A Comparative Exploration of the College Experience of Native Men in Alaska and

Hawai'i

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Deseree Salvador

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Deanne Magnusson, Ph.D., Advisor

Gerald Fry, PhD., Advisor

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This dissertation marks the end of a long and satisfying journey through places close to my heart. Any significant journey is marked by moments of fear, doubt and strong language, and this one was no different. I wish to thank those who carried me through those moments.

My husband read through pages of drafts and reassured me in days of doubts that this decision was the right one and that I could do it. My three children, who were young during our first summers in Minnesota, have heard countless times in the ensuing years, "Not now, I have to write…." And their retorts from, "Are you still working on that?!!" to, when I said that I'm going to defend my dissertation, "Well, it's about time!" Indeed it is!

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Dedication

To my Mother, Fay Angell and my Father, Lewis Salvador who instilled a love of

learning and an appreciation of the world.

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to explore the lifeworld experiences of Native men in college in Alaska and Hawai'i. The research on these two groups of Native men indicates worse outcomes than both other minority men and Native women in college. Meanwhile, these regions are undergoing rapid social and economic change requiring well-educated leaders to address the dynamic environment. This qualitative research study attempts to uncover the individual stories and reveals that their progress in higher education may not be as dire as the numbers first suggest. The 12 one-on-one interviews delve into the complex world these men face at the institution. The narratives reveal, in turn, inspirational and troubling narratives on their paths to college degrees.

Despite coming from disparate regions, the findings highlight surprisingly similar phenomena: Both groups take longer; are older; have paradoxical relationships with families: both offering strength and impeding progress; a love of learning flourishes-- a point of pride and surprise for those who had not previously considered themselves exceptional students. The findings illuminate potential paths to support for these Native men who come to college with greater responsibilities, experience and needs than the traditional student. Universities can reach Native men by offering pro-active advising, not only in the crucial first year, but also their transition to university for those seeking a four-year degree. Among the critical services that institutions can focus on are advising and counseling, facilitating men's meetings to navigate the complexities of college culture, including family in the college experience, and peer and mentoring opportunities focusing on both cognitive and affective skills. Finally, as institutions adjust to roles and accept responsibilities for these students, they will support not only Native men but also

the increasingly diverse student body coming to college as first generation, non-traditional students.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

We have a suicide rate for Alaska Native males that is about eight times the national average in the age category from 15 through 24. What does that say? Some people would look at that statistic and say, well, that's not about education—it's not an educational statistic. But I look at that, and I look at the lives of the people who are trapped in it. We are talking about young people who are going through life so ill-prepared for the future, whose opportunities are so narrow, whose sense of the future is so bleak, and whose circumstances are so overwhelming that death is preferable to the life that lies before them. Isn't that an educational issue?

Paul Ongtooguk, Inupiat Educator, 2001

Introduction

A gender gap often refers to the male advantage in rates of employment and education; in higher education, however, by the late 1970s, women had reached parity with men (Jacobs, 1996). And although the rate of men enrolling in postsecondary education has increased, it has not kept pace with the rate of women enrolling in and graduating from colleges and universities (Jacobs, 1996; King, 2000; Sum, Fogg, & Harrison, 2003; Sum, Khatiwada, O'Brien, & Palma, 2009). The higher education gender gap now refers to the higher ratio of women to men in most majors on campuses across the United States. Moreover, men from minority groups have even less success, and indigenous men have the lowest rates of postsecondary completion in the United States (King, 2000; National Center for Education Statistics, 2010). In Hawai'i, the Kuali'i Council (2006, p. 2) reports that Native women at the University of Hawai'i outnumber

men 59% to 41%. And according to the *Anchorage Daily News* ("UAA Recognizes," 2008), "Only one out of ten Native Alaskans who enrolled in bachelor programs at the University of Alaska in 2000 had obtained their degrees within six years" (para. 7). Alaska has the third highest gender gap in higher education (Sum et al., 2003), and the gender gap crisis is even more acute when disaggregated for Alaska Native male students. Kleinfeld and Andrews (2006) reports that less than one Native man receives a degree at Alaskan urban campuses for every three women (p. 430), and less than two men for every five women graduate at rural campuses (Kleinfeld, 2009). Despite the many programs instituted to help transition this population into higher education, success remains elusive.

Some of the programs and supports created at the University of Alaska to ease the transition of Native rural students into college, including the Rural Alaska Honors Institute, Alaska Natives in Science and Engineering, Rural Student Services, and the Learning Centers, have served to engage women who have transitioned into both the college and the workforce milieu much more easily than men. The Rural Alaska Honors Institute, which serves primarily rural Alaska Natives, reported twice as many college graduates than a similar population who had not taken the summer bridge program (Gonzalez & Levine, 2006). Nevertheless, the percentage of male participants has averaged only 32% since its inception in 1983, and men accounted for only about 25% of applicants and participants between 2008 and 2011 (Rural Alaska Honors Institute, 2011). Meanwhile, and despite this academic support, the Native male graduation rate across University of Alaska campuses has held fairly steady at approximately 4% each year. Although the factors responsible for engaging Native students have been

documented—family, academic support and preparation, summer bridge programs, mentorships, and spirituality (Doyle, Kleinfeld, & Reyes, 2009; Guillory & Wolverton, 2008; Jackson, Smith, & Hill 2003; King, 2000; Reyes, 2001; Saggio & Rendon, 2004)— the number of graduates has not substantially changed.

In 2010, University of Alaska recorded its greatest gain in Native graduates, though the reason for the increase was unclear. Administrators speculated reasons could be programs, support, or changes in student perspectives on education ("Progress Made," 2010). Moreover, statisticians from the University of Alaska confirm an 18% increase in Native graduation rate from 2009 to 2010, but the rate fell an almost identical amount in 2011. Also in 2011, a threefold increase in Native PhD graduates occurred from 2007, though the number of students increased from only one to three (L. Delisle, personal communication, August 10, 2011). Hopeful rises and dramatic falls in numbers of graduates may be the result of the small populations of Native students at university rather than programmatic policies.

The data may reflect a population that has other priorities, yet it appears that institutions continue with academic programs and supports that yield little gain. Alaska Native men's expectation and experience at university are different. It is easy to assume that students are interested in earning a degree, but with the success rate so low and scarce information from universities regarding how Native male students experience higher education, it is time that college administrators looked at the stories behind the grim numbers. Understanding the Native perspective on and experience in higher education is a necessary first step before embarking on even one more well-meaning academic support service.

Like Alaska, Native Hawai'ian women at University of Hawai'i outnumber Native men two to one, yet in 2005 men represented only 31% of Native Hawai'ians earning degrees on the Manoa campus (Kuali'i Council, 2006, p. 7). Since then, the University of Hawai'i has positioned itself as a leading indigenous serving institution. With this new direction, Native Hawai'ian student outcomes have improved. The Office of Hawai'ian Affairs and Kamehameha Schools have funded the university through its "Achieving the Dream" initiative, and Native Hawai'ian enrollment increased 50% from 2008-2010. The University of Hawai'i reported a 26% increase in Native graduation rates. At the state's seven community colleges, there was a 35% increase of Native students earning a certificate or degree in the same time period. Seventy percent of all Native Hawai'ians at University of Hawai'i attend community college and comprise approximately 27% of the student body, while transfers to the four year University of Hawai'i system for Native students have increased, with only two campuses not exceeding their goals (Poythress, 2011). Still, this group has a six-year graduation rate of 41% compared to 73% for Chinese American and 64% for Japanese American students. (Kuali'i Council, p. 4).

The University of Hawai'i at Hilo participates in other programs to increase Native male representation in the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) majors. With the advent of the new Science and Technology facility, University of Hawai'i leaders will institute a program in indigenous engineering to encourage male students in the STEM fields. Ideas to increase Native male participation and graduation include hands-on design workshops for cars, boats, and planes; the establishment of a

canoe club; and mentoring programs (Quality Education for Minorities Network, 2010, p. 8).

Rationale

Improved education and postsecondary graduation rates for Native men would have a lasting impact in their communities. Immediate threats to Native villages in Alaska include high-risk behavior such as some of the highest suicide, accidental death and substance abuse, and sexually transmitted disease rates in the United States, as well as climate change and the fiscal uncertainty of an oil-dependent economy. Native Hawai'ians are generally grouped with Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders (AAPIs) in many studies and are seldom disaggregated from the rest of that population; thus, misleading findings are a concern. For example, Wong, Price, Kingle, and Kato (2004) found that while AAPIs had among the lowest levels of alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use of any population, the Native Hawai'ian subpopulation had among the highest rates when disaggregated (p. 1). Education can lessen many of the threats and act as a defense to external pressures (Kolata, 2007; Martin, 2009; Sum et al., 2009). The effect of the postsecondary gender gap on local communities is immense: gender parity in the community and workforce, political power, and family structure are at risk. Kleinfeld (2009) reports that just 3% of Native men are graduating from the University of Alaska in both two and four year programs. Such data reflect that male students are not succeeding in school, but an explanation for the phenomenon does not exist. Poor outcomes in education fuel increases in societal, economic, and health problems. With further education comes increased employment, lower crime rates, higher tax base, better

preventative health, and improved well-being (Jacobs, 1996; Kolata, 2007; Sum et al., 2003).

Educational Outcomes

Alaska Native women are graduating at a rate of three women to every one man (Kleinfeld & Andrews, 2006). The University of Alaska campuses awarded 3.9% of their degrees in 2010 to Alaska Native men. However, for fiscal year 2011, there was an 18% decrease in Alaska Native/American Indian degrees conferred statewide, though the figures have not been disaggregated for gender (University of Alaska, Fairbanks, Planning, Analysis and Research, 2011).

Despite Alaska Native men's low completion rates, it is precisely the technical and professional knowledge or expertise that may save rural Alaska Native communities. Because fluctuations in temperature are more extreme at the poles, the Arctic and sub-Arctic locations make Alaskan villages disproportionately affected by the temperature variation associated with climate change. Recently, many villages have been relocated due to eroding coastlines, and severe storms are expected to increase as the ice shrinks at the pole and shore-fast ice accrues later in the fall, further exacerbating the problems in Native villages (Gregg, 2010). Native communities in Alaska and Hawai'i are already facing external threats on other fronts: economy, health, and education (Brayboy, 2006; Centers for Disease Control, 2012; Kizzia, 2008; Martin, 2009; Ogenwole, 2006; Yardley, 2007), so the gender gap only intensifies deep problems by corroding traditional gender roles and family structures (Hamilton & Seyfried, 1994; Hamilton, Seyfried, & Bellinger, 1997; Martin, 2009).

With such small numbers of students at university and college, percentages may fluctuate widely, but the education issues begin earlier. High school completion rates are low for Alaskan Native students, and men make up the largest proportion of leavers. Kleinfeld and Andrews (2006) posit that the exceedingly low graduation rates of Native male students is attributed to a belief that academic performance conflicts with the traditional male role as hunter and provider that "emphasized skills vital to the community, making the difference between survival and starvation" (p. 432), which in turn affects who is prepared to continue into higher education.

Hawai'i's secondary school graduation rate of 65% is just below Alaska's 66% (Vorsino, 2011) and nearly 10% lower than the U.S. average. Native women at University of Hawai'i outnumber Native males 59% to 41% (Kuali'i Council, 2005), and Complete College America (2011) report in Hawai'i the skills gap between available jobs and employees with education and training is 27%.

Employment Outcomes

Both states rely heavily on government spending: Hawai'i ranks fourth and Alaska first in per-capita federal spending per state (Hess, Sauter, Uible, & Nelson, 2012), and both have higher than average costs of living. Like Alaska, Hawai'i exploits its natural resources; however, tourism, the primary industry, is only rebounding in Hawai'i in 2012 after a 5-year low (Department of Business, 2012). Still, one in three Native Hawai'ians is living in poverty, and Hawai'i has the highest number of families with more than two generations in one household (Kana'iaupuni, Malone, & Ishibashi, 2005). Although the researchers admit that increased levels of postsecondary education, especially in high-demand science fields, would improve the statistics, they recognize

that Native Hawai'ians may have a different perspective on this quantitative measure of well-being and emphasize the resiliency and strength that have overcome these disadvantages (p. 9).

Alaska is immense, yet employment opportunities largely depend on access to natural resources in each region. Some villages are clearly impoverished while others have incomes over twice the median income for the United States. Duhaime (2004) report that although direct employment in mineral extraction is limited for Natives, accounting for less than 3% of Native employment, indirect employment tied to the fortunes of these resources accounts for approximately 60% of jobs statewide and even more in oil-rich boroughs. Nevertheless, even with a Native-hire preference for corporation and local government employment, finding skilled workers among this population is difficult. A large disconnect exists between the level of skills needed for heavy industry or administration and the training or education level of the local population; most positions are for non-Alaskans. Duhaime noted, "While specific raw materials can be found within the region, technology, qualified labor and capital have to be imported most of the time" (p. 173). Companies hire highly skilled workers from outside the region and state for rotating shifts, and the transient population can double the borough population figures. With a mixed economy, traditional subsistence skills are far less valuable, as a mixed wage economy takes precedence in even the most remote villages (Hamilton & Seyfrit, 1993). The effect of fewer educated men in rural villages throughout the state and the correspondingly higher rate of female education and out-migration exacerbate the already vulnerable Native communities. Out-migration is overwhelmingly takes the best, brightest, and most ambitious citizens, leaving those with fewer resources and skills in

the local community, further bankrupting the villages in this brain drain (Kizzia, 2008; Martin, 2009; Yardley, 2007).

Health Outcomes

Native Alaskan communities have some of the worst health and welfare outcomes in the United States, and Native Hawai'ian communities are not far behind. Alcohol abuse is highest in the indigenous populations; men are twice as likely in every age group to be alcohol dependent and they have the highest rate of fetal alcohol syndrome for any population in the United States, at 5.6 per 1,000 births (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2010). Alaska has the highest suicide rate in the nation, but disaggregated for Alaskan Natives, the rate is five times higher than the U.S. average (Yardley, 2007). Rural Alaska has the highest rate of sexually transmitted disease, highest rate of sudden infant death syndrome, highest rate of death from liver disease and cirrhosis, and second highest rates of diabetes and heart disease in the United States (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2006a). Sex crimes in western Alaska are the highest in the United States (Demer, 2011). Segal (1999) reports that 100% of the Alaska Native women in treatment for substance abuse had been victims of physical or sexual abuse (p. v).

In a study on healthy living for Native Hawai'ian college students, Boyd and Braun (2007) report 73% of the indigenous population is overweight and have "disproportionately high rates of chronic disease" (p. 1). With rising obesity comes increased rates of diabetes, high blood pressure, heart attacks and strokes (Community Health Profile, 2012, p. 36). Native Hawai'ians have the highest infant mortality rate for

all AAPIs combined and eight times the rate of tuberculosis of whites (Office of Minority

Health, 2012). Kolata (2007) correlates health to education: "If you want to improve

health you will get more by investing in education than by investing in medical care"

(para. 6). Hawai'i's Community Health Profile 2012 reports that "thirteenth year

education is associated with lower death rates" (p. 8). The profile also explains the health

advantages enjoyed by men and women completing even 1 year of postsecondary

education, training, or military: higher incomes, fewer reporting fair to poor health, and

better social cohesion (pp. 8-9). Therefore, examining the experience of college for these

students may lead to creating successful programs to support indigenous men and

increase their options and the viability of the local community.

Historical Context of the Problem

Indigenous populations in the U.S. have similar stories of cultural and linguistic

attacks, indoctrination, and segregation. Rosenstiel (1971) documents the history of

Alaskan Native education, which mirrors American Indian and Native Hawai'ian

education in most ways. Missionaries, first Russian Orthodox and later Protestant,

attempted to indoctrinate Native youth by separating them from their homes and villages,

encouraging intermarriage to weaken their culture, and disallowing, often violently, their

native tongue. The Nelson Act of 1905 created de facto segregation, as White education

became the purview of the state and Native education fell under federal jurisdiction. "It

was anticipated that this would eventually lead to a breakdown of the indigenous patterns

of life, and the total acculturation of the Native peoples. It remained in effect for three

decades" (Rosenstiel, 1971, p. 191). Responsibility for Native education again shifted

with the Johnson-O'Malley Act of 1934 and two boarding schools for Native youth opened in Alaska. Nonetheless, in an important way, both the Alaskan and the Hawai'ian experiences differed in the continental United States.

In Alaska, groups of students sued the state for not having secondary school available in their communities. Their 1976 case, *Tobeluk v. Lind*, originally filed as *Hooch v. Lind* to protect the identities of the plaintiffs and widely referred to as "Molly Hooch," mandated that the state support villages building local secondary schools (Cotton, 1984). The intent was to keep students at home and learning instead of taking the best and brightest away to board. The law reduced the need for the often traumatic boarding experience for many students, but it did not necessarily create good schools close to home ("State Ordered," 2009).

The Molly Hooch ruling followed another important milestone toward Alaska Native self-determination: the Alaska Native Claim Settlement Act (ANSCA). After the discovery of oil near Prudhoe Bay in Arctic Alaska, negotiations began in earnest to settle the land claims by various Native groups throughout the state. The United States agreed to establish 12 regional corporations (and one for Native Alaskans living outside the state) to receive monies from purchases, leases, and mineral extraction, thus paving the way for the Alaskan Pipeline to begin construction in 1973. Both the Molly Hooch decision and ANSCA empowered the Alaskan Natives and differentiated their experience from that of the Native population in the rest of the country. However, ANSCA still left a large disconnect between the corporate jobs created after ANSCA and the skill level of the Native populations through a workforce issue that continues to exist.

Since ANSCA, Alaska Natives in some regions have made great gains politically and economically; however, a substandard education for rural Alaskans has remained. Researchers from Johns Hopkins University listed the secondary schools in the Northwest Arctic and North Slope Borough, among others in Alaska, as "drop-out factories" (Balfanz & Letgers, 2004), with less than 60% of students persisting through graduation. In the 2004-2005 school year, less than one third of 10th graders passed the high school qualifying exam and less than half of the Alaska Native ninth graders went on to graduate (National Center for Education Statistics, 2010). Moreover, Judge Sharon Gleason ruled on February 4, 2009, that the state of Alaska has not met its constitutional duty for providing adequate education in rural Alaska ("State Ordered," 2009), so it is not surprising when only one in 10 Native students is graduating with a bachelor's degree in 6 years at the University of Alaska. Furthermore, Reyes (2001) asserted that the greatest barrier to college participation and success for Native students was the lack of academic and advising support at their high school (p. 152). "Native students' perceptions that they have not received an adequate high school education are largely correct and an underlying source of ambivalence about pursuing post-secondary education" (Doyle et al., 2009, p. 32). Additionally, Native men perceived a greater degree of discrimination or prejudice from school than women reported (King, 2000; Kleinfeld, 2009; Kleinfeld & Reyes, 2007). Alaska's public school system continues to fail Alaska Native students. Native students, on average, take 7 years to complete a degree, and it is not unusual for these students to have lengthy periods of time between semesters (Brayboy, 2006). What administration defines as failure may be an aspect of their success.

Hawai'i, on the other hand, was a sovereign nation led by the Kamehameha dynasty until 1871. Less than 20 years later, the Hawai'ian Kingdom was overthrown by a pro-United States coup orchestrated by sugar magnates unhappy with new tariffs on their product (Dougherty, 1992, pp. 167-168). A strong Hawai'ian identity and a sovereignty movement still exist in the state. Nevertheless, education for indigenous students in Hawai'i has followed a similar pattern as it did in the United States and its territory Alaska from its early 19th-century missionary movement to the creation of Act 56 in 1896. This act deemed English as the medium of education in all schools—public and private. The result of the policy was a huge shift from the people's native Polynesian language to a creolized Pidgin in the first half of the 20th century (Benham & Heck, 1994). However, the last remaining Kamehameha, Bernice Pauahi Bishop, understood the need for an educated Native populace and in 1883 willed her fortune to create the Kamehameha Schools for the education of boys and girls. The trust also stipulats that all teachers be Protestants of any denomination. These schools continue to serve Native Hawai'ian students at four locations across the islands, send 70% of graduates to university and an additional 25% to two year college. Moreover, Kamehameha school's endowment in 2009 was $9 billion, which was the wealthiest endowment in the United States ("Endowment Figures," 2008). The Native populations in the 49th and 50th states have unique histories differing from the rest of the indigenous nations. Can these experiences serve to strengthen their college outcomes?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore the experiences of Native Alaskan and Hawai'ian native men in college to have a better understanding of their perceptions of college and the factors that influence their persistence.

Nature of the Study

The models and findings of many researchers of Native populations (Doyle et al., 2009; Guillory & Wolverton, 2008; Huffman, 2001; Jackson et al., 2003; Kleinfeld, 2009; Kleinfeld & Reyes, 2007; Reyes, 2001; Whitbeck, 2006) inform this study. Factors that affect persistence in college will be explored. The students' village, traditional culture, worldview, relation to family and community, perceived institutional support, past educational experience, after college aspirations, and ties to subsistence life (Guiffrida, 2006; Guillory & Wolverton, 2008; Huffman, 2001; Jackson et al., 2003; Morotti, 1992; Oliveira, 2005; Reyes, 2001; Whitbeck, Hoyt, Statton, & LaFramboise, 2001) will be juxtaposed to the day-to-day life of a college student that includes self-management, course load, grades, and social and class relations (Tinto, 1993, 2006; Jacob, 2001; Harper, Harris, & Mmeje, 2005; Harrington & Harrington, 2011; Reyes, 2001) and then explored to understand the factors that encourage or deter Native men's persistence and success in college.

Theoretical Framework

A few theories converge to explain poor educational outcomes for indigenous students, and while these were founded on minority student learning theory, they have

been adapted and refined to explore the indigenous experience specifically. Each one recognizes the unique position of indigenous students in mainstream college culture. As indigenous theories, these work to create an awareness of the state of the Native educational experience in the United States as influenced at the societal and individual level. The theories inform the study, but they do not guide it. Nevertheless, their inclusion gives important background into the succession of knowledge that informs current understanding.

Any discussion of indigenous education must address the elements which directly put the indigenous student at risk in college. Bourdieu (1986) transfers capital theory—the maximization of profit--- to social or cultural capital, a *disinterested* or non-material barter. In other words, after producing enough economic capital, the resulting leisure allows for the pursuit of artistic and/or intellectual avenues which beget that classes' (bourgeois) milieu which in turn begets (more) economic capital: A circle of power influencing students' educational outcomes. He explains that due to this invisible web of interconnectedness and knowledge, academic success is equally the result of these systemic forces which support certain classes in pursuit of academia, for example, and necessarily exclude those who are not from the same class.

The protective and generative force of this invisible field of knowledge and/or connection cannot be understated. "The best hidden and socially most determinant educational investment namely, the domestic transmission of cultural capital…scholastic yield from educational action depends on the cultural capital previously invested by the family" (P4). Moreover, not only are certain groups: the educated, professional, well-connected, advantaged in this system; those who do not come from the hereditary group

of accumulated power (capital), are more than disadvantaged. Those who possess no social or cultural capital to exchange must attempt to acquire this amorphous "good". Thereby the unconnected student necessarily invests more time and sacrifice (p. 5). If measured, this acquisition of capital must assume a positive value for the pre-school (domestic) years where the (bourgeois) student had a "head start" and conversely, for the un-capitalized student, a "negative value in wasted time, and doubly so because much time must be spent correcting the effects"(pp. 5). Thus is the conundrum of the indigenous student in western college: having to paddle twice as hard to get to the same point.

Another theory to look at the macro-issues, Structural inequality theory was developed to address the poor social position of Blacks in America and how American institutions systematically exclude minorities from advancement. Ogbu (1978, 1982; Ogbu & Simmons, 1998) seek to explain the poor performance of Black students in school and created what became cultural-ecological theory and oppositional culture theory yoking educational failure in minority culture to systemic racism and, later, all forms of subordination: gender, sexual orientation, and class. Structural inequality faces criticism, for example for having no practical solutions to systemic problems, yet Huffman (2010) noted "it is a useful explanative tool for many of the perplexing dilemmas found in American Indian education" (p. 64).

From this critical theory, Brayboy (2005) explains minority failure and adapts it to the Native American experience, thus creating TribalCrit. Brayboy identifies nine points of TribalCrit relating to indigenous students in a Euro-American-centered system. These tenets include colonization—acknowledging Euro-American thought, knowledge

and power systems (Brayboy, 2005, p. 430), wealth accumulation, and assimilation and stressed that TribalCrit "values narrative and stories as legitimate forms of data" (Brayboy, 2005, p. 428) in the Native communities. Therefore, listening is a large and necessary part of researching in indigenous communities.

From the macro to the micro or individual level, the concern of interactionist theory is retention and persistence as they pertain to the transition of students from home to school. This theory presumes that students' backgrounds serve to interfere with or facilitate adjustment into college. Tinto (1975, 1993) and Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) offer various developmental models that identify either factors or stages for success in college, though none of them specifically addressed the issue of Native students in non-Native institutions. Various researchers (Huffman, 2001; Jackson et al., 2003; Pavel & Padilla, 1993; Reyes, 2001; Tierney, 1992) refine this to reflect Native students' experience in a majority institution.

Whereas the focus of those theories is on deficiencies or differences in the minority cultures that preclude college success, Huffman's (2001) transculturation theory identifies a singularly Native approach to examining student success, as opposed to failure, outlining the process of culture shock for Native students attending college. Huffman categorizes the experiences of students that lead to either a withdrawal from college or engaged participation as estranged or *transculturated*. Huffman's five stages parallel the stages of culture shock for sojourners traveling to foreign cultures (Paige, 1993), and Huffman finds the students best able to persist in college were those who came from the most traditional backgrounds and were least acculturated to Western ways.

Nevertheless, in this study, recurring themes should be ascertained from the stories collected, not from any preconceived theory. Dahlberg et al. (2007) emphasizes "the restraining of one's pre-understanding in the form of personal beliefs, theories and other assumptions that otherwise would mislead the understanding of meaning and thus limit the research openness" (pp. 129-130). However, studies by Contreras (1997), Jackson et al. (2003), and Penland (2010) serve as general examples of a purely qualitative methodology with regard to American Indian and Alaska Native students.
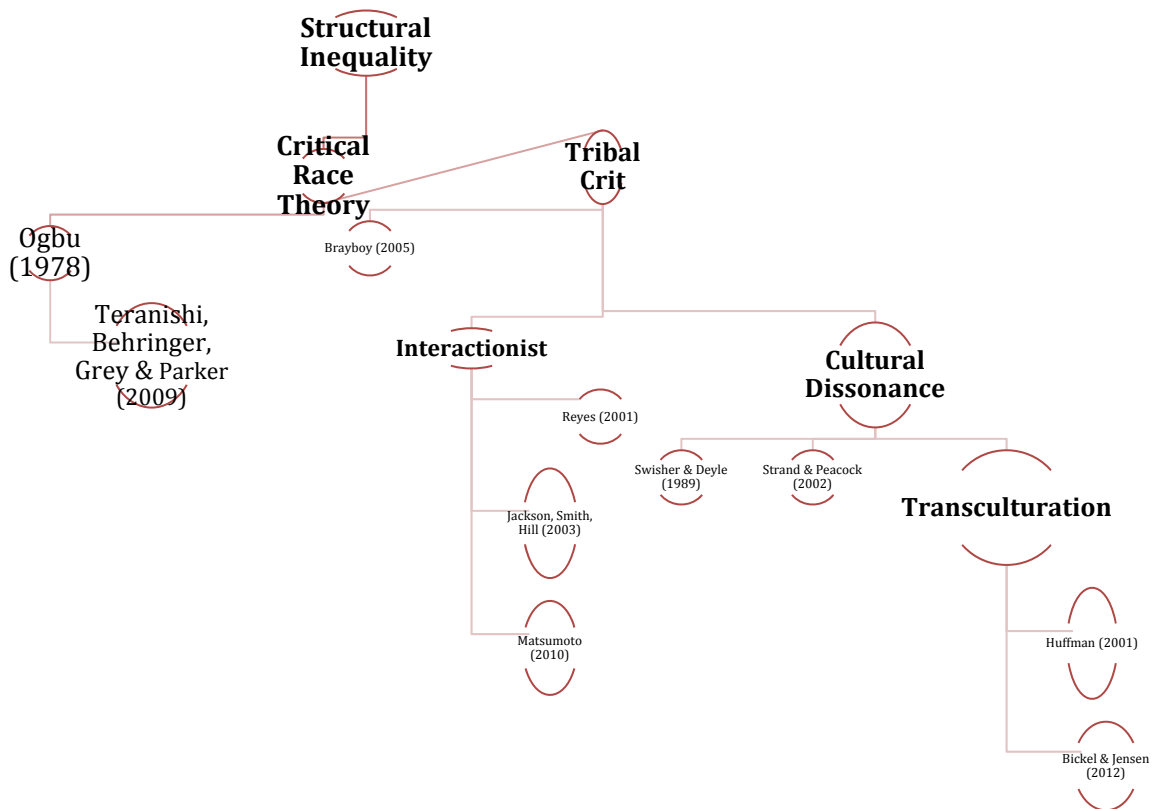
Figure 1. Native theory tree.

Research Questions

1. How does the indigenous male define success in college?

2. How does he perceive the postsecondary experience?

3. What do successful Native male college students perceive to be the most important elements in their persistence?

4. How has the institution assisted or obstructed their success?

Context of the Study

Sixteen percent of Alaska's population, or just over 100,000 people, are indigenous. The University of Alaska, Fairbanks, a land-grant institution, also houses the Community and Technical College; together, approximately 23% of their student population is Alaska Native. In 2011, male students comprised approximately 40% of that group from both urban and rural (non-road-system) regions of the state. In Hawai'i, the male-female ratio is about the same as Alaska while 23% of the college-age (18-24) population, 21,497 people, is Native of which 30% are at post-secondary school. Native Hawai'ians make up 29% of Hawai'i Community College student body and 16% of the University of Hawai'i, Hilo (Kuali'i Council, 2006).

Limitations and Delimitations

The focus of this study is Native male students at two state colleges. The study is contingent on participants' honest replies in the limited amount of time available. Validity of this study is limited to the reliability of the questions and responses. This study will be confined to interviewing a selection of Native men in their third to seventh semester of school at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks, Community and Technical College and the University of Hawai'i, Hilo, Hawai'i Community College in two and/or four year programs.

Key Terms and Concepts

Cultural values: Shared ideas about what is fair, true, and important, or not, in any group.

Gender gap: The female advantage in rates of enrollment and graduation in higher education.

Indigenous: Population groups with ancestral connections to a region prior to written history.

Native: A member of one of the groups of indigenous Americans: Alaskan Eskimo or Indian, American Indian, or Native Hawai'ian. Self-identified in this study.

Orientation: Traditional, Western, or mixed relationship to the village and local economy.

Persistence: Reenrolling from one term or season to another.

Retention: The act of keeping a student within any term—not dropping out.

Rural: From a Native village or town located off the road system in Alaska, or a non-urban area of Hawai'i.

Success: Completion of a degree or certificate or retaining and persisting in school.

Traditional culture: The practice of Alaska Native students who subsistence hunt for their families or engage in other pre-contact activities in Hawai'i and Alaska.

Worldview: Students' outlook or perception of the world, including the importance of traditional or Western employment.

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

Overview

This chapter includes a review of relevant literature and research on the indigenous male college experience. The review of literature is an interdisciplinary endeavor encompassing various fields. All the disciplines are examined in terms of how they apply to tertiary education for indigenous Hawai'ian or Alaskan men, including aspirations, expectations, adaptation to college life, and village employment. After an introduction of the historical context of a White sojourner-researcher into American Indian /Alaskan Native/Pacific Island lands, this chapter contains an overview of first-year-experience literature, including developmental education, retention, and persistence pertaining to nontraditional, disenfranchised, or minority groups in higher education. The gender gap in college attainment, both across ethnicities and in indigenous communities (Kleinfeld, 2009; Kleinfeld & Andrews, 2006; Sum et al., 2007), will be considered, as well as the associated economic and demographic changes (Hamilton et al., 1997; Martin, 2009). Finally, various models for Native success from the fields of education and psychology are examined through the lens of applicability to college-going men.

Background

The history of Euro-American–Native contact has been described as at best latent disregard (Rosenstiel, 1971) and at worst active annihilation (Woodcock & Alawiye, 2001). Since the time of the U.S. colonies, education reforms effected in Native communities have reflected the troubles brought by good intentions, for example, missionaries removing children from families and communities and placing them into

boarding schools and violently disregarding Native languages. Due to this history, it is essential to consider the needs of the Native community that will be affected by a change before considering the needs of the dominant culture or researcher. Western positivistic research that attempts to justify unjust policies and ensure continued funding through data collection is no longer an option for small, disparate populations, who, in all the years of scientific incursion, have yet to experience improved social outcomes in education, health, or employment (Segal, 1999). As Smith (1999) opines, indigenous research made careers for researchers who already had jobs. This acknowledgment of poor stewardship is a sea change in the evolution of Native reforms. It is now commonplace to engage each community to name its issue and seek its culturally relevant solution. In light of past research failures (Foulkes, 1989), more Native participation and self-determination in education or self-efficacy in treatment is the way to the future. Whereas Native communities often view funding and promotion as the defining research goal, the Western researcher might now agree a critical theoretical approach may offer a more effective orientation toward reform, both in the recovery literature and student success (Huffman, 2001; Whitbeck, 2006).

Good social and educational research relies upon a clear understanding of the cultural milieu. Burch (2005) outlines the various nations that comprise the Alaskan Inuit groups, which stretch from the coast of the Northwest Canadian border to the south central island of Kodiak. Burch analyzed the importance of rivalry and kinship that helped to support the people of this area and purported that the cold weather and scarce resources fostered a fierce rivalry between nations and a super-reliance upon kin groups. Both the rivalry and the kinship system allowed survival in this harsh area and explain

present-day cultural norms and relations in and among the Eskimo groups, and these relations may influence student success in the 21st century. Issues the researcher, teacher, or administrator may consider when engaging in these communities are the strong kinship ties, as well as traditional rivalries, which may have an effect on student participation or absenteeism.

Oliveira (2005) notes that despite Native American, Alaska Native, and Native Hawai'ian historical and cultural differences, these indigenous groups share common obstacles to higher education, including risk factors, first-generation status, financial assistance, time to degree, grade point average, and four year degree attainment (p. 15). Hagendorn, Tibbetts, Moon and Lester (2003) concur that much can be learned by studying the Alaska Native experience as so little research has been done on the Native Hawai'ian in college.

Native Educational History

Woodcock and Alawiye (2001) explore the relationship between Native people and the U.S. government with regard to Native education providing new avenues for progress. From nearly 200 years of cultural loss or "coercive assimilation" (Woodcock & Alawiye, 2001, p. 811), a new empowerment and self-determination is evident in recent policies in higher education. Chief among these is the rise of tribal colleges since the mid-1970s with the inception of the American Indian Higher Education Consortium. Public universities are challenged to hear other voices and to "create a climate and academic environment that is conducive to the inclusion of the American Indian and Alaskan Native students and the communities they represent" (p. 814). However, even

Tierney (2008) emphasized that, to secure vital funding through accreditation, these institutions must reflect the mainstream and to assume otherwise "overlooks the crucial importance of the socio-cultural contexts surrounding postsecondary education in the US" (p. 71).

Davis (1998) studies the history of Native American higher education since the colonial period and concentrated on specific eras of Western engagement and its government's shifting goals between Indian termination of the special trust relationship between the government and Native American leadership and self-determination. Davis purports that the post-World War II boom in multiculturalism encouraged the implementation or expansion of tribal colleges throughout the United States. Davis recast Native students' difficulties, direction, and mission in detail as a corollary to increasing the political strength of Native communities throughout the United States. This shift in power is reflected in various events, from the creation of ANSCA in the 1970s to the $3.4 billion Indian Trust settlement in *Cobell v. Salazar* in 2010. Understanding this political background is necessary to considering the role of individual student success for Native Alaskan communities. As the Native nation-states achieve recognition and power, the individuals will share this strength.

In contrast, Grande (2004) contends that Native American education was not merely to civilize or Christianize the Indians, but "deliberately designed to colonize Indian minds as a means of gaining access to indigenous resources" (p. 235). Time has borne out the truth of some of these claims. In rural Alaska, mineral wealth, or its absence, determines employment, infrastructure, and educational opportunities regionally. To what extent does it determine college choice? Are wealthier villages more

or less likely to undertake further education? The student members of the Calista Corporation, one of the state's poorest Native corporations, are among the most successful at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks (D. Wartes, personal communication, November 12, 2011). Which groups are more successful, those with or without financial supports? Understanding the juxtaposition of resource extraction to traditional culture in rural villages—the pressure, the potential, and the pitfalls—is necessary when looking at college attendance.

Rosenstiel (1971) delineates the national Native education policies—Nelson Act of 1905, Uniform School Act of 1917, Johnson-O'Malley Act of 1934, and Economic Opportunity Act of 1964—and explains their effect on Native students in Alaska. Even then, Rosensteil acknowledges the disconnect between Native communities and the policies as an extension or engine for Western economy, stating, "Conflicts in value orientation have not been completely resolved" (p. 193). The period of her research was undertaken at the dawn of self-determination for the U.S. Native groups, and the language of the article reflected critically on the history as well as on optimism for the possibility of educational reform for indigenous populations that culminated in the 1976 Molly Hooch ruling. Even with the advent of village schools, an Anchorage judge still determined that the state was not supporting academic achievement in rural districts ("State Ordered," 2009).

Two studies have involved examining the perceptions non-Native public school teachers and Native learners have of each other in Alaska Native and First Nations, Mestis, and Inuit communities. Contreras (1997) pursues a purely qualitative approach to examine student perceptions of non-Native teachers in a rural Alaskan village and finds

there are both cultural discontinuities and congruencies in the classroom. Students respond to what they perceive as irregular behavior by engaging in culturally appropriate, informal conversation, and joking, which is a culturally accepted form of correction. In turn, the students enjoy a casual rapport with instructors and not an authoritarian approach to teaching. Conversely, Hogg (2008) examines the perceptions of non-Native teachers on their First Nations, Mestis, and Inuit students and finds that instances of prejudice and racism are not uncommon in the schools. Usually this is due to either poor training or a lack of experience and education about the culture. Both studies speak to the cultural miscommunication that can ultimately affect the students' view of education as a whole, prior to the college years. The influence of the early years in education on the direction and perceptions of students cannot be underestimated.

Benham and Heck (1998) articulate the long and painful transition from sovereign nation to colonized people in *Culture and Policy in Hawai'i*. Sharing much of the same story as the other indigenous peoples of the United States, the researchers record missionary zeal, loss of language, and Western enculturation. Specific to Hawai'i, they also report on the institution of common and select schools that echoed and encouraged the Hawai'ian caste system. Benham and Heck continue through the Hawai'ian renaissance, invigorated in part by the sailing of the Hokulea in 1976 (p. 182) and Article X, Section 4 of the state constitution of 1978 allowing for "Hawai'ian education in the form of language, culture and history in the public schools" (p. 198). This act ended a nearly 100-year ban on the language in school, ultimately allowing for immersion schools and the return of students' mother tongue.

Academic Support

  Developmental education. According to Tinto (1975), if students are to be successful in college, they must gain the skills necessary to bridge the gap by improving one of the three predicative factors: college preparedness. The other two, parental influence and individual attributes, cannot be easily manipulated. Developmental education is critical because students are arriving poorly prepared for college, and remedial classes that introduce students to college culture and content knowledge are necessary to succeed. A benign definition of developmental education is a "general movement toward greater differentiation, integration and complexity in ways that individuals think and behave" (Pascarelli & Terenzini, 2005, p. 19). Though the term may be borrowed from what had previously been called remedial education, the concept of a developmental continuum is important and relates to new college students of any age.

  In practice, the odd bedfellows of proponents of college access and proponents of student gatekeeping often conspire to keep underprepared students out of credit-bearing classes, and as many as two thirds of students who enter the preparatory sequence of classes do not persist (Adams, Gearhart, Miller, & Roberts, 2009). Complete College America (2011), in a report titled *Time Is the Enemy*, referred to remediation as "the Bermuda Triangle of college" (p. 14). Nonetheless, for Native students, these courses are often cited as a positive factor in persistence (Harrington & Harrington, 2011; Reyes, 2001). The role of developmental education is crucial for Native students moving along a continuum toward degree completion: developmental education must often motivate students over multiple semesters while offering no credit toward a degree. This is an

immense task, especially for older students who come to college to receive a two year degree that is often delayed by semesters or years with the addition of preparatory math and English courses. Understanding clearly what works in developmental education is critical for the success of Native men.

Wauters (1982) explores the cultural milieu of Southeastern Alaskan native students and analyzed their needs in preparing for higher education. Wauters developes a curriculum to support their academic goals that incorporated the Native students' experience, culture, and expectations, which amounted to understanding the need to address these differences in classroom material. Allowing for cultural differences in the curriculum is a first step, but does not allow for the structural differences between Native and Euro-American values in education.

Developmental education is a critical factor for Alaska Native student success (Kleinfeld, 2009; Reyes, 2001) in college. These classes have been the bridge for rural students from poor-performing school districts to gain the cultural and academic background for success in college. Native students are twice as likely to take developmental-level courses and have nearly twice the attrition rate of majority students (University of Alaska, Anchorage, 2006). Moreover, 72% of Alaska Natives at University of Alaska are freshman students. This statistic reflects students' inability to persist after semesters spent in non-credit-bearing remedial courses or the university's failure to orient students to college culture. Understanding the experience of Native male students during this critical year provides insight into the elements that contribute to or detract from their college success.

Third-year transfer. Using Tinto's (1993) integration model in a quantitative study, D'Amico, Dika, Elling, Algozzine and Gin (2013) explore how well community college students integrate on transfer including various factors limiting and enhancing academic and social integration. They found college grade point average, advising and, interestingly, being female were among the predictors of how well students transitioned.

Herrera and Jain (2013) delineate elements necessary for a "transfer-receptive culture" for non-traditional, minority and low-income students. At the pre-transfer level the community college must establish non-traditional, first-generation transfer students as a high priority and provide outreach and resources for these students. At the post-transfer level, the receiving institution must offer support so that these students are encouraged to achieve at high scholastic levels; address the entire lived experience of the transfer students, especially the intersection between community, family and school; and finally, it must work create a framework to assess and evaluate the success of any transfer-receptive initiatives (p.53). Their research uses a Critical Race framework at which to examine success of the model used at UCLA.

In a mixed methods study, Miller (2013) identified the factors which six successful transfer institutions in Texas used to successfully transition Pell recipients. Like the findings of Herrera and Jain (2013), those pre-transfer elements include: 1) structured academic pathways, 2) student-centered culture, 3) culturally-sensitive leadership. She also found a lack of engagement and integration at the receiving institution as the greatest barrier. The nature of the Pell recipient, low-income and non-traditional, who is more likely to be part-time, work off campus and have a family, accounts for the lower level of university engagement.

Retention and persistence. The first year is a critical window for acculturating students into college life (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Tierney, 1992; Tinto, 1975, 2006). For Alaska Native men, the success of the transition from village to college life cannot be overstated. Tinto is the father of retention and persistence studies in higher education, and his models have informed college administrators with an initial understanding of the importance of the first-year experience. However, the models were intended for Euro-American culture, which does not represent the Native college-going experience. Subsequent researchers have adapted Tinto's models for minority students, and the adaptations have played an important role in understanding the reasons Native students stay in or leave postsecondary education.

College preparation, family support, and institutional programs (Tinto, 1975) are important for Native students, but retention models that do not take into consideration the role of village, community, religion, and family cannot be used reliably with groups outside Euro-American culture. Furthermore, Tierney (1992) argues against Tinto's model, which was based on earlier anthropological research on ritual or rite of passage to explain the college experience. For example, college life was explained in terms of disassociating from home life to integrate successfully into college life. This separation was a necessary phase in the successful transition to college—a rite of passage. Tierney notes that the original model was "never intended to explain one culture's ritual to initiate a member from another culture" (p. 608). Tinto's suicide analogy for dropouts or departers is particularly poorly chosen when speaking of Alaska Native groups who have five times the suicide rate of the rest of the nation (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2006b). Tierney contends that critical or feminist theories are better able to

reflect the nature of Native students in higher education in the United States because they speak to the history and experience of the non-dominant culture.

In Hawai'i, Matsumoto (2010) uses research from the Kamehameha Schools to examine factors that lead to college success. Five hundred Native Hawai'ian students were surveyed. She finds that although the integration model Tinto advocated does not fit the Hawai'ian students well, some factors persist. Those that correlate with success included relationship with teachers; on-campus living; a sense of belongingness, not integration; and financial resources.

Pavel and Padilla (1993) use Tinto's departure model in a longitudinal study of Native American leavers and found that aspects such as family background, post-secondary intentions and goal commitment and formal and informal academic integration (p.1) are transferrable for Native American students; nevertheless, other unique factors may contribute to leave-taking for this population. Pavel and Padilla suggest various directions for new research: longitudinal studies on a campus-by-campus basis, high school support programs, and the role of the family in Native students' success could all be more fully explored.

Guiffrida (2006) also adapts Tinto's model to Native students and critiqued its lack of cultural diversity. Guiffrida posits a cultural advancement to Tinto's original departure theory that reflects the experience of non-majority students in college. In fact, Guiffrida stresses the need to remain close and connected to the home community while at college and recognized that family is a necessary and vital factor in Native success (Guillory & Wolverton, 2008; Jackson et al. 2003). Guiffrida also emphasizes the importance of cross-cultural understanding for any student developmental model.

Jackson et al. (2003) interview 15 successful Native American college students in a qualitative study and contend that the current student development models are still steeped in the White Euro-American culture. Furthermore, Jackson et al. advise that a completely new perspective is in order to bring about success for Native students. The researchers attack earlier Native qualitative studies, noting that "information was based on data collected through standardized instruments which are based on existing theories and paradigms of typical European American culture" (p. 550). In their qualitative study, Jackson et al. identify both surface and deep themes, including religion, racism, and the paradoxical influences of support and fear from family and friends. These issues, from my experience on the North Slope, are the same as those experienced by Alaska Native men in college.

Guillory and Wolverton (2008) also document factors attributed to college persistence, including the role of family, giving back to community, and on-campus social supports. Paradoxically, like the findings of Jackson et al. (2003), family was the leading barrier to Native success, followed closely by (single) parenthood. Additional barriers are financial support and lack of academic preparation. Contrary to what universities report—that strong programs attract Native candidates—no Native students mentioned a university program itself as being a motivating factor for attending or completing college. If that is the case in Alaska, to what extent then is the strong commitment to Alaska Native languages and programs at the undergraduate and graduate level directed at Alaska Native students contributing to student completion?

Many of these factors echo the findings of Wells (1997), who surveys Native Americans across the United States and found dismally low graduation and retention

rates of 25% and 45%, respectively, for first-year students. Factors hindering success include those cited above and perceived cultural discrimination (Doyle et al., 2009; Kleinfeld & Reyes, 2007). Directions for improvement include remedial or developmental education, bridge programs, organized tutoring, and Native American teachers and assistants in college. Wells also points to tribal colleges as changing the landscape for Native students and acknowledged they are woefully underfunded and Native teaching programs have decreased. Current federal budget allocation is likely to exacerbate the already tenuous funding.

Some of the worst completion rates for Native students are at public two year colleges (Hagendorn, Tibbetts, Moon & Lester, 2003; Thomas & Wingert, 2010). It is counterintuitive that the shorter, more practical courses that researchers speculated would attract more men have the worst outcome. These programs are the ones Kleinfeld (2009) endorsed for having the most direct, practical path to training and employment for Native men, yet there continues to be a disconnect. The experience of Native men in these shorter term programs has been unexplored.

Teranishi, Behringer, Grey, and Parker (2009) assert that two year programs in Hawai'i have far more of the disenfranchised groups that fall under the Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) label. They found that the model minority stereotype does a disservice to the diverse peoples who comprise this population. Specifically, administrators see AAPI students as not needing student support services to the same extent as other minority populations do; meanwhile, Teranishi et al. find that AAPIs do perceive negative campus climates and report lower levels of satisfaction and well-being. At the same time, they are the group least likely to seek out psychological counseling or

support (Teranishi et al., 2009, p. 65). The researchers note that critical race theory allows an alternate viewpoint through the words and stories of the marginalized students themselves toward the goal of social justice in higher education. Although they acknowledge that disaggregating these students will create populations too small for statistically significant study, they advocate using critical race theory to examine issues such as remediation and English language learning, persistence and retention, and administrative leadership and college climate. Only after such an examination can useful programs and practices be created to support this diverse student group.

In 2003 Hagendorn et al. declare that "the national proportion of Native Hawai'ians that persist to college graduation is a mystery statistic not currently posted anywhere" (p. 3). These researchers through the College Persistence, Transfer and Success of Kamehameha Students (CP-Tasks), a joint project between Kamehameha Schools and the Rossier School of Education at University of Southern California, find that various factors correlate with retention for Native Hawai'ian students: financial aid through Kamehameha, high school GPA, parents' education level and interestingly, high scores in life satisfaction and self efficacy (p. 11). The researchers also find that family and work responsibility negatively affect persistence and students with higher grades tended to graduate reinforcing the importance of academics, especially while young. Unlike Matsumoto (2010), Hagendorn et al. do not find that a Hawai'ian "sense of belonging" correlated strongly to student retention.

Research and Models for Native Education

International indigenous education. Behnam and Cooper's (2000) anthology of what works in indigenous education highlighted Native groups from across the globe.

Benham and Cooper explored the attempts of Nations as diverse as Maoris, Australian Aborigines, Japanese Ainu, and Native Americans at educational self-determination. Taking greater control in their communities, each nation struggles to have a voice in the education process. Maori colleges or wänanga Maori are one such example. Nevertheless, concerns remain: "although there are successful alternatives not all Maoris choose this pathway, and those who are in the mainstream still suffer from lack of shared knowledge, shared values, low achievement and early exit from school" (p. 49).

Indigenous communities in New Zealand and Australia have become increasingly aware of the need to inject Native knowledge into the higher education curriculum. Beresford (2003) explored aboriginal education from various frameworks, for example capital or deficit theories, yet found them lacking. Drawing on Ogbu's critical race theory, he pointed to various factors influencing poor outcomes: racism, poverty and overcrowded housing, high absenteeism, functional illiteracy, and child abuse and neglect (p. 243). Beresford called on government and community to join to improve the lives of aboriginal youth and pointed to successful examples of partnership in schools.

Native American. Recent studies on indigenous students were informed by the TribalCrit literature. Brayboy (2005) conducts an ethnographic study of two American Indian college students in Ivy League institutions in an attempt to understand both the during and after of the college experience, especially with reference to both the individual and the communal costs and benefits of college-going. Brayboy criticizes "transformational resistance . . . as sometimes romanticized and attended by often serious individual costs and consequences" (p. 196), while acknowledging that some of the brightest students, in an attempt to oppose the power, end up dropping out, thereby

"rendering them ineffective in furthering their critiques of school and society" (p. 195). Brayboy speaks of *survivance*, or a student's ability to persevere in a sometimes hostile environment on behalf of his or her community or tribe and acknowledged the important role Native academics have played by making Western education a tool of empowerment, but nonetheless stresses the personal cost. The two students Brayboy follow had a difficult time reentering life on the reservation and were unable to reintegrate into their traditional modes. Brayboy acknowledges the irony that the tribe members who spoke out against the returnees' Western ways were the same individuals who benefited the most from their expertise.

Despite the two students' outward success, it came at a high cost; in effect, the subjects had "fallen on the sword" (Brayboy, 2005, p. 196), which he sees as both regrettable and inevitable. With little respect for returnee graduates in the community, it is not unusual that few Native students graduate and fewer still return. This will be an area for examination in the Alaskan context. In Alaska, I have often heard of the difficulty of returning to village life after college graduation. Teachers and professionals who return home are met with resistance, grudging acceptance, or searing resentment from family or community members. Ambivalence toward the inevitable change modernization brings may be one explanation. Brayboy (2005) acknowledged the need to know one's enemy, but members of the community need to take responsibility for the knowledge they use and make a new place so these community members can come back, work hard, mentor, and be wholly accepted. Failure to do so will alienate Native graduates and drive them further away from the village life that the community wants to preserve.

Brayboy (2006) authors a policy study of indigenous men in higher education. He acknowledges that persistence is key with members of this group because they take, on average, 7 years to complete a baccalaureate degree (Brayboy, 2006, p. 11). Although the student enrollment numbers for Native Americans in college have increased since the mid-1970s, male enrollment remains only 30% of female enrollment. He points to lack of finances, poor K-12 instruction, low integration into school, high absenteeism, lack of role models, and cultural incongruities (p. 17) as barriers to college. He also highlights the 20% accidental death and suicide rate for 15- to 24-year-old Native males. Poverty, incarceration, accidents, and suicides conflate to keep men from higher education. Brayboy (2006) recommends further research on the differences between urban and rural Natives in college.

Huffman (2001) applies resistance theory and the transculturation hypothesis in a qualitative study of 63 Native students at a university in the Midwest. Those students who adapt and ultimately succeed in college (transcultured) and those who struggle and drop out (estranged) are juxtaposed. The process of college acculturation is explored through four stages. The first is identical in both groups: initial alienation that leads to transculturation in the successful students and continues with self-discovery, realignment, and participation; for estranged students, the process includes disillusionment, emotional rejection, and disengagement. Huffman defines the new theory as a way to understand Native students in the majority culture.

Huffman's (2001) theory works to identify the developmental process of college adaption, much like Bennett's (1993) model of intercultural sensitivity that identifies stages that individuals must pass to become interculturally competent. Huffman's theory

can be helpful for generally acknowledging where a student is at, while at the same time accepting that students will not all fit nicely into such a model. Huffman finds culturally traditional students are successful in the academic milieu with the right support at the proper stage, which has been borne out by other researchers (Jackson et al., 2003; Whitbeck et al., 2001).

Using Huffman's four internal stages of transculturation (alienation, self-discovery, realignment and participation) and the bicultural identity formation model, Bickel and Jensen (2012) examine successful Native graduates' strategies for coping in mainstream institutions. Their findings reinforce the need for student support for transitioning to college and reminded instructors that those students who appear integrated have developed surface behaviors that no longer mark them in class. They stress that those "outward signs of adaptation of fitting-in do not reflect the internal conditions . . . or their successfully understanding the educational climate" (Bickel & Jensen, 2012, p. 420).

Strand and Peacock (2002) find resiliency as a factor for school success in Native populations. Resiliency is the adaptation and attitude necessary to defend against the stresses of Native life (Whitbeck, 2006). There exist a variety of ways in which traditional Native values strengthen resiliency in the face of expected negative outcomes, including dropping out or alcohol abuse. Other researchers (Guillory & Wolverton, 2008; Huffman, 2001; Saggio & Rendon, 2004; Wells, 1997) include familial support, spirituality, and emotional and physical health.

All of these researchers are concerned with the success of Native college students and not the barriers to success, though those too were mentioned. It is important to focus

on success. It is instrumental to identify those aspects of the college experience, attributes for success, or other factors that will finally lead students to success and allow them to concentrate on what works. While administrators have the quantitative data of failure in college, they do not have a qualitative explanation for those numbers, especially for the individuals least likely to graduate: Native male students.

Traits fostered in the early years help or hinder higher education. A quantitative study on school success for American Indian students of the upper Midwest first acknowledged the discontinuity felt by Native students between a Euro-American school district that was fundamentally different than the worldview and socialization experienced at home.

Whitbeck et al. (2001) studied 211 secondary school students living on or near a reservation for attributes of school success by controlling for positive factors: two-parent home, higher parental income and education, and maternal warmth and support. They looked at *enculturation*, which consists of three factors: involvement in Native activities, identification with Indian culture, and involvement in traditional spirituality. The survey results showed that traditional culture benefited students in school, leading to a resiliency factor that compensated for having lower income or living in single-parent homes. This research predated Whitbeck's (2006) later work on resiliency, and, like Huffman (2001), Jackson et al. (2003) attributes traditional lifestyles to school or college success.

A review of American Indian and Alaska Native dropout studies by Swisher and Hoisch (1992) illustrate a salient feature for a qualitative study of Alaska Native men: the importance of nuance when studying Native culture. Swisher and Hoisch reported startlingly high secondary school drop-out numbers but noted they are unreliable due to

the high transfer rate of American Indian/Alaska Native students. Transfer and or drop-out rates run as high as 90% in some schools and districts (Swisher & Hoisch, 1992, p. 1). However, they noted that two studies were significant because the researchers moved beyond the statistics. In these studies,

> The voices of students were presented. In one she was able to descriptively tell the story from a student's point of view. . . . [Another] incorporated similar goals of researching what the dropouts themselves identified as the factors contributing to their decision to drop out. (p. 6)

A full and complete descriptive story gives more information on the experience of the students themselves, far beyond what the statistic revealed. Swisher and Hoisch conclude by identifying the recurring factors pointed out as contributing to the decision to drop out. These factors include teachers who do not care or do not provide assistance; students who feel that school is not important for the future; problems at home and lack of parental encouragement. Reyes (2001) and Doyle et al. (2009) identify similar factors as barriers to further education for Alaska rural youth.

Alaska Native students. Doyle et al. (2009) study the educational aspiration or attainment gap for rural students in a study of 95 high school seniors in three rural Alaskan towns and villages who were classified as *drifters* or *directed* based on their hopes and plans after graduation. Doyle et al. find a disconnect between the aspiration of students and their plans for achieving these goals which led to most students becoming directionless after leaving high school. Four themes become clear in the initial and follow-up interviews: most want postsecondary education or training; few knew how to go about getting it; although encouraged by counselors or relatives, concrete and

sustained messages were necessary to carry out action; directed students had peer support. Based on these findings, Doyle et al. make suggestions for improvement, including more concrete advice and support at every stage of the college process from application and financial aid to travel arrangements and housing. Doyle et al. also note that local church groups affiliated with universities seem to do the best job at attracting and supporting students in their educational aspirations.

Doyle et al. (2009) concentrate on the aspiration–completion gap, whereas Reyes (2001) attempts to see what worked for successful college students at the University of Alaska. Reyes conducted a qualitative, descriptive study to determine which elements best contribute to the success of Alaska Native upper division and graduate students at the Fairbanks campus. The findings reveal that family, finance, and developmental education were the most important factors related to academic persistence, and public secondary education was the greatest barrier to college success, both in poor advising and academic preparation.

There are several areas to consider in evaluating these studies. Conducted over a decade ago, the findings from a more recent study may be different. Moreover, focusing only on male students may also reveal different factors which conspire to derail men's attempts to persist at higher education. Finally, because most students struggle and quit between the first and third terms, what events in that time frame help or hinder students? By graduate school, the students may be too far removed from the critical period to recall clearly the hardships or support.

Grantham-Campbell (2006) focuses on adapting Alaskan Native students in the cultural borderlands of urban settings and included the study of failure and persistence, as

well as the importance of elders, in conceptualizing student success for the community. The study involves examining the attitudes and aspirations of urban-dwelling Native Alaskans and redefined education in a broader cultural context. Grantham-Campbell uses her personal experience as an adopted-out Inupiat African American as a backdrop to the issues of multiracial identity and cultural awareness.

Smith-Bontempi (2006) considers the success of Native Alaskan college students by examining the *need satisfaction* as it related to and predicted grade point average for Native American college students. Smith-Bontempi conducted a quantitative study which established perceived contributions and barriers to student success. Results from the data confirmed that need satisfaction was not a predictor of grade point average.

The McDowell Group (2001) embarks on an ambitious study of Alaska Native opinions and values of education for the First Alaskans' Institute. Over 1 year, the researchers carried out telephone interviews with 1,000 Native families across the state, inquiring about each stage of their educational experience and followed up using executive interviews and focus groups consisting of two groups: rural, a village in western Alaska of less than 500 people, and urban, a group of Native parents and Native executives in corporations and institutions in Anchorage. The findings reveal many of the issues and actors that are routinely discussed: teachers, lack of Native values, poor preparation for work, lack of basic skills, and so forth. Similarly, there were mixed reviews on access, quality, and support at each stage of education. Some participants said there were wonderful options, and others reported a lack of choices. Despite these entrenched problems, there is a strong faith in the future for Alaska Natives at home. The solution for the myriad of problems remain undirected. There have been problems and

there is hope for a better future, but the path between these positions has not been successfully identified.

Native Hawai'ian students. Native Hawai'ians from Kamehameha Schools serve as the population to explore the predictive factors in college success. In a mixed method approach, Oliveira (2005) finds that among the factors were parent encouragement, advanced science class availability in schools, and financial aid.

Hanohano (2001) explores student success for Hawai'ians, and, like other researchers of Native students (Guillory & Wolverton, 2008; Huffman, 2001; Saggio & Rendon, 2004), also links it to cultural tradition, family, and spirituality. Hanohano creates a triad that serves as a compass for families to support students. Using the metaphor *education is our canoe*, he focused on the role of families in fostering academic success in the context of Native Hawai'ian principles, but conceded, "The will is there . . . to initiate such schools with spirit and spirituality in education but the massive transformations necessary for making dreams a reality may be years in coming" (p. 160).

Looking at the female perspective, Kupu (2010) uses personal narrative and storytelling to explore the influence of college on Native Hawai'ian students' identity. She found that students connected the feeling of Hawai'ianess to '*aina* (land), '*ohana* (family), and genes, but not necessarily history, politics, or behaviors (p. 198). Further, Kupu finds that the students' college identity was less developed and their academic experience was closely linked to job or employment. She hopes this knowledge of identity development for Hawai'ian Native females will create better support programs at college, but also points to the need to have a better understanding of male students in what she conceded was a greatly understudied population.

Gender Gap

Jacob (2001) uses longitudinal data to try to explain the gender gap in higher education. Cognitive skills between men and women provide no explanation, as male high school graduates have slightly higher college test scores, yet are five points less likely to graduate than women. Other variables that increased the gender gap are family background, single-parent household, and opportunity cost of college versus the availability of construction or manufacturing jobs. However, the greatest determinants that exacerbate those effects and increase the gap between female and male success are noncognitive factors including learning and teaching style and disciplinary problems.

Harper, Harris, and Mmeje (2005) create a theoretical model to explain the role of gender norms to higher rates of male judicial offenders in college. The social milieu and gender identity conflate, creating a high threshold for institutional disobedience. Guided by interactionist or student development theories, Harper et al. (2005) determine ways to address the individual and college environment dissonance that so often hinders college success. The study underscores policy reports of both Brayboy (2006) and Lee and Ransom (2011) in the need to engage men in higher education or risk losing them. Understanding male students of color, their expectations, and their aspirations for college allows administrators in colleges to create a climate that nurtures this growing population.

In a policy report for the College Board, Lee and Ransom (2011) highlight the still grim choices for young men of color. They delineate six pathways for postsecondary males, college, employment, unemployment, military, incarceration, and death, and

recommended various measures to improve what they classify as a failing system for men, showcasing programs across the country that successfully engage men in school. Lee and Ransom ultimately advocate for more nuanced, qualitative studies for Native American men, the least studied group, but acknowledge that their low numbers do not encourage many researchers.

Men are faring worse across all ethnicities for college completion, both nationally and internationally (Kleinfeld & Andrews, 2006). Though men's access to college has increased, they are not keeping pace with women (King, 2000; Sum et al., 2003). Nowhere is this more acute than in Native villages where loss of cultural traditions, poor mental health, and increased sexual and substance abuse may be symptomatic of female flight. In the modern economy, women are better prepared than men to succeed in office jobs and college (Hamilton & Seyfrit, 1993; Hamilton et al., 1997), and nowhere is this truer than remote, Alaskan Native villages.

Hamilton et al. (1997) report that gender imbalances in rural Alaskan villages are not a new phenomenon, and various pressures have always exacerbated gender ratios; however, female flight has accelerated in recent years. In a remote and harsh environment, historical and environmental events including weather, migration, disease, and famine all effect swings in the balance. However, the latest fluctuations are tied to economic opportunities from resource extraction and its corollary: out-migration of women who are more apt to seek white collar jobs and education (Martin, 2009, p. 63). Updating the research of Hamilton et al., Martin (2009) looks at female flight from data collected through 2006. Nearly 40% of the population of rural villages is under the age of 16, and female flight is likely to continue to skew populations in villages and exacerbate

social problems, including suicide and sexual and substance abuse. In small, kin-focused traditional villages, these effects may cause irreparable harm to the cultural ways of rural Alaskan villages. Martin (2009) acknowledges that, because men are the primary subsistence hunters, their role is more central to village life and thus more costly to the community when they leave. Martin (2009) reports the difficulty of retrieving data in rural Alaska: "Basic demographic data say a lot about community viability. . . . Survey research is increasingly expensive, many villages are tired of being studied and . . . the American Community Survey does not have a large enough village level sample to be representative" (p. 65).

Kleinfeld and Andrews (2006) report that women are graduating from colleges and universities at higher rates than men throughout the United States, and in Alaskan Native populations, the ratio is three to one. These researchers explore the divide between the traditional male role in the community and the college student role. Programs that attract Alaskan Native men have more immediate, practical applicability to the home community. Encouraging male attendance involves recognizing their cultural values and mind-set and creating programs that enhance their place in the community.

Sum et al. (2003) create a statistical analysis of the growing gender gap in college and its effect on the gross domestic product, workforce, and local communities. Sum et al. find the gender gap creates social instability in lower marriage rates; higher poverty, crime, and incarceration levels; and worse outcomes for children. Increased education will raise productivity, individual earnings, and the nation's gross domestic product. Although teachers and administrators believe that higher education equates with increased opportunity, the large number in Sum et al.'s study give pause to what the

effect could be in rural villages. In small villages with populations of less than 1,000, men ages 15-39 outnumber women 114 to 100, and some villages have rates that are greater than two to one. In 2000, there were 24 Alaskan villages with a population of less than 100; in 2008, that number rose to 32 (Martin, 2009, p. 63).

Gender roles. Building on work by Hamilton and Seyfrit (1993), Kleinfeld (2009) explores the mind-set of the rural Alaskan man and discovered a dissonance between the male students' aspirations and preparation. Kleinfeld finds that young men are more likely to fall into stereotypical thinking of *too cool for school*, which undermines their self-concept and their views of themselves as learners. Kleinfeld explores the college gender gap through interviews with 99 high school seniors. Female students are far more likely to have well-developed plans for college and career than male students and were much more likely than the male students to like school. Male students tend to have a disconnect between college and career, aspiring to creative, high-paying jobs such as music producer or video game designer without seeing the necessity of college to further their goals. Both sexes tend to see men as lazy, further eroding the strong self-concepts necessary for college success. Four strategies are suggested to improve male outcomes: understand the job market; see higher education as important; focus on masculine jobs such as paramedic, firefighter, or technology; and adapt classes to suit active men. Kleinfeld also acknowledges a need for further qualitative research to understand the motivation, needs, and desires of Alaska Native men with regard to higher education.

Kleinfeld and Reyes (2007) examine the transformation of traditional gender roles for rural Alaska Natives and found that women in rural areas are making gains in the

public sphere both in careers and in politics, but men are less willing to take any formal employment that could interrupt their subsistence lifestyles. Seasonal jobs that do not interfere with hunting do not require academic skills or qualifications. In fact, for rural men, schooling is "inconsistent with the traditional, prestigious male role of independent hunter and provider" (p. 432). Kleinfeld and Reyes concede that although the same uncomfortable transition is found in many developing countries, in the small, isolated Alaskan context it is more pronounced. Successful, traditional Native male students must find some prestige or fulfillment from the college experience. How are those men's experiences perceived as opposed to earlier studies?

Condon and Stern (1993) encounter similar attitudes to those Kleinfeld and Reyes's (2007) study finds. Condon and Stern interview young men and women in an Inuit village in the Northwest Territories of Canada. Most important, culturally, women see far less of a difference between their current teenage and adult roles in the village. Both young men and women interviewed believe women carry a far greater responsibility within the family: housework, child care, and sewing (earning money). In contrast, young men are seen as indulged within the family, and though traditionally they had been performing vital hunting tasks with older men, by 1991, subsistence activities played a diminishing role in village life. Without traditional duties to fill the days, teenage boys were adrift with idle time. Condon and Stern conclude, "Teenage girls seem better prepared than teenage boys to assume the social responsibilities of adulthood. . . . [For men] the transition to adulthood is much more dramatic and abrupt, requiring a greater number of behavioral and psychological adjustments" (p. 412). This finding echoes Napoleon's that "idleness of young men resulted in increasing levels of alcoholism and

drug abuse" (as cited in Kleinfeld & Reyes, 2007, p. 12). In short, men are less prepared than women to assume the self-responsibility that is important to success in a Western context.

According to Minogue (2005), the issues in Nunuvut, Canada, repeat the patterns found by Condon and Stern (1993). Locals observe that women are better able to transfer their traditional roles into a wage earning society.

> Men learn to hunt—staying silent, observing keenly and doing what you see others doing . . . women stay in camps sewing, talking, figuring out what needs to be done next. . . . There is prioritizing that fits into an office setting more than being out there on the land. (para. 14)

These are the noncognitive, affective skills that transfer well to academic success (Jacob, 2010). To what extent do the child-rearing practices or culture norms impede men's attempts at transitioning into college? Using Whitbeck's (2006) model, these risk factors should have equal yet opposite resiliency factors that can be encouraged to succeed in formal, academic settings.

Psychological Context

A final discipline that must be understood within the area of student success is the psychological realm. Two researchers explore the relationship of discrimination and minority success as it pertains to Native Americans and Alaskan Natives in the dominant culture. Morotti (1992) explores, through the lives of four Alaskan Native educators, the personal process of dominant-minority social negotiation to understand the development of self-concept formation and extrapolated to the wider Alaskan Native student population to create mental-health programs for youths. From the study, three themes

stand out as pertinent to the development of a strong self-concept: family relations, community engagement, and respect for others with the underlying theme of being-in-becoming value orientation. The importance of this worldview is evident in the data of the study and the integration of cultural values, and individual self-concept was the predominant factor in successful transcultural negotiation (outward success). The finding relates to the persistence work by Jackson et al. (2003), who discuss the issues of minority students or teachers in a majority institution. Saggio and Rendon (2004), Huffman (2001), and Guillory and Wolverton (2008) identify the importance of these same factors to college success. Finally, both Kleinfeld (2009) and Kleinfeld and Reyes (2007) note that men, in particular, perceive discrimination in school more acutely than women, which may affect their attitude toward formal education.

Segal (1999) explains substance abuse recovery in terms of self-help and delineated the issues, many of which are transferrable to higher education.

Professionals are teaching our children to read and write, repair a car, weld two pipes together, but they are not teaching him the most important thing: who he is. We do not dislike western civilization or White man. . . . It is our belief we can live together side by side, but not necessarily eating out of the same bowl. . . . The purpose of western education is for the individual to find ways to excel and promote himself whereas in the Native community it has always been for the individual to find ways to serve his family and people. (Napolean, as cited in Segal, 1999, p. i)

Whitbeck (2006) argues for a new consciousness when researching Native populations in the United States given the abysmal history of sojourners—researchers in

Indian lands. In particular, Whitbeck cites Foulke's (1989) study with Inupiat of the North Slope of Alaska, which has become synonymous with this kind of exploitative research. Whitbeck contends that only a culturally specific model that takes into account the population's own risk and protective factors will be effective. Moreover, he purports that Native people themselves must create their own path and not be subjected to a Euro-dominated social science model for recovery and support. Finally, the salient point of Whitbeck's article is the need to view the lives of Native American clients holistically; understanding the risk and resiliency factors in the disparate Native American populations is necessary to make lasting contributions to healthy communities. This same concept of risk and resiliency is an important aspect not only to recovery, but also college success. New students, especially from dissimilar cultures, must draw on their resiliency to thrive in a new milieu, not unlike the life-changing course recovery demands. With college comes a new way of thinking and interacting in the world, and by understanding from whence a student comes, risks and resiliency are an integral component of college life.

From the existing knowledge of indigenous communities, a new platform for understanding is possible for making the changes needed. By listening to the experiences of Alaska Native men in college in their own words, researchers can learn about critical periods, episodes, and events to assist rural men in college achieve their own success—whether that is a skill set, course, or degree.

Research on educating Native students is long and extensive. In the early years of schooling, few differences in ability and ambition exist, though by secondary school the sexes differ in achievement and aspiration. How do these changes manifest themselves in

tertiary education? More helpful theories that address the strengths of the students and their culture (Huffman, 2001; Whitbeck, 2006) may help to create models to understand the process of education (or recovery). More recently, there has been a movement away from strictly positivistic, quantitative methods of research toward more qualitative approaches when trying to understand the Native experience in higher education (Jackson et al., 2003; Whitbeck, 2006; Kleinfeld, 2009; Penland 2010), thus allowing for more attention of the stories behind the numbers to illustrate the nuance and complexity of Native male students at university. However, none of the authors of these studies concentrated specifically on the unique lived experience of Alaska Native male college students. In a population of lower achievers, Alaska Native male college students are those least likely to succeed. Finding out what works for this population is critical for rural communities. Through in-depth interviews, Alaskan Native men's experience can be documented in their own words to understand their unique and nuanced college perspectives. The hope is to improve institutional understanding of this vulnerable population to create programs that no longer stifle them, as the poor outcomes suggest, but empower them. Listening to their stories is the beginning.

Chapter 3: Methodology and Research Design

This qualitative study explores the experiences of two populations of indigenous men in college to understand their perceptions of college and the factors which influence their success. From this knowledge, college administrators, staff and faculty can develop effective approaches to encourage Native male participation, persistence and retention in higher education. A few assumptions inform this study and guide its theoretical basis: Native communities have long and complex relationships with outside researchers, indigenous populations have their own ways of making meaning separate from Western science's positivistic methods, and participants receive some benefit from the interviewing experience itself.

Educators and academics researching in Native communities must be conscious of the experiences of those who went before as well as the perceptions these populations continue to hold. L. T. Smith (2012) noted, "Research . . . told us things already known, suggested things that would not work, and made careers for people who already had jobs" (p. 3). In Alaska, 100 years of skepticism with anthropologist-researchers were exemplified in the 1979 Barrow Alcohol Study, which resulted with a preemptive press release and subsequent *New York Times* article titled "Alcohol Plagues Eskimos" (Foulkes, 1989, p. 12).

As a researcher studying the lives and experience of two Native populations, I am cognizant of this history. L. T. Smith (2012) further noted that all indigenous communities believe they are the most researched group in the world (p. 4), which is a comment I also heard as an instructor in Barrow, Alaska and while it may not be completely accurate, the perception of being under the microscope is real.

According to L. T. Smith (2012), "Research is not an innocent or distant academic exercise but an activity that has something at stake and that occurs in a set of political and social conditions" (p. 5). Specifically, the people of the North Slope serve as an example of this disregard: "A lack of confidence in the Inupiat people is clearly revealed in the attempt to 'shock' them into action by reporting the most extreme results available" (Beauvais, 1989, p. 26). Therefore, a theoretical perspective that takes into consideration the history, politics, and social position of the researcher and participants is paramount.

Bourdieu (1986) suggests that certain bourgeois groups have an advantage in higher education given their domestic and social milieu. Meanwhile, disenfranchised groups, including indigenous people, are disadvantaged in academics because of the institutionalized barriers preventing their success.

Ogbu (as cited in Foster, 2004) differentiates the role of education between "involuntary minorities" (p. 371) and voluntary minorities. Involuntary minorities have positioned themselves in opposition to the dominant society and have a deep distrust that undermines academics, whereas voluntary minorities see education as an opportunity to succeed in the system (Ogbu, as cited in Foster, 2004). This postcolonial and critical race theory has been adapted to indigenous peoples in the form of TribalCrit, which is another appropriate lens through which to examine this population. A TribalCrit framework takes into consideration the complicated relationship between the state, education by proxy, and indigenous nations. Brayboy (2006) notes,

> TribalCrit provides a theoretical lens for addressing many of the issues facing
> American Indian communities today, including issues of language shift and
> language loss, natural resources management, the lack of students graduating

from colleges and universities, the overrepresentation of American Indians in

special education, and power struggles between federal, state, and tribal

governments. (p. 430)

Finally, the process of interviewing, reflecting, and making meaning of each

participant's educational experience offers a window of discovery for the subject as well

as the study. A phenomenological research design focuses on the participants' lived

experience and gives the participants a platform to make meaning from reflecting on their

experience and perceptions. It is vital that this study is on the students' terms as much as

possible. Ultimately, if any benefit is to come of the data collected from the individual

student stories, it is to help program administrators, staff and faculty support those

students more effectively and to encourage future students from the communities to

persist if that is their desire.

Methodology

A qualitative approach encompassing multiple methodologies that is holistic,

inductive and naturalistic in its inquiry underlie this study. I seek to understand and

explore the experience of college-going for Native males in both Alaska and Hawai'i.

Case study, ethnography, and phenomenology equally inform and serve as the

overarching methodologies of the study.

Case study. An interpretive, multiple-case-study strategy complements and can

be used in conjunction with other methodologies; it is most appropriate for investigating

a contemporary phenomenon in context in a bounded system, "especially when

boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (Yin, 2003, p.

13). Merriam (1998) classified the heuristic case study as follows: "The studies

illuminate the understanding of the phenomenon of the study. They can bring about the discovery of new meaning, extend the reader's experience or confirm what is known" (p. 30). The bounded social system or unit of analysis, Alaska Native and native Hawai'ian males in college, must be understood in the context of each participant's life, expectations, and community. The individual cases may share common characteristics or conditions, so studying multiple, or comparative, cases allows for a more compelling interpretation of the phenomenon. As Merriam suggests case study "offers a means of investigating complex social units consisting of multiple variables of potential importance in understanding the phenomenon. Anchored in real-life situations, the case study results in a rich holistic account of a phenomenon" (p. 41).

Yet case study is often criticized as affording little basis for generalization (Yin, 2003, p. 10). Flyvbjerg (2006) argues against the idea that a case study cannot provide reliable information about a broader class, and indeed, contended it does. Case studies are vital to the development of a nuanced view of each phenomenon. The researcher must explore the individual cases not in the "hope of proving anything, but rather in the hopes of learning something" (p. 7). Studying multiple participants in the college context allows me to explore, illustrate, or challenge earlier assumptions especially, as in the case of Native Alaska and Hawai'ian Native men in college, when little theory or explanation of their college experience exists. Case studies, too, are not limited to any one theoretical or methodological strategy but can adapt to the boundaries of each phenomenon; thus, using this concrete, contextual strategy in concert with ethnography and phenomenology allows for the most holistic exploration of the subject.

Ethnography. Each case can be analyzed, interpreted, or understood through ethnography or participant observation. Living in a Native village in the Arctic as well as teaching in Tribal and Native-serving colleges in Alaska and Hawai'i affords me firsthand experience in the field, primarily, but not exclusively, the classroom. Bernard (2013) noted, "Hanging out builds trust, or rapport, and trust results in ordinary conversation and ordinary behavior in your presence" (p. 327). Ethnography, like case study, involves exploring a social phenomenon rather than testing any hypothesis and allows for a deeper investigation into a small number of cases. Moreover, an ethnographic case study offers a holistic depiction of life among a people, including history, culture, geography and interactions encountered by the people each day.

Anthropologists such as Malinkowski and Mead popularized ethnography in the early 20th century through their fieldwork in the Trobriand Islands and Samoa. In addition to the observations of cultures through ethnographic research, Geertz (1966) later employed elements of phenomenology to get at the underlying meaning or essence of each rite or observed behavior. Outside of anthropology, ethnography has been useful in commerce, too, as

> a way of understanding the particulars of daily life in such a way as to increase the success probability of a new product or service or, more appropriately, to reduce the probability of failure specifically due to a lack of understanding of the basic behaviors and frameworks of consumers. (Salvador, Bell, & Anderson, 1999, p. 37)

Faculty and staff need to understand the unstated desires and motivations influencing student choice in college. Ethnography links or uncovers the dissonance between what people say and what they do.

Phenomenology. In addition to multiple ethnographic case studies, this research is further informed by phenomenology focusing narrowing on the perspective of the essence of the college-going experience for Alaska Native and Native Hawai'ian male students. Although phenomenology was Husserl's answer to what he saw as "a dehumanized science" (Dahlberg, Dahlberg, & Nyström, 2007, p. 31), he wanted "to reinstate the everyday human world as the foundation of science" (Dahlberg et al., 2007, p. 31). For Husserl, phenomenology represents "the reflective study of the essence of consciousness as experienced from the first-person point of view" (D. W. Smith, 2007, p.261). Phenomenon, a thing or object, is explored, reflected on, and considered as it presents itself to the subject: the college student can look back at his experience and make his own meaning of it.

Examining the phenomenon of college-going from the perspective of Native male students' lifeworld (*Lebenswelt*), the world as experienced or lived, is personal, subjective, and intersubjective, one in which lifeworld participants share and communicate. This methodology allows the subjects to make sense of their own experiences and interpret meaning. Further, Dahlberg et al. (2007) suggests that the distillation of these experiences, or essences, can be developed into theory (DeJaegere, 2002, p. 64).

Given the postcolonial lens, Dahlberg et al (2007) note that theory helps "to interpret meaning to increase the possibilities of understanding . . . but an uncritical

reliance on theory can erode openness" (p. 163). Therefore, keeping an open and unbridled mind is necessary. Openness "means to avoid research restrictions and a lockstep use of method" (p. 112). Through observation and direct inquiry, qualitative research tools allow researchers to observe various phenomena and processes (Creswell, 2009).

This openness also refers to the researcher being part of the research process, not objective, but open to self-disclosure of the researcher's own thoughts and personal experience. In qualitative studies, the researcher is an active participant in the interviewing process and explicitly identifies any bias, experience, or values that may encroach upon interpretation (Creswell, 2009, p. 177).

Methods and Design Appropriateness

Observation. Ethnography allows for naturalistic observation of each case in the college milieu. Rich and descriptive notes from the field are critical for any ethnographically informed study. According to Merriam (2009), the physical setting, participants, activities and interactions, conversations, subtle factors such as nonverbal communication and apparel, and researcher's behavior are among areas that the researcher should be aware of during observations. Moreover, the researcher's notes should include a reflective component or commentary of the observation "feelings, reactions, hunches, initial interpretations, speculations and working hypotheses" (Merriam, 2009, p. 131). Therefore, intuition and early and ongoing impressions are equally as important as discourse is.

The role of the researcher in ethnography must be clearly articulated, Merriam (2009) delineates four roles for the researcher to assume. As instructor, past or present, I

will neither be completely concealed nor a complete participant. I will disclose to the participants whether I am observing the group or class, using their documents, or observing first and acting as participant secondarily in activities and discussion. As an instructor actively participating in many exchanges with the students, my role may be different. While not disclosing the study to the entire class, my notes and observations could be used in addition to the obvious role of interviewer for a few students. Taylor and Bogdan (1984) advise researchers to

> listen carefully for key phrases made by individuals, play back scenes from the observation when there are breaks, listen to first and last remarks in individuals' conversations, and use both wide and narrow-angle perspectives to shift from individual people and interactions to other activities. (as cited in Area Educational Agency, 2010, p. 8)

Interview. The number of Native male students is small; however, recurring themes are ascertained by listening, recording, and examining the college experiences of students. Furthermore, from a small group with similar experiences, a measure of transferability to similar student populations is possible. Spradley noted the following about the phenomenological approach:

> I want to understand the world from your point of view. I want to know what you know in the way you know it. I want to understand the meaning of your experience, to walk in your shoes, to feel things as you feel them to explain things as you explain them. Will you be my teacher and help me understand? (as cited in Kvale, 1996, p. 125)

Because the population is indigenous, and male students especially have perceived college and earlier education experiences as discriminatory (Reyes, 2001), I would like to open a forum to explore that dialogue. Having taught at a tribal college in Alaska, I know that this is an overriding opinion of many students about their educational experience, and I have heard their perceptions of being second class throughout their school years. Kvale (1996) notes that the interview is an interpersonal event, a conversation on a phenomenon of mutual interest, yet is an asymmetrical relationship. It is imperative that the interviewer balance between sharing too much or remaining objective or aloof (Kvale, 1996, p. 125).

Qualitative methodology also demands that research is pursued inductively. As such, researchers enter studies without any preconceived hypothesis but are free to explore or draw conclusions based on information from students, documents, or sites.

Through the multiple methodologies, the Native male experience in college is understood by allowing the participants to reflect on and interpret those experiences. The case study, too, is influenced by the Critical Race paradigm, an important lens in which to view each case. Van Wynsberghe and Khan (2007) explain, "Case study delineates…. the intensive, detailed and in-depth analysis of the critical theory paradigm is congruent with this goal" (p.89). The study's purpose is to understand college-going from the indigenous male student perspective to name the elements that contribute to or detract from academic persistence and, ultimately, success: "Narrative accounts and testimonies are valued as key sources of data by CRT [critical race theory] scholars. Listening seriously involves an ability to make connections between 'traditional' community values and those of larger societal institutions like courts or schools" (Brayboy, p. 428). Through the

interpretation of their stories, patterns, essences, and factors influencing student success are collected.

The research design relies on a purposeful selection of a few "information rich" (Patton, 1990, p. 169) cases with maximum variability on which to examine the college-going experience of Native male students. A phenomenological approach grounded in TribalCrit reflects the most judicious and participant-centered approach acknowledging the students' own strength, as well as the conflicted history of researchers attempting to help. The interview affords an opportunity for the subjects to self-reflect and make sense of their recent experience while the researcher hopes of learning from each participant, thus helping each other by comparing and illuminating the essences. "TribalCrit honors stories and oral knowledge as real and legitimate forms of data and ways of being. Stories are not separate from theory; they make up theory" (Brayboy, 2005, p. 439).

In phenomenological lifeworld research, the role of interviewer is one of openness and involves bridling or restraining one's pre-understanding in the form of beliefs, theories, and assumptions that would interfere with openness (Dahlberg et al., 2007, p. 130). Gadamer referred to pre-understanding as prejudice (as cited in Dahlberg et al., 2007, p. 142) and uncovering these involves reflection by the interviewer for any bias, expectation, or hypothesis. Without bridling this pre-understanding, making meaning and even gathering the data are compromised. Dahlberg et al. (2007) offered several questions for researchers to answer before interviews to enhance their ability to bridle and thus have openness. What has been my experience? What do I know or do I not know about it? What is it that I want to know? How is my way of understanding? Am I too

quick to make decisions about what I see? Do I see nuances or the broad outlines? Is it hard for me to be surprised?

Research Questions

1. How does the indigenous male define success in college?

2. How does he perceive his college experience?

3. What does a successful Native male college student perceive to be the most important elements in their college persistence?

4. How has the institution assisted or obstructed their success?

Population

Two populations of indigenous male students, Native Hawai'ian and Alaska Native, are chosen for their diverse experiences to participate in the interviews. These students are all self-identified as Native Hawai'ian or Alaska Native. Both regions have Within these populations, various measures are used to determine "nativeness" for benefits. The standard from 50% blood quantum in Hawai'i, to Interviews take about 1-1.5 hours, with one member check either in person or online. Although lifeworld research suggests beginning with five participants I start with more: possibly up to 10 in each state. In lifeworld research, there is no talk of saturation, as meaning is seen as infinite (p. 176). Repetition is expected at six to 10 participants; however, I continue to dialogue with two additional participants after reaching saturation.

Table 1
Profile of Study Participants

	Age	Degree pursuing	Degrees completed	Years elapsed	Military	Partner
1	38	BA Psych/ Social Work	A.A. Liberal Arts	11	Y	N
2	33	PhD[a]	A.A. B.A. M.A. Psych/Social Work	9	N	Y
3	36	B.A. Kinesiology	A.A.S Electrical	6	Y	N
4	27	A.A. Liberal Arts	X	6	N	Y
5	57	A.A.S Information Technology	X	3	Y	Y
6	59	A.A. Liberal Arts	X	1	Y	Y
7	44	M.A.[a]	B.A., A.A.S. Business	11	N	Y
8	48	B.A. Business	A.A.	30	Y	Y
9	6	A.A.S. Allied Health	X	6	Y	Y
10	58	X	B.A., M.Ed.	7	Y	Y
11	26	A.A.S. Construction Trades	X	3	Y	N
12	24	A.A. General Ed.	X	5	N	N

[a] applying

Geographic Location

Two-thirds are present or former students of Iḷisaġvik College, Alaska's only tribal college, located in Barrow, the northernmost city in the U.S. Though five of the Alaskan respondents were living in Barrow, Alaska, and one was working in a smaller village on the North Slope, the subjects represented Inupiat, Yupik, and Athabascan ethnic groups. The Hawai'ian respondents were all interviewed at Hawai'i Community College where five were current or past students. Both colleges began under the umbrella of the larger universities, University of Alaska, Fairbanks or University of Hawaii, Hilo, yet both separated from the "mother" institutions in the 1980's. The Alaskans were interviewed via Skype while I conducted interviews face to face with the Hawai'ians.

Sampling Frame

A maximum variation sample of Native male students with a variety of experience are purposefully selected from the entire population, initially chosen from faculty, staff or participant recommendation. The criteria necessary are as follows:

1. Identify primarily as Native (Alaskan or Hawai'ian)

2. Ability to participate in one 1.5-hour sessions and a follow up.

3. At a minimum, in their second semester of courses (24 credit hours).

4. Varied experience including stop-outs, part-time, or recent high school graduates.

5.   A range of majors, including vocational-technical, liberal arts, or science and math.

Respondent-driven sampling has specialized informants "who know a lot about their culture and are, for reasons of their own, willing to share knowledge" (Bernard,

2013, p. 171). From these informants, further ones are provided. Respondent-driven

sampling, as developed by Heckthorn, is a type of network sampling that is especially

appropriate for small populations of students and is less biased than snowball sampling

(Bernard, 2013, p. 174).

Data Collection

Initial data collection for both groups begins with careful observation, note-

taking, and continuous review, as Merriam (2009) recommends beginning the analysis

during the collection period. The purpose of ongoing, continuous analysis is to keep the

data tight and focused to inform lines of questioning or leads in the next collection

session. I know the interview participant directly or the participant is from another

participant or faculty recommendation in Barrow, Alaska and Hilo. In Hilo, I can

approach students directly after reading writing samples in first year classes or faculty

and staff referral. From their diverse experiences, further relevant, emic-oriented

questions are developed in individual tape-recorded interviews. I contact potential

participants individually for the 1.5-hour sessions. Transcribing, coding, and categorizing

of similar elements take place within 8 hours of each interview. Coding for similar

themes signals when saturation or repetition of data has been reached.

The interview, or dialogue in lifeworld research, is a forum to create and record

students' own meaning through recounting experience and allowing the phenomenon to

reveal itself. These essences from the participants in rich, descriptive detail document the

college-going experience for Native males in Interior Alaska and the Big Island.

Instrumentation

Initially, students are chosen based on my knowledge, or another faculty or staff members' recommendation for inclusion or through participant recommendation. Dahlberg et al. (2007) began questions to open dialogue in three stages: opening, directing, and follow-up.

- How did you decide to come to college?

- What is a normal day like in college for you?

- What was it like to leave the village/hometown for the city?

- Can you tell me about the first term on campus?

- How did the college experience change between the first and last terms?

- Can you tell me about your return to the village or home from college?

- How was your experience with teachers? Can you give me an example?

All these questions allow the participants to create meaning through telling their stories and reflecting on their experience.

Credibility and Transferability

A qualitative study is by its nature a creative project—more art than science. However, for some measure of credibility, a pilot test of possible interview questions ensures the questions elicit the kind of response necessary to answer the research questions. In addition, triangulation of the data ensures transferability; thus, it is vital that an additional researcher review the material for similarities or differences between findings and "to assess more directly the reliability and validity of the data obtained" (Patton, 2002, p. 195). A second form of reliability is member checks or returning to the participants, or campus elders, to evaluate the accuracy of the interpretation of data.

Finally, I cross check some information from numerical and demographic data obtained from the institutional research departments at the schools.

Data Analysis

Analysis in the multiple case studies begins during the collection phase by categorizing and delimiting themes, as well as by performing a continual review of observational notes to uncover potential avenues for exploration (Krueger, 2009; Merriam, 2009; Ryan & Bernard, 2000). Due to the small sample size, all demographic or individual information is noted during observation or the interview process itself if I personally know the participants. Their personal information includes age, status in school, family relations, or marital status. From this knowledge, each participant's answers to the questions are recorded. Within hours, I transcribe the entire interview, and analyze the transcript for similar impressions, recurring themes, or areas for further investigation. To supplement understanding of the issues discussed, I take detailed observational notes, thus giving a complete impression of the discussion.

After collecting the transcripts, they are analyzed, codified and categorized for "emerging themes" (Krueger, 2009, p.15). A diagrammatic analysis may be helpful in recognizing and conceptualizing the participants' ideas. Ryan and Bernard notes that "themes are abstract constructs that investigators identify before, during and after data collection . . . though theoretical orientation, literature and characteristics of the phenomenon being studied influence the themes researchers are likely to find" (pp. 780-781). Finally, summarizing findings from each participant before asking for triangulation from another researcher helps to distill the major points brought up by each participant-student. The data and findings are member-checked by the Native student or population.

Summary

Without the researcher taking into consideration the history and position of the student-participant, no effective meaningful research can be accomplished. Therefore, I am taking great care in developing a participatory design informed by phenomenology in ethnographic case studies. L.T. Smith (2012) strongly argues that the indigenous themselves must lead the research, and the research design ensures that the perspective, voice, and meaning of the individual are understood within their worldview and best reflect their view of the college experience.

Through careful participant observation and taping individual stories, a full, rich picture of the indigenous male college-going experience is recorded and analyzed for factors benefiting the college experience for this population. Despite the small sample, some measure of the knowledge gained in this study is transferrable to other students from Native communities. By understanding this population's experience and those factors that contribute to and detract from Native male college success, college administration, staff and faculty can encourage and support more Native male students through college.

Chapter 4: Findings

Introduction

This chapter includes the findings from a 12 one-on-one interviews with Alaska Native and Native Hawai'ian males about their college-going experience. A phenomenological, ethnographic framework informs the study while four research questions guide each interview and present avenues of exploration into the entirety of the college experience. A tripartite lifeworld approach to interviewing relies on viewing each story as a whole, and after listening and re-listening to each interview in its entirety, analyzing separate phenomena or subtopics, and reinserting the data to understand the experience as a new whole (Dahlberg et al., 2009).

The chapter proceeds from a participant profile narrative to the four research questions: The first question explores how the Native male student defines success in college. The second one questions *how does he perceive the college experience*? The final two questions ask, *What do Native male college students perceive to be the most important element in their success,* and *how has the institution assisted or obstructed their success?* The answers for the last two research questions often intersect as the narratives developed. Each question is divided into subtopics which are derived from their frequency of appearance, importance in a respondent's story, or a participant's unique perspective of that phenomenon. Three recurrent themes from the interviews, which do not clearly fall under any one research question follow those questions, and the summary of findings end the chapter.

Profile of Study Participants

Table 1 (p.63) in the previous chapter shows the age, degree(s) pursuing and completed, major (s) studied, number of years elapsed from the first to final or current semester in college, military service and marital or partner status. The first six are the Hawai'ian participants, the second half represent the Alaskan group. Many, number eight most clearly, had stopped out for years at a time. His first degree, an associate's, took twenty years from first term to graduation, and an additional ten for his bachelor's, which he was near completing when we spoke. Of the three-quarters of the respondents who received (or were in their final term of) an associate's degree, it took on average nearly seven years. Disaggregated, the data shows that the Hawai'ian subjects took almost five years, while Alaskan males took just over eight. Only one respondent had not been at a two year institution for part of his higher education.

Two-thirds of the subjects from Alaska are affiliated with the one tribal college in the state as students. This college had only seven male students graduate with two-year degrees in the previous two-year period (Amm, personal communication, December 12, 2014). One-half of the Alaska respondents had business degrees, and half have enrolled in online courses or programs for their degrees. All of the Alaskan subjects who had employment were employed in various professional-level employment for the borough government. Two of the subjects were full-time students. All the interviews with Alaskans were conducted via Skype with e-mail follow-up questions to clarify answers.

The Hawai'ian interviews were conducted all face-to-face. All respondents began at community college and two thirds had transferred to a four year college, private and

public. There were more full-time students in Hawaii; one respondent with an advanced degree had a professional career, and half were involved in student support services, full or part time. The Hawai'ian subjects came from various islands, but none had attended college out of state.

Research Questions

The guiding questions led the semi-structured interviews but rarely end there. The interviews often reoccur to current concerns. For example, near the end of term, grades concern and are a topic of discussion for the interviewees more than those who interview during the middle of summer. Conversely, some themes recur intermittently throughout the narratives and not clearly under any one research question; these I organized at the end of the chapter.

How do Native males view success in college? One respondent stated, "Never mind the completion, I go home today, I learned something new. That is success . . . it is not a destination." Similarly, most respondents did not connect grades directly to success. Rather, more spoke of success in terms of receiving their degree, finishing a course, or persevering in their program.

Grades. Most of the interviewees in both regions had a failing class or term, yet none of the respondents felt that the grade reflected on themselves or their choice to stay in college. A common refrain was "I got an F here and there, but it didn't stop me at all." Conversely, students with high grade point averages still did not see themselves as college material. One student, in spite of earning good grades in high school, explained, "I thought, as a Native Hawai'ian, that if I was to go to college, it would be because of sports."

One respondent answered the question, *are good grades very important* with, "No, definitely not. I don't even consider the paper to tell you that you can do it. I am still wholly against that [but I need it]." Another added, "I just wanted to pass." A respondent studying a technical discipline tied success to being the best [that he could be]:

Grades are basic for me. Just a marker telling me where I am at. I want to make sure I can do this, so I want to prepare myself. . . . I want to make sure I understand everything. . . . Having C's will be enough to get my AAS [associates in applied science], but I will go back and retake courses because I want to be the best.

Another shared,

It [a bad grade] bothers me to the point that I'm not satisfied with what I've been able to learn so far, but I realize it's maybe because I'm older, I can't learn as fast . . . but it doesn't bother me enough to keep me down . . . the grades don't.

Some identified successful courses to already mastered materials. "Looking back on it, the reason I got such good grades is I knew the stuff already. I wasn't getting into stuff I didn't know." Another Alaskan student identified, "A lucky first semester: straight A's. Followed by an F, B, and two C's my second semester." This experience was similar to others. One respondent stated, "At the beginning I had almost a 4.0. It was good. In fact, I was very happy." Later that same student received an F. He stated,

It kicked my butt. It was my fault. It had nothing to do with the teacher; he was great. I just couldn't keep up with the work . . . the teacher thought it [the grade] would discourage me, but it didn't. . . . I just needed to delegate what I need to do first.

One comment illustrated a common theme among the respondents that the allure of college that was hard for friends and family to fathom: "Why are you going to college if you have a job? 'I love learning.'"

How does he perceive the college experience?

Love of Learning. A common refrain involved respondents indicating that they loved the experience of being in college. After years at the tribal college, one Alaskan respondent rued the shorter terms of his online BA program. Focusing more on the learning than the grade or class, he stated, "I wish I kind of learned more in the classes. . . . I mean, five weeks is nothing, especially if you're on a topic you need to learn about. I don't recommend it." A Hawai'ian respondent reiterated, "We've got to do the work. Read the chapters and the reward is knowledge gained." All respondents enjoyed college and found fulfillment in taking classes and learning new subjects. Many respondents shared the sentiment, "I felt great. I enjoyed learning" and "[After that first semester] I really wanted to explore," or "I learned that I like to learn."

Frustration. All respondents were positive about the experience; however, the unfamiliarity was equally apparent, especially among the older students. One explained the dichotomy:

The reality is I don't know. I don't know what I'm learning about, that's why I'm learning. I have to tell myself, "It's alright not to know. It's alright to struggle." Sometimes you get frustrated, "what are they talking about?" But it's alright to not be familiar with the material. That's learning. This student was on the dean's list his first term. Another Hawai'ian student articulated his sense of confusion on beginning school:

There was nothing to prepare me for it [the class], so I was confused about everything. We had to learn about an animal I had never seen in my life. What it looks like, but I've never *seen* it. How to put it together, but I've never *seen* it. What part goes where, but I've never seen the thing. So how do you draw a picture of an animal if you don't know if it's got arms, legs, a head because you have never seen it? It was like that for me . . . very frustrating and confusing.

A younger student remarked on his first term, "Kamehameha prepared me completely and wholly for the education side of college. When it came to life experience and living, it did not prepare me for that. After the first semester, you realize how little you know."

Rigor. Almost all the respondents who continued to a four year institution spoke of the difference in rigor between community college and university. "[My first semester I felt] shocked. It just reminded me of high school. It's different now [at university], the rigor." Another responded similarly: "I wasn't learning . . . they kind of weren't teaching me anything either. Looking back on it, the reason I got such high grades is I knew the stuff already. I wasn't getting into stuff I didn't know." After taking the [College Level Examination Program] and challenging out of many introductory classes in his major, one military student found the 300-level courses he took relatively easy, yet later found the required 100-level courses challenging. "They were hard to get through . . . a lot of busywork."

Another example of the disparities between the institutions was as follows: "You could take two years of language down there and still not be ready for the first year up here. Even the grads who could speak Hawai'ian were struggling." After the military, one

went to community college and found it easy, but once he transferred to the four-year university was challenged.

Those who had started at four-year institutions often struggled and returned to two year college, some after long interruptions. "Honestly, I didn't connect with anyone on campus. I was living off campus and only went there for class . . . I didn't know who to talk to, and I didn't know that that was even an option….I didn't fit in. I kind of felt like everyone felt the exact same way. It's kind of an odd place to find and connect when you're all changing classes at -50 [degrees]."

Community college. Taking time out before returning to a two year college transformed one respondent's experience: "Now, this college is a lot more 'open aired.' I can talk to any of the staff members. They are right down the hall from me. . . . It is simple to catch them any time of the day. . . . It doesn't feel so segregated."

All the students who began at a two year college considered it far more supportive than the four year institutions. Many had stories of individual help from faculty for example, a few had instructors' home telephone numbers to discuss class. One Hawai'ian student explained, "This place has done a lot better at keeping students. I like that community college is between high school and college [university]." Another compared the experiences, despite admitting that good grades were not a struggle at the two year college:

> There is better teaching at the community college. They are more willing to help
> you out. It's more like a family. At the university, if it is not their office hours, it's
> "Sorry, can't help you." They are not flexible
>
> **Native male instructors.** Very few respondents had Native Hawai'ian male

instructors in college though more had them in high school. The importance of like instructors was mixed. When asked whether it was important that they had male Native Hawai'ian instructors, one answered, "It matters. You are the same age, so you can relate. They encourage and support you maybe because there's not many others." One respondent experienced the opposite: "No. Some guy teachers are complicated and like to talk about things just to hear themselves. Smart teachers, but bad teachers."

Another added that the professor in multicultural education was more interested in research than students: "He was not compassionate or understanding. Only wanted to talk about the numbers. I didn't think he really understood the dynamics of culture." Every student agreed that good teachers were good regardless of gender or ethnicity, and similarly bad teachers were bad despite gender or ethnicity. A respondent indicated, "Kamehameha had others [Native] too, but ethnicity didn't matter. Just because you were Hawai'ian doesn't mean you're a great teacher."

Critical Incidents. Few had what they perceived as a critical incident in college. Once they arrived, many felt the same as one respondent, who stated, "[I've been] totally on the path. Never came to crisis—not yet." Nevertheless, half of the respondents came to college after a precipitating event, some very traumatic. The first respondent enrolled in college with the encouragement of his brother, yet his motivation crystalized after that brother's death. Another revealed,

> I went through a bad patch before coming here. I was depressed and going
>
> through a bad breakup with my children's mother . . . I don't know where I'd be if
>
> I didn't come to college. It's been a real good environment.
>
> Many of the respondents began classes after the loss of a job or benefits and

others with the hope of new employment. Only a quarter had always planned to go to college, and many began with some ambivalence. One respondent summed up the attitude toward college before arriving:

> Maybe because looking at my parents . . . we are just [in] construction. I would do something that used my body and not my mind, and my parents never talked about college. We had to live day by day. My dad, to be honest, did drugs and so we lived day by day. I just wanted to survive. I wasn't thinking past that.

Some suggested it was expected that they would work and not go to college. A respondent noted, "College was not a priority. It was maybe because of their socio-economic status, parents were pushing us to go to work." Even those who had an idea of going to college started out working first and then becoming disillusioned by the lack of opportunity in manual or service employment. One arrived at college as a grandfather after years in construction and with the end of disability insurance looming. Despite his age, he had always intended to go to college, believing he would only work a few years before enrolling: "I was always education-driven. I don't know where it came from."

What do Native males perceive as the most important elements in their persistence? Family played a large role in persistence for some, but others were far more ambivalent. One respondent who was single, and a resident assistant, found a family-like connection and encouragement in the college and other students: "[I like] networking in the community. I just wanted to help, be a role model." Another worked as a writing tutor and note taker for students with special needs at the college; both of these positions seem to ground the students in a sense of community and family, which every respondent cited

as critical.

Military. Having the discipline to succeed or make uncomfortable choices, cited in many interviews, was often the result of military service. Half of the Alaskan subjects and 80% of the Hawai'ian respondents went to college after serving in the military. They all attributed their military experience as being critical to college persistence and success. One respondent noted, "At 18, I joined the military. It helped all my time management, work, family, and school." Another added, "After the military I went to college, so I felt [college] was easy." Discipline came up in all the former soldiers' stories: "My father was always pushing the military. . . . Maybe it's the structure and discipline. It offers some discipline which could be good for school. I see it that way . . . especially if they are not doing well in high school" or "Once I got serious. I became disciplined." Conversely, those who were without this critical component were perceived as not able to succeed; for example, when discussing other males in class: "Guys don't persevere at all. No discipline."

Only one was ambiguous about the effect of his military experience, "It [being in the military] didn't hurt." All the rest attributed their success to what they learned in the military. One respondent noted, "It gave me structure, responsibilities. . . . Leaving home and finding oneself is one aspect of growing up." Further, many of those indicated that they would encourage their sons to join the military first. In response to the question, *If your sons want to go to college, what would you tell them*, one respondent stated, "'You are joining the military.' They need discipline." Another, who had been a soldier and incarcerated in his past, facetiously noted he would say, "Go to prison first." One response to the question, *What does discipline mean*, was as follows: "Discipline means

saying no to friends. Get homework done. . . . I would say yes [to joining the military] for my sons, but not for my girls, [because] they do really well in school." One of the Alaskan his confidence level before and after military and college experiences: "I am now more confident." When asked, *What do you think college gave you?* He responded, "Number one: Confidence in myself and confidence in my ability to succeed."

Confidence. Conversely, the students' persistence in college grounded them and built confidence. The same student above said of college later, "[After earning my master's] I love it! I love school. I'm excelling, so why stop now? I am applying for my PhD." One respondent, who was always a good student, stated, "I always felt confident in class. If I was getting C's and D's I wouldn't have kept going, but I was getting A's and B's." Nevertheless, this confidence was not typical. Another Alaskan student who later reenrolled in a tribal college years after an unsuccessful term at a four year university stated, "There are a lot of things I can do to be successful. I feel confident, especially when I go back to a bigger school. I know where to go and what to ask for."

Lack of confidence. Lack of confidence was cited as a challenge for many. Self-criticism colored their perception of themselves as students. One respondent stated, "Intrinsic motivation [is] the issue. Self-reliance, having to push yourself, that is the only thing gets you through anything." In answer to the question, *what was the hardest part of college*, one answer was emphatic:

> Lack of confidence . . . even though you said [just now] that I had good grades. It was hard for me to motivate myself. Even though I do finish, the journey itself is not easy. I feel like there were times when I felt like quitting or giving up . . . feeling insecure in my ability. Even though, like you said, there's a lot of proof.

But because of how my psyche was, I was more easily persuaded to see the negative in everything I did . . . it has taken a while to silence that voice. That's the voice from my childhood saying, "You're never good enough or smart enough." Just silencing that voice has taken a lot of time.

Age. Confidence was the result not only of their military experience but also of their age. Few respondents had completed their education by their late 20s or early 30s. Many others connected being older to their success, and their attitudes toward education and lives later were markedly more stable than when they were 18 years old. When asked what the difference was between their success and other peers in class who did not persevere, the answer was emphatically, age. Many echoed the belief: "My goals have changed. When I was younger, I wanted money; now I want to help." Another stated, "It was much easier going to school when I was older and more mature than when I was a teenager." One recounted his path to college, "I was in my 30's. When I was 18 or 19, I went on a high school trip to Prudhoe Bay, and there I was accepted for on-the-job training. I wanted to work." Later the same student explained one of the factors that led him to college:

It was the first thing that I was compelled to do. I was too old to compete with guys at Prudhoe Bay. It was getting old for me. . . . My very first desk job was at college [as a student worker]. Before that, I used my body. I never used my brain.

Most of the subjects believed they were more interested in earning money quickly. Many discussed the appeal of quick money to younger men, such as in the following statement: "We just wanted to enter the workforce. That's what most of us did. It was other ethnicities that pushed for furthering their education." One explained the

difficulty for young men:

>Men don't seek help. They're macho, supposed to get it, but they see themselves
>
>drifting back and they're too proud to get help and then they get discouraged. . . .
>
>Their natural instinct is fight or flight. You're up against a wall, you cannot
>
>handle certain pressures, you flee, you quit. It's sad, but. . . .

After some discussion about the importance of age and maturity, I asked one graduate, *Is age the most important factor in finishing college?* After a brief pause, he responded with one word: "Alcohol."

Alcohol. Alcohol, partying, and sobriety characterized many stories. Over half the respondents in each state had histories with alcohol or drug addiction before and during college. One respondent stated, "I had finished all the partying, and thought, maybe it's time for a change." When talking about the reason other men do not enroll in college, the same respondent stated, "Remember *48 Hours* [a news show]? This town made national news because of drinking." He had been sober for seven years. Another response was similar: "I was sober for 13 years while I was in school." Still another felt his father's disease kept him from ever drinking and solidified his determination:

>My dad drank and fought and always bragged that it was being Hawai'ian. I hated
>
>*every* aspect of that. I never drank, never did drugs. . . . From the time I can
>
>remember, I always knew that everything he did, I did not want to do.

Others were not so adamant. While choosing not to drink, one respondent was unconvinced of sobriety's role in success, though he started college after he lost his job due to driving under the influence: "I only recently stopped smoking and drinking, but I was still getting A's. . . . I would only go stoned to English or math course. Going to

Sociology stoned, you think deeper, outside the box."

All respondents who worked with other students in their jobs mentioned the importance of not partying to college success. When asked, *Do you think giving up partying is critical to college success*, one recounted that the students who did not party were successful. By extension, those students they worked with who still partied were unsuccessful. Another answered:

Yes and no. We do have a few drinks every now and then, but it is honestly about self-control and knowing when to stop. I think that takes precedent over blaming one substance or another for failure. . . . At the same time, serious moderation is needed to be able to keep up with a schedule like mine.

How has the institution helped or hindered your success?

Academic support. About half the respondents had used the tutoring and academic support that the college provided, and all of that took place at the two year level. One respondent explained his strategy: "Seek help. Seek help. Go to the tutors, ask the professors, but I've got to do my part." He also explained the importance of tutoring for him:

What I hear at the Learning Center may be slightly different [from what the professor says]. And even me, when I enter the Learning Center, I'm not as tense [as in class]. Maybe I psyche myself out, but I'm more relaxed in the Learning Center. They speak a different language, a student's language not a lecturer's language.

Half of the Alaskan and over half of the Hawai'ian students remarked that they had weekly conversations with their advisors, who helped them to stay on track through

their degrees. Another common theme was the importance of student support services, one respondent commented on the increased availability: "[Now] Doyon [a Native corporation] has a network set up at UAF [University of Alaska at Fairbanks] to help students adjust, but back then, I had failed every class within the first 3 months."

The ones who had not sought out help were disappointed. A respondent stated, "I wish I reached out." The feeling of many of those who did not reach out mirrored the comment of one respondent who stated, "I didn't know they existed . . . I tried to figure it out on my own." One Hawai'ian subject, who worked at the tutoring center, observed, "Older women would always come and make sure they are doing OK. . . . They come for help because they know what they want to do [like nursing]."

An Alaskan subject directly affected by the support services said, "They have different activities going on. One of them was one-on-one counseling and that really helped me out. I personally didn't want it, but they slowly edged me into it and ever since then, it's been great. . . . They showed me life could be good."

Instruction. Good teachers were critical to the perception of college life. One respondent stated, "I was having—I am still having fun—all my instructors, like you— I've got really good rapport." Each respondent had examples of teachers who deeply connected with him, and not only in class. When asked, *what helped you through difficult classes*, an Alaskan interviewee shared, "My teacher." This English instructor would meet him in the evening for extra support, even after he left her class. Another in Hawai'i conveyed, "My instructor helped me stay focused [and] a few of my peers." Many students had stories of individual teachers. One responded, "My math teacher gave us extra time to complete the final. He just kept saying, 'Go back and look at number xx.'"

Another student remarked on his teacher's communication style:

He may seem like he's grouchy, but he's not. He's trying to teach you as best he can. He gave us his number so we could call at home. Yeah, he gave the whole class his number, and he'd be grouchy, but I'd be laughing because he would remind me of my Kupunas. Especially if [students] are not from around here, they'd be irritated by it. "I don't know what his problem is!" But I'd say that he just really wants to help you; it's just the way he speaks. He was a wonderful teacher.

The good teachers did not always give high grades, and it appeared to be the relationship each respondent had with the individual teacher that determined the teacher's quality in the respondents 'perspective. For example, one respondent stated, "All my professors are wonderful, even the ones who gave me F's. He's the bomb. We always talk story. You don't see me going after that guy because I deserve what I got." Another stated, "My program is very hard. I am lucky to have my teacher." In Alaska, one respondent noted, "I was told the teacher was mean, and I was hesitant to take her class, but when I got to know her, I wished I had had all my classes with her." When asked, *Did you ever have a teacher who wasn't helpful*, a respondent replied, "No, all the teachers have been helpful because they knew I was working so many jobs." This student had at one point five jobs, as well as five children.

The perception of fairness was critical; a bad grade was okay if the student earned it, but if it was perceived to be unfair, then the teacher was bad. One respondent found two professors critical in heightening his sense of belonging and confidence on campus. He stated,

"I could talk to them like a person. There was no power dynamic. They were not scary. I can tell them things that they don't know. We crack jokes. . . . [I found] that they are no different, and I don't have to be afraid.

Bad instruction. Conversely, nearly every respondent had stories of bad teachers. A few mentioned perceived favoritism in class, not directed at them, or general unfairness in policy enforcement. Many echoed the statement of one respondent, who indicated that bad professors "had their favorites, and I wasn't one." Others spoke of disinterested, disingenuous, teachers, or one who "just liked to hear himself speak." A subject recounted, "She wouldn't allow me to turn in a paper because I was out of class. I have a documented disability; I have this disease, but I wasn't allowed to turn something in, so that she knows I was willing to work. What's wrong with it? She doesn't give it back anyway. Couldn't even take it . . . at least it would be a D."

A few had made, or contemplated, formal complaints. One respondent stated, "I wanted to file a formal complaint but I am not gonna to talk with a D. . . . I'll wait [until I retake the course]." In another instance, "I got a D in one class—that ticked me off. I kept asking, [but] he wouldn't . . . he didn't answer me. . . . I kept asking, "What are you looking for?" and he wouldn't answer. That still burns me. The F did too, but I got what I deserved (there), but that D…"

Another respondent recalled another injustice: "I wanted to retest because I got an 80% on a test, but he only allowed retests if you failed, so he refused to help. Yet for students [athletes] who got 30s and 40s [percentile], he did." In each case, the respondents' anger or frustration was the perception of not being heard, favoritism, or unjust policy interpretation.

In these cases, the best outcome was a resolve echoed by several respondents. One Alaskan student was proactive, "This semester it's all self-study [online] and the instructor said he was really busy, but I personally don't think he's that busy. So I had to cc the dean in an e-mail to get help and explain the book to me."

Another student explained his perception about a particularly bad class. I asked, *Was there anyone who helped you*, and he replied, "No, it was just me, being stubborn. I refuse to give ground because of this one person. . . . It gives me the drive." Many respondents shared a refrain about English, including one respondent who admitted,

I did not like English; I failed that class. The teacher failed me, but I took it again and passed. I was so close to getting my degree, I wasn't going to let that stop me." After discussing a poor teacher, a respondent said, "I felt sort of like we [cohort] have something to prove."

One much older student equated his experience with a bad teacher to his experience in the military,

It's frustrating . . . but my drill sergeants were not nice people, but I learned to deal with it. I'm trying to grab ways to work with it so it doesn't smash me. If I'm having trouble working with it . . . I can't imagine other kids. They're gonna give up and walk away.

One Hawai'ian respondent stressed the importance of teaching to learning and advised,

This is a stickler amongst the Hawai'ian community. If you're not teaching Hawai'ians something, they don't consider you a teacher. If I'm not learning something in class, I'm not going to take full advantage; I'm just not going to give

you my best."

Peers. The positive role of classmates was echoed in most Hawai'ian stories in statements such as, "My peers are great!" When asked, *Can you remember a time that you were helped*, one response was "My friends. Because I'm outspoken [extroverted] I do study groups. Hook up with friends." The most emphatic answer was as follows: "I wasted my money [on that class] because everything I learned wasn't from the teacher. I learned everything from my peers." Many of the successful students had organized some kind of peer support that helped in classes and or programs. One respondent concerned with low numbers in his demanding program wanted to reach out to new students: "[My peers and I] are making a *hui*. We want to start an [educational] community on the Big Island. . . . We are going to catch them before they do [walk away]." One speaking of peers in his master's program said, "I got a 4.0. . . . I enjoyed the cohort, that's why. It's just 10 students. You know everybody. I just kind of excelled in that environment, so I thought, why not get a PhD?"

Another respondent received motivation to enroll while in prison from another inmate: "Speaking to people who have been in school can help anyone who is unfamiliar. There's that fear: it's too busy, it's not for me . . . [but they'll say] there's uncles and aunties your age. . . . They're there!" A respondent concurred on the importance of helping others: "I was able to tutor other students and help them." Another expressed that the way to engage a Native Hawai'ian student was to have him teach others what he knew: "To reteach it—that will focus a Native Hawai'i kid . . . to reteach what he learned; he will never forget it." The one Alaskan with a Master's degree expressed this same feeling: "Philosophy was a difficult class. Going up to the board to explain parts to

others really helped. I ended up tutoring that class.

In contrast, the attitudes of some men in the class were frustrating for the respondents:

> A lot of males do drop out [because of] friends and non-school-related projects [partying]. . . . They complain about school work, but they have no family or jobs and they complain. It ticks me off. I want to say, "Look at me. I have three jobs, five kids and am still doing the work and not complaining about anything.

I asked, *What would happen if you said that?* He responded, "Maybe they'd try harder and push themselves to work." Another commented, "The women were good, but the guys who sat near me; they weren't there. They were there, but not . . . watching videos. I couldn't concentrate. I always tried to sit away from them." He also said for some peers success was elusive because, "If they are not [creative] and have no imagination, then they cannot see themselves anywhere but where they're at."

Financial aid. While only one respondent perceived any critical incident while in college, everyone had a story about not having [enough] funding at one point or another. Nearly one third had been denied financial aid, whereas others did not qualify for funding. When asked, *What was the most difficult element of college*, "money" or "financial aid" was the immediate response.

Despite funding from Native corporations, all the Alaskan students still were unable to fund their college completely. One respondent stated, "I got paid for only one term. I had less than a 2.0 my second semester." One student who was continuing to finish a bachelor's degree, explained that after a poor second semester, "I went to the scholarship agencies and asked, "Can you continue to fund me?" but they said I had to do

better, but back then it was $60 a credit. I was the only student worker at the college."

Another concurred, "Native scholarships required passing grades, so no school [funding] after that first semester."

One Alaskan respondent who worked with students also commented on the students that he sees: "It surprises me that Native people think it [college] should be free for them. You have to pay for college, but I can help fill out scholarships." This stumbling block, in his estimation, was not only funding but the process. "Forms are what scares them. Once you get past fear, then you can concentrate on your studies." He also admitted, "I saw two or three guys walk away after they got big money in their pocket. I almost thought of walking away, too. But somebody told me, 'It's not gonna last long.'" He further stated, "I am glad we are not a college that deals with loans because we would be getting a lot of calls from the government."

Recurring Themes

The following overarching themes recurred throughout the interviews. They were not tied directly any one research question but imbued throughout the experiences. In the tripartite structure of lifeworld analysis, which goes from the whole, to the parts, back to a new whole, recurring themes infused many stories and are explained as the essences of the phenomenon. DeJaeghere (2002) describes essences as "invariant ideas [that] convey the sameness of the lived experience while variations illustrate unique perspectives" (p. 84). These essences of the stories became apparent as the interviews proceeded. One essence revealed itself primarily in the Alaskan stories: Time. Though both Alaskan and Hawai'ian Native males took more time in reaching their degrees, the discussion of this element appeared only in the stories of the former group.

Concept of time. I lived in a Native village and taught at the tribal college for five years. The village was similar to many of the remote, Native communities that dot the shores of the Arctic. From the first week of my arrival in late August 2004, I became acutely aware the concept of time was incredibly different than, for example, Japan and San Francisco, which were two other regions I had lived for a decade or more. Initially, I stayed in the dorms with students who came in from various smaller villages. This town was a hub in an extremely large, remote region, and so it attracted many people from even smaller, more rural villages, some with little more than 100 people.

It is not unusual for undergraduates to be up all night; it is typically with a particular purpose such as dancing, drinking, or writing a paper. What struck me as I walked down the hall in the middle of the night that first week was the ordinariness of the students' behavior. Past midnight, the outside was bright as daylight; accordingly, they behaved as if it were 2 p.m.: "Want to play pool?" "No. I'm watching TV. Is "Joe" in his room?" "Yes… just got something to eat." There was nothing remarkable about the early morning exchange, except that it was at 2:00 or 3:00 am.

I wondered then, before the term began, how these students organized their time for an 8:00 a.m. class. I was curious to understand how this seasonal orientation toward time, instead of a temporal orientation, would express itself in college because every aspect of college life is carefully measured, rewarded, and punished based on the clear understanding of this unstated framework. An unquestioned division of time could only bring frustration if there was not some kind of adaptation to broach this temporal chasm. One Alaskan explained the most difficult thing about being in college:

Keeping up enthusiasm at the end of the semester that you had at the beginning.

Everyone starts out, "I'm gonna do well," but by the end everybody is dragging.
. . . It is hard here. Especially fall semester is really, really rough on just about
everybody. The workload gets heavier and heavier as you also lose the weather.
. . . It is hard to stay happy without the sunlight. Spring seems a lot more light-
hearted, everyone is just happier, so it should be easier for me to keep up my
enthusiasm this term.

Most respondents took much longer than the seven year average (Brayboy, 2006).
The most directed students finished their bachelor degrees in a relatively typical five year
process; however, for all others, part-time study with oftentimes multiyear periods of
stopping out and repeating classes was typical. These periods were all unremarkable to
the subjects as they considered themselves students throughout these prolonged periods.
A common response was, "I dropped out for a few years, but I always knew it was
temporary." In fact, none of the subjects who had stopped felt that they were quitting or
not engaged in college, even if they were not currently enrolled. Each appeared to have a
long-term view of the process. As one subject put it, "I started my first classes in the fall
of 1982 and didn't get my AA [associate of arts degree] until 2003, taking classes here
and there. And now, 10 or 11, 11 years, I'm still working on my BA [bachelor of arts
degree]." He recounted his experience, which involved first flunking out and then,

After the military, I was married and started to work. I ended up going back,
taking classes here and there. It was a long time. I bounced around from ANS
[Alaska Native Studies] to business, journalism, and eventually I went to the
police academy. . . . I'll go back and try to finish my BA.

This respondent was within a class or two of completing a bachelor's degree after

165 credit hours of college spanning over 30 years.

Another Alaskan student explained, "My aim is still the same as in 2010 [being a teacher]; I'm 23 years old now. I took about three and a half years off between schools." When asked whether he always thought he would return after that extended period, "Oh yeah. Oh yeah. I always had a lot of positive reinforcement from family and friends." Nevertheless, due to issues at home, he had dropped out during finals week of his first term: "Pipes froze and we didn't have any hot water. I had to walk up the hill every day . . . that . . . and a whole bunch of family issues that week. It was the perfect storm. Honestly, it was a temporary thing."

Role of family and relationships. Connected to the time phenomenon was the paradox of family and relationships in keeping all students on course. Like the incident revealed above, family and friends both encouraged and betrayed the students' intentions. One respondent was enrolled when engaged in family and conversely stopped when he separated or divorced. He stated:

It would have been easier before I started my family, but they also were there supporting me. On the one hand, I have more responsibility, but if I didn't have that, I wouldn't have been focused on school. I was a young man and spent my time either working or hanging out with buddies.

Another cited, "Kids are most influential [to staying in school]." The most emphatic answer in the role of family to going to college was the following: "If it weren't for my brother, I wouldn't be sitting here talking to you." He continued, "My brother got me to go to college, and my aunt got me to stay in college." Another said, "I had some people in my life who've kept me going . . . when I felt like giving up . . . my kids . . . of

course, my wife. So I did. I stayed and got my degree."

Participants in both states spoke of being the role model. One respondent stated, "My going to college has motivated my family: my younger sister, her son, my nephew, my son, they all came to college with me." An Alaskan respondent proudly stated, "My sons followed me to college," and, "They said when I got off the stage [at graduation] I had the loudest ovation." While another Alaskan subject lamented:

My little brother . . . I've been trying to get him to go to this one in Palmer,

AVTECH. A few of his classmates are going when they graduate. He graduated

last year. I just want him to do something before he gets to be my age. I came here

when I was 24.

Ironically, at 24 he is one of the youngest respondents.

A Hawai'ian student, estranged from his family, still admitted the important role of relationships to college:

We need to live in a community. We need to be social in a community versus

being isolated, and all we have is our homework. We'll lose interest; in fact, we'll

hate school if there's no balance. [My girlfriend] supports me, oh yeah.

This propensity to progress in relation to others was summed up by the following statement:

It is probably too simple, but without the support, without realizing it, we are

successful by helping out a group of people, or in this case our wife and children.

The old way is to be a good hunter. If I was alone, I wanted to do what I wanted

to do. I would not have been successful in college. I would not be focused.

One of the few respondents who was not in a committed relationship during his

college career was responsible to a pseudo-family as a dorm parent and admitted, "Being a role model, it's a cool thing about my job. It is basically what my job is: to socialize." He concurred that the best part of being in college, or having a college education, was "being able to help—that is the is the most rewarding—[being] a positive Native Hawai'ian role model."

However, not all families were supportive: "A lot of them were surprised. They'd say they were happy, but then, 'When are you going to work?' I didn't let it bother me. It was nothing. It was no big deal. I was kind of misunderstood." Much of this pressure was subtle, "After my dad was sent to prison . . . my mom was unemployed. I just felt . . . They never told me to come back, but just hearing them. I felt guilt at being away and enjoying my life." The same respondent explained that while he "was always a good boy" and teachers assumed he had support or encouragement at home, he admitted, "I had nobody. It was all me trying to figure things out."

Others, returning home, felt "there's always an element of jealousy. You can't control it." Another Alaskan student lamented:

My friends will always be at home . . . yeah. I tried to get a few of them to come. Everything is the same, day after day and I try to tell them that but it didn't work. None of them came with me.

When asked what motivated them to stay in school, respondents in both regions articulated the fear of stagnation or drifting. An Alaskan student admitted,

Well, honestly I just see a lot of guys that are . . . stuck in jobs with low ceilings and not much opportunity of advancement or no jobs at all, and these are friends and family members of mine. I can't help but want to be the complete opposite of

them. Like just that future, whenever I imagine it, it is so scary that I jump back to my homework or jump ahead a chapter and read because I don't want to end up in that situation. I think that is pretty good motivation.

This motivation stemming from fear was summed up also by one Hawai'ian student:

Because of my Dad's situation, because of my family at home they didn't want me to go away to [university]. Even my counselor didn't think I was strong enough…I felt like a lot of people thought I was going to fail because of my emotional state. But I was very determined not to fail. I was going to succeed no matter what. I was at a point I said, 'Screw everybody. I'm going to do this for myself'

Ethnic identity. While not a topic of a research question, the subject of ethnicity became a recurring topic in most interviews. Many students had a sense of what Native meant in relation to student success, expectations of the community, or the nature of language to school success. The first interviewee began:

I resented my own race. I fought against my own race for the custody of my son. When the grandparents sued me for custody, they used [a Native institution] for custody and it was no longer a state case, it became a federal case, so I resented my own race. [Yet] I eventually made amends.

Two Native Hawai'ian students spoke directly about their identities. One said, "I grew up thinking negatively about being Hawai'ian. . . . Being Hawai'ian was not going to help me, that's what I thought. The other side of myself, Japanese, was the only thing that would help me in my education." Another student from Kamehameha who was

continuing his education in at the university said, "I saw myself more as a Japanese student because they do better." Finally, one respondent who had struggled with the identity dialectic explained:

> [At university] I first became proud of being Hawai'ian when I met other educated Hawai'ians. Native Hawai'ian doesn't always mean alcoholics, druggies and abusers. . . . Native Hawai'ians can be lawyers, judges, professors. . . . It was there I learned about my Hawai'ian side: the history of the overthrow, the Massey case . . . [I began to think] maybe that's why there's a lot of social issues with Native Hawai'ians, not all, but some. It kind of opened my eyes to the potential of what being Native Hawai'ian means. The whole idea that literacy was very high in Hawai'i . . . being Hawai'ian *and* educated was the norm.

He later summed up by saying, "Being Hawai'ian *and* Japanese is a strength. You have to accept your whole self, not just pieces of yourself." Another respondent worried about limits within the Hawai'ian community:

> There are very few of us, in my generation that can meet the blood quantum for Hawai'ian Homestead. Few would qualify, like me, to put their name on the piece of paper. They are considered the elite: I never considered myself one of them. I like to be on the outside looking in. . . . The fact that some kids can get scholarships based on blood quantum as well. That's a hurting factor.

Similarly, an Alaskan spoke of his experience writing on Native politics for a local paper as a journalism student, which he felt allowed the paper to bring up controversial topics without appearing prejudicial. One Alaskan explained the difficulty men have in college: "[Even though Western ways have been adopted recently] from a

cultural standpoint, your culture is on the land and we miss that feel. Going from traditional hunting and gathering to college student, [it's a] different environment. Getting used to doing the everyday thing." Another said, "I read recently that 'any guy can face a crisis, but it takes a lot more courage to face the everyday.' I think this is true."

Language. Language was another part of this culture paradigm. In terms of studying Hawai'ian language in college, one respondent stated:

> Every institution, Kamehameha, UHM [University of Hawai'i at Manoa], UHH [University of Hawai'i at Hilo], Punahou, they have their own way of teaching language and say their way is the only way. I have my Oahu dialect. They didn't accept it, [and said] "That's not Hawai'ian," so I said, "What makes you more Hawai'ian than me?" and they would throw out blood quantum. That is the one thing about Hawai'ians, and it will detour you from everything . . . segregate your people, the haves versus the have-nots. You need to stick together [or] that is when true disarray happens.

In Alaska and Hawai'i, those students who spoke a dialect, Village English or Pidgin, commented on the role of language to identity and success. Both groups felt that there was a distinct disadvantage in speaking any dialect in college. "If I hadn't heard [standard] English at home, it would have been more difficult in class," "Kids who primarily speak Pidgin are at a disadvantage because English is backwards [syntactically]," "I don't talk like anyone who grew up here. . . . Our parents talked to us in regular English and I think that helped." or "I learned [standard] English in ninth grade; it was [Kamehemeha] policy: 'This is the way they speak in college [so] this is the way you're going to learn it.' I understood that." He also spoke of his identities: "When I

go home, I speak Pidgin; in educational situations, I switch." One identified that it was less Pidgin than his perception of Pidgin that was the problem: "It was how I felt about it . . . that because I spoke Pidgin, I wasn't smart." He admitted,

When I think of things that fire me up . . . I want to be a writer, but I need to get rid of that voice . . . because of the Pidgin. . . . I know my Pidgin isn't that strong now, but because of Pidgin [I think] nobody's going to understand my writing . . . that I will always be judged.

An Alaskan shared, "I had a dialect. I wasn't like an attorney or someone like a big-city person. I felt that was one of my challenges." One Alaskan, when asked if he felt any prejudice at college said, "No, but I didn't grow up in the village. The ones who grew up in the village speak differently." He added,

In the early 80s there might be prejudice. Wherever you go, you get that: language, color, income, or other factors. If you can't deal with it, you can't hide under a rock. You're not going to make it. I think there's more tolerance now.

Summary

The 12 interviews contained rich descriptions of the college-going experience for Native Hawai'ian and Alaska Native men. In addition to the three recurring patterns above, time for the Alaskan group most notably, family, ethnic identity and language, the respondents' stories revealed far more similarities in their life and college experiences than differences. The Alaskan subjects held an orientation to time that led to a degree path that was much longer than average, and slightly longer than the Hawai'ian subjects. Time orientation is learned in Alaska where darkness and light come in six-month intervals, and Hawai'i, where summer and winter exist in each 24-hour period.

The role of family was in turn a source of strength and focus for students and an obstacle or drag on their ambitions. Successful navigation of this complex relationship equaled college success. The role of ethnicity and self-identity was in many cases significant. When a negative or stereotypical perspective of their ethnicity exists, accepting the identity dialectic was central to their successful integration into college.

In both regions, college was a positive aspect of their life. As goals were achieved, many felt encouraged and often earned multiple degrees. It seemed as if most respondents hit some invisible plateau, saw themselves as successful students, were reenergized, and felt compelled to continue learning. These were persistent students. Two had earned master's degrees, one was seeking a master's program, and one was seeking a PhD. All felt positive about the experience as a whole. The endogenous attributes of identity, confidence, stubbornness, and discipline all afforded success to these interviewees.

The exogenous elements that support students, including tutoring, counseling, and teaching, were important to the students who used them, though at least one third failed to take advantage of the support offered. The subject of teachers unleashed the strongest responses, both positive and negative. A good teacher kept students on course and challenged them; a bad teacher often left simmering resentment, and all but one subject had a bad teacher experience.

The individual stories reveal many trajectories to and through college; however, the phenomena revealed in their narratives are remarkably similar. Over ninety percent of the students are first generation students, navigating higher education virtually alone. Those who were able to find mentorship through teachers, advisors or counsellors, or

even peers marked the transition from struggling to confident students. However, for those students who did not find that support, a stubbornness or persistence fueled their drive through classes. In Chapter 5 implications, interpretations and recommendations on the findings are explored.

Chapter Five: Implications

Among minority men in college, Native male students have the lowest levels of college persistence, retention and graduation (King, 2010). In fact, by 2006, indigenous males graduated at half the rate of their sisters (Brayboy, 2006, p.9; Kleinfeld, 2009). The aim of this study then is to record the lived experience of Alaska Native and Native Hawai'ian males, two populations of Native male students who are among the least of the least-studied (Hagendorn, Tibbetts, Moon & Lester, 2003; Kleinfeld & Andrews, 2006; Kleinfeld, 2009; Lee & Ransom, 2011). Their stories illuminate themes revealing a more nuanced and holistic understanding of their college-going experience. By understanding these students' lifeworld, colleges can create more comprehensive approaches to encourage Native men.

Higher education institutions in Alaska and Hawai'i strive to engage and retain Native students. Alaska has rural student support services and bridge programs at the four-year institutions and at their one fully-accredited, tribal college; meanwhile, the University of Hawai'i's strategic plan refers to itself as "one of the world's foremost indigenous-serving universities" which encourages "indigenization of the curriculum." The two regions' parallel histories, separate from the Native American mainland populations, serve as a counterpoint between the college experiences of Native men in these remote regions.

Intentions nor policy alone can not create change; foremost, Whitbeck (2006) delineates the guiding precepts that are necessary for substantive change in Native communities, points equally important in the transformation of higher education:

1. The cultures themselves contain the knowledge to create healthy and

successful environments, divorced from and different than western European knowledge.

2. There exist within Native American cultures developmental risk and protective factors, which operate independently and in interaction with key risk and protective factors known in the majority population.

3. Failure to identify these factors and consider them will mean that prevention efforts will not address important mechanisms affecting the prevention outcome.

4. Ownership must exist for culturally specific prevention programs to be successful.

Listening to the respondents' narratives is the first step in appreciating the complexity of Alaska Native and Native Hawai'ian men's experience in college. The study's findings revealed striking similarities of their lifeworld experiences in and out of college. Like Whitbeck's (2006) risk and protective factors, the stories exposed the juxtaposition of home and college life. Family trauma underscores many respondents' experiences, tempered with both support, usually from their spouse, but also interference; a love of learning motivated them through difficult terms and prolonged degree progress; and Native identity is in turn stereotypical yet finally instrumental to their successful college transition. The findings illuminate a challenging college experience, yet only a few students were able to successfully navigate the services to effectively offset their inevitable difficulties. This chapter focuses on interpreting the study's key findings, implications for the institution, and recommends further research.

Credibility/Transferability

Instead of speaking of validity in qualitative, phenomenological, ethnographic, or interpretive studies, findings are evaluated by their dependability or credibility. Strategies to enhance credibility were re-listening to each interview and re-reading the transcripts for a whole of the students' college experience. Afterward, each interview was analyzed into constituent parts, and the meaning of the themes or parts that comprised the stories revealed themselves through this rereading and reflection. After analyzing the stories, the credibility of this study was enhanced by returning to the subject to reiterate ideas or check meanings from the initial interview. Interviewees e-mailed me to clarify things they had said or felt might be misconstrued. In most cases, these new conversations brought deeper insight.

Transferability, or reliability in positivist research, allows for some measure of generalizing. DeJaeghere (2002) explains that generalizing and theorizing comes by applying results to new contexts, and the researcher can discern similarities and differences among the various contexts (p. 90). Phenomenological research involves an attempt to take an unbridled approach to each lifeworld experience, and to do so, the researcher must continually reflect on one's own bias and prior knowledge. To arrive at a new whole or understanding of the phenomenon studied, it is vital for the researcher to look at the parts of the story with awareness of any preconceived notions in the interpretation.

In addition, a measure of transferability is ensured through a member check of individual accounts. For example, I asked about themes, stories, or parts that students had described after careful re-readings of each transcript. I often wrote out further lines of

questions based on previous interviews. Respondents brought additional insight on those questions or disregarded the ideas if they were not in their experience. Some professors generously read and provided feedback and added to the thick description (Dahlberg et al., 2007) of the findings from the data.

Discussion of Key Findings

College Success

How students themselves perceived success in college differs to how the institutions define success. Whereas institutions either narrowly define success as course completion, C or better, or more widely as degree attainment, respondents tended to emphasize learning rather the grade. Only one respondent in each region noted that grades were important, for example: "I may not have been so motivated if I was getting C's or D's".

Students in both regions took much longer than average to graduate, but it was not perceived as problematic in their narratives; they were making hard but necessary choices between home and school. While occasional semesters with low GPA's were almost universal among the respondents, their attitude was not of discouragement. In fact, the stressors which led to low grades as often triggered a response of "fight" instead of "flight". Nevertheless, college is not the primary tension; there were always multiple challenges throughout their college careers.

Perhaps because of the acceptance of a more interconnected life than "traditional students", most respondents considered grades as just being a "marker" on the path, and not particularly vital to their identity as students.

One factor which may influence students' focus on learning rather than completing in Alaska could also be job availability on the North Slope. Native corporations and local government have hiring preferences for shareholders, so well-paid positions for those with less education and training are not unusual. Therefore, there is not a strong exigency for having a degree in order for work. Consequently, students may be returning primarily to fulfill a personal desire for further study.

All the respondents managed diverse roles: caretaker, parent or grandparent, employee, and no respondent considered college their first priority. This finding indicates that there is room for policy or program changes at the institution to encourage persistence and engagement. Intrusive advising keeps students with conflicting priorities on course by proactively addressing student issues before they are insurmountable. Increased flexibility in deadlines or absences, and drop-in support including emergency aid, tutoring and child care may help to counteract the pull of these students' competing priorities.

Increasingly, the institution, especially community college, has fewer "traditional" students, those enrolling after high school. In fact, this more holistic approach to meeting Native men's needs in college will help all students succeed because as tuition climbs and employment options shrink, nontraditional students will continue to increase. The institution's ability to meet the students' diverse needs at times marked the successful from the unsuccessful terms. The findings revealed at four-year institutions these students perceived a lack of engagement and support in school which lead to students' attrition (Lee & Ransom, 2011; Miller, 2013;Tinto, 1986; Tierney, 1992, 2008).

Exigencies in the student's lives led to college in many respondents' narratives: release from prison, death of family member, or separation. Therefore, it is vital that support is available immediately for students to begin the process of adjusting to college culture.

Perception of college

Each respondent considers college a significant learning experience, and many are surprised at how much they enjoy it, liking learning for its own sake. "In college, I learned how to learn. I instilled in myself the necessary adjustments [to succeed] and I'm having good fun." A common part of college mission statements' is "lifelong learning", and these students become lifelong learners though data collection does not necessarily include them as such even though they persistently work on programs or degrees over years. Again, well-paying jobs are not necessarily contingent on college degrees on the North Slope, nor is student debt typically undertaken by Alaskan students who have access to funding through their corporations. Many of the exigencies that compel mainland students to complete are not a factor in education there. They are in college, in each case, because they want to be in college.

Rigor. This finding emphasizes the need of a seamless transition for the transfer students seeking a four-year degree. Of the interviewees who went from a two-year to a four-year institution, twice as many Hawai'ian respondents reported increased rigor in university classes. They felt that the transfer year was particularly challenging while at the same time they found less support from their professors at the four-year schools. This finding concurs with D'Amico, Dika, Elling, Algozzine and Gin (2013) who assert that

transfer students both struggle to make connections with professors at the receiving institution, and that academic skill development prior to transfer is crucial for baccalaureate success. This finding, too, affirms Herrera and Jain's (2013) position that institutions must better engage non-traditional, minority, first-generation transfer students so that they are "stimulated to achieve at high academic levels" while "acknowledging the lived experience that they bring to the institution and the *intersectionality* between community and family" (p.53). These phenomena have recurred throughout the narratives of the respondents in this study.

In addition to policies at each institution to support the pre-transfer and post-transfer students, professional development for teachers must be of the highest priority. At two-year institutions, instructors are tasked with balancing the needs of oftentimes underprepared students in content courses while challenging those students who will be continuing on to higher degrees. In an almost untenable position, these teachers are at the forefront of non-traditional student engagement and without support and professional development, transfer student outcomes will suffer.

Elements influencing persistence

Military. Another salient point borne out in findings was the influence of the military on their perception of themselves as students. Over half of each region's respondents had been in the military and pointed to that experience as seminal for teaching them discipline, forgoing immediate desires for longer term goals, and prioritizing time. In fact, the few who were not in the military, or did not come from military families, identified time management as one of their main struggles in school.

The ability to organize time, prioritize assignments and pace oneself is central to the college culture. Jacobs (1996) found these "soft skills" a contributing factor for low male student attainment in college. This is a skill that can not be assumed, even for adults. Few of the respondents spoke of high school as being challenging, so scheduling may not have been necessary, but in college a student's success depends on their ability to internalize this rhythm. Explicit instruction and repetition throughout their courses the first year college and again as student transfer to junior status in university assists not only Native students, but all students.

Building Confidence. One obstacle to student learning and retention perceived by many of the participants is a lack of confidence. One factor respondents suggested was that they felt out of place, not having been encouraged, or "not college material". One aspect of this was language, and perhaps one of the most direct and immediate avenues to building trust. The adoption of English in Native communities is a long and disturbingly punitive approach to acquisition which has resulted in a historically defensive outlook towards English as their second language (Rosenstiel, 1971). A full understanding of this history of language learning in indigenous communities must be taken into consideration, and also the long-term impact on students' learning. These are not co-incidental occurrences but result from traumatic events reverberating to current day. Yet this is one area instructors have a measure of power. It appears the difficulties occur in the first year, when stop-outs are pronounced, but again when they transfer to four-year institutions.

Teachers see each student each week multiple times and should approach the learning environment in a disarming way, bringing down the defenses and stress with which these students often arrive and provide a safe, curious and active classroom

experience. Then, as students become more comfortable in the academic milieu, confidence will increase. College skills, success skills classes or affective training offered for credit or as adjunct to first year experiences a vital component to navigating college culture and successfully transitioning into academia, especially for the non-traditional student who has not come with social or cultural capital in which to exploit the college experience.

Institutional Support

Student support services. Cohesiveness of a cohort or support system was a factor for good in college, yet contrary to earlier findings (Hagendorn, Tibbetts, Moon & Lester, 2003; Kleinfeld & Andrews, 2009; Oliveira, 2005; Matsumoto, 2010), community college offered these students the most support, and thus the most success. Student support services, both academic and personal, was one area which benefited the most of the respondents who took advantage of tutoring, advising and counseling. Consequently, they were most passionate about its benefits despite any initial wariness.

In fact, the students who advocated support services in many cases were initially ambivalent or against it; however, these same students overcame difficult personal issues that interfered with their academic lives through the guidance of astute student support staff. In each case, it was at the level of community college that students used these services. Moreover, respondents who did not take part in student support services and subsequently failed a term (or class) felt if they had reached out, or been approached, they may have succeeded.

Academic, psychological or social support for this group of students is especially important because there is less support for them outside of school. Seldom did these students report they could get any academic support at home; those who did spoke of their children helping them; moreover, many of the personal problems derived from their family situation. It was not only family who couldn't be counted on for support; respondents implied it was impossible to return to old friends if they were to remain in college. Because they are leaving behind their old supports, it is imperative that students build meaningful systems for both their daily activities (homework, informal discussion, etc.) as it is for the medium-term adjustments to college life.

In order to ameliorate infractions for minority men in college, Harper, Harris and Mmeje (2005) advise of talking sessions for men to discuss their evolution as students in a safe environment with other peers. Formal or informal "rap" sessions or self-help groups could offer additional, non-academic reflection and guidance in a safe space. This commitment from the institution to the Native male student must be of the highest priority with resources to fulfill the commitment to the success of these students (Herrera & Jain, 2013) while recognizing their more complex family systems.

Mentoring and peer relations. Respondents iterated the importance expressed by earlier researchers (Bickel & Jensen, 2012; Guillory & Wolverton, 2008), of "giving back" or mentorship. If students were not directly encouraging spouses, parents, children or siblings to enroll, then they often expressed the significance of college in terms of its need in their communities.

The findings also reinforce Tinto's (1986) initial research on student engagement, later modified by Tierney (1992) that Native students need not to integrate necessarily,

but to navigate between cultures, accepting the new college-student identity while affirming their Native identity (Bickel & Jensen, 2012; Hoffman, 2001). Integrating the self with the community was especially evident in the narratives of the respondents, and dynamics in the class can encourage these relationships with exchanges and service learning as a component of courses, if not formal mentoring relationships.

Additionally, class or program cohorts elicited positive remarks from respondents who were involved in them. All students who participated in peer activities viewed exchanges as positive. Instructors can encourage integration at the classroom level by allowing students to share contacts from the first day, and at the institutional level by offering formal or informal mentoring, learning communities, and study groups for incoming freshman.

Instruction. The study's findings support the importance of teachers and instruction to Native students (Reyes, 2001; Matsumoto, 2010). Nearly every respondent shared both helpful and hurtful teacher experiences. Interestingly, all participants who began in a two-year school and continued to university, concurred with the opinion about teaching in the two- vs. four-year colleges: "They are more willing to help you out, too. They're more like a family-kind-of-deal. They're willing to meet you after class, in their office….At the university, good luck!"

Most respondents, too, expressed the sentiment, "English is not my strong subject". This attitude has been instilled by comments of instructors throughout the students' school lives. It is imperative then to acknowledge the stress with which many of these students arrive and create a class in which they perceive as safe to learn. Instructors and professors must be aware of the role of stress and fixed mindsets in students' learning

in an attempt to counteract these debilitating forces. As one respondent noted, "I guess I am able to absorb more [at the Learning Center] because they talk like a student, not a teacher….and my stress level is lower [than in the classroom], so I am in a better place to understand"

Discussion of recurring themes

Time

These students took much longer to finish school. This finding presents several complications for college and universities. Institutional accounting for success stretches to 150% [for two or four-year degrees] (Complete College America) while Brayboy (2006) found that indigenous students took on average seven years for bachelor's degrees. The students in this study took almost seven years on average to complete their associate's degrees, or about 400% longer, yet at no point did these participants suggest they were leaving college during their extended breaks. While taking off sometimes years between semesters, they ultimately returned and thus count both as leavers from previous accountings and completers when they finish their degrees. Neither truly reflects the experience for these students. From their perspective, the first priority is not college. As one Hawai'ian student summed up nearly everyone's sentiment, "First family, then work, then school."

One interpretation of these extended college degrees is the length of time needed to create schema deep enough to sustain further education. All but one respondent had a parent who had graduated with a four-year degree. This slow build-up may reflect Bourdieu's (1986) idea that "the scholastic yield for educational act depends on cultural capital previously invested" (p.4). While these respondents had little to no investment in

their *habitus,* their own investment only pays off after time. Most began with a desire for "a degree" but found a love of learning which sustained them through the years of part-time study. Further education could be encouraged by redefining "lifelong learning". These students are our "lifelong learners" yet the accounting methods used by universities do not acknowledge this complex approach to higher education.

The National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES, 2010) limits its statistical population to first-time, full-time undergraduate degree seekers. These narrow criteria do not reflect the reality of Native students, or many others, at community college and even, four-year universities. Each institution needs to compile data on these students. While it appears Native students (especially males) are small populations, collecting accurate data on part-time, re-enrolling, and the non-degree seeking, may in fact, prove that they are persisting, that they do transfer, and that they ultimately graduate. Thus, the institution could ascertain a more realistic and nuanced perspective on both the Native male students as well as many undergraduates coming to or returning to college.

Family relations

The lengthy periods of time to degree are often the result of competing priorities most usually, from their families. This finding supports the contention of the complex nature of family. The paradox of the family creates both help and hindrance (Jackson, Smith & Hill, 2003, Saggio & Rendon, 2004; Guillory and Wolverton, 2008). While at times providing emotional support, in fact, the findings suggest this relational complexity is rarely in the student's favor. Even those who mentioned "family" as the most important factor for staying in school, later claimed some stop-out time related to interference

between home and school. Successfully bridging the needs of the family and institution are critical to stay in school (Huffman, 2001; Brayboy, 2005; Penland , 2010; Oliveira, 2005; Herrera & Jain, 2013).

One way to defend against the pull of the family was indicated in Hagendorn, Tibbetts, Moon and Lester (2003) who found that students living in the dormitory or on the mainland were most likely to do well. Living away from home may act as a necessary barrier to the needs of the family. While the findings of this study don't necessarily concur, the respondents in this study successfully navigated the conflicting priorities, usually at the expense of time. The familial paradox was a consistent theme for the respondents. However, moving away for college is not a realistic choice for these students who are rooted in jobs, children and part-time study.

The respondents have had little preparation for the culture of college or higher education. Only one Hawai'ian respondent had two parents with bachelor's degrees and a Alaskan had one who received a four-year degree after childrearing. These students had little investment from home in the necessary preparation, language and customs which Bourdieu (1996) explains as the *habitus* which allows connected, or privileged students to successfully navigate the *field*. Of course, essays and class content are a student's own responsibility, yet informal support is taken for granted in many middle class families yet not something to which these students have recourse. Many undergraduates come to school with that that fluency, but it is a privilege most of the respondents have not had; they are on their own.

In addition to their responsibilities to their birth families, nearly seventy percent of the respondents had children, and only one of those had less than three. While none of

these subjects were primary caregivers, the need for support, from a partner or childcare facilities kept students on track. Not only for the immediate need to attend classes, but as a counterpoint to potentially negative influences that many of the students work hard to overcome. I recall a student who was conflicted in leaving his children with his mother-in-law because of her alcohol dependence, yet there was no other alternative for him to get to class.

Two Alaskan respondents were currently seeking associate's degrees and lived in the dorms, away from their home villages. All the others lived at home, and most were able to bridge the family paradox albeit with numerous setbacks on the path. Nevertheless, if the institutions offered a place for bridging the home and school worlds, it would positively affect higher education retention, persistence and reinforcement to the next generation.

One pattern for accommodating this complex student lifeworld is 'community learning" where school children do homework beside their college-student parents, each getting help on math, science or English in the tutoring center. This commitment supports learning and has long-term positive repercussions throughout the community: instilling the importance of study, planting the expectation of college and possibly negating the needs of remediation in the next generation.

Ethnic Identity

Prominent throughout the literature is the role of ethnic identity and gender roles in Native communities (Hamilton, Seyfrit & Bellinger,1997; Martin, 2009; Kupo, 2010). The study's findings suggest that the role of ethnicity for most participants is not neutral.

Kupo (2010) found that ethnicity for Native Hawai'i females was both complex and contradictory. While she found no discernible connection between self-identity and college success for Native Hawai'ian women, this was not reflected in these participants' stories.

The findings revealed, like Huffman's (2001) "Transculturation" theory which, for successful students, consociates their disparate identities in time to a strong Native sense of self and student, the respondents in the study, too, had to go through a similar process of reconciliation of their past and present selves. Jensen and Bickel (2012) refer to this same phenomenon as "bicultural identity formation". It is important to note, that prior to this 'transculturation" or "bicultural identity formation" occurring, there was tension.

At times the stories revealed a stereotypical view of "Nativeness" in college, especially when they compared their "Japanese-side" in Hawai'i, or "city or non-village-selves" in Alaska, though this was not immutable. Once these students were able to see beyond the stereotype with education, experience and reflection, and re-identify themselves, the findings revealed that successful students were able to bridge this bifurcation of selves without diminishing nor threatening their "native" identity. Bickel and Jensen (2012) note that "development and retention of cultural autonomy is perceived in the research as essential to Native students' success" (p.416), and the findings certainly reflect this.

The involvement of Native community leaders often appear quite late in these students' narratives, often as adults. A more active engagement with positive aspects of the culture as well as an understanding of the risk factors could help to minimize

obstacles and maximize the rewards could help to combat stereotypes. This, too, could take place in the realm of support services. Again the previously-discussed men's groups on campus could offer an open forum for discussion to support minority men as they navigate the unfamiliar territory of college. Lee and Ransom (2011) and Harris, Harper and Mmeje (2005) explain that these groups minimize infractions, but more importantly, they allow students to speak openly, reflect and adroitly adapt to their new milieu.

Language and Identity

Language as a subset of ethnicity and culture plays a role in the perception of the students' ability to adjust to academic life. The few students who did not speak a regional dialect at home, or were able to switch comfortably, perceived an advantage, while those who spoke a regional dialect at home perceived a problem.

Bourdieu (1986) explains the centrality of language linking the speaker's involuntary acquisition to more, or less, prestigious or privileged groups. Language then is a type of social capital which attracts or distances students from the language of power. All respondents were aware of their particular place on the language continuum. For instructors, language allows for avenues of discussion in the classroom.

Language is central to students' identity, their grasp of content in the course, and students' ability to effectively join in the academic discourse of the institution. The topic should be addressed early and often. Moreover, rather than a punitive approach to local dialect, instructors can invite learning from the students as another way to build trust. Dialect is one area the student, typically, knows much better than the instructor, and a curious attitude on the part of the instructor allows an avenue for trust-building.

Limitations

Most of the respondents are affiliated with community colleges in Alaska and Hawai'i and as such represent a subsection of the Native male college-going population in these two regions. Likewise, reflecting the population of community college students, these respondents were with few exceptions, older and/ or returnee students.

Also, because I did not travel to Alaska, the Skype interviews may have created a barrier in the collection of stories from the respondents there.

Initially, I approached students who I knew identified as Native, and they in turn recommended others. The issue of "blood quantum", a racial classification used by the federal government to determine property rights in colonized communities, is controversial in these communities. Whether a student had one grandparent who identified as Native, or whether a student was raised in a primarily a "Native", "Western" or "Japanese" home not asked, though each participants' cultural histories arose in most stories. The question of "how much", marginalizing students who do not meet a litmus test, is counter-productive and does not reflect most Native men's realities.

Recommendations for further research

A more comprehensive examination of persistence and completion rates for Native students could reveal that they are much larger than 1% of the college-going population in the U.S. Widening the definition of undergraduate by including part-time, stop-out, and returning students in data collection will reveal a more nuanced perspective of the varieties of college experience.

In this study the researcher asks what factors keep students engaged, but an equally informative study could be tracking leavers. For example, many of the

respondents had dropped or stopped out of college or university at least once during their college career. Timely collection of data at the point of stopping out might add relevant information to understanding or supporting leavers. Similarly, as many respondents in the study left school for family obligations, gathering data on the attitude of the family of students (parents, partners, children, etc.) might prove another avenue to offer more holistic support in order to prevent student stop-outs. Recognizing the "intersectionality" of the community, family and college as expressed by Herrera and Jain (2013) is imperative for minority, low-income, first generation student success.

Respondents spoke of the draw of alcohol or drugs in their lives, or the need to distance themselves from family addictions. Further research on the addiction, drug use and sobriety for these students could also reveal pathways to college and offer support for students who are struggling to overcome these issues. The extent to which the self-medication is also tied to childhood trauma, allows for another layer of support and counseling to accommodate these students more comprehensively. Since many are leaving college due to extracurricular issues, understanding these primary issues may ultimately encourage college persistence.

Doyle, Kleinfeld and Reyes (2009) defined Alaskan Native males' direction and attitudes living in the village after high school as "drifting". Untethered by the school constraints or family responsibilities, and little need for gainful employment, they tended to do nothing. Could the pull of drifting be countered by local higher education opportunities? To what extent does lack of opportunity, or boredom, encourage study? What would be necessary to discourage early parenthood and keep men on track from high school through degrees?

A few respondents spoke of the need to have an exercise routine in place. While this was a potential avenue to explore at the beginning of my research, it was not one I carried forward. By the time this factor came out in the final few interviews, many of the respondents had not been asked nor offered this as important element in their college lives; nevertheless, interesting research has been done correlating exercise to educational attainment in Native populations (Sawchuk, Bogart, Charles, Goldberg, Forquera, Roy-Byrne and Buchwald, 2008) and may be worth considering.

Remembering Whitbeck's (2006) guidelines, it is vital that the institutions invite the students themselves to design and navigate the path to change. Recommendations from above have not fostered long-term success despite the focus on persistence for non-traditional students. Colleges must allow space for meeting between the stakeholders: students and college, and change will develop.

Conclusion

What this study documents is twelve remarkably similar stories of the college experience for Alaska Native and Native Hawai'ian men. The stories mark their tenacity against adversity which at some point in their journeys included, homelessness, prison, addiction, depression, loss of parents, and poverty. The success of these students highlights their resilience and perseverance. While there is a strong desire on the part of these students to learn and gain access to the benefits of education, the institution at times appears almost indifferent to their unique experiences. Far from being a place for learning and growth, it appears more a barrier that only the most secure and prepared can scale quickly.

The study's findings indicated many endogenous factors critical to men's success including confidence, language, and a nuanced understanding of Native identity, and consistent exogenous factors including a supportive primary partner, use of student support services and good instruction. On the other hand, family obligations, old friends, and bad instructors are obstacles to their progress.

One salient point recurred throughout the stories: these students have a strong motivation to study, yet motivation alone does not ameliorate their family obligations. The pressure of family needs often deterred students' college plans and lengthened their time to complete degrees. Therefore, a more comprehensive and holistic approach to higher education, taking the complexity of their lives into account, will eventually make college and university more relevant in the students' lives. Without rethinking the intersection of student and institution, any attempts at change will be thwarted. A learning opportunity exists for the university's administration, faculty and staff to work with indigenous communities to create a more welcoming space. As Native men take advantage of the opportunities presented in higher education, their families, communities and the institutions also can equally be strengthened by the diversity. This will assist not just Native men, but all students at the institution.

This is a period of transition for Native peoples in these regions: in Hawai'i there are protests against the Thirty Meter Telescope (TMT); Alaska faces new and contentious shipping and oil exploration in the Arctic. The voices of the indigenous are becoming stronger as these groups gain ground in their respective regions. Institutions of higher education must adjust, and administrators, faculty and staff have a role to work with Native students to transform the culture at college. This should be encouraged by opening

up physical space for students to meet and discuss the future of the direction of higher education. Informal discussion sessions, and more formal focus groups may reveal new areas of expansion and delivery relevant to these groups.

Finally, this study attempts to uncover the rich stories that underlie the rather dire numbers of Native male students in higher education in Alaska and Hawai'i and illuminate the myriad of factors behind stop-outs; in fact, the research underscores how similar the path through college is for many underprivileged students. As long as the rhetoric from leaders in the United States continues to encourage increased participation in higher education, especially at the community college level, pathways of support should also be in place. The new students, not only Native, will have more diverse needs, more responsibilities and possibly less preparation than those arriving directly from high school. While students may be less prepared, the institution should not. Meeting these complex needs is higher education's 21st century challenge.

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Appendices   **A.**

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Twin Cities Campus	*Human Research Protection Program* *Office of the Vice President for Research*	*D528 Mayo Memorial Building* *420 Delaware Street S.E.* *MMC 820* *Minneapolis, MN 55455* *Office: 612-626-5654* *Fax: 612-626-6061* *E mail: irb@umn.edu or ibc@umn.edu* *Website: http://research.umn.edu/subjects/*

April 28, 2014

Deseree L Salvador
PO Box 393
Hilo, HI 96721-0393

RE: "A Comparative Exploration of the College Experience of Native Men in Hawaii and Alaska"
     IRB Code Number: **1403P49103**

Dear Ms. Salvador

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) received your response to its stipulations. Since this information satisfies the federal criteria for approval at 45CFR46.111 and the requirements set by the IRB, final approval for the project is noted in our files. Upon receipt of this letter, you may begin your research.

IRB approval of this study includes the consent form and recruitment letter received April 23, 2014.

The IRB would like to stress that subjects who go through the consent process are considered enrolled participants and are counted toward the total number of subjects, even if they have no further participation in the study. Please keep this in mind when calculating the number of subjects you request. This study is currently approved for 25 subjects. If you desire an increase in the number of approved subjects, you will need to make a formal request to the IRB.

For your records and for grant certification purposes, the approval date for the referenced project is April 10, 2014 and the Assurance of Compliance number is FWA00000312 (Fairview Health Systems Research FWA00000325, Gillette Children's Specialty Healthcare FWA00004003). Research projects are subject to continuing review and renewal; approval will expire one year from that date. You will receive a report form two months before the expiration date. If you would like us to send certification of approval to a funding agency, please tell us the name and address of your contact person at the agency.

As Principal Investigator of this project, you are required by federal regulations to inform the IRB of any proposed changes in your research that will affect human subjects. Changes should not be initiated until written IRB approval is received. Unanticipated problems or serious unexpected adverse events should be reported to the IRB as they occur.

Driven to Discover^{SM}

The IRB wishes you success with this research. If you have questions, please call the IRB office at 612-626-5654.

Sincerely,

Christina Dobrovolny, CIP
Research Compliance Supervisor
CD/bw

CC: Gerald Fry

<div align="center">

Informed Consent Letter
Deseree L Salvador University of Minnesota, Twin Cities Campus
Organizational Leadership and Policy Department
808-934-2539
dlsalvad@Hawai'i.edu
A Comparative Exploration of the College Experience of Native Men in Alaska and Hawai'i

</div>

Background:
You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide to participate in this study, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take the time to read the following information carefully. Please ask the researcher if there is anything that is not clear of if you need more information.

Purpose:
Discuss your experiences leading to and in college to better understand how Native male students perceive college including factors related to success.

Procedure:
One and one half hours for the interview. You may be asked for a second consultation of an additional hour, if necessary.

Explain Procedure:
After initial referral via staff, faculty or participant-consultant, students will be approached to talk about their college experience. Up to 20 men will be invited for one-on-one interviews. These are intended to go more deeply into any of the areas ascertained by the referees through college work, discussion or personal knowledge. However, you can opt out AT ANY TIME for ANY REASON.

Risks:
The risks of this study are minimal. These risks are similar to those you experience when disclosing school-related information to others. The topics in the survey may upset some respondents. You may decline to answer any or all of the questions

Benefits:
There will be no direct benefit to you for your participation in this study. However, we hope that the information obtained from this study may lead to better support programs for Native men in college.

Confidentiality:
Every effort will be made by the researcher to preserve your confidentiality during interviews including the following:
Assigning code names/numbers for participants that will be used on all researcher notes and documents.

Notes, interview transcriptions, and transcribed notes and any other identifying participant information will be kept on a secure computer in possession of the researcher. When no longer necessary for research, all materials will be destroyed,

The researcher and the members of the researcher's committee will review the researcher's collected data. Information from this research will be used solely for the purpose of this study and any publications that may result from this study. Any final publication will contain the names of the public figures that have consented to participate

in this study (unless a public figure participant has requested anonymity): all other participants involved in this study will not be identified and their anonymity will be maintained

Each participant has the opportunity to obtain a transcribed copy of their interview. Participants should tell the researcher if a copy of the interview is desired.

Voluntary Participation:
Your participation in this study is voluntary. It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part in this study. If you do decide to take part in this study, you will be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part in this study, you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. You are free to not answer any question or questions if you choose. This will not affect the relationship you have with the researcher.

Unforeseeable Risks:
There may be risks that are not anticipated. However every effort will be made to minimize any risks.

Costs To Subject:
There are no costs to you for your participation in this study

Compensation:
Each participant will receive $20.

Contact and Questions: If you have any questions or concerns regarding the study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, you are encouraged to contact the Research Subjects' Advocate Line, D-528 Mayo, 420 Delaware Street S.E., Minneapolis, Minnesota, 55455; telephone (612) 625-1650 or advisor, Dr. GW Fry, Professor, OLPD, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities, 612 624-1004

Consent:
By signing this consent form, I confirm that I have read and understood the information and have had the opportunity to ask questions. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason and without cost. I understand that I will be given a copy of this consent form. I voluntarily agree to take part in this study.

Signature _____ Date _____

C.

1. **How does the indigenous male define success in college?**

   a. Tell me about a good term, semester or class.

   b. How important are grades to you?

   c. What was your reaction after your first term grades?

   d. In relation to your other roles in life, where does college come? (prioritize)

   e. Has your definition changed over time?

2. **How does he perceive the postsecondary experience?**

   a. What is the typical school day like for you?

   b. How was your first day in college? How did you feel in class? Out of class?

   c. How many other indigenous males have been in your classes? (Is that important/different?)

   d. Have you had any IM teachers? (How was that?)

   e. What has been the most difficult thing about being in college?

   f. Can you point to any critical incident in college which motivated you, changed your mind or moved you in a different direction?

3. **What do successful Native male college students perceive to be the most important elements in their persistence?**

   a. How have your friends and family responded to you being in college? (supportive/dismissive)

   b. Who has been the most influential person encouraging you to stay in school? (In what way?)

c. Have you ever had a particularly difficult time in college? What was that like? How did you get through it?

d. How well prepared do you feel you were for college? Can you tell me about it?

e. Can you tell me what you think was critical to your staying in school-- One thing which kept you going even if you felt like giving up?

f. How does it feel for you to return home from college?

g. Many students don't make it through classes, term or graduation, why do you think that is? Why have you persevered?

4. How has the institution assisted or obstructed their success?

a. Did you take DE classes? What were they like?

b. Which department was most helpful in getting through your classes?

c. What other programs or support do you receive in college?

d. Tell me about a department, faculty member or student who has helped you out. What happened?

e. Tell me about a time which you felt you weren't served or helped at all. What happened?

f. If a younger brother or cousin wanted to go to college, what advice would you give?

D.

Concept Map for Interview Topics

Success	College Culture	Critical Incidents	Others
Definition Change in understanding Successful class/term outcome	Academic Support Time management Preparedness Extra-curricular Sports	Incident (s) which influenced a class, semester or action. Most important influence for staying in college	Peer support in school. Non- Peer influence Family support Teachers College staff Others (Work, community, etc.)