participants reported that they were aware of the expectation in U.S. culture to attend college, giving responses such as Sunisia's: "*knowing that here in America, if you don't go to college like you're not gonna have that successful future*" (Q3, 3/25/13). It's likely that they picked up on this sentiment by attending high school in the U.S., which was consistent among all participants, even among those who arrived in the U.S. in their teens. When participants experienced doubt or uncertainty about attending college, these services were able to provide encouragement and also answer questions like how to pay for college. The support services mentioned earlier in the literature review appear to play a key role in bridging the motivation these participants received from their parents with the reality of attending college. Several of the participants referenced how little their parents knew about paying for college, but that through attending college preparation classes, they were able to navigate the applications for financial aid.

While paying for college was admittedly a mystery for many of the participants' parents, their families were a source of support in other ways. When asked if their families supported their decision to go to college and if their families support them now as college students, all nine participants reported that they received support from their family. The excerpt from Sunisa, below, was indicative of the variety of

ways in which the participants defined support:

Well because I was going to be the first daughter to go to college, and so during my high school year, they're like 'oh yeah, make sure you apply for all the colleges and like if financial aid doesn't help, we'll try to like get money so you can go' and so they like, even though my parents didn't have an education background they kind of like were just like verbal support, mental, emotional, financial.

Sunisa, Q17, 3/25/13

According to the participants, they received support from their families in one or more of the following ways: providing rides to and from afterschool programs, filing their [parent's] taxes in time for FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aide), being strict about or encouraging about studying, offering help paying bills so they [student] can focus on school, and even offering to take out personal loans in order to help pay for tuition. Espinoza-Herold (2007) suggested that some of the possible ways in which first-generation college students were supported by their family are ignored in quantitative studies on parental involvement but provided an account of how one such student, Carla, received support through cultural sayings and other examples similar to those provided by the participants in this study. Much like the experience of Carla, in *Stepping beyond Sí Se Puede*, these are meaningful ways in which the parents of first generation college students contributed to their children's success today (Espinoza-Herold, 2007).

While all of the participants reported that part or all of their family supported them, it was also clear that this support did not always translate into all facets of college life. In the excerpt below, Lorena expresses how motivation without support is not enough:

Our parents are like oh yeah go, or you know you go to college but like most of them are just like, we're like the guinea pigs, ya know. We're trying to like, how do we transition from like you know, from high school to like going to college. You know, it's like a really big thing.

Lorena, Q21, 3/25/13

While no other participants described themselves as “guinea pigs” it did appear that their parent's were less capable of supporting them, once they had arrived on campus. Most of the participants (8 of 9) felt that they could not talk about their experiences on campus with their non-college educated family

members, other than regarding major events, such a large project or even dropping classes. Several stated that it was too difficult to discuss their daily experiences because their parents are busy, the concepts are not easy to translate into their parent's main language or their parent's concept of education is from a culture, which is very different from the U.S. Fortunately, a student's social capital is not exclusive to one relationship and it appears that most of the participants had found people to whom they could turn for discussing daily college life. Some had older siblings, cousins or older friends with college experience or even degrees, while others had friends on campus or friends attending another college that they could rely upon. I would argue that this is one way in which learning-communities could help provide support for this population. As shown by Jehangir (2010), learning-communities can help create smaller communities on a large campus, which could provide created networking opportunities among students on campus.

It is worth noting that feelings of motivation and support from family members were not unanimous across all participants. In addition to not being able to discuss college life with some family members, two participants felt like some family members actually discouraged them from attending college. In the excerpt below, it is clear that Orna felt that her mother supported her decision to go to college, but she described her father as indifferent to her decision.

Like my dad was always saying, I mean he didn't barely, he didn't even finish high school, I don't think, and he started a construction business, and so his deal was that you don't have to go to college, and in fact, going to college is a waste of money and a waste of time and unless you know exactly what you want to do with your life and it's absolutely required that you go to college, then go. But even if you do go, I'm not going to help. But my mom was really enthusiastic about school and she was really strict with me about getting ready for school and when I came home, I had to do my homework.

Orna, Q3, 3/8/13

This is considerably different from most participants' reports of their families' attitude toward education as the key to their "*bright future*" (Zee, Q3, 3/20/13). Pancho also expressed this attitude, recalling what his grandmother use to say: *I might not know how to read or write but I always have money in my pocket* (Q17, 3/20/13). It's possible to argue that focusing on support among students already enrolled in college may not be as revealing, in comparison to those for whom college was an unfulfilled goal. However, I

view the experiences of Orna and Pancho as indicators of how beneficial social networks other than immediate family can be. While they expressed negative views towards education from some family members, these views appeared to be balanced by relationships that valued education, as they both persisted and were upperclassmen at the time of this study. For Orna there was a combination of a supportive mother and high school teachers. For Pancho, much of his support came from his wife and in-laws, who all held bachelor's or masters' degrees.

Peer and Instructor Interactions: Campus Climate

Overall, participants were likely to report peer interactions as contributing to perceptions of a campus climate that did not appreciate or value diversity and interactions with instructor or support staff, as contributing to perceptions of a campus climate that appreciated or valued diversity. Table 6 illustrates the number of participants whom answered each of the available options, regarding their perceptions of campus climate regarding their political and religious beliefs and whether they are respected regardless of their economic class and race. The number of participants that chose to either answer between two options or that changed their answers after discussing the follow-up questions is indicative of how complicated these topics were to answer in a multiple choice format.

Table 6. Participant's Responses Regarding Perceptions of Campus Climate

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I feel free to express my political beliefs on campus				3	5	1
I feel free to express my religious beliefs on campus				3*	6*	1
Students are respected here regardless of their economic or social class				4*	3*	3
Students are respected here regardless of their race or ethnicity			2*	5*		3

*Totals are higher than 9 because some participants choose to either answer in the middle of two options or noted that they would change their answer after discussing the statement in the follow-up interview.

The follow-up questions used in this study for the statements above asked for both positive and negative instances relating to each topic in Table 6. Most of the participants (6 of 9) made reference to diversity being appreciated or valued on campus but it was not always clear if these perceptions were directed toward peers, instructors, or both. Of these six participants, two explicitly stated that they felt that their professors were respectful of differences and encouraged students to share their opinions in class, while only one participant reported that other students on campus were aware of and appreciated diversity on campus. The remaining comments were more general, such as “*You don’t get discouraged because you’re different. It’s the other way around, you get encouraged because you’re different.*” (Pancho, Q8, 3/20/13) or “*It doesn’t matter to some people, you’re always encouraged to tell where you come from and why you’re here*” (Mia, Q7, 3/19/13). The word *encourage* leads me to believe they are describing perceptions of instructors or support staff, but it is not clear if this extends to their peers. I failed to seek clarification but the number of negative experiences with peers on campus leads me to believe these general comments were referring to instructors and other university staff.

Unfortunately, six of the nine participants shared negative experiences with their peers or an awareness of negative stereotypes of them (or other groups) from their peers, regarding their race, religion, politics, or socio-economic class. These experiences varied substantially but all contributed to negative perceptions of campus climate and were directly related to interactions with their peers. These experiences fit within three categories:

1. Criticism from their peers – Four participants expressed feeling criticized by their peers. For example, Mai Ly recalls feeling judged by classmate, “*I’ve been, like, criticized for being tired in class because I have to work in the morning and go to class at night.*” (Q7, 3/19/13) and Mia reported feeling criticized by members of her own race, “*One time we have a meeting and it’s called BSU, I don’t know if you know, Black Student Association, so we had a, like people start looking at me like really weird. I’m like, you know, I’m African too*” (Q8, 3/19/13).

2. Stereotypes – Two participants expressed feeling like their peers hold negative stereotypes as true towards themselves or other groups on campus. Loreana reported that she often heard classmates make negative comments about Asian students on campus, such as *“oh the Asians are smart, they’re messing up the curve”* (Q8, 3/25/13) and Condalisa said that she feels like some of her classmates believe that *“African Americans in general [on campus] are either a. here because the school feels pity for us or umm b. because we are here for athletics. Like we-it’s not possible that we’re here because of the same reasons that they are, like academics.”* (Q7, 3/27/13).
3. Racism – Two participants shared interactions with their peers that appeared to communicate direct racism. Mai Ly was asked by a classmate to *“do the Asian accent”* (Q8, 3/19/13) and Condalisa shared the following experience:

Condalisa: *I had some racial comments thrown at me from by strangers, like people I’d never even seen in my life before and umm just randomly on the streets, I was just walking –*

Researcher: *Just walking on campus?*

Condalisa: *Yes, and they just said some things, or like did little noises that mean something negative umm towards a person of color, and I was just like ‘wow, is this what this university has to offer?’ and of course not everybody was doing it but just that incident, I was wondering like if I was at another institution, like would this be happening to me right now.”*

Researcher: *Yeah, can I ask what they said?*

Condalisa: *It’s this noise that like ignorant people have this idea that Africans sound like umm we talk like this, and he made this noise, it’s [clicking sound].*

Condalisa, Q4, 3/27/13

All of these excerpts and particularly the last excerpt above from Condalisa expresses very clearly how interactions with peers can impact a student’s perception of campus overall, especially considering that this excerpt was in response to the question *“do you feel like you belong on at this university”*. It appears that this is another way in which learning communities could be of value to all students. In addition to providing support, learning-communities much like the MLC (Jehangir, 2010) can serve as safe environments for conversations about issues such as race and economic class. I would argue that if the goal is to create “global citizens” (Huesman & Soria, 2010, p.7), it is a disservice to all students, not just

first generation immigrant and college students, to leave college thinking that racism is acceptable.

Perceptions regarding campus climate for diversity in terms of interactions with instructors was less clear-cut among participants. Four participants described instances involving instructors that they either perceived as offensive or thought their classmates perceived as offensive while also making the distinction that they did not feel that the instructor had intended to be offensive. For example, Lorena described feeling uncomfortable as a Hispanic student in her Criminal Behavior class, during a lecture on which race is more likely to commit certain crimes. She expressed that she did not feel the instructor was being disrespectful because “*the facts are the facts and the statistics are the statistics*” (Lorena, Q8, 3/25/13) but it made her uncomfortable when the instructor addressed how certain crimes are more likely to be committed by certain races, without addressing the students of those races in the class or how they might feel. She felt as though it had been ignored that there were students of those races in class who clearly offered an alternative to those statistics. This seems reminiscent of the way in which Jehangir’s (2010) participants expressed that after the MLC, they at times felt as though their knowledge was not valued. Lorena’s experiential knowledge, as a Hispanic person, was not as relevant as the statistics her instructor presented in class.

In general, all participants expressed that they were comfortable expressing their religious or political beliefs, if they wanted to do so. When participants were asked whether they felt free to express their political and religious beliefs on campus, three of them acknowledged student groups as a resource that they knew was available to help them express themselves, should they want to do so. However, three participants also noted that they did not strongly agree or disagree with the statements regarding religion and politics because they did not have strong religious or political affiliation. At least among the nine participants in this study, issues related to race and economic class appeared to be larger topics of concern regarding campus climate for diversity.

The findings of this interview study regarding campus climate were consistent with results from a

report based on the analysis of the 2010 SERU and compiled by the Office of Institutional Research for the Office of Equity and Diversity (Huesman & Soria, 2010), which found that, “Of all of those groups [students, faculty, administrators, staff, student government, and the campus community], students believed that other students placed the least amount of value on diversity.” and that “Students are more likely to report that their peers express negative or stereotypical views about certain groups than faculty or staff /administrators” (Huesman & Soria, 2010, p. 2). This report was based on responses to the 2010 SERU from *all* undergraduate students at the same university as this study. The participants were not restricted by first generation status of any kind. It was commissioned by the Office of Equity and Diversity in order to provide a “quantitative snapshot” of where they are in terms of their “commitment to creating a more welcoming and affirming campus climate” (Huesman & Soria, 2010, p. 3).

Peer and Instructor Interactions: Academic Engagement

The questions used in this study regarding Academic Engagement were intended to allow insight into interactions with instructors. However, as noted earlier in this paper, it became apparent that to consider instructor and peer interactions separately would be an oversimplified view. This relationship is most clearly visible in the theme of creating community in classroom, similar to that developed in the MLC (Jehangir, 2010). Eight of the nine participants stated that they benefited in one way or another from feeling connected to their classmates and their instructor⁷. One of these participants, Mia, reported that she is more likely to speak up in class (both asking and answering questions) because this sense of community can actually mitigate her fear of talking in class (Mia, Q12, 3/19/13). Another participant, Condalisa, stated that she was able to contribute ideas for discussion from her experiences outside of class, which allowed her to create a more meaningful experience with the course content (Condalisa, Q11, 3/27/13).

⁷ It is promising to hear that participants are encountering this sense of community on campus, but because this study takes place at the same university as that of Jehangir’s 2010 study on the MLC and there is overlap in participant criteria, it is possible that my participants could actually be describing experiences from the MLC.

While it appeared that a sense of community was created through peer and instructor interactions, it was also clear that instructors have considerable control over creating a positive environment. In the excerpt below, Loreana describes, in her opinion, the two types of teachers on campus:

I always say that there's two different types of people in the word or two types of teachers. There's the ones that just care about their... they care about what they're teaching and they don't really care about if you get it or not, they're just going to teach it and that's what they do. And then there's another set that says, ya know, I'm here to teach history, and I love teaching history, and I want you guys to all love it, history. I'm going to do my best to make you guys all love history, and I love those types of teachers because it really makes me feel like, oh like she actually does want us to do good in this class, not just because it's required or not just because she likes it. She really wants us to do well.

Lorena, Q15, 3/25/13

From Loreana's description above, it is clear that the investment her instructor makes in her as a student has an impact on her investment in the class. Some of the other ways given by the participants that instructors can build a greater sense of community in their classes were: arriving to class early and staying after, assessing student comprehension throughout the class and reviewing content as needed, providing personal experiences with the class which are relevant to the course topic, and overwhelmingly by providing an opportunity for small group and whole class discussions. One participant noted that in-class discussion allowed her to bond with her classmates and another appreciated being able to hear what her classmates thought about the class content.

Generally, peers impacted some participant's willingness to speak up in class, as four participants referenced not wanting to be the person who asks too many questions because their classmates will become annoyed. Nonetheless, one participant noted being aware of this and not caring because he gets an immediate answer to his questions (A1, Q12, 3/19/13) and one participant did clarify that she did not want to sound like she "*falls victim to her class*" (Condalisa, Q12, 3/27/13) because she will ask the questions she needs to ask, if not during class, then after class. So while they expressed being aware of how the behavior could be received by their peers, the emphasis was on seeking answers in a variety of ways and

not just by asking questions during class. However, based on the findings reported earlier, it is possible that instructors could mitigate their student's apprehension to speak up by providing ample opportunity for interaction among classmates.

The descriptions my participants provided of positive interactions with instructors were similar to those expressed by the students in Jehangir's (2010) study on learning communities. While the MLC is a great example of how learning communities can create a connection between peers, instructors, course content and personal experience, it apparently does not need to be so complex. Another study on the impact of learning communities (Baker & Pomerantz, 2000) found that simply creating learning communities with three of the same classes and no thematic relationship had positive outcomes on students' experiences. When compared with students with similar demographics, students who were enrolled in the learning communities "...had higher grade point averages... were more satisfied with their college experiences, and were less likely to be placed on academic probation" (p. 115). The students in this study were not necessarily first generation immigrant or college students, but they were mostly commuter students and worked while attending classes, like some first generation students. This study suggests that learning communities, in the simplest form (a group of students taking the same classes), can have positive implications for student retention and success and could be a powerful resource for creating a connection to campus for populations who may not normally feel part of the college experience.

While the considerable number of negative peer interactions was surprising to me, what stood out were the ways in which the participants stated that their instructors could contribute to a greater sense of community in the classroom and connection with the campus overall. The suggestions listed earlier, such as coming to class early and being available after class, were taken directly from the participants' responses and show how simple changes could help create a sense of belonging for our students. In an article on how to put research on student retention into action, Tinto (2006) suggests that research done on

student retention does not always result in clear answers of how to keep students; to understand why students' leave does not always tell a university how to prevent future students from leaving (p. 6). Students' interactions with their instructors generally have a positive affect on student development (Kim & Sax, 2009) but the term interaction is often defined in vague terms, such as talking in person or by email about course content. This tells us that interactions with instructors are important but not necessarily how to facilitate it in the classroom. For this reason, there is a need to better understand what classroom practices result in positive student experiences. Previous researchers (Tinto, 2006; Jehangir, 2010) have pointed out that while classroom interactions are known to be important among faculty, it is not always reinforced in things such as obtaining tenure or promoted through regular teacher training. The findings from this study could provide suggestions for how to better define the term *interactions* for future research. This in turn could produce concrete suggestions for future teacher training.

A study of first year college students' academic engagement done by Soria and Stebleton (2012) compared the student engagement of first generation versus non-first generation students. The results also come from responses to the 2010 SERU survey collected at the same university as this study and reports that, "first-generation students consistently reported lower measures of academic engagement than their non-first-generation peers ... specifically, first-generation students reported having fewer interactions with faculty in the classroom and contributed less frequently to class discussions" (Soria & Stebleton, 2012, p. 8). It is not possible to say whether the findings from my study are in line with results from this quantitative study that reports academic engagement in terms of comparison and only accounts for first year students. However, it is possible to use the findings from my interview study to make informed recommendations on how to combat reports of fewer faculty and classroom interactions found by Soria and Stebelton. For example, one participant (Mia) reported that having a sense of community in the classroom through interacting with her peers resulted in her feeling more comfortable speaking up in class.

Soria and Stebelton (2012) noted that “it is believed that first-generation students’ lower social capital results in their decreased academic engagement” (p. 9) and they recommend increased opportunities for formal and informal interactions with instructors. However, my findings suggest that in addition to increased opportunities for interaction with instructors, it may also be key to create increased opportunities for interactions with their classmates, such as class and small group discussion.

Sense of Belonging

Each participant was asked directly if they felt like they belonged at the university where this study took place and I intentionally avoided offering further clarification, in order to let the participants direct their responses toward what was most prominent to them. Their responses fit in three categories:

1. Yes - Two participants responded that they do feel like they belong here, with little hesitation. One of these participants, Mia, noted that she took part in a “*bridge*” program that allowed her to come to campus a month before classes started, which made her feel like she belonged before classes even started (Q4, 3/19/2013).
2. I belong... in some respects – Three participants reported that they do feel like they belong within some facet of campus but not as a whole. For example, Sunisia said that “*as a whole not really, but in my college yes*” (Q4, 3/25/13) and Mai Ly noted that she felt like she belonged within her major (Q4, 3/19/13).
3. I belong... now – Four participants described their sense of belonging on campus as a process. One of these participants, Pancho, said, “*Finally, I do*” (Q4, 3/20/13), when asked if he felt like he belonged on campus, adding that it was a long journey.

As I mentioned earlier, sense of belonging is a complicated equation. While it’s possible to list several of the factors that might contribute to one’s sense of belonging, it’s not possible to say which factors contribute most greatly to one’s perceived sense of belonging because it is unique for everyone. Based on the responses from these participants, it is also clear that it cannot be fully understood in an isolated

context. As addressed by Pancho (Q4, 3/20/13), sense of belonging is a process and one that can experience highs and lows. And as Sunisia (Q4, 3/25/13) pointed out, it may be sufficient for a student to feel a sense of belonging within their college or major and not the campus as a whole.

A large-scale study titled “*Do I Belong Here*” by Stebleton, Huesman Jr. and Kuzhabekova (2010) used SERU data collected in 2009 from six different universities, including the university where this study took place. This study compared self-reported levels of satisfaction and sense of belonging among immigrant students on these campuses. It found that “immigrant status may lead to a lower sense of belonging at major public research universities” (Stebleton, et. al., 2010, p. 6). Again, it is not possible to determine whether findings from my interview study were consistent with results from “*Do I Belong Here*,” but the reported experiences relating to sense of belonging of the participants in my study, shared earlier, could provide insight into what contributes to one’s sense of belonging, beyond immigrant status. The participants in my study all stated that they do feel like they belong, but that it took time for them to feel this way. The variety of perceptions within this small-scale study demonstrates how difficult it is to fully understand something as complex as sense of belonging through questionnaires.

Conclusion

One issue mentioned in the introduction to this study is that it is not clear based on the existing research whether first generation immigrant and college have unique needs among other first generation college students. The findings in this study did not answer this question but one participant did reference a possible advantage first generation immigrant students may have over their fellow classmates. In the excerpt below, Pancho describes how his immigrant experience allows him to relate more easily with others from outside the dominant culture.

I’m pretty sure it’s – if you ask me something related with Ethiopia, I might be you know, a little bit, might have – but because I have some understanding from other countries, I might be able to relate it more to them.

Pancho, Q5, 3/20/13

This could be a valuable skill, especially when you consider the strategic objective mentioned earlier (Recruit, educate, challenge, and graduate outstanding students who become highly motivated lifelong learners, leaders, and global citizens). In some respects, first generation immigrants, by default, were raised as global citizens.

The findings in this study provided some common themes across participants and are valuable as they add to the short supply of qualitative research on this population. First, while familial support was not unanimous, participants reported a variety of relationships that contributed to their social and cultural capital. Second, it was apparent that interactions with peers played a significant role in perceptions of campus climate, as well as academic engagement. Third, overall interactions with instructors appeared to be positive and perceived as appreciating diversity. And lastly, while participants reported negative experiences with their peers, they also spoke to the ways in which instructors can mitigate these experiences, such as fostering a sense of community in the classroom. As a teacher, this was one of the more powerful findings of this study. It has changed the way I will approach my future students. I will make a conscious effort to connect them with their classmates by building in opportunities for them to share their opinions and hear from their peer. I will try to maintain some flexibility in my planning, to allow students some control over setting an agenda that connects to their daily lives. I will let them know that I am available when they need me by setting office hours after getting an idea of their availability, by arriving to class early and by waiting to pack up my things until after they have left.

Limitations of the Study

Some limitations of this study are worth noting. One such limitation is the vast amount of information covered in each interview. The design of this study only allowed for a very broad understanding of wide range of topics. Several follow-up interviews with each participant would be necessary in order to have a more in-depth understanding, and future qualitative research design on this topic could benefit from this.

Another possible limitation is in the nature of the questions used in the interviews. More negative experiences many have been reported when asked for a specific experience, because “neutral” experiences probably did not seem noteworthy to the participant during the interview. For example, the participants did not generally describe experiences of not hearing a racist comment because that would not stand out.

Opportunities for Future Researcher

While there appears to be a growing body of quantitative studies focusing on first generation immigrant and college students, further qualitative research is needed in order to better understand this heterogeneous group. Universities could also benefit from longitudinal studies that could provide insight into first generation students’ experiences before and during their college careers. There is also a need for better understanding the variation among first generation immigrant college students who are also first generation college students, and those who are not, in order to determine what could be unique about this specific group.

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Appendix A

Participant Worksheet

Indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following statements:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I feel free to express my political beliefs on campus						
I feel free to express my religious beliefs on campus						
Students are respected here regardless of their economic or social class						
Students are respected here regardless of their race or ethnicity						

How frequently during this academic year have you done each of the following?

	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Somewhat Often	Often	Very Often
Sought academic help from instructor or tutor when needed						
Communicated with a faculty member by e-mail or in person						
Talked with the instructor outside of class about issues and concepts derived from a course						
Interacted with faculty during lecture class sessions						

Questions and statements taken from the 2010 Student Experience at a Research University (SERU) survey. To view the full survey, go to:

http://www.oir.umn.edu/static/surveyreports/seru/2010/SERU_summary.pdf.

Appendix B

Full list of notes and interview questions used by the researcher

- Introduce myself and roles on campus.

“Before we start, I just want to go over the details of the study and be sure to answer any questions you have. Here is a copy of the consent form for you to review. I need to begin recording now, so that I have a record of your consent.”

- Give participant their copy of the consent form

“This study focuses on the experiences or stories of first generation college and immigrant students at the University of Minnesota. Previous research has shown that it is more likely for a student to leave college with a degree, if they feel like they belong at that college. I will ask you some general questions, like “Do you feel like you belong at the University of Minnesota?” and then ask you to follow up with examples or stories about times when you did or did not feel like you belonged here. You can decline to answer any questions, and you can decide to no longer participate at any time. Do you have any questions about me or the study? [question/answer] You can also email me or ask me questions at any time, during the study. If you do not want to participate, you do not need to provide a reason and you will not be penalized for not participating. Do you still want to participate in this study?”

“For part of the interview, I would like to discuss these topics. Could you please take a minute to complete this excerpt from the SERU survey.”

- Give Ss interview sheet

“Before we start, I have a few general questions.”

Are you a native English speaker? What other languages do you speak?

If not native, did you take ESL classes? When did you learn English?

What is your major? What do you study?

Why did you decide to go to college?

Do you feel like you belong at the University of Minnesota?

“And now I’d like to discuss your responses to the short survey...”

I feel free to express my political beliefs on campus

... *Why did you say ‘participant’s response’?*

... *Can you tell me about a time when you did not feel free to express your political beliefs?*

... *Can you tell me about a time when you felt free to express your political beliefs?*

I feel free to express my religious beliefs on campus

... *Why did you say ‘participant’s response’?*

... *Can you tell me about a time when you did not feel free to express your religious beliefs?*

... *Can you tell me about a time when you felt free to express your religious beliefs?*

Students are respected here regardless of their economic or social class

... *Why did you say ‘participant’s response’?*

... *Can you tell me about a time on campus when you felt aware of your economic or social class?*

... *Did you feel like everyone involved in that experience was respected equally?*

Students are respected here regardless of their race or ethnicity

... *Why did you say ‘participant’s response’?*

... Can you tell me about a time on campus when you felt that race was acknowledged in a disrespectful manner?

... Can you tell me about a time when you felt that race was acknowledged on campus but in a respectful manner?

Sought academic help from instructor or tutor when needed

... Why did you say 'participant's response'?

... Do you feel comfortable approaching your instructor? What factors make you more (or less) comfortable?

... Can you tell me about a time when you needed help and you approached your instructor? What made you comfortable approaching that instructor? Was it a helpful experience?

... Can you tell me about a time when you needed help and you did NOT approach your instructor? Did it occur to you to ask them? If so, what stopped you? How did you resolve the experience?

Communicated with a faculty member by e-mail or in person

... Why did you say 'participant's response'?

... Can you tell me about a time when you needed to communicate with a faculty member but you did not? Why didn't you contact them?

... Can you tell me about a time when you communicated with a faculty member? Why did you contact them? Was it helpful? Why?

Talked with the instructor outside of class about issues and concepts derived from a course

... Why did you say 'participant's response'?

... Can you tell me about a time when you talked with an instructor outside of class about course content? How do you feel about that experience?

Interacted with faculty during lecture class sessions

... Why did you say 'participant's response'?

... Can you tell me about a time when you interacted with faculty during class? Why did you do this? How do you feel about that experience?

... Do you have a favorite teacher or class? Why are they your favorite teacher or class?

... Have you ever had a difficult time working with a teacher? Why was it difficult? Was it ever resolved? How?

"Now, I have a few of my own questions about your experience at the U and about your family."

... What classes do you do really well in? What class activities do you do well?

... What classes are difficult for you? What class activities are difficult for you?

... Did your family support your decision to go to college?

... Does your family support you, now that you are in college?

... Do you talk about your classes or assignments with your family?

"And lastly, I want to get your feedback on how things can be made better."

... What student services have you used or been assigned to use? How were these services helpful? How could they be improved?

... What advice do you have for your teachers that would help them make first generation students' experiences better?

... What advice do you have for other first generation students?

“My paper will share common themes or experiences that I find across all of my interviews. At times, I might use a specific story to highlight that topic. No real names will be used in the paper. If I use one of your stories...”

... What would you like your pseudonym to be?

Appendix C

Example Email used to contact potential participants

What is the experience of first generation immigrant students at the University of Minnesota?

This study focuses on the experiences or stories of students at the University of Minnesota who are the first in their families to attend college, and who were not born in the United States. Previous research has shown that it is more likely for a student to leave college with a degree, if they feel a connection or sense of belonging with their college. The stories of these students will help the University better understand the challenges these students have, as well as the strategies they have for being successful students.

During the interview, you will be asked questions like "Do you feel like you belong at the University of Minnesota?" Then I will ask you to explain your answers with examples or stories about times when you did or did not feel like you belonged.

Other important information:

- All questions are optional (you do not need to answer any questions you do not want to answer) and you can decide to leave the study at any time.
- The interviews will be video and audio recorded. All files will be kept private.
- The interviews will last approximately 45-60 minutes. The interviews can go longer, but you will not be asked to stay longer than 60 minutes. These interviews can be scheduled around your availability.
- Your real name will not be used in the study.
- \$25 gift cards given for participation (options: Target, Starbucks, or the bookstore)

You can email Jenny at boexx054@umn.edu with any questions. If you want to participate, you can email Jenny or answer the questions in this "[Questionnaire to Determine Eligibility](#)".

In order to participate:

- you must be a current student at the University of Minnesota
- you must have been born in a country other than the United States
- your parents must not have bachelor degrees

Appendix D

Questionnaire to Determine Eligibility – submitted via a secure Google Form and available at:
<https://docs.google.com/a/umn.edu/spreadsheet/viewform?formkey=dFViMHFTbklvSEdyQ05WdFVWU1hud0E6MQ#gid=0>

Name:

University Email Address:

Phone number:

Alternative Email Address:

Do either of your parents have bachelor's degrees?

- No, neither of my parents have bachelor's degrees.
- Yes, both of my parents have bachelor's degrees.
- Yes, my mother has a bachelor's degree.
- Yes, my father has a bachelor's degree.

In which country were you born?

At what age did you arrive in the United States?

What is your residency status in the United States?

Are you currently enrolled as a student at “university name”?

- Yes
- No

Select your current year from the given options.

- Freshman
- Sophomore
- Junior
- Senior

Including the current semester (Spring 2013), how many semesters have you attended the “university name”?

Have you attended any college or university other than the University of Minnesota?

- Yes
- No

If you answered "yes" to the question above, please list all other colleges and universities you have attended AND the number of semesters you attended each school.

What is your experience with school BEFORE arriving in the United States? (Please describe what level in school and where it was located.)

What schooling did you complete in the United States? (Please describe what level in school and where it was located.)

Appendix E
Consent Form

Sense of Belonging in First Generation Students at “university name”

You are invited to be in a research study of sense of belonging among first generation students attending the University of Minnesota. You were selected as a possible participant because you met the criteria to participate and expressed an interest in participating in the study. We ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

This study is being conducted by Jennifer L. Boe, Second Language Studies, UMN.

Procedures:

If you agree to be in this study, we would ask you to do the following things:

Participate in 1 interview with the researcher, which will be audio and video recorded. The interview questions will be about your experience as a student at the University of Minnesota and all questions are optional. The interview will take 45-60 minutes.

Confidentiality:

The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report we might publish, we will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely and only researchers will have access to the records. All audio and video recordings of the interviews will be stored on a password-protected computer and will not be saved with any identifying information (such as your x500). The recordings will only be made accessible to the researchers.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the University of Minnesota. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any questions or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

Contacts and Questions:

The researcher conducting this study is Jennifer L. Boe. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact them at 110 Jones Hall, (507) 438-4409, boexx054@umn.edu. If you are not comfortable contacting the researcher directly, her advisor, Martha Bigelow, can be contacted at mbigelow@umn.edu or (612) 624-7087.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researchers, **you are encouraged** to contact the Research Subjects' Advocate Line, D528 Mayo, 420 Delaware St. SE, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455; (612) 625-1650.

Appendix F

Transcription Worksheet

Q1. Are you a native English speaker? What other languages do you speak?	
Q2. What is your major? What do you study?	
Q3. Why did you decide to go to college?	
Q4. Do you feel like you belong at the [name of institution]?	
Q5. I feel free to express my political beliefs on campus.	
Q6. I feel free to express my religious beliefs on campus.	
Q7. Students are respected here regardless of their economic or social class.	
Q8. Students are respected here regardless of their race or ethnicity.	
Q9. Sought academic help from instructor or tutor when needed.	
Q10. Communicated with a faculty member by email or in person.	
Q11. Talked with the instructor outside of class about issues and concepts derived from a course.	
Q12. Interacted with faculty during lecture class sessions.	
Q13. Do you have a favorite teacher or class?	
Q14. Have you ever had a difficult time working with a teacher?	
Q15. What classes do you do really well in? What class activities do you do well?	
Q16. What classes are difficult for you? What class activities are difficult for you?	
Q17. Did your family support your decision to go to college?	
Q18. Does your family support you, now that you are in college?	
Q19. Do you talk about your classes or assignments with your family?	
Q20. What student services have you used or been assigned to use? How were these services helpful? How could they be improved?	
Q21. What advice do you have for your teachers that would help them make FG students' experiences better?	

Q22. What advice do you have for other FG students?	

Appendix G

Transcription Worksheet – A1

- Sophomore, Chemical Laboratory Science
- born in Somlia, arrived in USA at age 12
- completed middle school and high school in USA
- native Somali speaker, took ESL middle school and freshman year high school

Q1. Are you a native English speaker? What other languages do you speak?	
	see above
Q2. What is your major? What do you study?	
	see above
Q3. Why did you decide to go to college?	
	- to get a job that uses his brain, he's interested in the sciences.
Q4. Do you feel like you belong at the [name of institution]?	
	- he's beginning to this semester. previously no, but he's made some changes now and that has helped. he's taken control of his schedule. he has a job on campus that is stable, pays well, and doesn't distract him from his studies. he felt like the coursework his freshman year were not easy, but not difficult enough to make him focus his studies. but then in his spring semester he had to drop two classes and take summer classes. but in his second year, he became more independent, he lived on his own, he had just had surgery on his leg. he was put on academic probation and he this was a big wake up call for him.
Q5. I feel free to express my political beliefs on campus.	
	Agree - he felt like with the vote yes/no it put everyone on campus on one side or the other. he feels like he is an open minded person and he heard both sides, but he comes from a religious family so he decided to vote yes and no, so his vote would not count. he feels like people on both sides don't agree with his decision – his Muslim friends say he should vote yes, and others say 'you don't really support' us. in class he is comfortable expressing his opinion. he doesn't want to be the only person with an opinion, so that doesn't play a part in his openness, too.
Q6. I feel free to express my religious beliefs on campus.	
	Agree - as a Muslim it can be more difficult because you have to pray 5 times a day. other than the one place in Coffman, there is no place to pray. one time someone came up to him while he was on the ground praying, and with his crutches next to him. the person thought he had fallen but later apologized. there isn't an environment for him to pray without people seeing them. he works on campus, but he hasn't discussed this with his boss. he tries to find a time for his prayers when work is less busy, but it is harder when he works longer shifts and he arranges it with his coworkers. he feels like people will think he is overly religious for having to pray.

Q7. Students are respected here regardless of their economic or social class.	
	<p>Strongly Agree</p> <p>- he's never had someone look down upon him because of his economic status. he feels like he's like anybody else. among classmates, he feels like people are divided by race. there is diversity on campus, but in the dorms all the students are white and in some of his classes, he's the only black student. he sees it in the fraternity houses – only white students go into this house and only black students in others.</p> <p>JB- can you tell me about a time when you felt aware of economic class?</p> <p>- no</p>
Q8. Students are respected here regardless of their race or ethnicity.	
	<p>Strongly Agree</p> <p>- he's never met a teacher who's racist.</p> <p>- in a public speaking class, for his final he had to give a 5 minute speech. and for the final class they met in a bar/restaurant but some of his Muslim classmates thought it was unacceptable for them to go there. they contacted the teacher and some decided to not attend, some still attended. he made a comment that "we're not all the same" and he felt like that was wrong, because maybe she thought he was saying that they're more extreme.</p>
Q9. Sought academic help from instructor or tutor when needed.	
	<p>Somewhat Often</p> <p>- when he has a question with his homework, he goes after class. if he has questions during lecture, he raises his hand and asks.</p> <p>- they have to be willing to help, by not rushing you, and not limiting the time. having an open office is helpful and trying to explain things in different ways.</p> <p>- he had a bad experience with an instructor who did not explain the homework, even when it would be on the exam. in situations like this he goes to tutors and tries to teach himself.</p>
Q10. Communicated with a faculty member by email or in person.	
	<p>Somewhat Often</p> <p>- it's more likely to bring up questions via email, unless it comes up during the lecture. it doesn't come up often because he doesn't often have questions about course content. he has a friend who tells his professors about all his problems, or excuses, and gets extra time. he's not like that because he thinks it could be really awkward if the</p>

	<p>instructor says no. if there is something he does wrong, he just faces the consequences.</p> <p>- when he thinks about this past fall semester, he should have sought help but he didn't because he felt most the problems were self-inflicted but were really environmental.</p>
Q11. Talked with the instructor outside of class about issues and concepts derived from a course.	
	<p>Rarely</p> <p>- outside of class he thinks of not including office hours or emails. he goes to his TAs office hours often, he finds them less scary, and they often do the grading.</p> <p>- he doesn't have "the luxury" of going "the extra step of learning how it's applied or how it's derived". it's a luxury because it isn't necessary for passing the class. if you understand it you should focus on other things you don't understand before going more depth on this topic. since he usually has 15-17 credits he does not have time for that.</p>
Q12. Interacted with faculty during lecture class sessions.	
	<p>Very Often</p> <p>- he's very talkative. in class when the topic is very interesting, he asks questions to get more information because he enjoys the class and he isn't shy about raising his hand. this makes him feel good because he gets an answer but sometimes he feels like he's the only person talking and "the guy that everybody hates". sometimes people ask him 'why do you take this class so seriously?' ... and the other students are on facebook or playing games. he takes all of his classes seriously because he is trying to go from academic probation to the dean's list and some people don't appreciate all his questions.</p>
Q13. Do you have a favorite teacher or class?	
	<p>- he has a favorite class that he works hard in, it does not come easily to him. he is retaking the class that he really likes because the instructor always encourages students to speak up if they do not understand. both instructors assess the class – how do you feel about the class 'good' 'bad'.</p>
Q14. Have you ever had a difficult time working with a teacher?	
	<p>- he has one class that puts more effort into describing things that are not complicated. she doesn't get her point across. in this class he goes to the TA when he has questions.</p>
Q15. What classes do you do really well in? What class activities do you do well?	
	<p>- he likes group discussions, sometimes he feels like he's carrying the discussion, sometimes he feels matched. when no one else talks, he'll speak up.</p>
Q16. What classes are difficult for you? What class activities are difficult for you?	
	<p>NA</p>

Q17. Did your family support your decision to go to college?	
	- yes, he doesn't have anyone older than him who finished college. he wanted to live in the dorms but his family did not encourage that. he originally went to another campus, but when he got there and saw that it was "overwhelmingly white" and felt like everyone would have thought that he was weird. he also received his financial package which did not include dorms or meal plans, so he decided to live off campus.
Q18. Does your family support you, now that you are in college?	
	- yes, they expect him to do well but he doesn't really have anyone helping him. he's the first person in his 'group' or clan to go to college and he doesn't feel like he can go to them with questions or for help.
Q19. Do you talk about your classes or assignments with your family?	
	- he talked with his aunt when he had to drop classes, she knows that dropping or failing a course is bad. when he is going through something major, he'll talk with someone. it was his advisor that helped him make that decision. - he talks about feeling bad about having to drop two classes and his poor performance.
Q20. What student services have you used or been assigned to use? How were these services helpful? How could they be improved?	
	- the writing center was very helpful. he wishes they had an online system (researcher told him about their online option). he uses the tutor offices for his specific courses, like Chemistry .
Q21. What advice do you have for your teachers that would help them make FG students' experiences better?	
	- contact us, not put more time into them but check in to see how things are going.
Q22. What advice do you have for other FG students?	
	- get your priorities straight, he has a job that relates to his major, and the job schedule works around his class schedule, create a study schedule-manage your time. don't study with friends, because there are always distractions – go to the library. remove FB from your phone! unsubscribe to netflix.

Appendix H

Transcription Worksheet – Mia

- Senior, Child Psychology and Public Health minor
- born in Ethiopia / arrived in USA at 17
- completed 1-7 outside of US, completed 10-12 of HS in USA.
- native Amharic and Oromo / took ESL in H.S.

Q1. Are you a native English speaker? What other languages do you speak?	
	see above
Q2. What is your major? What do you study?	
	see above
Q3. Why did you decide to go to college?	
	- first in her family to go to college, it's a big deal to be a role model for her siblings, for her community, to show them that they can do it. she wants to go to graduate school for child psychology.
Q4. Do you feel like you belong at the [name of institution]?	
	- yeah, especially her freshman year, because she did a summer program before coming here. it was a bridge program for the month before classes. they took classes, explored the U. by the time she started classes she felt like she belonged here.
Q5. I feel free to express my political beliefs on campus.	
	Somewhat Agree - she's not a very political person. she feels like some people don't want to hear about war going on in Ethiopia. she is part of the Oromo student union, and she felt like people wouldn't listen when she tried to talk with them about her culture. this was inside the student union.
Q6. I feel free to express my religious beliefs on campus.	
	Agree - you can express, you can wear (scarf), and some people want to know and she feels comfortable explaining. there's never been a time she didn't feel free to express her beliefs.
Q7. Students are respected here regardless of their economic or social class.	
	Agree - maybe I should say sometimes or between. it doesn't matter to some people, you're always encouraged to tell where you come from and why you're here.
Q8. Students are respected here regardless of their race or ethnicity.	
	Somewhat Agree "One time we have a meeting and it's called BSU, I don't know if you know, Black Student Association, so we had a, like people start looking at me like really weird. I'm like, you know, I'm African too." she didn't feel welcomed there. she was the only one wearing a cover up and felt like she was not included. she didn't feel like they were disrespectful to her but just that she was not welcomed.

Q9. Sought academic help from instructor or tutor when needed.	
	Often - she has one professor that she connects with when she needs help with classwork but even for other issues, like changing her major. he helped her with writing. if she has questions she will usually ask in class and not necessarily visit office hours. - when instructors seems serious “you should know this”, this makes her less comfortable approaching an instructor.
Q10. Communicated with a faculty member by email or in person.	
	Often - she doesn't prefer one more than the other. - she's had one instructor who she emailed, but they didn't respond until it was too late.
Q11. Talked with the instructor outside of class about issues and concepts derived from a course.	
	Somewhat Often - she'll ask if she has a question if she's stuck but not just to discuss because of her interest.
Q12. Interacted with faculty during lecture class sessions.	
	Often - she likes asking questions in class, but sometimes she keeps them to herself. sometimes she won't answer if she thinks she's wrong or she is shy. - she has one class that she is not scared to ask questions or answer questions because she feels comfortable in the class. everyone else was very interactive and this makes her more comfortable. the professor makes you more interested in the topic and sets it up so you get to know your classmates.
Q13. Do you have a favorite teacher or class?	
	- the professor makes the class fun, because there are activities, presentations based on favorite subjects,
Q14. Have you ever had a difficult time working with a teacher?	
	- no
Q15. What classes do you do really well in? What class activities do you do well?	
	- psychology classes because she likes critical thinking. she likes presentations.
Q16. What classes are difficult for you? What class activities are difficult for you?	
	- math is difficult for her.
Q17. Did your family support your decision to go to college?	
	- yes, her dad always said she needs to go to college. and her mom encouraged her. it was her dad that suggested she go here.

Q18. Does your family support you, now that you are in college?	
	- yeah, for the first two years she tried to do nursing but decided to change her major and her family still supports her decision.
Q19. Do you talk about your classes or assignments with your family?	
	- no, it's hard to explain to them. they know that it's harder than high school and tell her to study
Q20. What student services have you used or been assigned to use? How were these services helpful? How could they be improved?	
	- she's used MCAE, she works there, she volunteers, for them and she does a leadership program with them. she finds it helpful because they have events every month, a place to express yourself. she has no suggestions for improvement.
Q21. What advice do you have for your teachers that would help them make FG students' experiences better?	
	- make them feel welcomed and be understanding. she struggled with writing, and some professors don't understand that her writing isn't going to be the same as someone who grew up with English.
Q22. What advice do you have for other FG students?	
	- use resources provided here because they are helpful, like the summer program she had before she started.

Appendix I

Transcription Worksheet – Mai Ly

- Senior / Family Social Science
- Native Vietnamese speaker / took ESL 1-5 grades
- Born in Vietnam / arrived in US at age 6

Q1. Are you a native English speaker? What other languages do you speak?	
	see above
Q2. What is your major? What do you study?	
	see above
Q3. Why did you decide to go to college?	
	- it was expected from her family, her family wanted her to have a “white collar job, better income” and take the financial stress off her.
Q4. Do you feel like you belong at the [name of institution]?	
	- at the university as a whole – “possibly” but she does within her major, and also with the Y on campus. - she has some instructors who she feels comfortable opening up to
Q5. I feel free to express my political beliefs on campus.	
	Agree - since the campus is so big, she knows that if she wanted to express her political beliefs, she would be able to join a groups. - most of her classes encourage her to express political opinions. her major discusses family policy and she feels comfortable discussing these topics in her classes. most of her professors create a safe environment where you can share your opinions.
Q6. I feel free to express my religious beliefs on campus.	
	Agree - she’s Catholic and knows there are a lot of Catholics on campus but she doesn’t follow it strictly. she feels like there are a lot of people like her on campus. it doesn’t really come up often for her
Q7. Students are respected here regardless of their economic or social class.	
	Somewhat Agree - it depends on where it’s coming from. she feels like her instructors do respect the differences “I’ve been, like, criticized for being tired in class because I have to work in the morning and go to class at night. Whereas the other person that criticized me, he didn’t have to work, his parents paid for everything.” She feels like some of her classmates can’t relate to her lifestyle, because they don’t need to work and go to school. they can’t understand why she hasn’t done all her readings or why she is tired. JB- can you tell me about a time when you felt aware of you status?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vietnamese culture is very concerned with social status, buying name brands. she doesn't have many Vietnamese friends on campus. she didn't really try to look for a Vietnamese group on campus because her experiences with Vietnamese groups in the past (like church) is that she doesn't feel like she belongs there. - she feels like she looks like every other college student, not poor and not super rich. day to day on campus she feels like she fits in.
<p>Q8. Students are respected here regardless of their race or ethnicity.</p>	
	<p>Somewhat Agree</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - there are stereotypes, she's Vietnamese but people think she is Hmong or Cambodian. she finds people surprised by her race (classmates and other people on campus). she finds she gets stereotypes from other groups, groups that people think she belongs to and other Vietnamese people too. <p>“A white male classmate, that asked me to do the Asian accent.” she sat behind him in class, but didn't talk with him much. she said no, and he didn't seem to understand why that was inappropriate or rude.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - when people ask her about her race, they sometimes show interest in her culture, language, food. she considers this respectful and appropriate.
<p>Q9. Sought academic help from instructor or tutor when needed.</p>	
	<p>Somewhat Often</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - when she needs help reviewing a paper she will if it's a big project but not when she works on it last minute. - she's comfortable approaching most of her instructors. when she has a little time between classes, she will try to talk with them after class. - instructors that stick around after class, ask how you are, take time to interact with students after class = makes her more comfortable approaching - when her instructor seems busy, in a hurry, she has a hard time approaching them after class. she's not comfortable discussing things to do with anything other than class. - she appreciates more in depth explanations, rather than just quick responses - if she's not comfortable approaching the instructor, she will email them. or she will email her TA to ask for advice on how to approach the instructor or to get an explanation of why things are done a

	certain way. sometimes the TA will pass questions along to the instructor.
Q10. Communicated with a faculty member by email or in person.	
	Often - she hasn't met with all of her instructors this semester (other than after class), but one semester she had a difficult break up and it was effecting her schooling. so she had to meet with all of her instructors in person to explain and talk with all of her instructors. - she's had one instructor ask her to come to office hours, when they didn't have time to discuss after class.
Q11. Talked with the instructor outside of class about issues and concepts derived from a course.	
	Somewhat Often - she actually talks with the instructor after class often, especially in discussions when everyone is able to express their opinions, she likes to check in with the instructor after class to clarify the goal of the activity, to help herself collect her own thoughts on the topic. - since her classes discuss a lot of family policy, she asks after class about the future for whatever they are discussing in class, like if a policy will change.
Q12. Interacted with faculty during lecture class sessions.	
	Often - she contributes in most of her classes, especially now that she is in her smaller major classes. sometimes she asks questions about the content but also about her professor's experiences related to the topic. - she feels more comfortable relating with instructors when they share their own personal experiences, related to the topic.
Q13. Do you have a favorite teacher or class?	
	- her favorite teacher, is someone she had for two classes. she feels like this teacher is willing to build relationships and she is comfortable talking with her. she feels like this teacher is on task and has the class laid out well. she is well organized, has time for small group and whole class discussion. the homework/assignments help put the concepts or theories into context. she is comfortable opening up to this teacher, but also about asking questions about the teachers research and advice on grad school.
Q14. Have you ever had a difficult time working with a teacher?	
	- she had a public health class and she felt like the lecture was more a rant from the professor. another instructor did not explain what they were doing (solving problems on the board) and he would sometimes do them wrong. most students had to self-teach themselves. in situations like this, she connected with a classmate and work with

	them. she heard from other students that he was not helpful in his office hours. groups of students would just visit tutors.
Q15. What classes do you do really well in? What class activities do you do well?	
	NA
Q16. What classes are difficult for you? What class activities are difficult for you?	
	NA
Q17. Did your family support your decision to go to college?	
	- yes, but they could not support her financially. her family thought they should take out a private loan, but she learned from Upward Bound and other college access programs about financial aide. Also, when she joined the Y.
Q18. Does your family support you, now that you are in college?	
	- yes, and they are fine with her going on for graduate school.
Q19. Do you talk about your classes or assignments with your family?	
	- they don't really get the concept. things like declaring a major. in Vietnam, you decide what career you want and go to that specific college. they don't have the time for gen eds. Vietnam doesn't have the option of financial aide, she thinks. her parents expect her to know what she wants to do right out from high school.
Q20. What student services have you used or been assigned to use? How were these services helpful? How could they be improved?	
	NA
Q21. What advice do you have for your teachers that would help them make FG students' experiences better?	
	- she thinks most of the resources provided are outside of class, but instructors should try to now assume things about students if they are different.
Q22. What advice do you have for other FG students?	
	- join a group. "not based on race or culture, more on like hobbies or interests." she feels like she belongs because they have the same interests, and it's not about being the same race or culture.

Appendix J

Transcription Worksheet – Orna

- Born in Ireland / Arrived in US at 3 years
- Native English speaker
- Junior – Double Major Journalism and Psychology

Q1. Are you a native English speaker? What other languages do you speak?	
	see above
Q2. What is your major? What do you study?	
	see above
Q3. Why did you decide to go to college?	
	<p>“I decided because I felt like, well I went to school here so it’s not really like, I mean in terms of being born in a different country, I didn’t feel that as much but it was, I felt like, I understood the culture that it was kind of expected that you go to college in America. And in my family it wasn’t like that, it was kind of like, more about trades and more about training and just having some occupation after high school – and not really college. But I was really into school and really enthusiastic about it and I knew that I wanted to do that and I was – interacted a lot with my school counselors and things like that, so I felt pretty supported by them, to go to college.”</p> <p>JB – so you feel like your family had a different value on education or training?</p> <p>“I feel like in my family college is not your only option, it’s not like number one, you will go to college. Like my experience talking to other friends who have parents who went to college, it’s more like expected, like you will go. Like you might take a year off, but you will go. But for me it was like, like uh – yeah, that’s an option but there’s lots of other things. Like, like my parents had different views themselves. Like my dad was always saying, I mean he didn’t barely, he didn’t even finish high school, I don’t think, and he started a construction business, and so his deal was that you don’t have to go to college, and in fact, going to college is a waste of money and a waste of time and unless you know exactly what you want to do with your life and it’s absolutely required that you go to college, then go. But even if you do go, I’m not going to help. But my mom was really enthusiastic about school and she was really strict with me about getting ready for school and when I came home, I had to do my homework. So I think I felt kind of split between those two, but it was more – I was really enthusiastic about school and I didn’t want to just drop it off and my future goals had a lot to do with going to college.”</p> <p>- her mother did go to college for “like a week” because she got into the best college in France and had to drop out because she couldn’t afford it and did not feel like she belonged. so she had a “lost dream”</p>

	<p>for her daughter.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - financial aide was a big barrier for her. she had to nag her dad to go to meetings on this and she had to do a lot of the paper work on her own. - at orientation, she met with a financial advisor, and she remembers seeing all the other parents there with the other students. the financial advisor expected her to have savings or parents helping her pay.
<p>Q4. Do you feel like you belong at the [name of institution]?</p>	
	<p>“Yeah I think I do, after all that.” it takes awhile, she felt like she had to put herself out there to feel like she belonged.</p>
<p>Q5. I feel free to express my political beliefs on campus.</p>	
	<p>Somewhat Agree</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - she hasn’t yet established citizenship (but she is now!) and so she isn’t comfortable speaking up. she also sees herself as financially conservative and socially liberal, but feels like the campus is mostly liberal. she is comfortable discussing current events (especially in J-school) but she tries to remain neutral when it’s time to give political opinions because she can’t vote, but she also feels like that is her personality. <p>JB- can you tell me about a time when you did feel free to express your political beliefs?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - during election time they were talking about who they were voting for and she felt comfortable expressing an her opinion that third party candidates are good in a class discussion. -being in a smaller group within the class, she feels more comfortable speaking up about her opinions. <p>JB- can you tell me about a time when you did not feel free to express your political beliefs?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - sometimes it feels like it is assumed that everyone on campus is liberal or least that this is the undertone (making jokes about candidates like Ron Paul assuming the audience would find it funny). this makes her hesitant to speak up.
<p>Q6. I feel free to express my religious beliefs on campus.</p>	
	<p>Agree</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - because she doesn’t have very strong religious beliefs and it is “invisible” or doesn’t come up very often. It might be different for people part of a more visible religion. <p>JB- can you tell me about a time when you felt free to express your</p>

	<p>religious belief?</p> <p>- in a class discussion about providing therapy to people with religious belief, she felt comfortable bringing it up because it was relevant to the class discussion. she assumed there would be people in the class with strong religious views that weren't speaking up and she felt comfortable addressing it.</p>
<p>Q7. Students are respected here regardless of their economic or social class.</p>	
	<p>Somewhat Agree</p> <p>“...when you're talking about, kind of, social activities with friends or something, sometimes it comes up that, like, oh we're going to go out or something and then I'm thinking, 'oh I wouldn't be able to afford that'. Because it's kind of like, certain, like certain lifestyle is kind of normal and that it's eating a lot and spending a lot of money, not really worrying about paying rent, not necessarily that nobodies parents, I mean that everyone's parents support them in every way, but I just feel not a part of those conversations if they happen in class or otherwise. Or if we're talking about how students have a lot of disposable income in a journalism class, I'm thinking, well that doesn't really apply to me because I'm always, money's always really tight and I'm always worried about paying rent or whatever, or food.”</p> <p>JB- can you tell me about a time when you felt aware of your social or economic class?</p> <p>“Well I remember one time, it was in, cause I'm in ATS – Access to Success, and uh, we were in one of our classes we're required to take for that. And we were talking about first impressions. Like okay, look at the person next to you and kind of guess what their socioeconomic status was and this person said 'oh you look like middle class or just normal or upper middle class normal' and that the word normal to me was like, oh so it's normal here to be upper middle class. And so, that made me feel way different. And that was even within a community that was, because ATS is kind of geared toward people who might not have, might have had harder opportunities to get through college.” when she started college she just wanted to fit it, and not draw attention to how she is different all the time.</p> <p>- she felt like this class ATS took students who were minorities in any manner and put them together (LGBT, economic and racial)</p>
<p>Q8. Students are respected here regardless of their race or ethnicity.</p>	
	<p>Somewhat Agree</p> <p>“Of course there's exceptions and the [name of institution] likes to promote the fact that we're diverse, but when you sit in a classroom and you look around, it's mostly white kids, for the most part. So I</p>

	<p>always wondered how it would feel to be someone of a minority and look around and most people aren't like you." this makes her think of her mom's experience as being the only ½ black person in her village or at her school.</p> <p>- she feels like when there is someone from a racial minority in class, they are included in discussion but that friendships are not usually made. "There's diversity but it's still kind of broken apart." speaking to the different groups on campus.</p> <p>JB- can you tell me about a time when you felt disrespected because of your race?</p> <p>- she was put into MCAE because she noted that she is ¼ black, but she felt strange because her "race" isn't visible, because she looks white. she came to campus early and went threw three days of activities and all the other participants were racial minorities, so everyone was wondering why she was there.</p>
Q9. Sought academic help from instructor or tutor when needed.	
	<p>Often</p> <p>- at least every other week. she is comfortable approaching her instructors. she meets with her TA in one class to discuss grades. she is more comfortable approaching TA but some professors are very intimidating. when instructors ask to be addressed as "Professor" or have very direct language in syllabi (all caps or no flexible language).</p>
Q10. Communicated with a faculty member by email or in person.	
	<p>- she avoided office hours for the first two years but she was more comfortable emailing an instructor with questions. then as she got into her major classes, she felt more comfortable contacting them.</p> <p>- after a while she found her niche, but even after being involved in lots of student groups, she didn't feel like she related. eventually, once she felt comfortable opening up to others on campus she felt like it was more like her home.</p>
Q11. Talked with the instructor outside of class about issues and concepts derived from a course.	
	NA
Q12. Interacted with faculty during lecture class sessions.	
	NA
Q13. Do you have a favorite teacher or class?	
	NA
Q14. Have you ever had a difficult time working with a teacher?	
	NA
Q15. What classes do you do really well in? What class activities do you do well?	
	- where there are labs and hands-on activities or context. community engagement classes or classes with a discussion, where she feels more connected to her classmates, instructor, and the topic – it helps

	give her meaning to all the theories they study.
Q16. What classes are difficult for you? What class activities are difficult for you?	
	- big lectures and inaccessible professors. in one class, she can't even check grades on Moodle which makes her feel isolated or like she doesn't know how to track how she is doing.
Q17. Did your family support your decision to go to college?	
	<p>- half of them, her sisters are younger than her and she didn't really discuss college with her family abroad (in Ireland). she thinks her mom felt bad that she couldn't afford to help but she was able to get financial aide.</p> <p>"I remember in 8th grade, I was thinking I'm not going to go because I can't afford it, because my parents can't afford it. And it was just, no, I'm going to go. And so when the people would come in and give us these schpeels about how important it was to go to college, I'd be like well I can't go anyway, even if I wanted to. And then after a while it became an option to me and I wanted to go and so I looked into, I had to take extra steps to try and figure out the whole financial piece."</p> <p>JB- what made you feel like it was an option</p> <p>"Just having teachers talk to me about and my school advisor would like check in with me about it ... and also that I took PSEO class and was like, oh this really is a possibility, like it became real to me and I was thinking that I could, that I really do want to go to college and I – I'm gonna try to go even if I ended up not being able to go, I would try it at least."</p>
Q18. Does your family support you, now that you are in college?	
	- she thinks her dad is clueless about what she is doing, but her mom is very supportive and strict about getting her schoolwork done.
Q19. Do you talk about your classes or assignments with your family?	
	- her dad doesn't ask anything, her mom sometimes ask vague questions or something related to career, after college. she thinks for them it's more about where she will end up after college.
Q20. What student services have you used or been assigned to use? How were these services helpful? How could they be improved?	
	NA
Q21. What advice do you have for your teachers that would help them make FG students' experiences better?	
	- recognizing differences can be helpful. "We still can't all relate to eachother just because we're all different than the average. And it feels almost like, getting looked down on – you need your hand held, even though we probably worked really really hard just to get into college and got accepted and so in some aspects there's that attitude."
Q22. What advice do you have for other FG students?	
	NA

Appendix K

Transcription Worksheet – Pancho

- Senior (Applied Economics and minor in Spanish)
- Born in Mexico, arrived in US at 17
- took ESL when he first arrived in US (enrolled in an Alt high school and took career classes for ESL students for one year) and had studied some English before leaving Mexico.

Q1. Are you a native English speaker? What other languages do you speak?	
	see above
Q2. What is your major? What do you study?	
	see above
Q3. Why did you decide to go to college?	
	“I always liked the school environment.”
Q4. Do you feel like you belong at the [name of institution]?	
	<p>“Finally, I do.” He started at MCTC and felt like that was a good place for him to start because he felt like there were lots of students like him there.</p> <p>“When I transferred to [name of institution], you know it was a big change because it was a big school, plus going to applied economics program, being the only Latino in your classroom, where even outside of the classroom there’s no other, you know, people who look like you, who talk like you, think like you. And it’s kind of hard. umm But then, you know, through the semesters, this is my fourth semester at [name of institution] I started talking to other students and saying, what do you do. For example, one of my friends, he introduced me to the rec center, and that’s where most of my afternoons when I have time, go and play basketball and that’s how we, you know, feel more like home more to the [name of institution] to study you know, but more to the [name of institution] to, I don’t know, burn calories and have fun with friends.”</p>
Q5. I feel free to express my political beliefs on campus.	
	<p>Agree</p> <p>- students in general are aware that live in a mixed community and he thinks the students appreciate this.</p> <p>JB- why not strongly agree?</p> <p>- people who live in the U.S. might misunderstand countries they don’t know, he gives the example of Mexico being very diverse and how domestic students might not understand the variation within a country. “I’m pretty sure it’s – if you ask me something related with Ethiopia, I might be you know, a little bit, might have – but because I have some understanding from other countries, I might be able to relate it more to them.”</p>
Q6. I feel free to express my religious beliefs on campus.	
	Agree

	<p>- his religious beliefs are pretty open, he feels like here you can find lots of different beliefs and because it is an educational institution it doesn't really come up.</p> <p>"I couldn't relate how to express or how to interpret – how to communicate, umm, the knowledge that I have about religion, because, Mexico, it's really, like I said earlier, a mix of cultures, so they over the years, religion and people and some of the beliefs, they mix together. So they might have the, you know, like celebration that they worship something else than what we might think is Catholic but it's within the religion. And it was a little difficult for me to explain somebody else that – that never experienced this like old ethnic group." referring to a class discussion in one of the Spanish minor classes.</p> <p>"There is a hard time to understand their perspective because you never been to those areas." referring to difficult domestic students might have because they aren't familiar with other cultures, but an advantage that he has because he has experiences in other countries.</p>
<p>Q7. Students are respected here regardless of their economic or social class.</p>	
	<p>Strongly Agree</p> <p>- there is a lot of emphasis on how much you pay to be here. he's never had a confrontation on campus regarding this.</p> <p>- he experienced someone calling him "rich" because his bus from Chaska has internet.</p>
<p>Q8. Students are respected here regardless of their race or ethnicity.</p>	
	<p>Strongly Agree</p> <p>"You don't get discouraged because you're different. It's the other way around, you get encouraged because you're different."</p> <p>JB- can you think of a time when race was acknowledged in an appropriate way?</p> <p>talks about an instructor comment to a classmate "that's why you're here" commenting on her last name but she took it as referring to her location.</p>
<p>Q9. Sought academic help from instructor or tutor when needed.</p>	
	<p>Often</p> <p>"I have some rules, as a student, that I create myself. The first week you have to go and talk to each individual professor, so you get to know them. So that's the first meeting that I always set up in the first week of you know, the start of the semester. From there, I follow up with some of the questions that I have about the syllabus, things that I</p>

	<p>don't understand and try to find out, what I think it is I can do to improve the areas that I'm not being too successful and umm try to follow that." he follows up with plans about how to use TA office hours and library resources.</p> <p>- he also talks about the importance of saying something in class and asking questions when you have them, which allows the instructors to know you and to help you.</p> <p>JB- are you comfortable approaching instructors?</p> <p>- setting up the first meeting helps, because you get to know them.</p> <p>- when you are really lost with the content, you need to first stop and try to understand it yourself. he needs to see the big picture of the class content, so he wants to make sure he understands that on his own before he will go to an instructor for help.</p>
<p>Q10. Communicated with a faculty member by email or in person.</p>	
	<p>Very Often</p> <p>- everything is by email (first), he always sets up a time via email before visiting them, even during office hours. he learned this after an instructor explicitly told him to email first, when he went to his office hours without making an appointment. this was helpful for him.</p>
<p>Q11. Talked with the instructor outside of class about issues and concepts derived from a course.</p>	
	<p>Often</p> <p>- he's trying to take as much as he can from different instructors, he looks up instructors before the semester and sees what they are researching, what committees they are part of. If it relates to his field, he will set up a time to go talk to them. this has opened opportunities for him to become more involved in activities related to his major and network with others in that social circle (like going to presentations)</p>
<p>Q12. Interacted with faculty during lecture class sessions.</p>	
	<p>Often</p> <p>- he tries to do this when he has doubts or questions about the topic. the most important thing is to ask questions that he doesn't have an answer for. he feels he needs to be very prepared before coming to class with questions.</p>
<p>Q13. Do you have a favorite teacher or class?</p>	
	<p>- he pushed him to become a better writer, using his own thoughts and voice, using lots of details. he encouraged him throughout the semester, with lots of feedback on how to improve. even when he had a good grade, he had ways to improve</p>
<p>Q14. Have you ever had a difficult time working with a teacher?</p>	
	<p>- the class was "messy", his feedback was not helpful "why did you</p>

	do that” but no suggestions on how to correct it and he did not set up a time to discuss it with the instructor.
Q15. What classes do you do really well in? What class activities do you do well?	
	- he had one class where classmates often came to him with questions on how to do lab activities and this gave him confidence in the class. he friends (not the same ethnicity) that he had from previous classes and this also gave him confidence in the class because they could work together to help one another understand the material.
Q16. What classes are difficult fro you? What class activities are difficult for you?	
	- had a difficult time what new terms into his own words, on a quiz. the lecture and the book did not connect for him, and that was challenging because that middle ground is what was on the quiz, and all quizzes were timed which is very stressful for him.
Q17. Did your family support your decision to go to college?	
	<p>- his wife and her family all also graduated from the [name of institution]. his wife has 2 MAs and mother in law works in Washington, father in law has a BA. “They really pushed me to do this (college), umm not only that but they kind of you know, push me and told me where to go and how to do it. And that’s a – that’s a lot of help, especially when you have to deal with all the paper work. I never realized it was, just too much. But because my wife, she was there, she was always willing to help and make sure that everything was fine. Umm you know the work paper, work for FAFSA, for registration, and your classes – make sure that your schedule is perfect for your work schedule, all those things that you never thought about.”</p> <p>JB- what about your parents?</p> <p>“One of the things that my grandma says, she goes ‘why are you going to school?’ Why don’t you invest your money, and buy a house and just be happy and that’s one of the things that umm as a person, you always deal with because for one part of your family, you’re being successful because you are going to school, your doing your chores while you’re suppose to, and the other – with the other side, it’s not that easy because the most important thing is family, so get married, have kids, have an okay job and just live life. Because they’re coming from different year, you know my grandma, she’s going to be ninety years old, I grew up with her and I believe she didn’t know how to write or read. And she always told me, you know this – she called herself ‘black lady’ or negra, I don’t know why, well she not very, well she dark skin but not very dark skinned, she goes ‘I might not know how to read or write but I always have money in my pocket.’ That was her message all the time. But she was up five in the morning, all the way until seven pm. It was a long day, and thanks to her, I’m here, because she fed me, you know, but now that I’m all grow up and trying to live my own life, I gotta do, because I live in the United States, do what is right.”</p>

Q18. Does your family support you, now that you are in college?	
	- it's been a long process because his 2 year degree took almost 4 years, because he was working and sending money to family. When he came to this school, he decided to focus on school because "time is money"
Q19. Do you talk about your classes or assignments with your family?	
	"Always. It help me to always relate all the material that I'm learning." he likes to discuss topics with wife during dinner, before bed. "this helps me reinforce all the stuff that I'm learning."
Q20. What student services have you used or been assigned to use? How were these services helpful? How could they be improved?	
	- writing help, tutoring with TAs, uses the supplemental material that came with his books (links) which give him a different way to learn the material.
Q21. What advice do you have for your teachers that would help them make FG students' experiences better?	
	<p>"encourage them to talk, at least to get to know them a little bit." it's really important because it gives them a chance to talk to others in the class. having an open door policy, so students know they can go to them with any questions when they are new. "it's takes a long time, and that's something you don't have" regarding figuring out the campus and college expectations.</p> <p>- the first semester, you think "this is not for me", but instructors can engage with the student to help them feel connected.</p>
Q22. What advice do you have for other FG students?	
	- create your schedule, use lists to keep yourself on task. exercising is good and helps you meet people. get sleep. try to figure out what went wrong when you don't do well with something.

Appendix L

Transcription Worksheet – Zee

- Freshman – Undecided (interested in computer science, business marketing, HR development, International Business)
- From China / Arrived in USA at 13 yrs old
- Had formal schooling in China and then finished high school in the USA
- Native Chinese speaker (learning Korean and Japanese) / Took ESL in Middle School and then honors English in High School.

Q1. Are you a native English speaker? What other languages do you speak?	
	see above
Q2. What is your major? What do you study?	
	see above
Q3. Why did you decide to go to college?	
Family + (sayings)	<p>“Well first of all it’s my parents wish because never had been to high school or college [his parents] and they wanted me to have like the college experience and get more education. Yeah, and umm how, what do you call it education will start your bright future, that’s what they told me.”</p> <p>JB- What do you think a bright future is to your parents?</p> <p>“I don’t know, maybe I graduate from college and I can make my own living, so they can retire, like go to China or somewhere else.”</p>
Q4. Do you feel like you belong at the [name of institution]?	
	<p>“Well it all depends, the colleges some of the cultures I don’t think I really belong but like the campus, like academic campus, yeah I think I am.”</p> <p>JB- What do you mean some of the cultures?</p> <p>“Parties. Party or drinking cultures not exactly my thing.”</p>
Q5. I feel free to express my political beliefs on campus.	
	<p>Agree</p> <p>- you are allowed to be yourself and express your own opinion.</p> <p>JB- why not strongly agree?</p> <p>- he has felt criticized before by frat groups which he feels are normally Republican.</p> <p>JB- can you tell me about a time when you did feel free to express your political beliefs?</p> <p>- he doesn’t feel like he normally talks about it. gives an example of democratic groups asking people to vote democrat and he says “yeah I was already going to vote democrat”</p>

	<p>JB- Can you tell me about a time when you did not feel free to express your political beliefs.</p> <p>- when American politics come up in a class discussing foreign politics, he doesn't think it is appropriate.</p>
Q6. I feel free to express my religious beliefs on campus.	
	<p>Somewhat Agree</p> <p>- he is aware of the different religions on campus, notes that half of his class is usually Muslim. he doesn't want to make statements that could offend certain groups. he mentions that he has a "style issue" with being too direct or seeming rude, so he is reluctant to discuss religion because he is aware of how others might perceive him as rude.</p> <p>JB- can you tell me about a time when you did feel free to express your religious beliefs?</p> <p>- it's mostly off campus in fraternity houses, he does not feel judge based on religion here.</p>
Q7. Students are respected here regardless of their economic or social class.	
	<p>Strongly Agree</p> <p>"Because when I talk to people, and they normally ask you your social and economic backgrounds and they know what ethnicity you are, and they really don't care."</p> <p>- he feels like they are all the same because they are all students.</p>
Q8. Students are respected here regardless of their race or ethnicity.	
	<p>Strongly Agree</p> <p>- he feels like campus is mostly white but still very diverse.</p> <p>[talking about his experience with fraternities] "When we have like conflict with eachother, we usually like talk racist jokes at eachother. And sometimes they call me like, I don't know stinky, and I call them hillbillies." (he used to be in a fraternity but not anymore because of the drinking culture)</p> <p>JB- has there ever been a time on campus when you felt like race was acknowledged in a respectful way?</p> <p>- no, everybody respects eachother.</p>
Q9. Sought academic help from instructor or tutor when needed.	
	<p>Often</p> <p>- whenever I'm stuck, he contacts MCAE or his instructors, talks</p>

	<p>about being too tired to contact teachers because it changes his comprehension.</p> <p>JB- what factors make you more comfortable contacting an instructor?</p> <p>- easygoing, bring activities to class, let the students talk in class.</p> <p>JB- can you tell me about a time when you needed help and you did approach your instructor?</p> <p>- emailed an instructor with a question of the content and the instructor emailed back within 30 minutes.</p> <p>JB- can you tell me about a time when you needed help but you did not approach your instructor?</p> <p>- I couldn't find her office, and wanted help in person, so her went to the tutor service.</p>
<p>Q10. Communicated with a faculty member by email or in person.</p>	
	<p>Often</p> <p>- MCAE told him how important it is to keep in touch with instructors throughout your college career. So he tries to email often, but he doesn't know what else to communicate about other than homework.</p>
<p>Q11. Talked with the instructor outside of class about issues and concepts derived from a course.</p>	
	<p>Occasionally</p> <p>- if he has a hard time understanding, he will ask them after class. sometimes he'll talk to his instructors if he is not successful, to see what the problem could be. he doesn't normally discuss ideas for fun because he is busy and they hurry back to their classes.</p>
<p>Q12. Interacted with faculty during lecture class sessions.</p>	
	<p>Somewhat Often</p> <p>- he doesn't want to take up class time so they can get through all the material. he sometimes keeps his questions to himself. one time he did interact with his instructor was when they were talking about pain medication and back pain. he had experienced back pain, so he decided to ask about what can cause back pain (he wanted to know if it could be the hard surface he was sleeping on).</p>
<p>Q13. Do you have a favorite teacher or class?</p>	
	<p>- he enjoys psychology, but not the progress quiz. he has one teacher that he thinks has interesting lectures. he had him for his first year lecture and then took another class with him the next semester.</p>
<p>Q14. Have you ever had a difficult time working with a teacher?</p>	

	- not really
Q15. What classes do you do really well in? What class activities do you do well?	
	- math classes, participation and discussion.
Q16. What classes are difficult for you? What class activities are difficult for you?	
	- psychology, because there are some terms that are difficult, small group work.
Q17. Did your family support your decision to go to college?	
	- yes, they wanted him to go to college
Q18. Does your family support you, now that you are in college?	
	- yes, still JB- how do they support you? - they give him food, storage, buying notebooks and folders.
Q19. Do you talk about your classes or assignments with your family?	
	- sometimes but they don't ask about it. they tend to have their own things to worry about.
Q20. What student services have you used or been assigned to use? How were these services helpful? How could they be improved?	
	- MCAE, CEHD Career Service for a class assignment to help determine a major.
Q21. What advice do you have for your teachers that would help them make FG students' experiences better?	
	- he doesn't have any, he just tries to do what they say.
Q22. What advice do you have for other FG students?	
	- manage your time, don't mess around (drinking)

Appendix M

Transcription Worksheet – Lorena

- Sophomore – Double Major: Psychology & Sociology of Law and Criminal Deviance.
- Born in Puerto Rico, arrived in USA at 4 months
- Completed entire education in US (PA and MN)
- Native English Speaker / Studied German

Q1. Are you a native English speaker? What other languages do you speak?	
	See Above
Q2. What is your major? What do you study?	
	See Above
Q3. Why did you decide to go to college?	
	<p>“Multiple reasons, one just because of the fact that I would be the first person to do so. Umm everyone in high school tells you that like that’s the way to go. And I knew that it would just be like smarter for me because I know what I want to do, has to get a college degree.”</p> <p>- gives more reasons, saying that her mom didn’t go and that most of her cousins haven’t gone or started but did not finish college.</p> <p>- talking about how it is expected in high school that you go to college, she mentions that when she moved from PA to MN, she was in honors classes but that they would not put her in honors classes in MN because the move might “stress me out” and because the curriculum was different.</p>
Q4. Do you feel like you belong at the [name of institution]?	
	<p>“yes”</p> <p>JB- How so...?</p> <p>“I don’t feel any negativity here.” She goes on to say that maybe if there were only one race represented on campus, she wouldn’t feel like she belongs, but she doesn’t feel that way about this campus. She compares it to her schooling experiences in PA, where she did not feel like she belonged because of the lack of diversity. “And the instructors are super accepting and so are my advisors.”</p>
Q5. I feel free to express my political beliefs on campus.	
	<p>Strongly Agree</p> <p>-She identifies as a liberal or democrat and feels like her views are shared with others on campus (this seems to influence her answer). But she also says that she thinks that even if she were republican, she would feel accepted because there are republicans on campus.</p> <p>JB- Can you tell me about a time when you did not feel free to express your political beliefs?</p> <p>... no.</p>

	<p>JB- Can you tell me about a time when you did feel free to express your political beliefs?</p> <p>- she talks about how, in her opinion, most professors are liberal/democratic but that when she had a professor who she thought was conservative, they mentioned that they would not get into political discussions in class. She appears to find comfort in knowing that her political views are shared with her instructors.</p>
<p>Q6. I feel free to express my religious beliefs on campus.</p>	
	<p>Strongly Agree</p> <p>- she talks about how she does not identify with any religions but that there are student groups for all and even for those without a religion. she is not part of any student groups but is aware that they exist and she feels like this is a diverse campus with many different religions represented but also that “most college students don’t identify with a religion”.</p> <p>JB- Has there ever been a time when you did not feel free to express your religious beliefs?</p> <p>- times when religious groups on campus are trying to get people to come to worships. she doesn’t feel comfortable confronting them to say “no”.</p> <p>JB- Has there ever been a time when you did feel free to express your religious beliefs?</p> <p>“...no”</p>
<p>Q7. Students are respected here regardless of their economic or social class.</p>	
	<p>Agree</p> <p>“I feel like, I don’t know, because for me, I get a lot of my tuition paid for by the government, I feel like there might be like some – jealousy – or something like that, you know, envy like in the crowd. Like when I like, people will like ask me ‘what about FAFSA or like financial aide?’ or you know like, I’m not going to tell them that they pay like fifty five thousand a year or well like fifty five hundred a year for me, ya know. But I’m like, oh yeah, like I’m independent like I classify as independent so I get a lot of my tuition paid for and I feel like there’s like some sense of like jealousy, cause you know, there’s people [classmates and parents of classmates] who are paying like out of pocket everything.”</p> <p>- she goes on to explain that she doesn’t feel like she’s ever met an “independent” white student, and that most students in her position are also minority students. this is reinforced by the people she sees in</p>

	<p>TRiO, in that they are all students of color or non-white.</p> <p>JB- Has there ever been a time when you felt aware of your economic or social class?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - gives examples of when she had a class visit from OneStop talking about paying back student loans. she felt like she didn't need to be there because she only has loans out for rent and food, unlike the other students who have loans for tuition. - talks about the idea of the "poor college student" and that she doesn't feel like that because she works two jobs and has always been very responsible with her money- she saves and has a savings account and that she doesn't waste her money. <p>"I'm not a poor college student. I'm poor in the fact that like I'm low-income, because I'm like independent and I'm like doing it by myself but I've been saving money, so it's like I'm supporting myself so I don't feel like I'm a poor college student."</p>
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Q8. Students are respected here regardless of their race or ethnicity.

	<p>Between Somewhat Agree and Somewhat Disagree</p> <p>"I know that a lot of people make comments about the like Asians on campus, because they're like 'oh the Asians are smart, they're messing up the curve' and I see that in like every class I'm in. Like it does not even matter if I'm in my English class, if I'm in like my Chemistry class or even Psychology – there's always comments saying how Asians are always messing up the curve."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - she goes on to describe how she feels like the attitude in general is negative towards Asians on campus – that they don't make friends with non-Asians. <p>JB- has there ever been a time on campus when you felt that race was acknowledged in a disrespectful or inappropriate way?</p> <p>"...no" she only recalls people making negative comments about Asians on campus. She seems to identify many of the Asian students as either international or recent immigrants and that they "come over here" knowing what they want and that they do not "mess around with partying" like other students [students from the US] do.</p> <p>JB- has there ever been a time on campus when you felt like race was acknowledged in an appropriate or a responsible way?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - she gives an example from a class when they were discussing the civil rights movement and the (white) instructor wanted the entire class to sing a song that civil rights activists would sing to show that
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	<p>they were not backing down. Many of the African American students felt like this was inappropriate but she thinks that the way the instructor intended it was in a positive way. one student pulled the instructor aside to explain why it was offensive and then the instructor addressed in in the next class to apologize.</p> <p>- in her criminal behavior class, when they discuss different crime statistics the topic of race often comes up (like which races have higher crime rates). She didn't feel like the instructor was being disrespectful, but it did make her uncomfortable as a Hispanic student in the class. (doesn't seem like the teacher really addressed the fact that these statistics include or generalize about students in the classroom... it is removed from the idea of reflection or ownership that is used in the MLC curriculum). She didn't say anything because "the facts are the facts and the statistics are the statistics" (an example of not necessarily feeling like her knowledge or view is valued)</p>
<p>Q9. Sought academic help from instructor or tutor when needed.</p>	
	<p>Often</p> <p>- She wants to make sure she does well in her major classes (classes for her major) and so she visits those instructors often. she visits the tutors, professors, and her roommates weekly.</p> <p>- she says she is comfortable approaching her instructors but sometimes feels awkward about how to ask for them to explain a topic.</p> <p>JB- has there ever been a time when you needed help but did not visit the instructor?</p> <p>- yes, because the office hours did not line up with her availability but also because it was only a few days before the exam. With her busy schedule, she needs to prioritize and can't always study far in advance. if the instructor has office hours the day of the test, she is more comfortable asking for help close to the exam.</p> <p>"There's just a million things that I go through my mind when I'm like talking to them [instructors]. I'm like oh I don't want you thinking I'm a bad student because I'm asking you now, office hours are last week, I could have gotten to you then or like a couple of days ago."</p> <p>JB- what qualities make you more comfortable approaching some instructors?</p> <p>- gender, she goes to her female professors more often because they tend to be more sympathetic or emotional. but she also gives an example of a past male instructor who was very approachable.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - when an instructor comes late and leaves class immediately after class and how they present the material impacts whether they seem approachable or not. if they seem passionate about the topic (and that the students learn it), they seem more approachable.
Q10. Communicated with a faculty member by email or in person.	
	<p>Somewhat Often</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - usually the same questions she has, other people ask during lecture. or she tries to get her questions in during class. - she says that it depends on everyone's schedules whether she will email or visit an instructor. She also mentions that it depends on how fast the instructor is at reply... she said one instructor didn't email her back for two days, which she thought was too long. If the instructor emails back immediately (within the hour) she will email them. Some questions she prefers to discuss in person, if it is something she doesn't understand. - she's trying to visit all her instructors in person at least once, to make a positive impression on them.
Q11. Talked with the instructor outside of class about issues and concepts derived from a course.	
	<p>Occasionally</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - she talks about not bringing up all her questions about the topic because it's often too late (meaning the topic was already covered in a test) and that she does not want them thinking she is a bad student or that it is normal for her to be behind. - she goes back to needing to prioritize her study time. if she knows something will be on a test, she will make sure she knows it but if it's just one concept, she won't spend too much of her time focusing on it if she understands everything else.
Q12. Interacted with faculty during lecture class sessions.	
	<p>Rarely</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - mostly she is concerned with looking silly in front of her classmates in larger classes. She is more comfortable contributing in smaller classes (-50 Ss). She identifies as shy in larger classes or big group settings, but in smaller groups she is more confident talking. she points out that she has never had a bad experience, but that she has seen it happened to other students.
Q13. Do you have a favorite teacher or class?	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - about her favorite teacher: provided so many examples and all the readings related closely to the concepts, made it clear that she wanted to help and that they could contact her about anything.
Q14. Have you ever had a difficult time working with a teacher?	

	- about a difficult time with instructors: she didn't feel like the instructor was helpful because she didn't feel like he was helpful in class – he read off the PPT, and answer questions with little explanation, he was not fun, did not use examples when describing theories, mono-toned. “not how I liked my teaching”.
Q15. What classes do you do really well in? What class activities do you do well?	
	- likes group settings because you get a sense of what everyone else is thinking, discussion based classes, and professors who feel like they are open. “I always say that there's two different types of people in the word or two types of teachers. There's the ones that just care about their umm they care about what they're teaching and they don't really care about if you get it or not, they're just going to teach it and that's what they do. And then there's another set that says, ya know, I'm here to teach history, and I love teaching history, and I want you guys to all love it, history. I'm going to do my best to make you guys all love history, and I love those types of teachers because it really makes me feel like, oh like she actually does want us to do good in this class, not just because it's required or not just because she likes it. She really wants us to do well.” (this speaks to that sense of community or family the students in the MLC felt)
Q16. What classes are difficult fro you? What class activities are difficult for you?	
	- straight forward, not giving examples, she wants different ways to think about each concept. if they are too straight forward, she feels like she just read the book. - she talks about even in her 2-300 person lecture class, she feels like she wants to be there because her instructor gives lots of examples and answers all the questions.
Q17. Did your family support your decision to go to college?	
	“Oh yes, for sure.” - her sister went to college for a year and had to dropout, so she was encouraged a lot by her sister (who she feels like raised her).
Q18. Does your family support you, now that you are in college?	
	- her sister offered to help cover bills so that she doesn't need to struggle to pay bills and can focus on her schooling. even during high school she wouldn't let her work more than a 2-3 days per week, so she can focus on school. - her sister has her trade degree and wants to go back for accounting.
Q19. Do you talk about your classes or assignments with your family?	
	- she does with cousins who are also in a University setting but not with her sister. she goes on to explain the differences between her experience at the U and her sister's experience at a trade school... the U is less straightforward.

	<p>- she doesn't really talk about school with her old friends, but she does with people she met on campus.</p> <p>“So I just talk to people that they understand it more because then they're like, my best friends and my sister [those without Univeristy experience] think I'm just like complaining and they're like ‘that does not sound like a really big problem, like grow up’.”</p> <p>- she's currently living with friends she met during her freshman year. she feels like she can talk with anyone on campus about any problem here, because they know about it from their own experience.</p>
<p>Q20. What student services have you used or been assigned to use? How were these services helpful? How could they be improved?</p>	
	<p>UCCS (University Counseling and Consulting Services) because she is stressed out about her course work.</p> <p>Nutritionists to talk about how to buy healthy food on a budget.</p> <p>TRiO advisors; she spoke very highly of her advisor – she helped her find work on campus.</p> <p>Carreer and Planning Exploration (CAPE) – where she learned about her major</p>
<p>Q21. What advice do you have for your teachers that would help them make FG students' experiences better?</p>	
	<p>Use more examples and be open to how different people learn. Repeat things. Different examples will build off of different people's experiences and different learning styles.</p> <p>FG students may have had to grow up faster and support ourselves..</p> <p>“Our parents are like oh yeah go, or you know you go to college but like most of them are just like, we're like the guinea pigs, ya know. We're trying to like, how do we transition from like you know, from high school to like going to college. You know, it's like a really big thing.”</p> <p>“They [the University] expect the same out of every college student but most times, there like for us [FG] our expectations are more because like have to like fill these gaps, like sometimes we didn't get any support at home or stuff like that you know, we like just had to deal with these issues while like you know like I have to work, like a lot.”</p> <p>“We just had to grow up faster.”</p>
<p>Q22. What advice do you have for other FG students?</p>	
	<p>“Take advantage of the student services.”</p>

	“And don’t feel alone, there’s a lot of us out here.”
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Appendix N

Transcription Worksheet – Condalisa

- Freshman, no prior college / intended pre-med bio major
- From Liberia, arrived at 9
- started school at 3, skipped 3rd grade
- native English speaker (says that her family has different dialects of a tribe, she is the product of two tribes but cannot speak them fluently, knows some phrases. studied Spanish in HS)

Q1. Are you a native English speaker? What other languages do you speak?	
	- added above
Q2. What is your major? What do you study?	
	- added above
Q3. Why did you decide to go to college?	
	“I don’t think it was really a choice not to go to college, in my family. umm Just cause my parents well my parent were like ‘education is the key to success’. umm Also for myself I knew that like in this world nowadays you pretty much you have to go to college or else you’re, I don’t want to say nothing, but like the odds are kinda stacked against you if you don’t have a college degree, so my dad’s pushing me and me just knowing that what I want to do requires a college degree.”
Q4. Do you feel like you belong at the [name of institution]?	
	<p>“umm Initially I didn’t but after getting involved in like, a lot a lot of things and like clubs and organizations I now feel more of a sense of belonging than I did in the beginning. Like if you’d asked me this fall semester, I would have been like [shakes head no] I want to transfer out.”</p> <p>JB-What kind of things happened fall semester that made you feel like you didn’t belong?</p> <p>“umm It was like after welcome week I felt like, I started questioning everything that happened during welcome week, like was it even real, is that just their job, were they even really happy that the freshmen were here or does anybody even care. And I started feeling like nobody cared after like welcome week. It was like everybody was just like hello and welcome and in your face and then after welcome week all the happiness died down and everybody just went about their business and you were just like this little person lost in this big university.”</p> <p>JB- So kind of like the support went away after week 1 (yeah), ok, anything else that happened?</p> <p>“Well just an incident that may not even mean nothing but it took me by surprise because I felt like in the day and age that we live in things like this shouldn’t be happening. umm I had some racial comments thrown at me from-by strangers, like people I’d never even seen in my life before and umm just randomly on the streets, I was just</p>

	<p>walking (JB- just walking on campus?) yes, and they just said some things, or like did little noises that mean something negative umm towards a person of color, and I was just like ‘wow, is this what this university has to offer?’ and of course not everybody was doing it but just that incident, I was wondering like if I was at another institution, like would this be happening to me right now.”</p> <p>JB – yeah, can I ask what they said?</p> <p>“umm it’s this noise that like ignorant people have this idea that Africans sound like umm we talk like this, and he made this noise, it’s (clicking sound). (JB – oh ok) Yeah. Just randomly out of nowhere, we’re just walking. I’m going and he’s coming this way (gestures with hands) and I hear the noise, and he just does it so nonchalantly so I turn around like whoa, excuse me. And he just keeps going as if, as if.”</p> <p>JB – so then you said in your second semester, that you joined certain clubs or activities that made you feel like you belonged more...</p> <p>The Black Student Union and the African Student Association, MISA(?), more involved in TRiO, MCAE. After “feeling down about the campus”, she started reaching out and found these organizations helpful. She also relied on older students to tell her where to find support. She uses MCAE for tutoring and “counseling”. She said she uses their tutors as life counselors. In her HS, they had “Student Learning Advocates” and she sees one woman at MCAE in particular to be her “SLA” – like her “school mom”.</p>
<p>Q5. I feel free to express my political beliefs on campus.</p>	
	<p>Agree – you see rallying on campus, especially during the recent election, people are campaigning on campus and in their dorms. She doesn’t have a strong personal connection with this question, but feels like the general sense from others on campus is that it is acceptable. Since she doesn’t have a strong political affiliation, she doesn’t say “strongly agree”</p> <p>(side note, I mentioned that she was wearing a lot of red, and her interview was on the day that people were suppose to wear red to support equal rights – so she may have been making a political statement without even realizing it.)</p> <p>When asked if there have ever been times when she did not feel free to express her political beliefs, she seems to associate that with a personal barrier, and not that it isn’t acceptable on campus.</p>
<p>Q6. I feel free to express my religious beliefs on campus.</p>	
	<p>Agree – She feels like a variety of religions are visible on campus (student groups) and that there isn’t just one main religion dominating. But then she mentions that while she doesn’t think the U</p>

	<p>has a religious affiliation ... “but you can kind of assume some things by the environment around it, and all I’ve seen so far were like Catholic, or Christian churches. Which I am, so that’s fine for me but for somebody who isn’t, they might feel a little weird.”</p> <p>She says she doesn’t strongly agree again for personal reasons... she’s describes herself as “the girl who went to church every weekend” while living at home and since college, only goes when she has to go. There seem to be a personal connection between the topic and the individual, which influences their answer. (If they aren’t strongly religious, they don’t strongly agree... but overall might feel like the University environment is welcoming.)</p>
<p>Q7. Students are respected here regardless of their economic or social class.</p>	
	<p>Somewhat Agree – (from a discussion in her writing class:) “I feel like there’s this notion that because this is a PWI, predominately white institution... [some people go what is that] umm because it is that, there’s this notion that some kids have, and we’ve actually had this discussion and it was my first time hearing it, where they go well umm because of affirmative action they feel like that’s why a lot of umm like minorities are here on campus and also that they feel that most of the African American males or like just African Americans in general are either (a.) here because the school feels pity for us or umm (b.) because we are here for athletics. Like we-it’s not possible that we’re here because of the same reasons that they are, like academics.”</p> <p>She mentions that this might not be a “common” assumption, but that it seems to be shaping what it is on campus (her perception).</p> <p>JB- what do you think they mean by pity? Like that you are coming here for free or...?</p> <p>“ I feel like they mean that, well, while we don’t meet the requirements, the University still like ‘oh, we’ll take you anyways because you’re like a minority and we want you guys at our school’. Ya know, and when they say that I feel like oh well, does the University really want me for me or are they doing it because, I don’t know if there is a requirement that the University must have like a certain level of like, I don’t know, diversity or whatever, but then I start questioning myself. (Even though I know that) What they’re saying may or may not be true but the fact that so many people have this perceptions of students of color on campus has me wondering.”</p> <p>JB – has there ever been a time when you felt aware of economic or social class?</p> <p>She described a discussion had in class about an article written by an</p>

	<p>old college professor who suggests that students who have to work/pay for college will take greater care in their studies. Everyone else in the class either said that they agreed or disagreed, but that their parents paid for their college...</p> <p>“And I was sitting there, and as we went around the circle, so many people said the same thing, like ‘my parents pay for my college’ and either (a.) ‘I don’t care’ or ‘I don’t take it seriously’ or (b.) ‘I do care’. And I feel like I was the only one in the room who said ‘well my parents don’t pay for my college, in fact, I don’t even pay for my college. The school and other people who feel like they believe in me pays for my college. So I definitely take it seriously.’ Ya know. And I was just looking around and I was like, so all your parents pay for your college. I was like wow, so there’s a big gap right here. Here’s somebody who’s totally on scholarships, so I have to-I have like these requirements. I have to keep above this percent and whatever and you guys kinda just like, I know you say you care but you’re not going to be like penalized if you go below this grade point average.”</p> <p>Other examples of when economic class is evident:</p> <p>“If you go the bookstore, I would usually pick out like one thing to buy and it would be on day when there’s a sale, but people just like come in there and just like buy. Like I’m it’s a bookstore, obviously prices are high but people just don’t seem to care.”</p> <p>“Sweatshirts, electronics, their-all their books from the bookstore. Like ‘you guys are bargaining?’ oh my.”</p>
<p>Q8. Students are respected here regardless of their race or ethnicity.</p>	
	<p>Somewhat Disagree – References the earlier discussion and that it makes her feel like her race is “under attack” and that she needs to prove to people now, that she deserves to be here...</p> <p>“I’ve been doing this my entire life, like proving people wrong.”</p> <p>“I just thought like (ya know) it’s college now, people would be over that but the fact that that stereotype is still here on campus, that I have to work my way into proving to somebody, proving to somebody that I’m here for the same reason as them. That I’m just as smart as them. That I can do what they can do and I can help make the University look just as good as them academically and not playing sports-wise. So I feel like it’s made my work harder, because of my race.”</p> <p>“I’m here for the right reasons, I made my grades, I had the high numbers, umm, my resume was built. Ya know umm and what they were saying is true, some kids are here simply because of sports or like because they got a scholarship to do something for the University but what about us who are just your average students. We all get put into a box simply because one person had the stereotype, so we’re</p>

	<p>going to apply it to everybody else who is of this race.”</p> <p>JB – Can you think of any times when race was acknowledged in an appropriate or respectful way?</p> <p>She felt that black history month was “pretty good” on campus but then notes that it was mostly done by the Black Student Union/African Student Union.</p> <p>Mentions she got comments “from people saying ‘I don’t feel like Black History month should be a month. It should be like a day or a week.” and her reaction is that black history is American history “don’t make it seem like we’re the only ones who benefit from this day or like doesn’t benefit from this day”</p> <p>JB – Can you think of any times when race was acknowledged in an inappropriate or disrespectful way?</p> <p>She references this mentality on campus that SOC are only here as athletes or because the University feels sorry for them. She feels like this idea continues to exist on campus and “it’s not like oh I give you props because we got into this tough university because you-you had the requirements and the university felt like you would be a good fit for this school”</p> <p>“I think that most of that is just in my head because all my life that’s pretty much what it has been, proving people wrong, usually people-people of another race that I have to prove wrong. Like, that I’m just as smart as you or that I belong here just as much as you do, type of deal.”</p>
<p>Q9. Sought academic help from instructor or tutor when needed.</p>	
	<p>Very Often – She says “is the type of person” who likes to get clarification right away. If she doesn’t understand something, she is less likely to go back to it. She will ask questions in class (even if it annoys her classmates) or stay after class to ask. She acknowledges, that she is the one who will be frustrated or pay the price, if she doesn’t get a thorough answer, so she makes sure she understands before leaving.</p> <p>But class size did affect whether she would ask during class or not. When she started having large lecture classes, she noticed that when one student would keep asking questions, it would disrupt the class flow, so she started writing her questions down and go to the instructor after class or before class more often.</p> <p>JB – Thinking of those instructors that you are comfortable approaching... what qualities or characteristics do they have?</p>

	<p>She likes instructors who actually say “come to office hours” or come ask me questions if you don’t understand, seem friendly and approachable (no scowl on their face).</p> <p>Even if they seem mean, she would still approach them “because hey, it’s about me and my education”</p> <p>JB – what about those instructors that you are more hesitant to approach? What do they look like?</p> <p>“They’re the ones that always seem to be in a hurry, like they’re packed up when we’re packed up and ready to go. Or like they come in a bit late, so I can assume that like either you have something more important to do.”</p> <p>She says that this puts more responsibility on the student, because then they need to find a time to meet with the instructor (when they won’t stay in their own class, to ask questions).</p>
<p>Q10. Communicated with a faculty member by email or in person.</p>	
	<p>Often – She either tries to catch them before or after class or sends emails. She doesn’t normally visit during office hours because the available times don’t generally match up with her schedule (working and going to school).</p>
<p>Q11. Talked with the instructor outside of class about issues and concepts derived from a course.</p>	
	<p>Somewhat Often – She talks about in her Freshman seminar (fall semester), she had one teacher that let them “continue the conversation after class” and this was a time when she would visit office hours, either to get more help understanding or just to share her opinion.</p> <p>In her writing class this semester, when they have an interesting discussion, she will bring that topic to AFAM to get other people’s opinions. And she invited her writing teacher to join her at one of these AFAM discussions. (AFAM – part of the Afro department, a graduate student is conducting research on whether study spaces help African American students’ retention rate and if so, possibly lead to the creation of more study spaces for everyone.) In this example, it sounds like she will not only continue the conversation/”dialogue” with her instructor, but they will bring what was discussed in AFAM back to class, so she is actually helping to co-construct course content/discussion with her instructor.</p>
<p>Q12. Interacted with faculty during lecture class sessions.</p>	
	<p>Occasionally – like she mentioned earlier, she doesn’t want to hold up the class like it annoys her when other students do. She doesn’t want to be hypocritical about it.</p> <p>Also points out that she doesn’t want it to sound like she “falls victim</p>

	to her class” because if she needs clarification, she will get it. But if it will take multiple questions, she will wait until after class to ask.
Q13. Do you have a favorite teacher or class?	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - one teacher: was super nice and caring, she seemed like a teacher that wanted to be there teaching us, and she was excited about the course concepts, always checked in what students understood or did not understand, made herself available by providing ample office hours. - one teacher: didn’t act like a student but knew what it was like to be a student. - some teachers spend too much class time talking about their own research, when it isn’t relevant to the course content. “this isn’t what I paid for”
Q14. Have you ever had a difficult time working with a teacher?	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - felt like her online class required work that would not have been necessary if it had been an in person class. she felt this teacher was a “negative Nancy” and a “mass email communicator” but she wasn’t great at returning emails. she had 1 office hour for 1000 students. she would return individual questions with a large mass email addressing some of the common questions. - Gloria used the tutors but “sometimes it just helps to know your professor and I like to-I like to try to figure out how they’re thinking so I can like I can figure out how the test may or may not be”. If the tutors approach or focus isn’t what is on the test, than it is less helpful. - “I don’t get how they do the math for office hours, but you can’t have 1000 students and have two, pretty much two hours worth of office hours in the week and then get mad at us when we email you questions because we couldn’t get to your office hours.”
Q15. What classes do you do really well in? What class activities do you do well?	
	- I like group discussions, I don’t like to be lectured at. I like sitting and seeing everybody’s face.
Q16. What classes are difficult fro you? What class activities are difficult for you?	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Even though I like group discussion, I don’t like group work/assignments. She gives an example from a paired debate, where her partner prepared nothing and she did not give him any of the research she had done. She says “it showed” when it was time for the debate, that he had not done any of his work. - She emailed the instructor before but then when she talked with the teacher after class, the instructor did not seem to know about the first email. The teacher then talked with the other student after class. Gloria was fine with this resolution, since she did not feel like it was her responsibility beyond telling the teacher.

Q17. Did your family support your decision to go to college?	
	<p>“My dad did, even though he doesn’t know much about the college process, he did. And I was in programs like TRiO or TRiO Upward Bound, which helped me with that. And he was supportive of me being in anything that can help you get into college because he doesn’t know about it. So.” ... Or he’s not familiar with America’s way of doing things.</p> <p>JB – But he supported you in what way?</p> <p>“He would take me to the field trips, we had to meet at like (I don’t know) Ramsey to go college tours and all that. He would take me there and pick me up. Umm when we needed the FASFA to get done, I told him all the information that he needed, he got his taxes done early, umm so I could get that out of the way. (ahh) Just always reminded me that education is the key. I don’t know like, He would always say things like ‘you don’t want to be like me’ ya know, working for somebody else, you could do your own business. Like pretty much you could go farther than me. That’s why we-I brought you to America. So don’t make me ashamed.”</p>
Q18. Does your family support you, now that you are in college?	
	<p>“He checks in.” She says that her dad is quiet and prideful and assumes “you know what you’re suppose to do”</p> <p>-She feels like more of her motivation comes from herself, right now, but recently on a STLF (Students Today Leaders Tomorrow) alternative spring break trip she was able to hear about how her father feels...</p> <p>“There was a surprise activity, like we were sitting in a circle and they started reading like these things, and it took me awhile to catch on that they were letters from like family members. And my letter came from my dad and he was basically saying like how at the beginning of me coming to college he was worried about if I was going to fit in, in here, in the institution, if I was gonna still excel. Umm and he feels more comfortable having known or like happing knowing that I am in control of things here. And like I’m not going off like some college students do and just drinking and partying all the time. So he’s happy about that. So.” JB – Oh that’s interesting, so they contacted him... “It was a nice surprise, because my dad would have never said that to me.”</p>
Q19. Do you talk about your classes or assignments with your family?	
	<p>“mmhmm, I’d be like ‘Oh I have a test tomorrow’ and he’d be like ‘well study hard’. Or I’d tell my sister even, and she’d be like ‘well, you can do it ‘cause I did it and I’m done, so it’s possible’. And my grandma too, would be like ‘don’t complain about things you can’t change’. Like if you can change it than there’s no reason to complain. Ya know. I’d be like, ‘ohh I’m so stressed, like there’s so much work</p>

	<p>for me to do.’ And she’s just like ‘Others have done it. You can do it too.’ Like you will make it. So it’s like tough love from my family.”</p> <p>- her sister lived with her mom, and lived in Ghana, and finished her degree in Houston.</p> <p>JB – do you have any other siblings?</p> <p>- she has a brother and a sister who got pregnant right out of high school. And another brother still in Liberia about to graduate from a “community college” there.</p> <p>- she recently became close with her sister in Houston. Her sister wanted to be a resource for her and Gloria didn’t feel like she was a good resource, so she relied on others.</p> <p>JB – so who or what have been good resources for you?</p> <p>“umm MCAE has been a big help and TRiO. I mean, that’s where my counselors are. umm And like older-upper classmens here. Like my best friend’s brother’s here. umm and all his friends. He tries to connect me to people who are like thinking of or who are like Biology majors already. And like kinda like this buddy system of (oh) you can use this person, ask them questions and all that. Or if you know somebody who’s taking a class that I’ve taken. He’ll be like well this person can help you with that. Just like, he’ll talk to them.”</p> <p>MCAE helps me with like, they helped me find umm find scholarships in the beginning of the year when I was worried about finance. umm so I was able to like get that under control. They helped me find like volunteer work and they’ve just been able to like connect me with a whole lot of things that I’m now involved with.”</p>
<p>Q20. What student services have you used or been assigned to use? How were these services helpful? How could they be improved?</p>	
	<p>“some people are in TRiO but do not know that they’re in TRiO. So they’re not getting the like resources that they have available to them. umm I just, I feel like if I had it my way, I would bring TRiO more like into the school. Because CEHD is where TRiO is housed and it’s like, I don’t want to say it’s far away, but it kinda is. It’s way over there in like the outskirts, and I feel like we’re not even part of the University even though we’re right there. But it just seems like so far out of the way.”</p> <p>JB – So you mentioned that in the first semester you didn’t use as many resources, is that because you didn’t know what resources were offered?</p>

	<p>“I knew I was in TRiO. I just didn’t know what resources they offered. And maybe in many of the letters and the pamphlets they sent us, it was in there somewhere. But when you’re a freshman, when you’re an incoming freshman, there’s just so many things being thrown at you. Like read this, come to us, do this, do that, and I just eventually came to the point where everything that came just went into the trash. Like I can’t do this anymore. I’m overwhelmed.”</p>
<p>Q21. What advice do you have for your teachers that would help them make FG students’ experiences better?</p>	
	<p>“Just understanding that we are first generation.” JB – well what does that mean. “Some of us maybe haven’t had the same experience as like your average college student. umm depending on like what age you were when you came here. Like I know I had to go through ESL, umm even though English was my first language...”</p> <p>“Well I’ve been through like a lot, So a teacher who’s understanding and tries to get to know you for you instead of placing that average like incoming freshman stereotype on you, like oh you’re suppose to know this, this, and this. How about asking, instead of assuming. So a teacher that doesn’t make much assumptions about their students would be umm good.”</p> <p>“I think that’s key, like getting to know your students because you can’t just assume that because somebody looks different that they’re a first year, or like a first generation student. But you would only know that if you got to know your students.</p> <p>- Gloria suggests that by getting to know your students, the instructor will hopefully know what to do – that they will check in with someone occasionally if the instructor knows they are FG.</p> <p>“Kinda being like a support for us, ya know. umm Some people get college and can do it well and some of us don’t. Some of need support like, we need to feel like our teachers care about us here, like they did in high school. And I know that’s a common stereotype that you’re here on your own. But it’s-I found that to be a lie. There are a lot of teachers here that like care about your success in their class and here at the University. So they’re not just only asking you ‘how do you feel about my class? how do you feel like you’re doing?’, it’s more like ‘how are you’re other classes? how are you doing in them?’”</p>
<p>Q22. What advice do you have for other FG students?</p>	
	<p>“Get to know your professor. Communication is umm really key. You don’t wanna be or feel like, I don’t want anybody to ever feel like I did in the beginning. Like you don’t belong where you choose to go, because, I don’t know, because of many different reasons.”</p> <p>“What is the saying that they say. ‘Closed mouths don’t get fed.’ Like</p>

you have to speak up sometimes. People don't know how you're feeling. Like yeah, we can assume because you're a freshman, you don't know everything about the University, but you got to speak about your problems, and your issues that you're having so somebody can point you in the right direction or help you."

"Talk to your teachers, talk to like adults that you know on campus. And try to connect with upper classmen, so they can like lead you in the right path."

Appendix O

Transcription Worksheet – Sunisia

- Family Social Science / Junior
- from Thailand / arrived in US at 2
- primary language is Hmong / took ESL classes until Middle School

Q1. Are you a native English speaker? What other languages do you speak?	
	see above
Q2. What is your major? What do you study?	
	see above
Q3. Why did you decide to go to college?	
	<p>“Primary, one of the things was because it was like, one of my greatest goal to go to college and just because like my two sisters, they didn’t get that opportunity to do it. So it was just a way of just saying that ‘well here I’m gonna go to college for all of us.’”</p> <p>“And knowing that here in America, if you don’t go to college like you’re not gonna have that successful future.”</p> <p>- if you don’t finish high school, you won’t get a good job. there are more opportunities if you keep climbing that later.</p>
Q4. Do you feel like you belong at the [name of institution]?	
	<p>“I would say like as a whole not really, but in my college yes.”</p> <p>JB – when you say not at the college as a whole, why is that?</p> <p>“Well like it’s-it’s, like maybe you hear a lot, it’s really big and so it’s really hard to interact or just connect with people from different colleges but like with my college, it’s just like-like I see familiar faces and I know the people and I know the professors so there’s that-like you’re able to build a relationship with them and just like having that relationship makes you feel more belong.”</p>
Q5. I feel free to express my political beliefs on campus.	
	<p>Somewhat Agree – there is the example of the Vote Yes/Vote No campaign. she felt like everyone was able to express their opinions, but that you need to draw the line between “oh how much should you do it and how much should you put people down for their opinions”</p> <p>“I’m not that big on like political issues, so I’m never really like offended.”</p>
Q6. I feel free to express my religious beliefs on campus.	
	<p>Somewhat Agree</p> <p>Doesn’t really feel the need to share or express her religion or culture, but feels like there is an atmosphere on campus that would allow it. She says “somewhat” because she feels like her religion is difficult to describe or express to other people. It might not reflect her thoughts on whether the campus environment is accepting.</p>

Q7. Students are respected here regardless of their economic or social class.	
	<p>Agree</p> <p>“Umm I would say I agree because I do so that a lot of professors, they don’t discriminate students regardless of what kind of neighborhood they’re from and like their socioeconomic status but I do kind of see it like within the students. Sometimes some students like just the way you dress, like, they just like stereotypes but yeah.”</p> <p>JB – has there been a time on campus when you felt aware of economic or social class?</p> <p>“Um so I think it shows more on like the brand of clothes that you wear, so I do notice that a lot of people like if they like wear Abercrombie and Fitch and all that stuff, like they’ll kind of like group themselves together, or if you’re wearing like NorthFace they’ll kind of like group themselves, and it just kind of like, you can really see it because, it’s on their jackets, it’s on their shoes, like even the Ugg boots and it’s like on their backpacks. And then if you don’t really see that like the name brand stuff, and it’s just like oh they’re kind of grouped up together and I would say that has a lot to do with like the race itself too. and yeah.”</p>
Q8. Students are respected here regardless of their race or ethnicity.	
	<p>Somewhat Agree – she is acknowledges that she is more comfortable approaching other Asian people, rather than stepping outside her own race and she sees this among other students.</p> <p>JB – so then within your college, do you try to associate with other Asians?</p> <p>“...since like we’re in the same class, (assume we’re gonna be majoring in the same thing?) and we’re gonna have some kind of similarities and like more often than not, like since it’s just a college like I recognize those people.”</p>
Q9. Sought academic help from instructor or tutor when needed.	
	<p>Somewhat Often – she prefers to try to work through the problem herself, before going to an instructor.</p> <p>JB – What characteristics make you more comfortable approaching an instructor?</p> <p>“Before I take a class, I kinda like look up who the professor is and then just kind of like research a little bit on them and then just kind of like their interests of like their research interests or just like what they’re interest in and so that just kind of leads from one thing to another. Like oh, you know, she’s interested in um family policy, so I have interest in that too so maybe I should like try start a conversation with him or her.”</p>

	<p>JB – Has there ever been a time when you needed to meet with an instructor but did not?</p> <p>- generally only because of time restrictions/schedule</p>
<p>Q10. Communicated with a faculty member by email or in person.</p>	
	<p>Often – not necessarily weekly, but when there is a big exam or assignment and she has questions. she prefers to email instructors in order to set up appointments for face to face meetings.</p>
<p>Q11. Talked with the instructor outside of class about issues and concepts derived from a course.</p>	
	<p>Somewhat Often – if her questions can be answered by email, she will not meet in person (but this is more regarding not understanding the material and not really going deeper with course content).</p> <p>JB – what about, like you mentioned looking up instructor’s research interests? will you approach them to talk about that?... she said yes, but did not go into more detail.</p>
<p>Q12. Interacted with faculty during lecture class sessions.</p>	
	<p>Occasionally – (she mentioned that often her class schedule doesn’t allow her enough time to talk with instructors after class)</p> <p>JB – what about during class? ... she says she has become more comfortable over the semesters. JB – so what factors have contributed to you becoming more comfortable?</p> <p>“If I like the class, and I feel like I know what’s going on. If I understand the material than more than not, I’ll raise my hand or like I’ll ask questions, umm but (if) I’m not too familiar, I’ll just kind of sit back and let other people ask and if I do like have questions but I don’t want the whole class to know, I’ll just ask the professor after class.”</p>
<p>Q13. Do you have a favorite teacher or class?</p>	
	<p>- she found an instructor with research interests that really align with what she is interested in working with (parent-child relationships). she does lecture, but also has “engaging” class discussions. She is one of her favorite teachers, even after taking 2 morning classes with her... she said her voice woke her up.</p>
<p>Q14. Have you ever had a difficult time working with a teacher?</p>	
	<p>- she describes a much older instructor, whose “voice wasn’t the best for lecturing” and “there was no spark between me and the material”</p> <p>JB – so what do you do in classes like that? do you suffer through or?</p> <p>“Well in classes like that, I try to sit with people that I just sit with so I like, when we have like class discussions they kind of know who I am and I know who they are and like we can just kind of like, if I have a question I’ll just ask them because I’m sure they understand</p>

	the material more than I do. “
Q15. What classes do you do really well in? What class activities do you do well?	
	- she enjoys small group projects... “probably because you’re able to like bond and create a relationship with some of the students and I guess more often than not, you present it to the class, so I enjoy that.”
Q16. What classes are difficult for you? What class activities are difficult for you?	
	none given
Q17. Did your family support your decision to go to college?	
	“Well because I was going to be the first daughter to go to college, and so during my high school year, they’re like ‘oh yeah, make sure you apply for all the colleges and like if financial aid doesn’t help, we’ll try to like get money so you can go’ and so they like, even though my parents didn’t have an education background they kind of like were just like verbal support, mental, emotional, financial.”
Q18. Does your family support you, now that you are in college?	
	- yes
Q19. Do you talk about your classes or assignments with your family?	
	- generally no, she does not talk about school stuff with her family because it takes a lot of time for her to translate school work into Hmong, but she will for larger projects or activities that she wants them to know about.
Q20. What student services have you used or been assigned to use? How were these services helpful? How could they be improved?	
	- part of TRiO and is more “active” now than her first two years because she has more time, is aware of MCAE but doesn’t use it very much, recently joined STLF (Students Today Leaders Forever)
Q21. What advice do you have for your teachers that would help them make FG students’ experiences better?	
	- she talks about conferences for k-12 teachers on how to get your students to participate or engage, and she wasn’t sure if professors have things like this. (connect to Jenahgir’s notes about how tenure is tied to research not teaching, so professional development for professors looks different than it would in k-12) - FG learning styles can be different and that they can be very shy – or hard to break out of their shell.
Q22. What advice do you have for other FG students?	
	“As cliché as that may sound, like once you’re in college like yeah it is all about involvement and if you’re not so involved then I guess you, I don’t know, it’s not like about college life but like it is the college life too because if you-you’re in college and like you want to experience that, so.”

Appendix P

PI notes

- Al says he wishes he had the “luxury” of discussing content outside of class, but if he understands something, he needs to focus on other things.
- Mai Ly talks about how finding the U-YMCA was when she started to feel like she belongs... in her advice she says to find a group but not necessarily a group based on race or culture.
- All students talked about being the only or one of the only racial minorities in their classes. Most of them felt that race was respected and didn't report many examples of feeling discriminated, but if they did, it was often by their classmates. Mai Ly talked about a student asking her to do the “Asian accent” in class, and having it explain to another classmate why she was tired or not doing all the work (because she has to work and, she assumes, the other student did not). Orna talked about being aware of her own financial status when other students talk about things like spring break trips, but felt good when she met other students who had to pay their own way. She also appears to be part of the racial majority and felt like people assumptions about her were not accurate - they saw her as part of the upper middle class, when she is not. Al mentioned that he actually registered for classes at Duluth but left after he got there and realized (or felt like) he was the only SOC. He also talked about becoming more independent and this could have contributed to her choice to leave Duluth. Condalisa shared a story of a male white peer staring her down and making a clicking sound (referring to African languages that use clicks) as they walked past one another on campus.
- Pancho talks about a rule he has (made by himself) to talk with every instructor he has in the first week of classes; this is pretty different from all the other students who had a strong preference to emailing instructors... then he mentions that his wife has two master's degrees, his mother-in-law has a master's. They were strong motivators for him and helped him the process of applying as well as being people for him to come home and talk with after a day on campus. During dinner, or before bed, they talk about his classes and this is a time for him to reflect on what he learned and better understand it (or what he doesn't understand).
- Pancho's grandma says “I can't read or write but I always have money in my pocket.” This highlights the attitude many FG college students face when deciding to go to college (also mentioned by Orna), but some students have a different experience where there is a lot of pressure and expectations on them but little support or advice, beyond encouragement.
- The way the instructor leads a class has a big impact on whether students see them as approachable or not... do you allow time for discussion? do you interact with the students during break or after class? or do you pack up your things and get out as quickly as possible? Maybe instructors need to make/assign students to come to office hours or ask them to visit, rather than hope they will come.
- 2 students talked about an “old” math teacher, with a thick accent who often did work incorrectly and refused to help, even when they visited their office hours.
- almost all of the students had reconsidered their answers, after explaining them with me. self reported data may not be so reliable without follow up explanation...
- Condalisa mentioned that after welcome week, she started to feel like it was all fake or the support had disappeared... she started to question whether the smiles and help was real because it had all gone away after week one.
- Several students, when I asked “do you feel like you belong” said now - yes, not if you had asked me last semester or my first semester.
- Pancho talks says that because he comes from another culture/country, he has a better time relating to other students (even when he doesn't know their country/culture)... Condalisa told me about a sibling going to school in Ghana and added “a country in Africa”... many FG immigrant students are coming in without an assumption that everyone else has the same experience like some of their domestic peers.