

**The Perceived Impact of a Private Scholarship Program on Kansas City Hispanic
Students: An Examination of Access and Persistence of Scholarship Recipients**

Julia M. Vargas
B.A., William Jewell College, 1994
M.L.A., Baker University, 2005

Submitted to the Graduate Department and Faculty
of the School of Education of Baker University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

Doctor of Education
in
Educational Leadership

May 5, 2015

Copyright 2015 by Julia Vargas

Dissertation Committee

Major Advisor

Abstract

The Hispanic population of the United States is a growing community. Studies have shown an increase in the number of Hispanics enrolling in college, yet the number of Hispanics persisting through graduation has remained static. The purpose of the current study was to determine the impact of the Greater Kansas City Hispanic Development Fund Scholarship Program (GKC-HDFSP) on the access to and persistence in college for its recipients. A sample of 12 recipients was selected through a random sampling of respondents to the 2012 GKC-HDFSP survey. The participants described their college experiences during individual interviews. Through qualitative interviews and document analysis, data were gathered and analyzed to determine themes.

Five themes emerged that reflected the students' thoughts and perceptions of their college experiences. These themes included (1) deficiency of college-going information; (2) inability to pay for college; (3) sense of belonging; (4) encouragement from others; and (5) internal motivation. The findings present implications for high schools, colleges, and community organizations responsible for meeting the needs of a growing Hispanic population.

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of *mi abuelita*, Margarita Vargas de Arazate, whose love of learning passed through each of her children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, and my father, J. Mauricio Vargas, whose journey to this country to further his education inspired my educational journey. Through risks, struggles, and successes, doors were opened, opportunities were given, and dreams were fulfilled.

Acknowledgements

This journey would not have been possible without the support and encouragement from many. To my parents, Mauricio and Carolyn Vargas, and my siblings, Carrie, Dulce, and Cito, thank you for your belief in me and support while I worked on this project. Thank you to Bryan, Abby, and Brent for your prayers, good thoughts, and encouragement. To my nephews, Felipe, Jackson, Sebastian, and Kady, I hope you always pursue your dreams. To my chosen family, my dear friends, thank you for keeping me going, raising my confidence, and celebrating each step of the journey.

Secondly, to my dissertation committee members much appreciation for your support through the process. Dr. Anne Daugherty, thank you for your guidance and enthusiasm for my research. Dr. Katie Hole, I appreciate your valuable feedback and advice through methodology and analysis protocol. Thank you to Dr. Tes Mehring for serving on my committee. I give a special thank you to Dr. Uzziel Pecina for your support through my journey. A special appreciation to my cohort 9 classmates, your dedication served as an inspiration to me. Thank you to my colleagues at Rockhurst University who were cheerleaders, sounding boards, and mentors. Special gratitude to Dr. Ann Volin for her keen eye and thoughtful feedback.

Finally, to the Greater Kansas City Hispanic Development Fund Scholarship Program board of directors, thank you for giving me the opportunity to highlight this program that affects so many lives in the Kansas City area. May you continue to assist students to realize their dreams of going to college. To the recipients who agreed to be part of this study, thank you for sharing your stories in hopes of assisting future students. Your perseverance is inspiring. May you continue to succeed in reaching your goals.

Table of Contents

Abstract	iii
Dedication	iv
Acknowledgements.....	v
Table of Contents.....	vi
List of Tables	xi
List of Figures	xii
Chapter One: Introduction	1
Background.....	3
GKC-HDFSP	6
Statement of the Problem.....	8
Purpose of the Study	9
Significance of the Study	9
Delimitations.....	10
Assumptions.....	10
Research Questions.....	11
Definition of Terms.....	11
Overview of the Methodology	13
Organization of the Study	13
Chapter Two: Review of the Literature	15
Hispanic Access to Higher Education.....	15
Obstacles to Access.....	15
Legal and Political Obstacles.....	16

Academic Preparation.....	18
College-Going Information.....	18
Pathways through Post-Secondary Education	20
Persistence of Hispanic Students	21
Contributing Factors for Persistence and Retention	24
Personal and Socio-Cultural Factors.....	25
Environmental and Involvement Factors	26
Financial Assistance.....	28
Federal and State Aid.....	30
Merit-Based and Need-Based Scholarships.....	31
Private Scholarship Programs	33
Conceptual Framework.....	35
Social Capital Theory	35
Persistence Theory	37
Summary	38
Chapter Three: Methods	39
Research Design.....	39
Population and Sample	40
Sampling Procedures	40
Instrumentation	43
Interview	43
Document Analysis.....	44
Reliability and Validity.....	45

Researcher’s Perspective	47
Data Collection Procedures.....	47
Data Analysis and Interpretation	49
Limitations	50
Summary	51
Chapter Four: Results	52
Descriptive Statistics.....	52
Emerging Themes	55
Deficiency of College-Going Information.....	55
High School Counselors	55
Community-Based Programs	57
College Choice.....	58
Understanding the Process	61
Next Generation	64
Inability to Afford College.....	65
Financial Need	66
Employment During College	69
Financial Benefits of GKC-HDFSP.....	69
Other Financial Assistance	72
Encouragement from Others	72
Family Support.....	73
GKC-HDFSP	76
Social Networks	79

Campus Personnel.....	81
Sense of Belonging	83
Student Organizations.....	83
Student Support Services	88
Academic Challenge	90
Hispanic Representation on Campus	92
Nontraditional Student Issues	93
Internal Motivation	94
Goal Setting	94
Personal Attributes.....	97
Sense of Identity	98
Summary.....	99
Chapter Five: Interpretation and Recommendations	101
Study Summary.....	101
Overview of the Problem.....	101
Purpose Statement and Research Questions	102
Review of the Methodology.....	103
Major Findings.....	103
Findings Related to the Literature.....	104
Factors Influencing Scholars’ College Decision-Making Process.....	105
Factors Influencing Scholars’ Ability to Complete College.....	106
The Extent to Which the GKC-HDFSP Supports the Scholars	108
Conclusions.....	110

Implications for Action	110
Recommendations for Future Research	113
Concluding Remarks.....	113
References.....	115
Appendices.....	132
Appendix A. GKC-HDFSP Survey	133
Appendix B. Interview Protocol	137
Appendix C. IRB Form.....	140
Appendix D. Permission for Interview Protocol.....	145
Appendix E. IRB Approval.....	146
Appendix F. Invitation to Participate.....	149
Appendix G. Informed Consent Form	151
Appendix H. Thank You Note	154

List of Tables

Table 1. Hispanic Population Growth in Kansas City Metropolitan Area by County	2
Table 2. Comparison of Hispanic and White College Completion Rates.....	24
Table 3. Participants' Family Background	53
Table 4. Participants' Educational Background.....	54
Table 5. Participants' Family Size and Income	65

List of Figures

Figure 1. Hispanic and White College Enrollment vs. Degree Attainment.....	23
Figure 2. How Community-Based Programs Influenced College Preparation.....	58
Figure 3. Factors in Selecting a College	59
Figure 4. Adjustment to College Life	83

Chapter One

Introduction

In his 2009 State of the Union Address, President Obama stated that 75% of the fastest growing occupations require more training than a high school diploma (Obama, 2009). He challenged the nation to pursue post-secondary education opportunities and set a goal for the nation to be the top ranked country in college degree attainment (Obama, 2009). To achieve this goal, advances must be made in the degree attainment of those enrolled in post-secondary institutions. As the demographics of college students and the nation change, it is imperative that the degree attainment of Hispanics be considered in this challenge.

Hispanics are the fastest growing and largest ethnic group in the United States. The population increased 43% from April 1, 2000 to April 1, 2010, from 35.3 million to 50.5 million people (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011). Hispanics are the largest minority group in half of the states, including Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Maine, Massachusetts, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oklahoma, Oregon, Rhode Island, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Washington, and Wyoming (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011).

The greater Kansas City region which spans two states and five counties, Wyandotte and Johnson in Kansas and Clay, Platte, and Jackson in Missouri, mirrored the national increase in the Hispanics population. According to the 1980 U.S. census, 31,324 Hispanics lived within the greater Kansas City metropolitan area (U.S. Census Bureau, 1980). In the 2010 U.S. census, the number grew to 154,541 Hispanics living within the same five counties (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010b). The data indicate a 493%

increase of the Hispanic population since 1980. Table 1 shows the growth of the Hispanic population in the Kansas City metropolitan region by county.

Table 1

Hispanic Population Growth in Kansas City Metropolitan Area by County

County	1980 Census	1990 Census	2000 Census	2010 Census
Clay County, MO				
Total Population	136,488	153,411	184,006	221,939
Hispanic Population	2,157	3,539	6,594	13,101
Jackson County, MO				
Total Population	629,266	633,232	654,880	674,158
Hispanic Population	16,492	18,890	35,160	56,434
Platte County, MO				
Total Population	46,341	57,867	73,781	89,322
Hispanic Population	540	1,161	2,211	4,424
Johnson County, KS				
Total Population	270,269	355,054	451,086	544,179
Hispanic Population	4,035	7,005	17,957	38,949
Wyandotte County, KS				
Total Population	172,335	161,993	157,882	157,505
Hispanic Population	8,100	10,997	25,257	41,633

Note. Adapted from the “1980 Census Characteristics of the Population,” U.S. Census Bureau, 1980, retrieved from <http://www.census.gov/prod/www/decennial.html>; “1990 Age, Nativity, and Citizenship for the United States, States, and Counties,” U.S. Census Bureau, 1990, Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Commerce, retrieved from <http://www2.census.gov/prod2/decennial/documents/1990/CPH-L-114.pdf>; “2000 Census Characteristics of the Population,” U.S. Census Bureau, 2000, Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Commerce, retrieved from <http://censtats.census.gov/pub/Profiles.shtml>; and “Summary File 1,” U.S. Census Bureau, 2010b, Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Commerce, retrieved from <http://www.census.gov/2010census/news/press-kits/summary-file-1.html>

Because of the increase in the Hispanic population, education institutions, policy makers, and researchers seek to create a body of literature to examine the experience of Hispanic students in post-secondary institutions.

In 1984, the growing Kansas City Hispanic community established the Greater Kansas City Hispanic Development Fund Scholarship Program (GKC-HDFSP) as a means to support students pursuing a post-secondary education. These scholarships provide a financial affirmation of the community's support of students' educational pursuits. While the administrators can account for the entrance of recipients to post-secondary institutions, it is not known if these students persisted and attained their educational goals. In order to help close the gap in knowledge about the outcomes of the GKC- HDFSP, the current study was conducted to explore the impact of receiving the scholarship on the education of Hispanic youth in the Kansas City area.

Background

The U.S. Census Bureau's Current Population Survey reported the number of Hispanics enrolled in college in October 2010 was 1.8 million, or 15% of the overall number of people enrolled in 2- or 4-year institutions, a 24% increase over the previous year (Fry, 2011). The increased enrollment is only partially due to the population increase. Increases in high school completion and fewer job opportunities for high school graduates contributed to the increase in college enrollment (Fry, 2011). While the number of Hispanic students enrolled in college is a positive step in reaching the goal set by President Obama, it does not reflect degree attainment of Hispanics. Fry and Taylor (2013) noted that while the college enrollment rate of recent Hispanic high school graduates is higher than their White peers, the degree attainment rate falls short. The

U.S. Census Bureau (2011) reported only 14% of Hispanics 25-years-old or older had obtained a bachelor's degree or higher in 2010, compared to 51% of Asians, 34.5% of Whites, and 21.2% of African Americans. While these data demonstrated an improved educational access and attainment picture, Hispanic students still lag behind other minority groups and White students.

In Excelencia in Education's report *Roadmap for Ensuring America's Future*, Santiago (2011) profiled characteristics of Hispanic college students. They were more likely to be the first in their family to attend college: 50% of Hispanics in 2007-2008 were first generation college students compared to 45% of Black and 28% of White students. Hispanic college students were more likely to be employed enrolled part-time, received lower amounts of financial aid, and be enrolled in community colleges (Fry, 2004; Santiago, 2011; Swail, Cabrera, & Lee, 2004). According to Tinto (1993), these characteristics contribute to the non-persistence of students in college.

Lack of financial aid knowledge and financial assistance procedures and limited family resources are two factors attributed to non-persistence of Hispanic students (Fry, 2002; Garcia, 2010; Jenkins, Miyazaki, & Janosik, 2009; Longerbeam, Sedlacek, & Alatorre, 2004). In the 2011 National Survey of Access and Funding in Public Higher Education, the Education Policy Center acknowledged that because of rising tuition and cuts to federal and state financial aid programs, students and families are expected to pick up more of the costs for college education (Katsinas, D'Amico, & Friedel, 2011). From 1981 to 2011, the tuition cost for private 4-year colleges has doubled, while public institution cost has almost tripled (U.S. Department of Education, 2011). In the 2011-2012 academic year, tuition was estimated to increase at more than two times the rate of

inflation in order to generate revenue that was lost due to state budget cuts (Katsinas et al., 2011). The increase in tuition affects the cost to students and families.

In addition to cutting revenue to the institutions, many states have frozen state aid levels such that they do not keep up with tuition cost (Katsinas et al., 2011). State aid programs that reached out to minority students have been changed to accommodate current economic needs. Merit-based aid and loans replaced need-based student grants for many low-income minority students (Gardner, 2005). With less federal and state financial aid available and higher tuition costs, students and their families are being asked to contribute more to their education costs. While this puts a burden on all students, the effect is harshest on those from economically disadvantaged families.

To assist these families, post-secondary education institutions are being asked to raise their own scholarship dollars from private sector funds (Katsinas et al., 2011). The partnership between post-secondary institutions and the private sector can alleviate burdens created by the increase in college costs and lower financial assistance. Privately-funded scholarships could assist more low-income minority students in attending 4-year institutions and provide resources for students based on need (LaNasa & Rogers, 2009). According to Santiago (2011), "Community partnerships play a role in student retention, completion, and success" (p. 13).

Much of the information students receive about college comes from high schools. Because of the difference in resources for high schools, college information varies from high school to high school and possibly from student to student (Perna, 2006). Simply having information available is not enough; a high school culture promoting college is needed to prepare students. Stern (2009) suggested that creating a college-going culture,

one in which college preparation was incorporated into all aspects of the school, relied on the high school's leadership. Without a supportive high school culture, first-generation college students and their families navigate the college enrollment process blindly.

Liou, Antrop-Gonzalez, and Cooper (2009) found that Hispanic students' college information networks go beyond high school teachers and counselors. They proposed that grassroots community efforts could be the resource needed by underfunded and resourced-stretched high school officials to help give information to students and families anticipating a college education. Santiago (2011) called for community leaders to assist families and students by sharing information about how to prepare and pay for college.

GKC-HDFSP. The GKC-HDFSP is an example of a community-based program created to support Hispanics attending college. The GKC-HDFSP leverages community resources and funds from colleges and private philanthropies to provide college scholarships to Hispanics within the greater Kansas City area. Its primary focus is to assist Hispanics living in the neighborhoods with the largest concentrations of Hispanics, which are Argentine and Central Avenue areas in Kansas City, Kansas and the Westside and Northeast areas of Kansas City, Missouri. However, the eligibility region includes the Greater Kansas City Metropolitan Area of Wyandotte and Johnson counties in Kansas and Clay, Platte, and Jackson counties in Missouri. The scholarships supplement the students' financial resources from family, government, and other sources.

The objective of the scholarship fund is to provide financial assistance that will result in better educational and economic opportunities for Hispanic students: "It is the express intent of the Hispanic Development Fund Scholarship Program that scholarship recipients make use of the scholarships to graduate from college and return to the Greater

Kansas City Area to contribute to the local Hispanic Community” (Greater Kansas City Community Foundation, 2014, para. 1). Categories of scholarships include need-based, merit-based, and need-merit-based scholarships. The amount awarded to each scholarship recipient is intended to assist families with the estimated family contribution to the college costs and not to replace federal, state, or institutional aid.

To be eligible for the GKC-HDFSP, the student must be Hispanic, reside in the Greater Kansas City Metropolitan Area, and exhibit academic merit, financial need, and community involvement (Greater Kansas City Community Foundation, 2014). The recipients must be enrolled as a full-time student at a fully accredited college or university working toward an associate, bachelor, or graduate degree to receive the scholarship (Greater Kansas City Community Foundation, 2014). Students pursuing this scholarship complete an online application and upload copies of academic transcripts, financial statements, and acceptance letters as evidence of their academic merit, financial need, and enrollment. In addition to the quantitative information, applicants submit an essay to introduce themselves to the selection committee. Each completed application is reviewed by a selection committee comprised of community members to determine recipients of the scholarship.

The GKC-HDFSP is a community-based program that awards scholarships to academically gifted and financially needy students. The founders of the scholarship envisioned the scholarship as a way for the Hispanic community to help all Hispanics attend college regardless of academic performance and financial need.

Statement of the Problem

As communities seek to alleviate the challenges of obtaining a college education, Kansas City community leaders have created ways to support Hispanic students. The GKC-HDFSP is an example of a community-based program created to support Hispanics attending college. The GKC-HDFSP leverages community resources and funds from colleges and private philanthropies to provide college scholarships to Hispanics within the greater Kansas City area. Many of the area's post-secondary institutions have matching commitments with the scholarship fund. The college matches the amount awarded by the GKC-HDFSP, doubling the institutional aid. The Hispanic Development Fund (2014), GKC-HDFSP's parent organization, reported that since its inception, GKC-HDFSP has awarded over \$2.6 million through 3,100 scholarships with money raised from the public and private sectors, and from matching funds provided by area colleges and universities. The fund has supported many students through the 30 years of awarding scholarships. However, little information has been gathered from the recipients to determine the impact of the scholarship on the education attainment of Hispanic youth.

As tuition costs rise and state and federal aid is cut, students and their families rely more heavily on private financial assistance to cover their estimated family contribution. The lack of information for Hispanics in the greater Kansas City area hinders community leaders, post-secondary institutions, and area secondary schools from addressing the specific needs of Hispanic students entering and completing degrees from post-secondary institutions.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the impact of the GKC-HDFSP on access to post-secondary education and persistence in college for its recipients. Through a qualitative study utilizing interviews and document analysis, factors were identified that facilitated scholars' educational attainment in order to understand the role of the GKC-HDFSP on college access and persistence and to understand the financial need of the scholars.

Significance of the Study

This study extends the knowledge regarding a growing population: Midwestern Hispanic college students. The literature on the Hispanic student experience is limited by either its scope or geography. Current literature has included studies that examine one or two institutions at a time to determine student experience; other studies have been conducted mainly at Hispanic serving institutions (HSI) or in areas with a large Hispanic population. Although the recipients of the GKC-HDFSP attend many institutions within Kansas and Missouri, the current study was conducted to discover the commonality of student experience across institutions. The findings of the study contribute to the growing body of literature regarding Hispanic college students.

The findings of the study may provide information for the GKC-HDFSP and post-secondary institutions to better understand the Midwestern college-going Hispanic student. The results offer the GKC-HDFSP an opportunity to reflect on the contribution of the scholarship on its recipients to inform future funding opportunities and programs. Post-secondary institutions can utilize the current study to inform their outreach, recruitment, and retention efforts for Hispanic students.

Delimitations

Delimitations set the boundaries for “the purpose and scope of the study” (Lunenburg & Irby, 2008, p. 134). The research was limited to only those students who received the GKC-HDFSP scholarship and completed at least one semester at a fully accredited 2- or 4-year institution. Additionally, the sample was limited to those recipients who completed the 2012 GKC-HDFSP survey. Because the purpose of the scholarship is to support scholars in graduating and contributing to the local Hispanic community, participants were limited to those who resided within the greater Kansas City metropolitan area. Delimitations set the parameters for the population and sample pool for participants to be interviewed in the current study.

Assumptions

In order to move forward in the research, assumptions were made about the data, participants, and circumstances of the participants that were “accepted as operational for purposes of the research” (Lunenburg & Irby, 2008, p. 135). The first assumption was that the academic preparations were sufficient for scholars to succeed at the post-secondary institutions they attended. Because a letter of acceptance is a required element for an application, it was assumed the applicant met the admission requirements for the institution. A second assumption was that the data collected by the GKC-HDFSP for the application were accurate. These data included information on family income, college choice, and academic performance for the applicant. The third assumption was that participants accurately completed the survey. A final assumption was that the participants were forthcoming and accurate in their ability to recall their college

experience during the interviews. Based on these assumptions, the data gathered were sufficient to address the research questions.

Research Questions

This study examined the impact of the GKC-HDFSP on its recipients. The research questions guiding this study are as follows:

1. What factors influenced Hispanic scholars' college decision-making process?
2. What factors and programs influenced Hispanic scholars' ability to complete post-secondary education?
3. To what extent did the GKC-HDFSP support the Hispanic scholars and address their financial need?

Definition of Terms

To assist the reader's understanding of the terms used, the following section outlines terms used throughout this study.

Access. Access is a term used to describe a student's ability or inability to enroll in a post-secondary institution and stay long enough to generate a transcript record (Adelman, 2007). The term does not distinguish between types of post-secondary institutions the student entered (e.g., community college, proprietary, or 4-year) or the type of student (full-time or part-time).

Hispanic. Hispanic is a term that refers to students whose origin can be traced to a Latin American country colonized by the Spaniards and therefore those who inherited the "Hispanic" culture. Although Hispanic and Latino are often used interchangeably, the term Hispanic was used in this study as the prime description of the study's population in order to remain consistent with the GKC-HDFSP and the U.S. Census

Bureau (2010a): “People of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin are those who trace their origin or descent to Mexico, Puerto Rico, Cuba, Spanish-speaking countries of Central or South America, and other Spanish cultures” (p. 26). It could be a first, second, or third generation person living in the United States. Quoted researchers, interviewees, and studies were not altered, and thus the term Latino appears if used by the cited source.

Merit-based scholarship. Merit-based scholarship is financial assistance based on academic performance of secondary students that pays for all or a portion of the costs associated with post-secondary institution attendance (Heller & Marin, 2004).

Need-based scholarship. Need-based scholarship is financial assistance that is determined by a formula calculated on the expected family contribution to a student’s educational expenses. A financial analysis is calculated on the number of family members, net income, net assets, and other relevant factors that may affect a family’s ability to cover the cost associated with educational expenses (Heller, 2004).

Persistence. Persistence describes a student’s continuous enrollment in a college or university (Astin, 1993). A student’s persistence is not dependent on continuous enrollment at one institution. A student can persist even if that student transfers from one institution to another.

Private scholarship. Private scholarship refers to financial assistance provided to the student from a private foundation, business, or individual. A private scholarship is given to help meet the student’s estimated family contribution.

Retention. Retention is a measure of the number of students who persist in their studies from one year to the next at the same institution (Tinto, 1993). Unlike persistence, retention refers to continuous enrollment at a specific institution. Thus,

retention contains an element of persistence; however, persistence is a broader concept that looks toward college completion.

Social capital. Social capital is a term that refers to the social structure, resources, and support networks that are generated by positive relationships among people who enable social action (Adam & Rončević, 2003; Coleman, 1988; Putnam, 1993; Sergiovanni, 2000).

Overview of the Methodology

Interviews and document analysis of former and current recipients' GKC-HDFSP applications and surveys were utilized in the current study. A qualitative approach was used to elicit the perspective of scholarship recipients in order to gain a deeper understanding of the impact of the scholarship on the access and persistence of its recipients. A representative sample of the recipients who completed the survey was selected from the recipients for whom current contact information was available. Individual interviews were conducted with each of the participants of the study. The interview responses and scholarship applications were coded and analyzed in addition to the survey responses to determine the impact of the GKC-HDFSP on access to post-secondary education and persistence in college for its recipients.

Organization of the Study

Introduced in this chapter was the study's background information, the statement of the problem, purpose of the study, significance, assumptions, delimitations, research questions, and overview of the research methodology. Chapter two includes a review of the literature on access and persistence of Hispanics in higher education, financial assistance, and the conceptual framework for the study. Chapter three contains the

research methodology used in this study including the research design, data collection procedure, data analysis and interpretation. Chapter four includes the findings, descriptive statistics and the emerging themes from the study. Chapter five contains the study summary, the findings related to the literature, the implications for action and recommendations for future research.

Chapter Two

Review of the Literature

The Hispanic population is one of the fastest growing and largest ethnic groups in the United States. Since the 1980s, the number of Hispanics attending college has increased. Researchers have sought to create a library of literature defining the experiences of Hispanics in many arenas. This study contributes to the growing body of research of Hispanics in higher education. Provided in this chapter is a review of the literature divided into four sections: a) Hispanic access to higher education; b) persistence of Hispanic students in higher education; c) financial assistance available for higher education; and d) the literature describing the theoretical frameworks for the study.

Hispanic Access to Higher Education

Access to higher education refers to a student's ability or inability to enroll in a postsecondary institution. This "walking through the door" definition of access does not take into account the type of institution, the enrollment status (full-time or part-time), or even the success of the student enrolled (Adelman, 2007, p. 49). This is the broadest and most often used definition of access for policymakers, administrators, and students. Through this lens, access to higher education for Hispanics improved as the number of Hispanics enrolled in higher education tripled between 1976 and 1995 (Nora, Rendon, & Cuadraz, 1999). The increase demonstrates the Hispanic population growth as well as the improved access to higher education.

Obstacles to access. Hispanics and other racial and ethnic groups have faced legal and political obstacles related to access to higher education (Gandara & Contreras, 2009; Nora et al., 1999; Stader, 2013). Additional obstacles to college access include

poor academic preparation, lack of knowledge about college-going information, and difficult pathways to post-secondary education (Adelman, 2007; Edwards & Sawtell, 2013; Fry, 2002, 2004; Martinez & Cervera, 2012; Perez, 2010; Perna, 2006; Santiago, 2011).

Legal and political obstacles. For some Hispanics and other racial and ethnic groups, the eligibility or qualifications to enroll in higher education institutions have been questioned through challenges to affirmative action in college admission processes. Affirmative action can be traced to President Lyndon Johnson's Great Society policies that charged the United States to demonstrate the possibility of equality of outcomes for all groups through actions and not only through words (Gandara & Contreras, 2009). Opposition to affirmative action policies in college admissions sought to reverse these policies through political and legal actions.

In 1995, the University of California Regents banned the use of affirmative action in admission considerations after political pressure mounted from the governor (Gandara & Contreras, 2009). In 1997, a legal challenge was presented to the Fifth Circuit of Appeals through the Hopwood Case in which plaintiffs filed suit against the University of Texas for admitting Hispanic and African-American students with lower entrance exam scores (Gandara & Contreras, 2009; Nora et al., 1999). The ruling was that the race-based admissions process was inadequate and race should not be a consideration in the admission process (Gandara & Contreras, 2009; Nora et al., 1999). In 2003, another challenge to affirmative action was issued to the University of Michigan's admissions procedure. In the *Grutter v. Bollinger*, the court determined that the university had "compelling state interests" (Stader, 2013, p. 159) in their efforts to diversify the student

body through active recruitment of underrepresented minorities. Although the court's decision in this case seemed to open the doors to higher admission rates for underrepresented groups, the aftermath was similar to that of the Hopwood ruling and the University of California decision, which was a drop in minority applications (Gandara & Contreras, 2009; Nora et al., 1999; Stader, 2013). The results of these decisions have narrowed the pipeline for Hispanic students seeking access to college.

A subset of Hispanic students, undocumented immigrants, has unique obstacles to access to colleges. Undocumented immigrant students can include Hispanics and other nationalities. In the 1982 *Plyrer v. Doe* case, access to public education was granted to undocumented immigrant children (Gandara & Contreras, 2009; Stader, 2013). However, this ruling did not address post-secondary education opportunities, forcing undocumented students who gain admission to college to be classified as international students and thus subjected to higher tuition costs (Gandara & Contreras, 2009), which for some meant giving up on their dream to go to college.

The Dream Act proposed to allow undocumented students who graduate from a U.S. high school to be granted temporary legal status allowing them to enroll in college and pay resident tuition (Gandara & Contreras, 2009). Although the Dream Act has stalled in the United States Congress, some states have passed their own Dream Act legislation. The Kansas legislature passed a state version in 2004 to allow undocumented students who graduate from a Kansan high school the opportunity to attend Kansas public higher education institutions at the resident tuition rate (Kansas Dream Act, 2004). In 2012, President Obama signed the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) that allowed undocumented students who came to the United States prior to age 16,

completed high school or a GED, were not convicted of criminal acts, and were not 31 years old before June 15, 2012 the ability to apply for deferred action immigration status and be eligible for employment authorization and post-secondary education (Homeland Security, 2014). This act allows undocumented students more access to higher education institutions.

Academic preparation. Adelman (2007) stated the most significant deterrent to higher education is not financial concerns but academic preparation. Gandara and Contreras (2009) asserted that Hispanic high school students are not challenged to take college preparation courses or enroll in the advanced placement (AP) classes. Edwards and Sawtell (2013) studied the demographic trends of Hispanic AP data to demonstrate the increase in number of Hispanic students taking the AP test. However, the percentage of Hispanic students who scored 3 or higher on an AP exam has steadily declined from 2002 to 2012 (Edwards & Sawtell, 2013). Marsico and Getch (2009) suggested that high school counselors advocate for Hispanic students to enroll in college preparatory curriculum. The Hispanic population is often centered in large, urban areas with overcrowded and under-resourced elementary and secondary schools (Nora et al., 1999; Olivares, 2011). These schools fail to provide Hispanics with marketable education and are unable to prepare students for college (Nora et al., 1999). In addition to attending under-resourced schools, Linares (2008) asserted that minority students in these schools are discouraged from college preparatory programs.

College-going information. Another threat to post-secondary access is a lack of knowledge of admission and financial aid information and processes that comprise college-going information. Many Hispanic students entering college are the first in their

family to pursue higher education. Thus, a college-going Hispanic student cannot rely on the experience of older family members to provide guidance through the college application process (Liou et al., 2009; Martinez & Cervera, 2012; Perna, 2006; Zarate & Burciaga, 2010). Instead, most Hispanic students receive information about college from high school personnel or community members.

While most Hispanic students receive information about college from school personnel, the majority of Hispanic high school students reside in urban areas with overcrowded and under-resourced schools (Gandara & Contreras, 2009; Irizarry, 2012; Liou et al., 2009; Olivares, 2011). If school counselors are under-resourced, they may not have the capacity to research options and present them to students interested in attending college. Instead, the school personnel depend on the student to seek information. Martinez and Cervera (2012) found that Hispanic students as a group utilized the least number of resources and applied to the fewest colleges during a college search. Students did not seek information from school personnel, college resources, family members, or friends at the same rate as members of other ethnic groups (Martinez & Cervera, 2012). Perna (2006) found that high schools did not always distribute information about college costs or financial aid to families, thus requiring them to seek out the information for themselves. If students are not seeking information (Martinez & Cervera, 2012) and schools are not offering information to students (Perna, 2006), an opportunity exists for community resources to assist college-going students in the college search (Liou et al., 2009; Yamamura, Martinez, & Saenz, 2010).

Lack of information contributes to misunderstandings of college costs and availability of financial aid. Perna (2006) found a gap between information available and

actual knowledge of college price and financial aid. The lack of information about financial assistance and college information is a contributing factor for Hispanic students choosing 2-year colleges instead of a preferred 4-year institution (O'Connor, 2009; O'Connor, Hammack, & Scott, 2010) or choosing to delay or forego enrollment (Stern, 2009). The lack of social networks with those who know the system of applying for college and financial aid creates an obstacle for Hispanic students who aspire to attend college but do not know how to enroll (Lillis & Tian, 2008; O'Connor, 2009; Stern, 2009).

Pathways through post-secondary education. The pathway chosen to gain access to and through post-secondary education, which can include 2-year institutions, part-time student status, delayed entry, and bridge programs, is another threat identified in access literature. Hispanic students are more likely to enroll as part-time students and at 2-year institutions than are their White peers (Fry, 2002, 2004; Santiago, 2011; Swail et al., 2004). Santiago (2011) profiled Hispanic students to provide a more accurate picture of the average Hispanic college student. She found that the average Hispanic college student is native-born, a high school graduate, English language dominant, a part-time student, and of a non-traditional age (Santiago, 2011).

The lack of adequate college preparation affects the student's access to college and the type of post-secondary institution the student chooses to attend (Garcia, 2007). Garcia (2010) found that although Hispanic community college students aspired to attend college, they did not make plans for enrollment until only a few weeks prior to the beginning of the first semester of college. Fry (2004) reported that even Hispanic students who are academically successful in high school often do not choose to enter

selective colleges. The cost of selective colleges may also be a deterrent for Hispanic students (Lillis & Tian, 2008). Students who are not given advice on college entrance procedures, financial aid, or other higher education opportunities quickly dismiss selective colleges as an unreachable dream (Garcia, 2010; Nora et al., 1999; Perna, 2006). This lack of knowledge regarding the college-going process affects a student's ability to enroll.

Although most of the college-going Hispanics are native-born, studies have been conducted to determine the college choice process for immigrant students. Perez (2010) found three factors immigrant students used to determine college choice: opportunities that the student perceives the college could give, cost, and social support networks. These factors weigh in the decision to attend college and in the persistence of students to remain enrolled in college until completion. By delaying or extending the time in college, Hispanics diminish the likelihood of degree attainment (Adelman, 2007). Additionally, high school programs designed to improve college access need to be expanded to continue services into college to improve college persistence (Cabrera & LaNasa, 2001; Saunders & Serna, 2004; Spradlin, Burroughs, Rutkowski, & Lang, 2010). Scholars indicate that the pathways to post-secondary education need to include not only access information but also college retention program information (Adelman, 2007; Cabrera & LaNasa, 2001; Perez, 2010; Saunders & Serna, 2004; Spradlin et al., 2010; Swail et al., 2004).

Persistence of Hispanic Students

Swail et al. (2004) studied pathways taken by Hispanics to college. Findings from the study indicated that even qualified Hispanic students lag behind their White

peers in completion rates. Fry (2004) suggested that college choice may affect completion rates, as selective institutions graduate more of their students than do non-selective institutions. Selective institutions provide support programs for students that increase graduation rates; however, few Hispanics choose to attend more selective institutions (Fry, 2004).

Hispanic college students are more likely to be first-generation, work while attending college, enroll part-time, be of a non-traditional age, and attend a 2-year institution (Fry, 2011; Jenkins et al., 2009; Santiago, 2011). Jenkins et al. (2009) found the following characteristics of First Generation College Students (FGCS): they face financial problems if they work more than 20 hours a week, they are less likely to ask questions or seek help, they have lower computer skills, and they perform less volunteer work. Each of these characteristics can be a factor for student departure from college (Tinto, 1993). The stress caused by the factors can lower grades and ability to complete college courses.

Feelings of being overwhelmed and stressed are not unique to FGCS or Hispanics. The Cooperative Institutional Research Program's annual Freshman Survey for 2012 found that the self-rated emotional health of all freshman college students is at a record low (Sander, 2012). The results also showed more freshmen see the financial benefit of college to their future, and four of five freshmen aspire to graduate school (Sander, 2012). These results demonstrate the expectation of college students to complete and continue education beyond the undergraduate degree.

Fry (2004) reported that a large percentage of Hispanics attend college, comparable to the number of White students. However, "go to college" may have

different meanings for the average White and Hispanic high school students (Gandara & Contreras, 2009). Hispanic students are more likely to enroll as part-time students and at 2-year institutions than are their White peers (Fry, 2002, 2004; Santiago, 2011; Swail et al., 2004). Figure 1 shows college enrollment compared to degree attainment of White and Hispanic students from 1975 to 2005 (Gandara & Contreras, 2009). While Hispanic enrollment increased over the time span, the percentage of degree attainment remained stagnant. During the same time, the percentage of White student enrollment decreased yet their degree attainment increased.

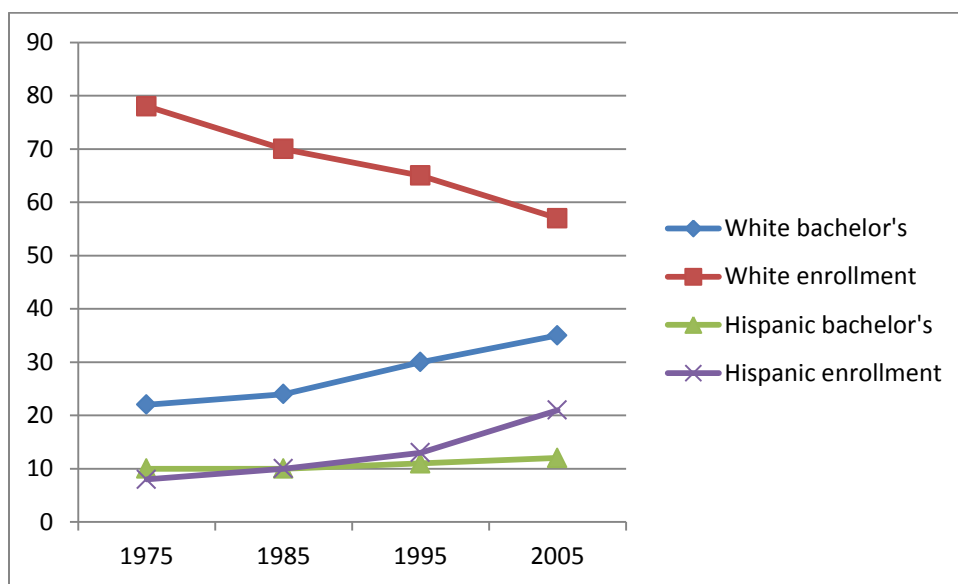


Figure 1. Hispanic and White college enrollment vs. degree attainment. Adapted from “The Latino Education Crisis: The Consequences of Failed Social Policies,” by P. Gandara & F. Contreras, 2009, p. 25.

Santiago and Solis (2012) issued a report for Excelencia in Education on the college completion rates of Hispanics in each state. The GKC-HDFSP works specifically with students in the greater Kansas City area, which consists of two counties in Kansas and three counties in Missouri. In Kansas, the percentage of Hispanics completing college increased 2.3% from 2005 to 2008. However, the gap between Hispanic

completion rate and White completion rate widened by 0.4% over the same time. In Missouri, the percentage of Hispanics completing college decreased from 2005-2008 from 24.6% to 24%, while the college completion rate for Whites increased from 35.1% to 37.5% during the same time. Table 2 shows the gap in the completion rates for Hispanic students in Kansas and Missouri. These reports suggested that although Hispanics are enrolling in college, they are not persisting through their program of study.

Table 2

Comparison of Hispanic and White College Completion Rates

Completion Category	Hispanic Population	White Population	Equity Gap
Kansas College Graduation Rate	38%	47%	9%
Kansas Degree Attainment ^a	15%	37%	22%
Missouri College Graduation Rate	42%	49%	7%
Missouri Degree Attainment ^a	22%	32%	10%

Note. Adapted from “Ensuring America’s Future by Increasing Latino College Completion: Latino College Completion in 50 States,” by D. Santiago & M. Solis, 2012.

^aWithin 150% of program time.

Contributing factors for persistence and retention. Persistence and retention are related terms that refer to a student’s continuous enrollment in college. Oseguera, Locks, and Vega (2009) distinguished these terms: “Persistence can be framed as the outcome of individual student behavior, whereas retention is the outcome of institutional efforts and actions” (p. 26). While the current study explores the persistence of Hispanic students, it is important to understand the institutions’ retention efforts that might affect student persistence. Tinto (1998) suggested promotion of learning communities through

active, collaborative learning as a means to increase student retention. Hernandez and Lopez (2004) reviewed the literature of the personal, environmental, involvement, and socio-cultural factors influencing student persistence.

Personal and socio-cultural factors. Personal factors that influence persistence and retention include high school GPA and test scores; and academic self-concept, family, and finances. Socio-cultural factors include immigration status, ethnic identity development, gender roles, community orientation, and role of religion. The literature on personal factors that affect persistence of Hispanic students demonstrated the self-efficacy of students to succeed in college. The personal factors contribute to the resiliency of students and their self-belief that they can succeed in college (Gloria, Castellanos, Lopez, & Rosales, 2005; Hernandez, 2000; Linares, 2008). Knowledge of financial resources influenced college persistence and degree attainment by allowing Hispanic students the opportunity to study without financial stress (Hernandez & Lopez, 2004; Nora, 1990). The students' experiences in college also affect success.

Scholars suggest that first generation college students are at a high risk for academic failure or early departure from post-secondary institutions because they are not prepared to succeed in higher education (Jenkins et al., 2009; Orozco, 2007; Terenzini, Springer, Yaeger, Pascarella, & Nora, 1996). Family support and encouragement may be especially important factors for these students (Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001; Linares, 2008). In addition to family support and encouragement, persistence in post-secondary education may be influenced by the generational level of the student. Fry (2002) suggested that second-generation Hispanic students, those who are born in the United States, are more successful in pursuing college education than foreign-born peers. It has

been argued that by the third generation, there should be no difference in educational attainment; however, Orrenius (2004) found the high school dropout rate of third generation Hispanics is almost twice as high as the average rate. Scholars cite the need to pass down the strong achievement ethic through the generations to encourage academic success and post-secondary attainment (Hu, 1997; Olivares, 2011; Witham, 2003).

Environmental and involvement factors. Environmental factors that contribute to persistence and retention include the racial climate of campus, presence of an ethnic community, and working or living off campus. Involvement factors include faculty-student interaction, mentorship, and participation in student organizations. Gloria et al. (2005) assessed the extent to which university comfort, social support, and self-belief were factors that predicted academic non-persistence decisions, and they found that inadequate social support was the strongest predictor of academic non-persistence. Comfort at the university also had a strong influence on college decision-making and persistence. Garcia (2010) studied the barriers first-semester Hispanic students experienced and found that FGCS Hispanic students have limited knowledge of college processes such as financial aid, academic policies, and course selection procedures. The lack of knowledge of these processes limits students' abilities to persist in college due to missed deadlines and improperly filed paperwork. Garcia (2010) found that students felt frustrated by the process and therefore left the institution.

The processes of course registration and financial aid are important to college attendance and success; however, they can create institutional barriers for students. Many students rely on financial assistance to afford a college education. An adequate understanding of scholarships, grants, and loans is needed to make informed choices and

secure futures. Some scholars have found that access to financial resources influences persistence and degree completion of Hispanic students (Hernandez & Lopez, 2004; Nora, 1990), while other scholars found that lack of financial resources was the primary source of stress for Hispanic college students (LaNasa & Rogers, 2009; Munoz, 1986). Additionally, knowledge of college procedures to register or withdraw from courses is essential to a student's persistence.

Student involvement also contributes positively to persistence. Berger and Milem (1999) asserted that becoming involved in campus activities in the first year of college predicts future involvement in other activities; this is positively linked to the integration into campus social and academic life and persistence. This is consistent with the findings of Astin (1993) and Tinto (1993) that an institution's social as well as academic life influence persistence and degree attainment. Fischer (2007) noted that students who become more involved in campus life create social networks and tend to perform better academically. Minority students who integrate into campus life have a greater sense of belonging at the institution than do their counterparts who do not participate (Hurtado & Carter, 1997). However, campus culture influences the sense of belonging. Hurtado and Carter (1997) found that an actual experience with discrimination was significantly and negatively associated with attachment or connection to the institution, even if the experience happened outside of the campus academic or social life. In contrast, Tierney (1999) and Kinzie, Gonyea, Shoup, and Kuh (2008) asserted that minority students who have experiences that affirm their racial and ethnic identities improved their sense of belonging and persistence in college.

In addition to the interactions with peers, faculty interaction contributes to the persistence of Hispanic students (Fischer, 2007). Forming connections with faculty and administrators provide Hispanic students with the knowledge, encouragement, and support they may lack from limited awareness of college experience and procedures among family and friends (Olivares, 2011). Contradictory to this, Hurtado and Carter (1997) and Orozco (2007) found that Hispanic students who worked with faculty on research projects, conducted independent research with a faculty mentor, or had been invited to a professor's home did not demonstrate an improved sense of belonging. Hurtado and Carter (1997) suggested that mere interaction does not increase persistence; however, interactions that promote resilience of Hispanic students could have a positive effect on the persistence to degree attainment. This suggests that the quality of interaction is significant to persistence. Additionally, Oseguera et al. (2009) proposed that interactions with Latino faculty and administrators provide additional support as role models. Oldfield (2007) suggested campus reform to include diversification of college faculty in order to welcome FGCS.

Financial Assistance

Affording post-secondary education has been a concern for institutions and families since Thomas Jefferson founded the University of Virginia. Toby (2010) chronicled the use of scholarships that started with Jefferson's advocacy for financial support:

By that part of our plan [of education in Virginia] which prescribes the selection of the youths of genius from among the classes of the poor, we hope to avail the State of those talents which nature has sown as liberally

among the poor as the rich, but which perish without use, if not sought for and cultivated. (p. 298)

This initial view of financial assistance was to offer poorer, academically successful students the financial resources to attend college. Financial assistance is viewed as a means to attract high achieving students to an institution, a way to build a stronger workforce, a way to encourage degree completion, and a method to diversify student enrollment (Gieser, 2012; Heller, 2003; Longanecker, 2002a; Patel & Richburg-Hayes, 2012). To meet the many goals of financial assistance, various forms of financial aid have been created.

Financial aid offices have become a necessity on college campuses due to the amount of aid given to students from various sources (Toby, 2010). However, underrepresented groups have limited knowledge of financial aid and their responsibility in accepting it (Gieser, 2012; Toby, 2010). While the goal of financial aid may be to offer financial resources so that a student can attend college who otherwise would not be able to afford college (Gieser, 2012), the results of financial aid strategies have been mixed (Gieser, 2012; Toby, 2010). When students are underprepared, financial aid is useful to gain access to college, but it does not meet the academic needs that students will require in order to persist (Toby, 2010). Tanner (2012) suggested colleges add conditions to the receipt of financial aid that encourage academic performance as a method to improve college completion. Even among those who persist to graduate, Gieser (2012) found that low socio-economic status students “attain lower incomes, attend graduate school less often and are less likely to earn a graduate degree” (p. 13).

Federal and state aid. The largest aid programs for students are the federal and state financial aid programs (Gieser, 2012). Federal financial aid programs include Pell Grants, Stafford Loans, and Work Study. State financial aid programs vary to meet the specific needs of the state. Some states have explored ways to invest in higher education that also serve to increase the economy. For example, Kansas invested in specialty programs at state institutions to bring faculty expertise and jobs to the area (Bautsch, 2011). By supporting the specialized program, the state ensures expertise of faculty and a qualified workforce for the future without the risk of supporting the individual student's college cost. However, with cuts in federal and state financial aid programs, institutions are pressured to find private aid or raise funds for institutional aid (Gieser, 2012). If these additional funds are not available, families will be expected to contribute more of the college expenses (Katsinas et al., 2011).

Federal financial aid programs have not kept pace with the cost of colleges for students. As the gap between college cost and financial assistance widens, students fill the gap with federal or personal loans or credit cards (Martinez, 2006). Although studies have found a general positive relationship between loan acceptance and persistence and college completion (Li, 2008; Nora, 1990), Museus (2010) found the effect differed for racial and ethnic groups. Black students who took out loans for college were more likely to persist to college completion, while their Asian, Latino, and White counterparts were less likely; in fact, the negative effect was strongest for Latino students (Museus, 2010). This suggests that using loans as financial aid may not lead to degree attainment for all ethnic groups.

With the risks of using loans to pay for college, it is not surprising that students prefer free financial assistance in the form of scholarships and grants (Martinez, 2006). Martinez (2006) found that free financial assistance focused students on education rather than on financial worries regarding repayment, and this lack of worry led to greater persistence and higher college completion. The two main types of scholarships are merit-based and need-based scholarships.

Merit-based and need-based scholarships. Merit-based scholarships are financial assistance based on academic performance of students that pay for all or a portion of the costs associated with attendance of post-secondary education (Heller & Marin, 2004). Henry and Rubenstein (2002) asserted that merit-based scholarships motivate students to achieve academically in the hope of receiving financial aid for college. In contrast, need-based scholarships are decided by a formula calculated on the expected family contribution to a student's educational expenses to determine the financial need of the student to attend college (Heller, 2004).

Toby (2010) asserted that after the passage of the G.I. Bill, which gave veterans financial resources to attend college after World War II, scholarships began to shift from the traditional merit-based view espoused by Jefferson to financial assistance awarded for non-academic criterion. The G.I. Bill opened the doors of college to veterans and increased college enrollment nationally; at its height, veterans comprised 49% of college enrollment (Toby, 2010). With the establishment of the G.I. Bill, nonacademic criteria for awarding financial assistance were normalized for college, and financial need was the first criterion used (Toby, 2010). Similar to traditional scholarships, these scholarships

were awarded to financially needy students; however, academic performance is not a factor in determining the award (Toby, 2010).

The Higher Education Act of 1965 extended need-based financial assistance to all students for the first time (Patel & Richburg-Hayes, 2012); its goal was to ensure that “all citizens [have] the opportunities for personal advancement provided by higher education” (Wolanin, 2001, p. 4). Other nonacademic criteria used to award financial assistance are testimonials of student’s effort to overcome obstacles, special talents, and community service (Toby, 2010). Academic scholarship programs such as the National Merit Scholarship Program, National Achievement Scholarship Program, and Intel Science Talent Search remain competitive but do not have the same widespread appeal as financial assistance that does not have academic eligibility requirements (Toby, 2010).

Institutional and private financial aid programs award scholarships based on a student’s merit or achievement or the student’s need. Gardner (2005) reported the trend of aid programs to award more merit-based scholarships. With the reduction of need-based aid, families are expected to contribute more toward college costs (Gardner, 2005; Heller, 2003). Heller (2002, 2003) asserted that merit-based scholarships increasingly have been awarded to higher income students likely to attend college without assistance, thus widening the disparities of college affordability between low-income and high-income families. In response to Heller, Longanecker (2002b) asserted that merit-based scholarships promote participation in college-going activities and reward academic achievement for all students regardless of family income.

Longanecker (2002b) further noted there is no evidence the increase in merit-based scholarships has been detrimental to need-based scholarships. Additionally, he

noted the increase in need-based aid that occurred while merit-based aid was gaining popularity (Longanecker, 2006). Merit-based programs such as the Georgia Helping Outstanding Pupils Educationally (HOPE) Scholarship and the Kentucky Education Excellence Scholarship (KEES) have had mixed results. The Georgia HOPE program increased the number of middle-class students enrolled in college by awarding scholarships for high academic achievement (Henry & Rubenstein, 2002; Longanecker, 2002a). However, in his critique of the program, Heller (2002) noted that the Georgia HOPE program increased the gap in college enrollment between students from low-income families and those from higher income families by awarding scholarships to students without a financial need. Kash and Lasley (2009) found that the KEES program funding was regressive: the more scholarships awarded, the greater the strain on the state to fund the scholarships. The scholarship amount was not indexed to inflation, so the effect on college affordability for students diminished as college cost increased.

Even with state and federal aid programs, students and their families are expected to contribute to their education. Families who are not financially capable of paying for college expenses explore the options of private scholarships to fill in the gap left between government aid and institutional aid.

Private scholarship programs. Private scholarships have become the stopgap measure to meet students' financial needs after state, federal, and institutional financial aid have been awarded. Private scholarships are free financial assistance from corporations, nonprofits organizations, community groups, individual, families, or other non-governmental sources. Private scholarship programs are given through private foundation, business, or individuals to a student as a contribution to costs that are not

covered through any other financial aid. This type of assistance contributes positively to the retention and persistence of students (Gansemer-Topf & Schuh, 2005; Gross, Hossler, & Ziskin, 2007).

Although private scholarships contribute to a student's persistence, they do not alleviate all of low-income students' financial concerns. Arzy, Davies, and Harbour (2006) found that even with a full scholarship, recipients felt vulnerable and insecure about finances. LaNasa and Rogers (2009) found that students who received private scholarships reported that the scholarship made higher education feasible and motivated student achievement. However, students have continued financial needs, such as living expenses and transportation, causing them to seek employment or loans that endanger their academic success and persistence.

Even though full scholarships do not alleviate the financial concern for all recipients, they do provide students with access to their preferred college choice. In a study on college choice and engagement of low-income students, Hu (2010) found that the Gates Millennium Scholarship students were more likely to choose a private 4-year college than a public 2-year college. These students were also more likely than students without full scholarships to engage in academic and social activities while enrolled in college.

Financial concerns are likely felt most acutely by undocumented students. Diaz-Strong, Gomez, Luna-Duarte, and Meiners (2011) examined how financial aid policies make it difficult for undocumented students to attend higher education institutions. Because undocumented students do not qualify for federal, state, or some private financial assistance, they pay for their education through family contributions, private

scholarships, or other strategies such as working more hours and taking fewer classes (Diaz-Strong et al., 2011). The financial assistance options for these students are limited. The ability to offer financial support is determined by the governing body of the organization, community group, or corporation that sponsors the private scholarship.

Conceptual Framework

The review of literature on access, persistence, and financial aid suggests a complexity exists to understanding the interplay of these topics. In her study of differences in college enrollment, Perna (2006) recommended the incorporation of social capital measures to “traditional approach to enrollment results in models that better explain the decisions of students to enroll” (p. 51) in post-secondary education. The current study combined social capital theory, which explores resources and practices associated with college access, with persistence theory, which explores factors associated with degree attainment, to provide the conceptual framework for the study.

Social Capital Theory. The ability to use social structure, norms, and networks for personal gain and exchange or accumulate resources comprises the social capital of a person (Coleman, 1988). Coleman (1988) defined social capital as a relationship between people expressed through exchange that facilitates action in three forms: “obligation and expectations; information channels; and social norms” (p. S95). Putnam (1993) defined social capital as the organization of “networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit” (p. 67). Lin (2000) posited that networks need to be mobilized into action or resources previously unattained in order to be considered social capital.

Various scholars have argued that the dichotomous presence or absence model of social capital is detrimental to racial, ethnic, or low-income individuals (Perna, 2000; Portes, 2000; Stanton-Salazar, 1997). Other scholars argued that social capital is present in networks that every group has the potential to tap into such as family, school, and community groups (O'Connor et al., 2010; Rios-Aguilar & Deil-Amen, 2012). The latter argument suggested that the social capital model exists on a continuum rather than as a dichotomy.

The emphasis on creating and sustaining networks with individuals and institutions to improve access to resources is the key to utilizing social capital. The shortage of social networks is a deficiency of the Hispanic community (Perna & Titus, 2005; Wells, 2008), which translates to a deficiency of social capital such as parent college education, expectations for college, friends who plan to attend college, high school quality, parental involvement, test preparation tools used, and family resources (Wells, 2008). Various scholars found that even through the limited social capital networks, Hispanic college students receive information to gain entry to college but receive little additional information through the networks to assist with the selection of major, career planning, financial aid, or post-graduate opportunities (Gonzalez, Stoner, & Jovel, 2003; Holland, 2010; O'Connor et al., 2010; Perna & Titus, 2005; Rios-Aguilar & Deil-Amen, 2012; Sandefur, Meier, & Campbell, 2004; Stanton-Salazar & Dornbusch, 1995). This suggests that the networks formed to assist Hispanic students in gaining access to college do not continue after the student is enrolled in college, and new networks are not formed to assist with future planning.

Alfred and Nanton (2009) stated that the success of college transition, persistence, and completion depend on the student's ability to create, leverage, and manage social networks. This suggests that the student is not only a recipient of social networks but also is an active participant in the formation and mobilization of the networks. Scholars have attributed a strong social network to a sense of belonging in college, student well-being, and academic achievement, all of which contribute to the persistence of the student (Bassani, 2007; Israel, Beaulieu, & Hartless, 2001; Nunez, 2009; Strayhorn, 2010).

Persistence Theory. Retention is the student's continual enrollment in the same college, while persistence is the student's continual enrollment in college, regardless of the institution. Tinto (1993) formulated the Student Integration Model to explain the roots for individual departure from college. According to Tinto (1993), factors affecting student attrition include external obligations, finances, and lack of involvement. One factor in persistence theory is the student's sense of belonging. Hurtado and Carter (1997), Nunez (2009), and Strayhorn (2008) asserted that students with a deeper sense of belonging at the college continue enrollment in the college. In addition, Hurtado and Carter (1997) stated that membership in religious and social groups in college had a positive effect on sense of belonging, while racial tensions, even if only perceived, have a negative effect. Students who perform well academically and socialize with diverse populations reported a higher sense of belonging (Strayhorn, 2008). Nunez (2009) found that second-generation immigrant status Hispanic students have lower sense of belonging than first or third generation Hispanic students.

Additionally, Engstrom and Tinto (2008) asserted that support for students made a difference in persistence and students in learning communities persist more. The aspects

of learning communities that students attributed to their success are a safe place to learn, a supportive place to learn, a sense of belonging in college, and making connections (Engstrom & Tinto, 2008). The learning communities provided the social networks that helped the students to persist.

However, Zurita (2005) found that students who persisted through graduation and those who stopped out described similarities in home environments, a lack of social integration at the college, and feelings of academic under-preparedness. This suggests there are other contributing factors to non-persistence. Cabrera, Castaneda, Nora, and Hengstler (1992) reported that Tinto's theory neglects "the role of the external factors in shaping perceptions, commitments, and preference" (p. 144). The researchers advocated that including more information about the interplay of institutional, personal, and external factors can aid in better understanding the factors of persistence (Cabrera et al., 1992).

Summary

In this chapter, the small but growing literature of (a) Hispanic access to higher education; (b) persistence of Hispanics in higher education; (c) financial assistance available for higher education; and (d) the theoretical frameworks for the study indicate the lack of study of Midwest Hispanic college students and their experiences. With an understanding of the current research of Hispanic college students, the current study could contribute to the literature of access and persistence of Hispanic students in higher education. The research methodology, including the research design, data collection procedures, and method of data analysis, are presented in the next chapter.

Chapter Three

Methods

The purpose of this study was to determine the impact of the GKC-HDFSP on the access and persistence of Hispanic students in post-secondary institutions. The study was conducted to examine the journey of select Hispanic students through their college experiences in order to discover the scholarship's impact on the students' access to and persistence in higher education. This chapter includes a discussion of the research method used for the current study including the research design, data collection procedures, and method of data analysis. The chapter also includes the researcher's role and limitations of the study as a way to impede any misinterpretation of the findings.

Research Design

A qualitative research design was deemed the most appropriate method to address the purpose of the study and to reflect the researcher's social constructivist worldview. Social constructivists operate from the belief that "individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work" (Creswell, 2014, p. 8) by creating meaning from their experiences. The researcher with this worldview interprets the experience and setting of the participant through personal interactions. Qualitative research "emphasizes understanding by closely examining people's words, actions, and record" (Lunenburg & Irby, 2008, p. 89) for patterns and themes in order to explore the "meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem" (Creswell, 2007, p. 37). Qualitative research methods are used when an issue needs to be explored. Since the GKC-HDFSP's impact of the scholarship on the recipients has not been studied, a qualitative research

method provided an opportunity to discover the recipients' perceptions of the scholarship's impact on their education.

Population and Sample

The population for the current study consisted of those individuals who received the GKC-HDFSP scholarship. Between 1984 and 2014, the GKC-HDFSP awarded 3,100 scholarships (Hispanic Development Fund, 2014, para. 1). The recipients have the opportunity to apply for the scholarship each year of their post-secondary education. Some recipients received the scholarship for multiple years, while others received the scholarship for one year of study. The GKC-HDFSP initiated an effort to locate and survey past recipients in the summer of 2012 (see Appendix A). A representative sample was selected from the recipients who completed the 2012 GKC-HDFSP survey to participate in interviews.

Sampling Procedures

Participants were selected based on their completion of the 2012 survey. Initially, a simple random sample of 24 was selected. Potential participants were invited to participate by email. The initial invitation resulted in eight interviews. Another random sampling from those who completed the survey resulted in an additional 24 invitations. Participants responding positively to the invitation were interviewed to be part of the study, totaling 12 recipients. Two potential participants were not included because they no longer lived in the Kansas City area. One person declined to participate in the study. The remaining did not respond to the invitation. The following section provides a description of each participant interviewed. Pseudonyms have been used to protect the identities of the participants.

Alberto attended a large 4-year private selective research institution outside of the Kansas City region for one year. He transferred to small 4-year selective institution in Kansas City. Alberto received the scholarship for three years. He has obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree.

Beatriz attended a small 4-year private selective institution in the Kansas City region for one year. She has taken a few classes at a community college since then. Beatriz received the scholarship for one year.

Cristobal attended a large 4-year public research institution in the Kansas City region. He received a Bachelor's degree in four years from the institution. He received the scholarship each year of undergraduate education. Cristobal went to graduate school at a large, public research institution in the Kansas City area, receiving the Juris Doctorate. He received the scholarship for two years of his graduate education.

Diego attended a small 4-year private selective institution in the Kansas City region for one year. He then transferred to a community college for one year. Diego attended a small private for-profit institution for one year. He transferred back to the original institution to complete his bachelor's degree. Diego received the scholarship for the first two years of undergraduate education. He attended a large public institution outside of the Kansas City area for graduate school where he obtained a master's degree.

Estella attended a small 4-year private selective institution in the Kansas City region for four years to receive a bachelor's degree. She received the scholarship for the first year of study.

Felipe attended a very small private associate's degree dominant institution in the Kansas City area for one year. He transferred to a very large public community college

to attend classes part-time. He received the scholarship for one year at the community college. Felipe received an associate's degree after six years of study. At the time of the interview, Felipe was about to begin a program toward a bachelor's degree at a large public research institution and was receiving the scholarship.

Gabriella attended a small 4-year private institution outside of the Kansas City region for one year. She transferred to a very large, public community college district outside of Kansas City area for two years as a part-time student. Gabriella returned to the Kansas City area and attended a public community college for one year before transferring to a small 4-year private selective institution. She received a bachelor's degree. Gabriella attended graduate school at a large public research institution where she obtained a Master's in Social Work. She received the scholarship during the last year of the bachelor's program and the two years of her master's program.

Hector attended a public community college in the Kansas City region for five semesters to receive an associate's degree. He transferred to large public research institution outside of the Kansas City region to complete his bachelor's degree. He received the scholarship for the last three semesters of his education.

Isabel attends a large public 4-year research institution in the Kansas City region. At the time of the interview, Isabel had received the scholarship for four years and was in her fifth year of study.

Juana attended a small private 4-year institution in the Kansas City region for four years to receive a bachelor's degree. She received the scholarship for the first two years. She attended graduate school at the same institution where she received a master's degree.

Luis attended a large 4-year private research institution outside of the Kansas City region to receive a bachelor's degree. He received the scholarship for the last year of undergraduate education.

Mario attended a large public community college in the Kansas City region after service in the military. He earned an associate's degree after six years of study. He received the scholarship for one year.

Instrumentation

In the current study, interviews and document reviews were utilized to collect data from the recipients. Each study participant completed the 2012 GKC-HDFSP survey and was interviewed to recall their college experience. Additionally, the original application to the scholarship program was utilized.

Interview. The primary data source in the current study was the semi-structured interview. Interviews allowed participants to recall and reflect on their college-going experience. As Seidman (1998) noted, "At the root of in-depth interviewing is an interest in understanding the experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience" (p. 3). For the current study, the participants were asked the same set of questions; however, clarification or additional information was requested as needed.

The interviews were guided by the interview protocol (see Appendix B) developed by Lane (2009) in his research that explored the impact of a private scholarship on the access, persistence, retention, and success of African American and Hispanic students. The questions were selected because they offered the study participants an opportunity to share their background, perspectives on the GKC-HDFSP, and college experiences. Although participants' responses were filtered through the lens

of time and experience, the face-to-face interviews allowed for interaction with the participants for clarification and additional information.

As Seidman (1998) noted, interviews are like relationships that need to be developed. Rubin and Rubin (2005) suggested the interview should begin with a casual conversation in order to put the interviewee at ease. Once rapport is established, the interview can begin using the interview protocol. Seidman (1998) warned interviewers to “use an interview guide cautiously” (p. 76) so that the interview is not manipulated by the guide and those topics important to the participant are not neglected. Study participants were encouraged to explore subjects important to them regarding the college-going experience. Bogdan and Biklen (2003) suggested that the most important rule for an interviewer is to listen carefully, as listening contributes to establishing rapport between the interviewer and participant. Fontana and Frey (2005) described the empathetic interviewing approach as not “merely a ‘method of friendship’; it is a method of morality because it attempts to restore the sacredness of humans before addressing any theoretical or methodological concerns” (p. 697). Rubin and Rubin (2005) suggested that the closing of the interview maintain the empathetic tone and advised interviewers to continue to listen for themes emerging in the closing conversation. The interview stages promote a conversation to occur. While the conversation depends on the interviewer’s ability to listen and ask questions and the participant’s ability to disclose, document analysis provides less uncertainty in obtaining information.

Document analysis. The second data source for the current study was the use of document analysis. Document analysis complements interviewing during the data collection process (Merriam, 2001). Bogdan and Biklen (2003) cautioned researchers of

the dependence on the availability of documents for analysis. The current study, however, utilized documents from the GKC-HDFSP for analysis, thus ensuring the availability of documents for each participant. The GKC-HDFSP and recipients provided the documents utilized in the study. The documents analyzed included responses to the survey created by the GKC-HDFSP in summer 2012 and information on the students' applications for the scholarship.

Two elements comprised the scholarship application: the form and the essay. Each element was reviewed and analyzed. To apply for the scholarship, students completed an application form with basic demographic information: name, school, GPA, family income, and major. Each applicant also submitted an essay. The question to be addressed in the essay changed each year; however, the theme remained consistent regarding how a post-secondary education would affect the life of the applicant.

Advantages of using document analysis in the data collection include providing a point in time look at the "language and words of the participants" (Creswell, 2014, p. 191), which is not reliant on the participant's ability to recall past events, feelings, and perceptions. Using document analysis with the use of interviews provides multiple sources of data that add to the reliability and validity of the findings from the current study.

Reliability and validity. Rubin and Rubin (2005) asserted that reliability and validity of qualitative research judged by "its transparency, consistency-coherence, and communicability" (p. 85) in order to maintain the trustworthiness of the data. Throughout the study, the accuracy of the transcripts and the researcher's notes were checked in order to maintain the reliability of evidence. Stake (1995) suggested

researchers prepare a written transcript of the interview to be reviewed for accuracy and stylistic improvements from the interviewee. Each interviewee had the opportunity to review the transcription of the interview to ensure accuracy and reliability. During the coding process, checks were incorporated to assure that there was not a drift in the application of codes by comparing data with the codes through researcher notes with each transcript.

Validity in qualitative research involves establishing credibility in the description and explanation of the interpretation of the findings (Janesick, 2003). As recommended by scholars of qualitative research, several strategies were employed to ensure validity of findings (Creswell, 2014; Janesick, 2003; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1998). The first strategy taken was member checks. Interviewees were given the opportunity to review the descriptions and themes for accuracy (Creswell, 2014). A second strategy used was that of peer review, in which a colleague examined transcriptions, coding, data analysis, and findings as they emerged and offered comments and questions about the interpretation to enhance the overall validity of the study (Creswell, 2014; Merriam, 1998).

Because the intent of qualitative research is to explore particular descriptions and themes developed in context of a specific geographic area (Creswell, 2014), the generalizability of the findings is limited. However, through careful documentation of the procedures and protocols, this study could be replicated in another region or for another scholarship. Even with the checks in place to ensure reliability of evidence and coding and validity of findings, Creswell (2014) asserted the researcher brings bias to the study so good qualitative research should contain comments by the researcher that

acknowledges this bias. Through reflection and self-disclosure of the biases and beliefs held by the researcher, the credibility and trustworthiness of the research is improved (Lunenburg & Irby, 2008). The researcher's perspective of this study is described to allow the reader to understand the researcher's background and position.

Researcher's Perspective

The researcher is the key instrument in a qualitative study (Creswell, 2007), which means it is imperative to disclose this researcher's prejudices, biases, and positions in order to maintain the integrity of the research. I acknowledge the inherent biases brought to the study due to my position as researcher, past and present experiences with post-secondary education, past experience with the GKC-HDFSP, and my common ethnicity with the Hispanic participants involved in this study. After spending 12 years in the nonprofit sector, I have transitioned into post-secondary administration within the academic affairs division. As a recruiter and advisor to high school students applying for scholarships, I was introduced to the GKC-HDFSP. These experiences and interactions along with my ethnicity could contribute to potential biases on my part. It is my intent to maintain credibility and integrity throughout the study as I provide the reader with an interpretation during data collection, data analysis, and reporting of the results.

Data Collection Procedures

Prior to data collection, a Proposal for Research was submitted to the Baker University Office of Institutional Research (see Appendix C). In preparation for data collection, the researcher contacted Dr. Austin Lane to request permission to use the interview protocol employed in his study. Lane granted permission via email (see Appendix D) to use and modify the interview protocol from his study on the impact of a

private scholarship on the access, persistence, retention, and success of African American and Hispanic students. The researcher also met with the executive director of the GKC-HDFSP to discuss the data already obtained by the scholarship program.

As discussed in the sampling procedures section, participants were selected from the recipients who had completed the 2012 GKC-HDFSP survey. The survey (see Appendix A) was administered through Google Docs surveys to each of the recipients using current email lists and social media contacts. In addition to the GKC-HDFSP contacts, recipients were asked to share the survey link with other recipients in a snowball fashion. Ten percent ($n = 239$) of the scholarship recipients responded to the survey. The GKC-HDFSP granted permission for the utilization of this data.

Once the Baker University Office of Institutional Research granted approval (see Appendix E) to conduct the research, an invitation to participate in the study was sent from the administrator of the GKC-HDFSP and the researcher (see Appendix F). Forty-five invitations were sent to potential study participants. Fifteen individuals responded to the invitation, one declined to be interviewed, two were no longer living in the area, and 12 were interviewed. After the participant expressed interest in the study, an interview was scheduled and a consent form was emailed to the participant (see Appendix G). The consent form was signed and returned prior to the interview. The interviews were held in public places, conveniently located for the participants.

The individual interviews conducted were approximately 45 minutes long. The semi-structured interview was based on the protocol Lane (2009) designed for his study. The structured open-ended questions allowed students to provide details of their college-going experiences and perceptions of the scholarship. However, participants were

encouraged to speak freely of their experiences. To maintain the recording of data, each interview was digitally recorded and notes were taken during the interview. The recording and researcher notes were crucial to document analysis. Merriam (1998) noted the importance of being open and sensitive to the data during the data collection. Upon conclusion of the face-to-face interviews, thank you notes (see Appendix H), consent forms, and transcripts of the interview were sent to all participants. The participants were asked to review the interview transcript for accuracy.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

The wealth of data collected and the range of data sources create a challenge for researchers using qualitative research methodology (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 2001; Stake, 1995). The challenge is to bring all of the data together to provide a common understanding. To begin the process, the recordings were transcribed into text files. The transcripts were reviewed for accuracy by the participants. Next, the researcher read the interview transcripts thoroughly, highlighting statements that provided an understanding of the access and persistence issues of the participant's college experience. The survey responses and scholarship applications were similarly analyzed and were compared to the interview transcripts to determine alignment to the interview data. Participant responses were listed in a table database to illustrate the commonalities or inconsistencies.

Analysis is a matter of giving meaning to data (Stake, 1995). Therefore, some analysis may take place in conjunction to the data collection. There are two levels to coding data: identification about the data and interpretation constructs related to analysis (Merriam, 2001). Notes, comments, and observations that seemed interesting, potentially relevant, or important to the study were kept as analysis was performed (Merriam, 2001).

The first coding process aided in the generation of categories and emerging themes for that piece of evidence. Coding provided a common designation for the researcher to use. During the first coding process, each interview and document was analyzed without relation to the other interviews or documents. The specific vocabulary used, the frequency of repeated nouns or phrases, and the common description of experiences identified concepts for coding (Rubin & Rubin, 2005).

The next stage of coding, the explanatory schema, supports the interpretation and generalization of the data. This stage connects each individual participant's data through concepts and interpretation (Foss & Waters, 2007). This method of analysis allows for construction of themes and the modification of categories. Data can be condensed into a manageable format and logical links can be created between the study's research questions and collected data through the inductive data analysis. Emerging themes were described using data from multiple perspectives of the participants. After categorizing and analyzing the data using this method, the researcher shared the information with the peer reviewer. The peer reviewer examined the interview transcripts and researcher codes, asked questions, and checked for accuracy. Afterward, the researcher organized the data and presented the findings in text, table, and figure forms in a clear and understandable way for potential readers (Creswell, 2014; Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Excerpts from the interviews were included to provide evidence for the themes and to accurately and vividly describe the participant's experience.

Limitations

According to Lunenburg and Irby (2008), limitations are "factors that may have an effect on the interpretation of the findings" (p. 133) that fall outside of the control of

the researcher. The study was limited by its dependence on the forthcoming responses of the participants. A rapport with the participants is needed to encourage honest responses. Even with this acknowledgement, the participant may not be willing to respond to each interview question. Just as crucial to the study as the participants' willingness to respond truthfully is the participants' ability to recall their experiences. The amount of time lapse from college to the present can influence the memory of the student's experience, especially for those who received the scholarship in the first decade of the program.

Summary

Utilizing a qualitative approach, the current study was an attempt to determine the impact of the GKC-HDFSP on the access and persistence of Hispanic students in post-secondary education. Purposeful sampling and representative criteria resulted in interview participants. The use of document analysis and interviewing offered a wealth of evidence to analyze. The use of member checks and external audits enhanced the validity of the study's data. Inductive data analysis led to emerging themes. The results of the data analysis and findings of the study are discussed in chapter four.

Chapter Four

Results

The purpose of this study was to determine the impact of the GKC-HDFSP on access to post-secondary education and persistence in college for its recipients. The experiences of 12 past or current recipients of the scholarship were assessed through interviews and responses to the 2012 GKC-HDFSP survey. In this chapter, themes that arose from the participants' responses are described and connected to the conceptual framework for the study.

Descriptive Statistics

Data was collected from 12 past ($n = 10$) and current ($n = 2$) recipients of the scholarship who shared their thoughts and perceptions of how the scholarship impacted their access to and persistence through college. Female participants ($n = 5$) comprised 42% of the sample. Table 3 illustrates the family background for each of the participants. Seventy-five percent ($n = 9$) of the sample were U.S. citizens. Forty-two percent ($n = 5$) of the sample had at least one parent attend some college. Only two participants had one parent complete college.

Table 3

Participants' Family Background

Participant	Residency Status	Father's Education Level	Mother's Education Level
Alberto	U.S. citizen	Some college	Completed high school
Beatriz	U.S. citizen	Some college	Completed middle school
Cristobal	U.S. citizen	Some elementary school	Completed high school
Diego	U.S. citizen	Some elementary school	Some high school
Estella	U.S. citizen	College degree	Some college
Felipe	No valid immigration documents	No formal education	Some elementary school
Gabriella	U.S. citizen	Some college	Some college
Hector	U.S. citizen	Some elementary school	Completed high school
Isabel	U.S. citizen	Unknown	Some middle school
Juana	Permanent resident	Completed elementary school	Completed elementary school
Luis	Permanent resident	College degree	Some college
Mario	U.S. citizen	Some elementary school	Completed elementary school

Table 4 displays the educational background of each participant, school type, and educational level achieved. Eight participants attended a public high school. Half of the participants ($n = 6$) attended a high school in the urban core of the city. Three participants attended more than one college during their undergraduate education. Two participants were enrolled in college during the study.

Table 4

Participants' Educational Background

Participant	High School Graduation Year	High School Type	College Type(s)
Alberto	1994	Private, urban high school	Private, 4-year college
Beatriz	1993	Private, suburban high school	Private, 4-year college
Cristobal	2001	Public, urban high school	Public 4-year college
Diego	1999	Public, urban high school	Private, 4-year college; Community college; For-profit college
Estella	2003	Private, suburban high school	Private, 4-year college
Felipe	2007	Public, suburban high school	Private junior college, Community college; Public, 4-year college
Gabriella	2003	Private, suburban high school	Private, 4-year college; Community college
Hector	2009	Public, urban high school	Public, 4-year college
Isabel	2010	Public, urban high school	Public, 4-year college
Juana	1995	Public, suburban high school	Private, 4-year college
Luis	2009	Public, suburban high school	Private, 4-year college
Mario	1991	Public, urban high school	Community college

The participants represented nearly 20 years of GKC-HDFSP recipients. Through analysis of interview and documents, common themes emerged from the diverse group.

Emerging Themes

Social capital theory and persistence theory formed the framework the study.

Five themes arose within this framework to address the research questions of the study:

(a) deficiency of college-going information; (b) inability to afford college; (c) encouragement from others; (d) sense of belonging; and (e) internal motivation.

Deficiency of college-going information. The ways in which participants learned of college opportunities and financial aid opportunities varied. Participants spoke of the ways they learned about college and financial aid during the interviews and in the responses to the survey. Participants reported two contributing agents to their college information: the high school counselors and community-based programs. Additionally, participants reported the ways in which the information contributed to their college choice: understanding the process and the next generation of students.

High school counselors. Just over half of the study recipients ($n = 7$) reported ways in which the high school counselors discouraged their college preparation or limited their college options. Five participants reported feeling they had to initiate the college conversation with the high school counselor. Diego reported,

As far as college access and scholarships and applying for schools, I mean, we had our counselor at school, and he was good, but I had to make the effort to see him. He wasn't the one to see us. When we were in the office he was good, but he wasn't always great at pushing the kids that needed that extra push. And I kind of did back then.

Three participants reported that their high school counselor dissuaded their initial college hopes. Gabriella hoped to go out of state to college; however, the advice she received from the high school counselor was to stay in state. She found herself conducting her own research:

A lot of it was research on my own and also my sister. She chose to go out of state so she gave me a lot of resources, a lot of help, personal information that she did. A lot of it was on a whim deciding to leave Kansas City. A lot of my friends were staying local and I decided that I wanted something new. I did some research on, and I thought I wanted a Catholic university. I did end up at a Catholic university and it was incredibly expensive. And a lot of the assistance that existed focused around local universities and not so much out of state. I was almost discouraged to do the out of state thing from my academic advisor.

Cristobal reported that his high school counselor steered him toward a community college:

My counselors at the school that I went to never sat me down to go through the FAFSA. In fact, many of them directed me to go to a community college for my first few years because my grade point average for a while was in like the 2s because it was a very difficult school.

Finally, I got good enough grades.

Estella had a positive experience with her high school counselor:

I was there, they were really great. I would go to them to make sure I was on track to get to go to school. To find a university, to determine what

school I wanted to go to. Help me figure out if I was looking for a big school or small school. I knew that I liked the intimacy in having a small student to teacher/faculty ratio. I wanted to make sure that I looked for something like that.

Luis credited his high school counselor for encouraging him to apply to a school he did not consider to be attainable:

I had assumed that anything that was further away was more expensive, too expensive for me. So one day my high school counselor approached me and said, “You should think about applying to these school because they offer better, or pretty decent, financial aid.” So I did and it turned out that some of them do. That’s how I chose it.

Community-based programs. Ten participants spoke of participation in co-curricular, community-based high school programs that introduced college opportunities to them. Mario cited the community-based program as the only college preparation available at his high school: “I was able to visit a few colleges through (community-based) program. That was the only college support we had at (my high school) at that time.” Alberto participated in a national college preparation program that “prepped me on the college admission process: writing, looking at extracurricular, looking at involvements, selling yourself to the college. That was a good program.”

Figure 2 shows how influential the community-based programs were to the participants. Seven participants were active in the LULAC National Educational Service Center/Hispanic Leadership Opportunity Program (LNEHC/HLOP), a community-based leadership development and educational enrichment program.

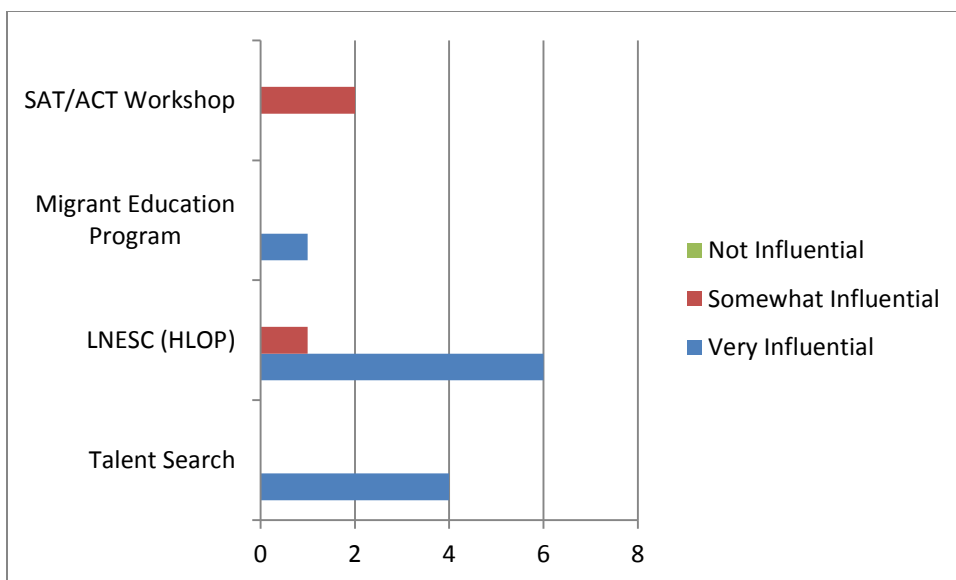


Figure 2. How community-based programs influenced college preparation. This figure illustrates participants' responses to the 2012 GKC-HDFSP survey question "Did you participate in any of the following programs? If so, how influential were the following high school outreach programs in your decision to apply to and attend college?"

However, even after participating in those programs, seven participants reported feeling unknowledgeable about the college going process. Juana summed up her experience:

I went through the whole process not really understanding what FAFSA was or things like that. Because my parents didn't know anything and it was just my counselors and mentors that I would go to and ask them...I wasn't sure what I needed to do so I just did what people told me to do.

College choice. Each of the participants answered questions regarding the process they went through to determine which college they would attend. Figure 3 illustrates the responses participants gave when asked to rank the importance of each factor listed to selecting a college.

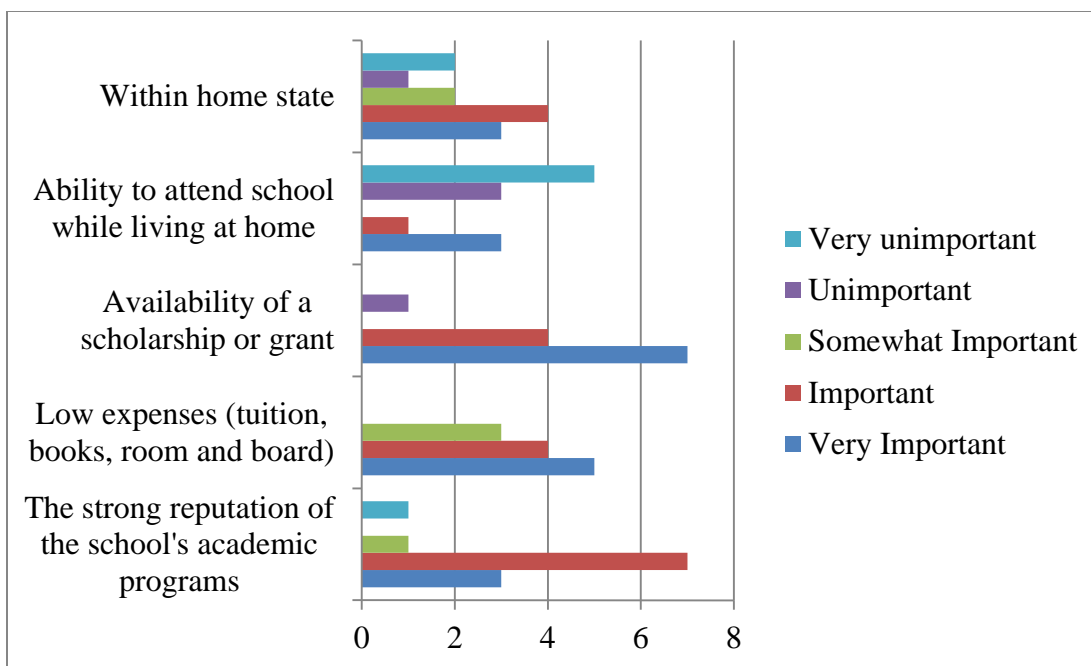


Figure 3. Factors in selecting a college. This figure documents participants' responses to the 2012 GKC-HDFSP survey question "How important were the following factors in deciding which college to attend?"

As demonstrated in Figure 3, nine participants spoke of the importance of affordability to the college decision-making process. Juana stated,

I remember when I got the offer letters from [the colleges I applied to] even though [my college's tuition] was more money, they gave me the most financial aid. So it came down to me going there because I was going to get more financial aid.

Luis spoke about his surprise at which college offered the best financial aid package:

The biggest factor was money and the financial aid. They offered the best financial aid package out of all of the universities that I had applied.

'Cause I really didn't know anything about colleges, college rankings. I

had planned to go very local until my... I had assumed that anything that was further away was more expensive, too expensive for me.

Financial aid was just one factor that participants mentioned. Academic program of study was mentioned by three respondents. Estella commented, "I think more than anything was the type of program and what I was looking to do career-wise. I wanted to get my bachelor's more than anything." Hector looked at the program of study in relation to his future career goals:

My plans when I graduated from high school was to major in entrepreneurship because they had an entrepreneurship program there. But then I realized how much college actually cost and so I realized it would probably be better to start at a community college where the cost was so much lower. And then I realized that entrepreneurship probably wouldn't be the best major because I figured I would be graduated with a hefty size debt. So I was thinking about it from like, if I was a lender, I wouldn't want to loan someone who already had this debt and wants to tack on more debt for some business that may or may not succeed. So I figured it would be best to major in an actual profession, like accounting or something like that where I could work for like 15, 20, 25 years and then save my money that way and then start my business, if I wanted to when I'm like 40 or 45 years old. I knew I was going to major in accounting and I noticed that [my college] had a good accounting program and that I was eligible for other scholarships regardless of the Hispanic Scholarship Fund.

Another factor in the college decision-making process for two of the participants was the proximity to work. Felipe decided to transfer to a community college because:

After being there a semester, I met some other students who had heard from friends that they transferred to (my community college) and that was a better campus for me because I work like 5 minutes away from the campus.

Understanding the process. Nine participants reported feeling that they lacked the knowledge to make informed decisions about financial aid or academic courses. The participants often stated that “I didn’t understand” or “I didn’t know” throughout the interview. Participants were most confused by financial aid. Overall, 10 participants knew to apply for financial aid through the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). However, eight expressed confusion over what the FAFSA did. Juana stated,

I went through the whole process not really understanding what FAFSA was or things like that. Because my parents didn’t know anything and it was just my counselors and mentors that I would go to and ask them. I was very unfamiliar with the terminology so even knowing what “match” meant was a new concept and I didn’t really understand it. It was the financial aid advisor who told me I had to renew the FAFSA every year because I didn’t know.

Cristobal recalled not applying for FAFSA for his first year of college because the process eluded him: “As far as preparation, I did not fill out the FAFSA my freshman year of college because I didn’t know how. I didn’t know exactly what it was.” Even

with resources available, Diego expressed confusion by the process and recalled turning down a full tuition scholarship:

I was still pretty dumb and naïve as far as college expenses and the whole college experience. I know I had a lot of help and resources...but I don't think I really understood until I got there. And if you haven't had that or had that in your family, you don't really quite get it. I mean, I had financial aid, I had some scholarships, I had the Pell Grant and the federal grants through FAFSA, so I knew I would have some of it cover. But (college) is expensive and I didn't get a full scholarship. I was going up to the college one day. You know, I had already been accepted and had my classes already but school hadn't started. I was going up to the financial aid office to figure out the financial aid situation. I walk in, and I'm by myself and trying to figure things out. I know I looked like a lost dog, and this guy says "Hey, do you play soccer?" That was the first thing he says to me and I'm like, "Huh? Well, yeah." And in my head I'm thinking "Yeah, I've played soccer before. I played for fun with my brothers." And he's like, "Are you going to go to school here?" And I'm like "Yeah," and he says "I want you to play on our soccer team. We're going to give you a full ride scholarship if you play on our soccer team." And I'm just looking at him like he is a nut, and he says, "I'd love for you to come play on our soccer team. You look like you can play soccer and I want you to come play for us." I say to him "I play for fun. I never played in high school." And he says, "But you look like a soccer player." And I say "I

don't think so. I appreciate it but no." So I turned down a full ride to [my college] to play soccer.

The lack of understanding caused five participants to miss the opportunity for additional financial aid. Isabel recalled, "I remember my second year, no one told me you had to have a certain GPA to keep these [institutional] scholarship. I think losing that initial scholarship really opened my eyes." Felipe talked about losing a full tuition scholarship and admittance to a university when he revealed his immigration status: "I did receive a full scholarship from [university] for their pre-law program, but I was rejected once I went to campus and had to give my information. They asked for information to prove that I'm documented and I said I can't. I got rejected."

Five participants also spoke of their confusion when dealing with academic processes of dropping a course and choosing a major. Juana recounted a time when she struggled academically:

There was a class that I had taken and the professor ended up having cancer so we only took one exam and I didn't do very well, so I flunked that class. I didn't know that you could withdraw a class so it wouldn't reflect in your GPA.

The confusion of the participants extended to their families. The students felt the support of the family even when the family didn't understand the college experience. Mario recalled:

Neither one of my parents were college educated so it was...they were proud that I was going but...I was the first one on both sides of my family,

my mom and dad didn't graduate from high school. The support wasn't because they didn't want to, they didn't know how.

Isabel spoke of the frustration she felt because of her family did not understand the college experience:

Being first generation is really hard 'cause sometimes I would ask my mom, "What should I do about this class? Or what do you think I should take?", and she would be like, "You know, just do what you think is right. You are the one who knows yourself the best. I can't tell you." And it got really frustrating. So I just stopped asking her for class advice eventually. They are really good about supporting my decisions.

Next generation. Five participants addressed their desire to work with future recipients of the GKC-HDFSP to share their experiences as examples. The participants expressed their responsibility to ensure others know about the opportunity of the scholarship. Gabriella described how she has worked with future students:

So any kids that would come my way that are Hispanic, I would always refer them to that and let them know about that [the scholarship] and kind of review their essays and things like that. So I think it is cyclical as far as me receiving that support but then giving that support back. It all works to help.

Three participants reflected on their experience with community-based programs that led to college information and lamented the current lack of high school opportunities. Diego recalled the significant impact community-based programs had on his college journey and wished current students experienced the same:

I see that now, where students lack that, they are missing that piece and you can see that it is challenging for them. You can't help but think that if they had a group like HLOP that they were a part of, I think there's no telling the influence that might have on them. I think all of that was hugely important to my success at the college level. I struggled at the college level, it wasn't easy for me.

Inability to afford college. A second theme that emerged from the interviews and the survey was the inability to afford college. Table 5 documents the family size and income at the time of each of the participants applied for the scholarship. Each of the participants discussed the expectation that they would pay for all college costs. Participants reported their financial need, their employment during college, the financial benefits of the GKC-HDFSP, and other financial assistance.

Table 5

Participants' Family Size and Income

Participant	Family Size	Family Income
Alberto	5	\$80,001 to \$100,000
Beatriz	5	\$80,001 to \$100,000
Cristobal	3	\$20,000 to \$40,000
Diego	8	\$20,000 to \$40,000
Estella	6	\$80,001 to \$100,000
Felipe	5	Less than \$20,000
Gracia	2	Less than \$20,000
Hector	2	\$20,000 to \$40,000
Isabel	4	\$40,001 to \$60,000
Juana	7	Less than \$20,000
Luis	7	\$60,001 to \$80,000
Mario	4	Less than \$20,000

Financial need. Because each of the participants expected to pay for all of their college costs, they looked for many ways to make college possible. Gabriella stated, “My parents put me through private school from kindergarten through high school so they pretty much said that college was my responsibility. So knowing that, I understood, and I did what I could to apply for scholarships and grants.” Other participants ($n = 4$) reported that they worked during high school and summers to save money for college. Cristobal said, “I had saved enough money and I applied for the scholarship. By that time, I knew I was going to (my college) and had the first year covered.”

Seven participants stated that their family provided limited financial support in terms of incidentals or being able to live at home to save the costs of living expenses. Diego counted living expenses as his family’s contribution to his college education. He stated, “I didn’t have to pay living expenses because I lived at home. So that was their way of helping, they didn’t charge me rent, although I paid them something when I worked but they weren’t asking me for anything.” Hector reported,

My mom, she’d give me money like \$60 every now and then but she didn’t have any money to pay to assist me that way [tuition]. I mean I didn’t have a car until my last semester at [my college], so in terms of gas and things like that she helped. But in terms of actually paying for the tuition, books, and things like that no, I didn’t really receive any assistance at all.

Isabel also reported that her mother would be able to assist with incidentals should the need arise:

I knew I was going to qualify for a lot of FAFSA. I had applied to a couple of other scholarships but I don't remember receiving them. I know my mom had saved up some money for emergency uses only, not for tuition.

In addition to applying for scholarships, grants, and loans, three participants found alternative means to handle college expenses. Felipe relayed the method that worked for him to pay for college courses:

I definitely had the dreams of going to college but I had no idea how I was going to be paying the fees. And they were really expensive fees because I'm out of state tuition. But what I did, and what worked for me, was I was working full time and what I would do was I would take at least one or two classes per semester. That's way a two-year program turned into a six-year program because I would take the minimum and I would pay that with my credit card and I would work the entire semester just to pay that credit card. To have it empty, to be able to have it for the next semester.

Luis recalled selling personal items to be able to buy books each semester:

I found myself, in order to buy books for next quarter, I found myself, selling my books from previous quarters or I sold, I collect coins, quarters and whatnot, so I would sell some of those. I actually don't care about the quarters as much but the books, I really, really care about the books because I'm a nerd, I guess and it really hurt me to have to sell those books back just to be able to buy the new books for my classes. There were things like you could get supplementary materials for each class that

helps you basically the answer guide to the book or whatnot, and I wasn't able to afford those because it was an additional \$80. So you know, all of those things kind of add up because you know that you are at a disadvantage from the get go.

After high school, Mario enlisted in the United States Army. This enabled him to utilize the G.I. Bill to assist him to pay for college:

I had the GI Bill and other scholarships that I could apply for and out of pocket fees. I had a real strict work schedule when I came back. I was a full time nontraditional student but it did help me out financially as I was working part time.

Three participants reported concerns about paying for college because of their immigration status. The participants noted that their options were limited until they were able to obtain documented status. Luis stated that this concern affected which colleges he applied to:

At the time, I was undocumented and so I knew that I wasn't potentially... I was working on getting my papers, but potentially, I wasn't going to get them in time to apply for FAFSA and all of that stuff. So I had to make sure that I applied to the college, I guess, with the biggest endowment or a college that had a program to help students in my situation. I did end up getting my papers at the very last minute. It was a like a month before FAFSA was due for [college]. So I got very lucky in that regard. Either way I would have been covered because [college] has the endowment, the funds to help students who are undocumented.

Employment during college. Eleven participants reported working during college. Four participants reported working at least 40 hours per week during their college experience. Two reported taking part-time classes in order to maintain the work schedule. Mario reported the need to decrease the number of class hours in order to successfully complete courses:

At the beginning, I would have 12 hours then come back down to 6 hours or 3 hours. I think I did full time one time and it was too much as far as working full time and school full time. I wasn't able to do full time.

Felipe reported that the scholarship allowed him to increase the number of courses he could take in a semester. He said, "Those years that I had the scholarship I was going full time to school and working full time. In fact, last semester I took five classes and worked 40 hours. It was pretty hard." Alberto began working for his university in order to take advantage of the employee benefit program:

I started to work for the college and I could get class paid for, being an employee of the university. That helped me so much because now I could take summer classes and get done faster and at the same time they are free. It was kind of a nice deal.

Four participants reported working in order to pay for incidentals and living expenses, not tuition costs. Hector reported getting a part time job, "mainly for just outside expenses like living expenses. I had to get a job to support any other types of expenses, like my phone bill, insurance, things like that."

Financial benefits of GKC-HDFSP. Ten participants discussed the financial benefits of receiving the GKC-HDFSP reporting that "every little bit helps."

Estella stated the benefits of the scholarship to her:

The HDF fund definitely helped out because that first year, having to get started, it helped to at least alleviate some of the burden in making that transition and the money really helped for me to have a comfortable transition. I was able to purchase a computer to help with my studies. So that really helped out a lot to have access to my own personal computer to do research, write papers, and be able to network, and things like that.

Luis reported that the scholarship allowed him to study abroad without the worry of missing a semester of work to pay for travel costs, books, and other expenses accrued from going to college out of state:

So the way I actually ended up applying was, my junior year I studied abroad in South Africa that winter quarter. I was working while I was in school. Even though, obviously, what I was making wasn't paying for the majority of the tuition, it was covering things like travel from here to California, books, and any other expenses that I had, which I did have some, especially towards the end of college. The amount of financial aid that (my college) gave me lowered a bit. So I knew it was going to be very difficult to pay for college after coming back from South Africa. But I knew that there were resources out there. But I really wanted to go. So it's not like I had it cemented, I didn't think when I come back, I'll be covered by the Hispanic Scholarship Fund, but I knew that it existed and that other scholarships existed. And so, that made me feel a lot better about taking the risk, the financial risk, of not working for an entire

quarter and going to South Africa and having that experience coming back and still be able to stay in school.

Juana reported the benefit of the matching program of the scholarship helped her decide to enroll in her college:

It definitely made a difference in knowing that it would be matched and (my college) was one that would match it. So I can definitely remember thinking, “in reality this is going to be \$500 and not just \$250.” It helped finalize that decision.

Cristobal also reported the benefit of the scholarship to assist in paying for books and other college expenses:

But the Hispanic Scholarship Fund usually was that little piece that pushed you over the edge. That gave you, maybe a little bit of spending money to pay for your things throughout the year. But those books are expensive, in law school it was over a thousand dollars a semester. To have the Hispanic Scholarship Fund, that really took a load off of me so that I could concentrate on my studies.

While most of the participants perceived the scholarship as a benefit, three participants mentioned the requirements for the scholarship was not worth the award amount. Alberto reported the following:

The amounts I received were not life shattering. It helped pay for a couple of books. I mean, you got money. Every little bit helps. I'd say the most of the thing I've thought about with the Hispanic Development Fund, it was the politics of it. Seeing who was going forward, who was celebrated.

I'm like \$500 was nice but \$1000 would have been better. I'm like "I'm going to an expensive school and \$1000 doesn't go a long way at [my college] versus \$500 going to [a public institution]."

Other financial assistance. Ten participants reported receiving the Pell Grant as part of their financial aid package. Hector transferred institutions in the middle of an academic year and did not receive any scholarships during the first semester at his college. He said, "Even though I didn't get any scholarships for that first semester at (my college), it didn't really hurt me that much financially. I still had some money from the Pell Grant for the previous semester at community college."

Seven participants reported receiving institutional scholarships as well. Juana entered a competition at her college for scholarship money:

I did academic competition at [my college] because I had a low ACT score. So I didn't necessarily qualify for any ACT scholarships but because I had a 3.98 GPA and I was 4th in my class, I was able to join the competition and got like 2nd place. So that was a pretty big chunk of where my money came from. And so once I decided that I was going to go to [my college], they also encouraged me to do the Hispanic Scholarship Fund because they matched it as well.

Isabel recalled receiving an institutional scholarship through her school stating, "I applied to a group on campus—Multicultural Scholars Program. They provide aid to students of color, first-generation students."

Encouragement from others. Another emerging theme is the encouragement from others. Participants spoke about their connections to family, the Hispanic community, friends, mentors, the scholarship program, and campus personnel.

Participants reported receiving encouragement from significant relationships included family support, GKC-HDFSP, social networks, and campus personnel.

Family support. For the participants, the structure that most affected their education was the family. All of the participants spoke of the emotional support they received from their family to attend college. Diego described how his family supported his education:

If I was at home doing work, I remember mom and dad would try to keep things quiet. If my little cousins were coming over, they would tell them to play in the other room because *tio* is working or studying. I definitely felt that support. They knew it was important to me and it was important to them. Emotionally as well, like when I was down, or stressed for whatever reason, they were there for me and I could count on my mom and dad. My mom especially, I remember her and I talked a lot. My dad, we talked but not like the level my mom and I did. She would always ask me how are things going, how are you feeling, you look stressed today, is everything ok, just breathe. We would spend time, like I would go to her room and we would just talk for a couple of hours or whatever. So that was nice to just get away and get re-energized and then go back. My brothers as well were supportive. Knowing that education is important and they wanted me to graduate from college. So they pushed me.

Cristobal recalled how the support of his family helped him deal with the academic stress of undergraduate and graduate school:

Both in grad school and college, it's great to have family near. I don't think I ever spent more than 3 weeks away from home... Sometimes my father would drive to the toll booth on I-70, so that he wouldn't have to pay and I wouldn't have to pay, but we would meet at that rest area, and he would give me a dozen burritos. I mean, in law school, it keeps your sanity. It helps you keep focused and balanced, not feeling like you are losing it while you sort of are sacrificing bits and pieces of that family life that you have.

Beatriz described how she felt she represented the hope of her family during her time at college:

My parents always pushed us to get a bachelor's degree at least. They wanted that for us. My dad always said that, "My father brought me to this level. Now I want you to go higher." They always wished for something more, especially education. They were really big on education.

Gabriella was a single mother, nontraditional student when she received the scholarship.

The support from her family included assistance in caring for her daughter:

My dad helps me a lot and I have a great aunt and uncle who help me significantly as far as picking up my daughter from school, letting her stay the night while I worked three jobs and did full-time school. Very supportive family and friends, too.

Seven participants spoke about the difficulties balancing academic and family responsibilities. Juana spoke about the transition of family responsibilities to her siblings:

I was the oldest so I was taking care of a lot of the stuff at home, too. So being gone meant that my other sisters had to take on some responsibilities like paying the bills and stuff like that. So it was hard to be outside looking in and knowing that there were responsibilities that I wasn't helping with anymore.

Luis described how he maintained his family responsibilities while attending college out of state:

If I happened to run out of money at the end of the month, I would ask her [my mother] to transfer me some. Sometimes she would run out of money or my sisters would need something at the end of the month so if I had a little bit left over, I would send it to her. We just helped each other out however we could. Online banking really helped out with that, being able to transfer that.

Two participants spoke of the difficult decisions that were made because of their role in the family. Felipe described his role as head of the household and the toll it took on his work and school responsibilities:

I'm the head of the house. I live with my mother who was recently diagnosed with cancer, terminal cancer. So all these years, I've been paying the house... For the past 2 months I haven't worked at all because I took family leave (FMLA) to be able to be with her and become her primary caregiver. Where I work they are really, really flexible with my work schedule. They are always willing to help me out and do give me the 40 hours so I can pay my college and still be able to help my mother.

Gabriella made the decision to return home from out of state to care for a sick family member. This decision included stopping her education. Gabriella stated, “So while it was a great experience, I lived in Austin and went to community college there. Eventually, I came back because my mom was sick. So, I came back to help with those responsibilities.”

GKC-HDFSP. Ten participants spoke of the GKC-HDFSP and its support of their education. Participants viewed the scholarship award as validation for their educational work and support of the Hispanic community. As Gabriella stated, “It felt like I was supported from the local community.” Isabel described her feelings after receiving the scholarship: “I was proud that I received it because it was from the Hispanic Scholarship Fund.” Felipe also described his reaction to receiving the scholarship:

I remember receiving the letter. I was thrilled to receive the scholarship. I remember, it was the first time I was able to receive an award as a scholarship... [It] gave me the opportunity to add more classes to my schedule. It alleviated some of those financial problems that I had, as far as being able to add more classes to my schedule. Not only financially, but also emotionally. It was definitely something that helped me to push even harder toward my education.

Diego recalled the boost in his confidence to attend college after receiving the scholarship.

I knew I was going to go to college. I knew I was going to go. So getting accepted was great, it was a great feeling. I think coming from the scholarship it was more important. It's smaller; it's very selective as well.

They only have a certain amount of dollars that they can give out and you know that going in. You are one of the few who can get that scholarship. You are one of the few that they say, “You know, we believe in you enough that we are going to get you this.” So that was nice. And coming from your own Hispanic community is nice. It’s nice to have. Knowing that you are getting money is good too.

Isabel recalled that the scholarship helped her maintain her grades:

I think academically, I didn’t want to disappoint. I didn’t want to disappoint folks who gave me a scholarship, so I think that helped me. Nobody from the scholarship would come out and tutor me or anything, but me not wanting to disappoint and knowing that I had to re-apply next year and show my grades was like, all right, I need to make sure I stay on top of it academically.

Estella expressed a desire to continue to help the scholarship program financially and as a volunteer:

One of the things that I think some people miss is that once you get a scholarship that it’s not done. They don’t realize that they can give back to that scholarship. And so when I graduated, I knew that I wanted to give back to the GKC-HDFSP and so even now I try to help out when it comes to reviewing applications or donating.

Beatriz described her view of the scholarship, “I see it as a community effort and making sure it is not just me being educated but it’s my kid and anybody else that I see. It’s

definitely a valuable program and it's good that we have it." She encouraged her children to apply for the scholarship when they went to college:

Our oldest daughter did [receive the scholarship]. Our middle daughter, *gracias a dios*, got a full scholarship to Donnelly. So she did apply but I understand if she didn't get it, we know why. There are other kids that have more of the need. My youngest daughter, we were just talking about it yesterday. I said we have to remember for you to apply next year when you can. So yes, it is on our radar.

Even though the recipients felt encouraged by the scholarship, three participants suggested ways to improve the scholarship program that would encourage more future students. Participants suggested more equity in distribution of funds after they noticed the differences in the scholarship amounts and recognition between recipients. Alberto described the differences in terms of expectations:

It was just different expectations. The leaders who were giving out the presentation doted upon those who feel that they came from the community. I wasn't a Westsider; I didn't grow up on the Westside. But it was definitely those. I could see the politics at play. It's the Kansas City Hispanic community, there are politics.

Juana shared how confused her parents were with the process because of the language barriers:

I think going back to the awards ceremonies and my parents going with me, nothing was ever in Spanish so they knew I got a scholarship, but they

didn't know how the program started or what the purpose of it is or anything like that.

Another aspect in question is the requirement of full time student status. Mario responded,

There are a lot of people who just don't have the choice of, you know, they have to work and so they go to school part time, and that just disqualifies people. Maybe they are adult household wage earners that want to achieve an education but they can't because they have to work full time.

Social networks. Seven participants reported the support of friends and mentors encouraged them during their college experience. The friends and mentors assisted with family responsibilities, helped participants connect to resources, and encouraged participants to complete college. Alberto recalled a time when he considered leaving school:

I was worrying about bills. Other students didn't have to worry about gas, lights, food, water, and rent; that all takes money. I thought I could concentrate full time and get ahead in my bills then go back (to school). But then my best friend said, "You are not dropping out." I had a little powwow with him and other friends and they kind of talked me off the edge.

Juana recalled how her friends and mentors helped when she missed home, noting that "There were two women that would send their help. Not just encouraging words, one would come up and visit me. My priest would come up and visit me every once in a

while.” Gabriella remembered how friends would assist her as she balanced family and academic responsibilities. She stated, “I have a couple of really close friends that would pick her (daughter) up or would have her go over for a little bit while I had class. My friends would step up and help.”

Diego recalled how his friends would keep him out of trouble so that he could attend and complete college:

I remember one of my best friends growing up, at the time I was in college; him and a few other friends were doing some not so good things. They barely graduated high school, didn't go to college, and into things that they shouldn't have been doing. They always made it a point to tell me, “You shouldn't be hanging out with us” or “Don't come out with us tonight because we don't want you to be here.” It wasn't that they didn't want me there; it's just that they didn't want me to screw up. At the time, I didn't quite get it. But looking back I know that those guys were looking out for me. They knew, they might be screwing up their own lives but they weren't going to let me screw up. That was kind of cool to have that.

Hector also spoke of his friends support for his college completion:

Since I am the only one of my friends, even from [high school], I can't think of people from my class who have actually graduated, maybe one or two. Whenever I do go back to my friends there is that sense of “He made it out of the hood. He has a college degree.” That feels good. So I guess they provided support in that sense.

Participants recalled the resources that friends and mentors provided for their education. Mario cited the community organizations he was involved with as the ones to encourage education. He said, “I got support from outside sources. Education was something that was promoted around me just not within my family.” Felipe credited the friends he made in the KS/MO DREAM Alliance, an advocacy group to encourage DREAM legislation, for showing him resources, including the GKC-HDFSP, to get through college:

I definitely had some help from the KS/MO DREAM Alliance. Other students who were undocumented, they definitely helped me out as far as telling me what I need to do to get in the process. They talked to me about what was a credit hour or what was a placement test.

Participants also shared their desire to join the network that supports the scholarship. Estella explained the impact of the scholarship on her view of community as she talked about contributing to the scholarship:

It’s like giving back for someone else; even if it’s just a few dollars, I try to give something. So that way, I don’t feel like I just took. I think the scholarship fund made me think like that. So I figure, if someone gave to me, I can give back to the community.

Isabel expressed her goal to join the network, “And you know how they have ‘influential Hispanics’ from the area attend the reception, my goal is to be one of those one day.”

Campus personnel. In addition to family, GKC-HDFSP, friends, and mentors, four participants recalled the encouragement they received from campus personnel. The participants mentioned personal connection with the campus personnel encouraged their

completion of college. Alberto described feeling isolated from fellow students when he took a job at the college but being connected to a faculty member:

It was kind of gratifying that I was able to connect with a couple of professors, especially when I was working for the university. They understood that I was working full-time and going to school full-time. They would say, “Are you okay? Are you sure?” That person actually became my advisor. It was kind of nice.

Two participants spoke about the opportunities that the campus personnel had given them. Hector spoke about the internship and scholarship opportunities that he was able to receive because of his connection:

The advisor for the Multicultural Business Student Association, she provided a lot of support. She was the one that got me the Koch scholarship. She was real helpful but other than that there wasn't anybody on campus I could like go to and talk to at all.

Isabel credited an advisor for encouraging her to seek out resources and perform better academically:

The one I'd say that has helped pushed me to stay in school has been the Multicultural Scholars Program. The Business School has a program all to itself and it's the biggest one. The mentor there is a professor in the Business School and he's Puerto Rican. I felt like it was nice seeing the representation and I could open up to him as well and he could provide feedback that I could use. He's definitely pushed me to do better, he's

definitely pushed me academically more than the other resources that I've used on campus.

Sense of belonging. The fourth theme presented is the development of a sense of belonging. Participants spoke about the struggles and successes they had fitting into the campus environment. Figure 4 displays the ease to which participants adjusted to aspects of college life. The most difficult areas of adjustment were the lack of campus diversity, managing family responsibilities, and paying for college expenses.

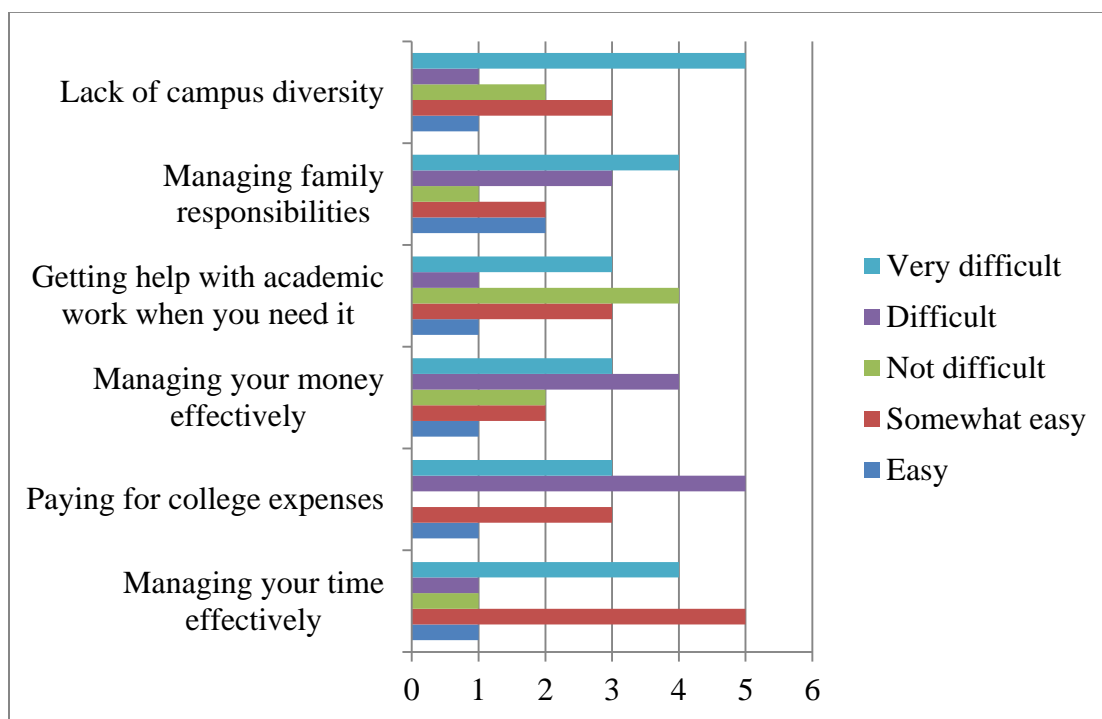


Figure 4. Adjustment to college life. This figure illustrates the participants' responses to the 2012 GKC-HDFSP survey question "How difficult were the following factors when starting college?"

Student organizations. Ten participants spoke of their participation in campus life through student organizations as a way to find their place in college. Eight participants reported joining organizations that catered to Hispanic or multicultural students. Estella

recalled joining student organizations similar to ones she was involved in during high school:

I joined SOL [student organization of Latinos] because I had participated in HLOP [Hispanic leadership opportunity program] in high school and wanted something in that realm. And then through SOL, very similar to HLOP, we developed that network there. I also joined other organizations that had to do with social justice because of my background that I did in high school with all of the different volunteer organizations. So I wanted to keep that up. And I knew that if I had gotten scholarships for giving back and volunteering while that wasn't my reason for doing it, it was a great result. It obviously helped me out and continued to doing that because I also knew too, that my scholarship was based on that. That was part of the pre-request that I be involved in the community when I got it, now it didn't mean I had to maintain that to keep it. But I wanted, it was out of nature or habit that I did SOL. I have such a pride in being Latina myself that I wanted to tell people about it. I think too the dance group I was in. It was always about showing or showcasing our culture so that was another reason I got involved with SOL.

Luis explained why it was important for him to join an organization focused on service in the Hispanic community:

I belonged to a community service group, predominately Latino but not exclusively Latino, not a frat but sort of. It wasn't exclusively male, there were some women but it focused around the male role model in the Latino

community and communities of color... Being part of a group that focuses on the well being of the Latino community and explores issues of policy and disparities, it really helped me understand where I came from and the challenges that I've faced; the community had faced, and also provided camaraderie for me to deal with those. Yeah, it helped to deal with a lot of the issues.

Cristobal described the reasons he became involved in student organizations dedicated to Hispanic and multicultural students:

In college I joined the Latino fraternity, Sigma Lambda Beta. I was very active in the Hispanic American Leadership Organization (HALO). I was a member of the Student Senate. Partaking in some of the university programs; there was a program called [program], where you got a chance to interact with many persons of different ethnicities and backgrounds and challenging ourselves to find ourselves in [the] uncomfortable position to address issues of tolerance and understanding different cultures. And on a campus of 25,000 people and probably 2,000 are persons of color, I probably knew 1,800 of those 2,000 because those were the people that I hung out with. It's very difficult when, as a Latino, at that time about 2% Latino population of the university, to find your social networks, your cliques, your social networks you want to have. That's why I was so active in those groups. It kind of helps you. I think you get lost if you don't find it. But once you do, you kind of find a home away from home with those groups as well.

Isabel described the isolation she felt before joining student organizations and how she has become more active in campus life after she discovered her place:

You know living in the scholarship halls, it's a predominately white community. I don't think it lived up to my expectations in that aspect, just because, I feel like a lot more students of color or low income students would have applied for this amazing opportunity of having reduced housing but I found that a lot of the students who are pretty well off or pretty wealthy and there wasn't anyone I could connect to like many other Latinas or Hispanics. So, no one ever told me about the Hispanic American Leadership Organization (HALO) or any of the Latina Sororities on campus and I just felt so out of the loop. It makes me regret living there sometimes because there was no one I could easily connect to or share what was going on. Lately, I have been more active. I ended up joining a sorority, Sigma Lambda Gamma, one of the Latina sororities on campus and I became a peer mentor for the Business School. I became a TA for the Business School for one of the Supply Chain classes that we have. I got involved a lot with social justice, me and four or five other students started a retreat called [program]. It's mainly focused on the Greeks on campus and opening up their eyes to social justice. I think that's everything I can think of off the top of my head.

Even after joining student organizations, Hector still felt out of place on campus. He explained his participation as professional networking:

At [my college], I was involved in different organizations: Beta Alpha Psi, which is the accounting I wouldn't call it a fraternity, it's more an accounting professional association where you network with employers and things like that; the Multicultural Business Student Association; and the Young Americans for Liberty which wasn't necessarily a professional organization it was more a political student group. Those were the three ones that I was involved in. In terms of Beta Alpha Psi and the professional networking helped in securing internships and getting scholarships as well. In terms of meeting people, like I did not really fit in at [my college] at all. I didn't really like it because there was nobody that I could relate to there. Even like the little Mexican fraternities there, I couldn't really find anything about them appealing. So in terms of finding friends, they didn't really help in that sense, but in terms of finding professional contacts they did. But like Beta Alpha Psi and Multicultural Business Student Association, I didn't really meet friends there. I would just talk with them during the meeting but didn't hang out with anybody outside of the events.

Juana described her experience of feeling out of place at college:

I came home every week almost... There were times when I would be there for two or three weeks but I just got really homesick. I helped out with the theater, doing back stage stuff one year. But no, I didn't belong to any groups. I didn't feel like I belonged. I mean, I was there and I was going through the motions but I didn't feel like I belonged. Nobody

understood my culture. Anybody that looked like me was third or fourth generation so they did not even speak Spanish. Thinking back, I was Catholic and I didn't even know how to say all of the prayers in English because I had always gone to mass in Spanish; so even in church I felt like "I don't even belong here."

Student support services. Five participants reported using student support services such as tutoring, counseling, writing, career centers on campus. Two participants reported that they were referred to the offices and would not have sought the services otherwise. Hector commented that,

They made me [attend] because I got written up like four times during the first month. The people that I met there we'd drink in the dorms, so they made me talk with some rehab counselor there. But that was mainly forced upon me; I didn't want to do that. Other than that, I didn't utilize any of those resources.

Diego sought out services to improve his academic standing:

I went to the tutoring center. I would get help on papers and I remember my calculus class, I was struggling so I got help there. When I was in nursing school, I went. I guess I'm a bad test taker, so I would see a counselor there. I would see a counselor once a week and we would work on test taking strategies. And that seemed to really help. That was very helpful. So I would set up a session once, sometimes twice a week to just go and sometimes we wouldn't do anything on test taking, we would just talk. And that was nice.

Luis described his interactions with student support services throughout his time at college. He explained how the office taught him lessons he did not learn at home:

Well, at the beginning academically I did need a lot of help, especially with my writing. So I definitely used those. But in terms of counseling, toward the end. The last two years of college were really stressful for me because money was getting shorter, things were getting tougher, the thought of finding a job afterwards, etc., etc. So there was a time when I had a lot of anxiety so I did meet with a counselor and that helped a lot. Just coping strategies. I really didn't realize that there were strategies you could use to cope with stress and anxiety, all of those challenges that life throws at you. Just because I've always... from seeing my mom work and how she has raised me, it's always been just "work your hardest, it will fix itself later." And that's what I've been doing since high school but it just never stops. So learning to take care of myself along the way is something I never really thought of. My mom was never able to do it so I just figured "that's life" and I just couldn't do it anymore.

Felipe utilized the academic advising office to help set his course schedule to meet his needs as a part time student with limited times for taking classes;

I definitely used the counseling to know what classes I needed to take. They were extremely helpful with that part. I told my counselor everything about my situation and that I can't be testing classes. I know what I want, I have a clear path. I know I want to be a social worker, so I guess that was a great advantage for me because most students may not

know what they want at a community college level. So I didn't have to take so many classes that didn't fall into my career. I took the classes that I needed to get done. But the counselor was always able to provide me with information that I needed as far as what classes I should take and what classes not to take. And they would always follow up with me to see how I was doing not only academically but on a personal level.

Cristobal explains why he did not seek the services from the tutoring or writing centers:

I did not utilize any student support services. Even in law school and undergrad, I remember all of those "we can read your essays before you submit them." I don't know I guess I was always one of those persons that felt like, if I make a mistake, it's going to be my mistake and I'll learn from it. Even more than if someone else was influencing my work; maybe it's just a thing that I have. If I make a mistake, I want to own it and have it be my mistake.

As a student attending evening or online classes, Gabriella found that the times the centers were open did not suit her schedule. She said, "The challenge would have been that I work in one part of town and my schools were in another. So the challenge was always time."

Academic challenge. Six participants reported experiencing academic challenges during college. The challenges included choosing a major and coursework. Juana struggled with courses but did not seek assistance.

I had a pretty tough work load with classes and labs. I remember physics and chemistry just not being... I just didn't understand it. It's like those

were my two worse grades getting a D in both classes and not knowing or being embarrassed that I had to ask for help or I didn't even know who to go to for help. And even though the professor, I remember a couple of times the professor saying "Come in if you need help" or whatever, it was just making that step. I don't know what kept me from taking that step and asking for help. Again, I was the only person from my high school there. I had friends but they were all, I felt like they were all very prepared in knowing how to study. I didn't know how to study.

Diego struggled with choosing classes and a major. Because of this struggle he transferred schools to look for a less expensive college:

This is the other thing, going in; I had no idea what I wanted to do. I had no idea what I wanted to major in, what I wanted to be when I grew up. But I was really confused about what classes I should take, what I shouldn't take. People were all excited about what they were doing, "I'm going to business school, I'm doing this and I'm doing that" and here I am trying to figure out, "What do I do? What am I supposed to do?" So I had a really good friend who was going to start at [for profit college] and he was going to do something with computers and he said you should come with me, we can hang out and I'll help you. That's why I went to [for profit college] for a semester. I knew right away that this wasn't for me. I'm in these classes and I'm learning but I don't care to learn about this stuff. After that, I was ready to go back to [my college]. I went back and I graduated. I'd say I was pretty successful.

Isabel also struggled with courses and choosing a major:

I changed my major three times. I started off as pre-nursing and I think I lasted a semester and I said “No, I want to cut up dead people” so I changed my major to microbiology with the intent of going to med school. Then the more I got into it, the more I didn’t like it and I ended up taking an exploratory semester and I changed my major to accounting during my junior year. So this is actually my fifth year here. I’m a super senior.

Hispanic representation on campus. Nine participants spoke of the lack of Hispanics on campus. The participants noted the lack of diversity in the student body and in the faculty. Cristobal reported that the lack of Hispanic representation was different from his home community:

I would probably say that when you first begin college, it feels pretty strange leaving where I’m from, where I’ve lived all of my life. Where it is, who knows, 60-80% Latino to a place where it is 2% Latino. It was culture shock and that took some adjusting. It’s very difficult when, as a Latino, at that time about 2% Latino population of the university to find your social networks, your cliques, your social networks you want to have.

Hector noticed the difference between his home community and school community included the style of dress, stating “When I went to [my college], I remember my first month there, I realized that I had to get a different wardrobe, because the way I dressed compared to the way everybody dressed there is completely stuck out.” Diego explained that feelings of disconnect were heightened by not living on campus:

There weren't a lot of Latinos; there weren't too many African Americans up there either. And because I wasn't living on campus, I think I felt disconnected a little bit going in. And it kind of, it brought me down a bit. I mean I did pretty well in my courses that first semester but I felt disengaged.

Juana described feeling torn between cultures:

As a first generation student and an immigrant to this country, it's hard because you feel like you are always in two different worlds. Do I really feel like I belong here because there are not a lot of kids that look like me? And even within such a small community, I still felt like I didn't belong and I had religion in common. I thought I was going to feel like I belonged.

Isabel spoke of the lack of diversity among faculty members on her campus: "For me representation matters and seeing other Latinas and Latinos on a predominately White campus is important to me, like I can name one or two staff or faculty that have Hispanic roots and it's disheartening for me." She also noted the decline in the number of Hispanics in her cohort since she began college and how it motivated her to finish:

I saw a lot of Latinas from the Kansas City area maybe one or two years ago come in as freshmen and they are not here anymore. I don't know what those reasons might be but I just want to let them know that it is possible no matter where you are from.

Nontraditional student issues. Four participants were nontraditional college students and spoke of the difficulties they had developing their sense of belonging. Even

though Alberto was the traditional age of college students, he felt nontraditional because of his responsibilities. He said of his college experience,

I felt non-traditional because I didn't live on campus and I worked. I was a different kind of student. You know, most of them didn't have to worry about putting food on the table. They lived in the dorms; they lived in *Shangri-la* compared to me. I was scrapping by on tuna and macaroni. I didn't have the same problems as them. They were carefree.

Family responsibilities impacted the amount of time nontraditional participants spent on campus. Gabriella stated, "I was older, I attended night class or I did online classes. Trying to juggle and still work several jobs. It made it hard to make time." In addition, Mario cited family responsibilities as one of the reasons he has not achieved his education goals.

Mostly just parenting, I don't have the time. Financial aid is the biggest. I can't afford college now and I don't qualify, because of how much I make, I don't qualify for a lot of the scholarships. But I don't make enough to pay for it on my own either. So I just put all of that on hold.

Internal motivation. The final theme to emerge from the interviews and survey is the internal motivation to complete college. Eight participants reported that internal factors contributed to their educational achievements.

Goal setting. Five participants expressed their educational goals. They had developed goals and did not let obstacles impede them. Isabel stayed true to her goal even when friends did not. She said, "That's my goal. I'm from Kansas City and I had a

lot of friends start here but they did not make it very far in their college careers. So I want to finish.”

Juana got married after her second year of college but did not stop attending college, even when her family expected her to:

When I first told him [my father] that we were getting married, he told my mom, “She is never going to finish college.” So I had to finish. That is the reason I didn’t stop... But I had to finish because I had to prove my dad. I finished not top honors or anything like that, I mean, I barely finished but I finished.

Cristobal faced a crisis during his final year of law school after the death of his father. He was given the option to take a break from school and chose not to take that option:

My father passed away in April of 2011. I was in my last semester of law school and more than a couple of my professors encouraged me to delay my graduation from law school and delay taking the bar in July of 2011. I did none of those things, I kept moving forward. One of those things where I felt like this is what I should and need to do, keep moving forward because that is what my father would want. That’s what I need to do in order to get my life up and running or keep my life up and running.

Gabriella stopped college to return home to care for her mother. After a couple of years, she returned to college to provide a better life for her daughter and herself:

I moved back home and I took a break for a couple of years and I was kind of complacent at that point. And then when I had my daughter, after she turned one that was my motivation. She was the one that basically

motivated me to go back to school. And at first I thought I will just finish the associate's and that wasn't enough. Then I thought I'll finish my bachelors [degree] and that wasn't enough. So I just kept going. She has been the inspiration behind it.

Participants who had not achieved their educational goals, maintain the goals and hope to achieve them in the future. Beatriz said, "I didn't push myself as much as I should have or could have" in terms of achieving her educational goals. However, as a parent, she shares the stories from her family history to her children to encourage them to set and achieve their education goals:

And I think our whole family, what our parents, our grandparents, all of these generations that came here to this country for a better life; I tell my girls, don't take it for granted. We tell the stories that were told to us about their great grandmas working in the fields. Planting the *camotes* in the mountains, because that is all they had at that time. Picking the *camote* and eating tortillas with chili because at that time, that is all they had. Don't take that for granted. You know, we're fighters, we're warriors, we're Aztecas. We keep going. We keep fighting, we don't stop. Just giving them that *ganas* to keep going. That's what I've tried to instill in them. Of course, family. We have to keep doing this together. And the same that my parents tell us, "We brought you to this level, we want something more for you. But always stay grounded. Always remember where you come from." That's what we try to tell them.

Mario stated, “I still haven’t finished with it [education]. My goal is to get an undergraduate degree. So I haven’t finished yet.” As a current student, Felipe shared a definite vision for his future:

In 2017, I will get my bachelor’s hopefully. Once that is done, I plan to enroll into a dual program where I can get my Master’s in Social Welfare and my Juris Doctorate to practice law because I want to be able to do both. I want to practice law for adoption for same sex couples. That is my goal. Or do some immigration work as well. I am currently an immigrant rights activist in the local Kansas City area.

Personal attributes. Seven participants spoke about a personal characteristic that led them to achieve academically. Diego spoke of his resiliency and his ability to navigate his networks:

I had to adapt and be flexible and learn. Having had all of those resources and people around me that I could count on in college, really helped me be successful regardless of what barriers I faced or what barriers I put up for myself.

Hector displayed his ambition when he said,

I think it is just my drive, my own mindset. I like making money, so I figured the best way to make a decent amount of money whenever I become an adult is to go to college. To me, that was my main mindset. I have a goal; I believe college is the best way to attain that goal. I think very long term, whereas a lot of my friends think very short term so a lot of them dropped out. I’m the only one of my friends who graduated from

college or even went more than one semester. I had one friend who was able to get into [university] for one semester but he dropped out after that. I would say it was just my mindset of having goals and finding the best means to attain those goals. I'm very goal oriented. I had all of my goals written down and I would review them periodically.

Isabel recognized her drive to complete has been helped by finding a place on campus:

I have definitely gotten a lot more motivated and I have a lot more self-confidence, I guess since finding my spot on campus. I don't know, I feel like doors are finally starting to open up for me and I can see the light at the end of the tunnel after such a rough start.

Sense of identity. Six participants spoke of the discovery of themselves contributed to their completion of college. Cristobal recalled the experience positively:

I was happy. You know, you're in that age where you are still in self-exploration, finding out who you are, what you want to do, what you want to be. It was very important for me to find the HALOs and the fraternity and to hang out with people who were like minded of similar ethnicities and background that I had. So it was difficult at the beginning, but once you find it, you feel like you've found your home.

However, other participants viewed this experience as stressful. Alberto said, "To be honest, it was the discovery of who I was. I was finding out who I am and coming to terms with it. Throw that on with financial stress and you've got Xanax crying out to be taken."

Diego had to learn his study habits and discover the type of lifestyle that would suit a college student. He explained how that discovery led to a better appreciation for his education:

I was trying to keep the same lifestyle that I thought I could, and then my grades started to dip a little bit. I remember thinking, “I need to take a step back and take a breath and figure this out before I go on.” Because if I would have kept going, I think I would have burned out and I think I would have stopped completely, I wouldn’t have been in a good spot. I mean, the first time going to college, there are a lot of challenges.

Sometimes feeling like you are alone and no one gets what you are going through. That is why I took that semester off and took time to regroup, save some money, worked a little bit. Then said, ok I’m going to try this again, but I’m going to try it at a different level.

Additionally, Diego stated that receiving the scholarship validated the struggle he went through. He said, “Receiving that scholarship gave me more confidence. Knowing that a group of people read my story and believed in me enough that they are going to give me some money so that I can go to college.” Felipe said that the scholarship “gave me a sense of ‘I’m not invisible. I’m here,’ and they acknowledged that, even though my documentation is not what the U.S. system wants me to have right now.”

Summary

Twelve former and current recipients of the GKC-HDFSP were interviewed for this study to explore their perceptions of the access, persistence, and financial impact of the GKC-HDFSP on their college experience. The results of an analysis of the data

collected through interviews, the 2012 GKC-HDFSP survey, and the participants' scholarship applications were presented in this chapter. Presented in chapter five are the findings in relation to the existing literature, implications for practice, and recommendations for future research.

Chapter Five

Interpretation and Recommendations

The study was guided by the research questions to determine the impact of the GKC-HDFSP on the recipients' ability to enter and complete in college as well as other factors in access and persistence to college. The first section, a study summary, consists of a review of the problem statement, the purpose of the study, research questions, review of the methodology, and major findings. The second section relates the findings of the study to current literature. The concluding section consists of a discussion of implications for action, recommendation for future research, and concluding remarks.

Study Summary

This study was designed to investigate the access, persistence, and financial impact on student recipients of the GKC-HDFSP, a private community-based scholarship program. An overview of the challenges of access and persistence faced by Hispanic students is presented in the study summary. Additionally, the purpose statement and research questions are reiterated to describe what the study was designed to explore. The research design and methods of data collection are discussed in the review of methodology. Finally, the results of the current study are presented in the major findings section.

Overview of the problem. As communities seek to alleviate the challenges of obtaining a college education, Kansas City community leaders have created ways to support Hispanic students. The GKC-HDFSP is an example of a community-based program created to support Hispanics attending college. The GKC-HDFSP leverages

community resources and funds from colleges and private philanthropies to provide college scholarships to Hispanics within the greater Kansas City area.

The objective of the scholarship fund is to provide financial assistance to Hispanic students. The amount awarded to each scholarship recipient is intended to assist families with the estimated family contribution to college costs and not to replace federal, state, or institutional aid. The fund has supported many students since it began awarding scholarships in 1984. However, little information has been gathered from the recipients to determine the impact of the scholarship on the education attainment of Hispanic students. The lack of information on the impact of the GKC-HDFSP hinders community leaders, post-secondary institutions, and area secondary schools from addressing the specific needs of Hispanic students entering and completing degrees from post-secondary institutions.

Purpose statement and research questions. The purpose of this study was to determine the impact of the GKC-HDFSP on access to post-secondary education and persistence in college for its recipients. Through a qualitative study utilizing interviews and document analysis, factors were identified that facilitated scholars' educational attainment in order to understand the role of the GKC-HDFSP on college access and persistence and to understand the financial need of the scholars. The following research questions were used to guide this study:

1. What factors influenced Hispanic scholars' college decision-making process?
2. What factors and programs influenced Hispanic scholars' ability to complete post-secondary education?

3. To what extent did the GKC-HDFSP support the Hispanic scholars and address their financial need?

Review of the methodology. A qualitative research methodology was utilized for data collection and analysis for this study. Social capital and persistence theory formed the framework for the study. Interviews were conducted with 12 recipients of the GKC-HDFSP. The interviews were recorded and responses were transcribed and coded. Data collected from the administrators of the scholarship included the results of the 2012 GKC-HDFSP survey and the participants' scholarship applications. The data were analyzed utilizing strategies designed to extract the most relevant themes. As a result, five themes emerged that reflected the participants' perceptions of the GKC-HDFSP's impact on college access and persistence.

Major findings. Data collected from the interviews and supplemented from the survey and scholarship applications indicated the significance of the emerging themes: (a) deficiency of college-going information; (b) inability to afford college; (c) encouragement from others; (d) sense of belonging; and (e) internal motivation. The participants indicated the receipt of college-going information affected their ability to attend the college of their choice. The resources utilized by the participants to gain college-going information included high school counselors, community-based programs, and their own research. Even with these resources, participants recalled feeling confused about the process of admission and enrollment. Each of the participants reported their ability to afford college was dependent on receiving financial support. The participants reported that they were expected to pay for their college education without the financial support from their family. Many of the participants worked during college in order to

afford the costs. Encouragement from others provided participants with confidence necessary to continue their education. Each of the participants reported that they received emotional support from their family, friends, and mentors. Participants reported feeling a sense of belonging to the college community prompted them to continue their education. Many of the students sought multi-cultural or Hispanic student organizations to join during college. Challenges to the participants' sense of belonging included academic struggles, minority representation on campus, and being a nontraditional student. Finally, internal motivators such as goal setting enabled participants to achieve their educational goals. Participants also recalled that the college experience helped develop their sense of identity.

Findings Related to the Literature

Prior to collecting data, a review of literature examining the college experiences of Hispanics was conducted. The available literature suggested that Hispanic students' college experiences were influenced by college costs, family expectations, information channels, and the ability to fit into the college setting. The current study was designed to add to the existing research on Hispanic students' experiences by examining growing group of Midwest Hispanics. The research on social capital theory identifies elements that effect access and persistence in college as information channels; obligations, expectations, and trustworthiness of structure; and norms and effective sanctions. Tinto (1998) described three factors associated with persistence as financial, psychological, and institutional. The current study adds to this research by examining the cultural effectiveness of these theories. In this section, the findings related to the research questions are discussed and connected with the existing research.

Factors influencing scholars' college decision-making process. Participants revealed the importance of providing quality college information to high school students as they are making college decisions. Consistent with current research, FGCS participants utilized high school personnel to provide college-going information (Liou et al., 2009; Martinez & Cervera, 2012; Perna, 2006). Also consistent with current research, participants reported to have initiated conversation about college opportunities with high school personnel (Perna, 2006). Additionally, participants utilized community-based programs to explore college opportunities. Several participants cited the community-based programs as part of their preparation for college. Participants stated these programs provided them opportunities to visit college campuses, introduced them to the college application process, and provided them information about financial aid. Liou et al. (2009) encouraged community organizations and community members to utilize their networks to provide college-going information to Hispanic high school students.

Current literature is centered on Hispanic population in large, urban areas with over-crowded and under-resourced schools that fail to provide students with marketable education and unable to prepare them for college (Nora et al., 1999; Olivares, 2011). In the current study, urban and suburban participants stated they did not feel academically prepared for college. In addition to not enrolling in college preparation courses, participants did not indicate taking AP courses in high school as part of the preparation process. This is consistent with current literature that claims Hispanic students are not encouraged to enroll in college preparation or AP classes (Gandara & Contreras, 2009).

Students who are not given advice on college entrance procedures, financial aid, or other higher education opportunities quickly dismiss selective colleges as an

unreachable dream (Garcia, 2010; Nora et al., 1999; Perna, 2006). Several participants described changing their college choice from a selective, out-of-area college to a local college out of concern about the ability to pay for college and the lack of encouragement received through the high school. Only one study participant reported being advised to consider a large, selective, out-of-area college to meet his financial needs. If students are not seeking information (Martinez & Cervera, 2012) and schools are not offering information to students (Perna, 2006), an opportunity exists for community resources to assist college-going students in the college search (Liou et al., 2009).

Factors influencing scholars' ability to complete college. Scholars suggest expanding high school programs to include information about college retention programs to help improve the Hispanic student persistence (Adelman, 2007; Perez, 2010; Suanders & Serna, 2004; Swail et al., 2004). Hispanic college students are more likely to be first-generation, work while attending college, enroll part-time, be of a non-traditional age, and attend a 2-year institution (Fry, 2011; Jenkins et al., 2009; Santiago, 2011). Additionally, Jenkins et al. (2009) found FGCS are less likely to ask questions or seek help and perform less volunteer work. Consistent with this research, many of the participants fit this description. Most of the participants were the first in their family to attend college; only two participants had a parent who completed college. Most of the participants reported working during their college experience; several reported working full-time during college. Participants who struggled financially sought to reduce the stress by taking fewer courses and working more hours. Participants also reported not seeking help from student support service such as the tutoring and writing centers on campus. Contrary to the research, many of the participants reported a desire to give back

to the community through service and their careers. These characteristics are important to note because they can be a factor for student departure from college (Tinto, 1993).

Hernandez and Lopez (2004) identified factors influencing persistence and retention: personal factors, environmental factors, involvement factors, and socio-cultural factors. Personal factors, such as academic self-concept, family, and finances, contribute to the resiliency of students and their self-belief that they can succeed in college (Gloria et al., 2005; Hernandez, 2000; Linares, 2008). Family support and encouragement may be especially important factors for these students (Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001; Linares, 2008). Each of the participants stated that even though they did not receive financial support for college, they felt emotionally supported by their family.

Socio-cultural factors such as immigration status, ethnic identity development, gender roles, community orientation, and role of religion influence students' ability to persist (Hernandez & Lopez, 2004). Three participants cited religion as a factor for their choice of college. The participants felt that the common religion would help them feel at home at the college.

Fry (2002) suggested that second generation Hispanic students, those who are born in the United States, are more successful in pursuing college education than foreign-born peers. The current study did not support this finding. Three of the participants were immigrants, eight were children of immigrants, and one was a third generation Hispanic. The generational immigration status did not predict their success in college.

Environmental factors that contribute to persistence and retention include the racial climate of campus, presence of an ethnic community, working or living off campus (Hernandez & Lopez, 2004). Gloria et al. (2005) found that inadequate social support

was the strongest predictor of academic non-persistence. Many of the participants reported joining Hispanic or multicultural organizations as a way of connecting the ethnic community. Current research suggests that working or living off campus contributes to non-persistence (Hernandez & Lopez, 2004). Contrary to this research, many of the participants lived or worked off campus and persisted.

Involvement factors include faculty-student interaction, mentorship, and participation in student organizations (Hernandez & Lopez, 2004). Astin (1993) and Tinto (1993) assert that an institution's social as well as academic life influence persistence and degree attainment. Participants who were involved in multiple organizations had an increase in their sense of belonging. This is consistent with Hurtado and Carter's (1997) findings that students who integrate into campus life have a greater sense of belonging at the institution than do their counterparts who do not participate. However, Hurtado and Carter (1997) warn that mere interaction does not increase persistence or increase the sense of belonging. Several participants reported being involved in a student organization and feeling isolated on campus. One of the participants stated that his participation in the student organization was to improve his professional options, not to make friends. Additionally, Oseguera et al. (2012) proposed that interactions with Latino faculty and administrators provide additional support as role models. Nine of the participants addressed the lack of diversity within the college faculty and administration.

The extent to which the GKC-HDFSP supports the scholars. Private scholarship programs contribute positively to the retention and persistence of students (Gansemmer-Topf & Schuh, 2005; Gross et al., 2007). Martinez (2006) found that free

financial assistance focused students on education rather than on financial worries regarding repayment. Participants expressed that receiving the GKC-HDFSP provided some financial relief. Many participants stated “every little bit helps.” However, several participants commented that the award amounts were not significant enough to reduce their financial worry.

LaNasa and Rogers (2009) found that students who received private scholarships reported that the scholarship made higher education feasible and motivated student achievement. Confirming this finding, many of the participants reported that the GKC-HDFSP provided them with confidence and motivation going to college. One of the participants credited the scholarship for making the transition to college comfortable. Another participant reported that receiving the scholarship gave him the sense of becoming visible.

Even after receiving the private scholarship, students have continued financial needs, such as living expenses and transportation, causing them to seek employment or loans that endanger their academic success and persistence (LaNasa & Rogers, 2009). Many of the participants reported having a financial need even after receiving the GKC-HDFSP. Most of the participants were employed throughout their college experience; some employed full-time while limiting the number of classes they take. In addition to employment, participants looked for ways to reduce the financial burden of college by living with family, selling books or coin collections, taking out additional loans, or using a credit card to pay for tuition and fees. However, contrary to the research, these factors did not have an adverse effect on the participants’ persistence.

Financial assistance is viewed as a means to attract high achieving students to an institution, a way to build a stronger workforce, a way to encourage degree completion, and a method to diversify student enrollment (Gieser, 2012; Heller, 2003; Longanecker, 2002a; Patel & Richburg-Hayes, 2012). Although participants did not cite the GKC-HDFSP's college match program as a contributing factor to their college choice, many of the participants stated that the match program was an additional benefit to the scholarship. The GKC-HDFSP match program allows the college to match the scholarship fund awarded by the fund.

Conclusions

Findings from the current study represent information on the college experiences of Hispanics who received the GKC-HDFSP. Interviews and document analysis provided a collection of data. Social capital and persistence theories created the conceptual framework through which the data were examined. The existing research indicates that Hispanic students' college experiences are influenced by college costs, family expectations, information channels, and the ability to fit into the college setting. The current study was designed to add to the existing research on Hispanic students' experiences by examining an emerging group of Midwest Hispanics. The experiences described in the current study may provide insight to increasing college enrollment and completion of Hispanic students.

Implications for action. The current study's findings present implications for high schools, colleges, and community organizations responsible for meeting the needs of a growing Hispanic population. Findings from this study may assist high school personnel to improve distribution of college-going information, college and university

administrators to increase retention of Hispanic college students, and community organizations to discover new ways to collaborate with schools and serve students.

The participants reported a dearth of college-going information from high school personnel. The participants reported having to initiate conversations about college with the personnel and that limited information was provided. Many of the participants expressed confusion about the application and financial aid process and frustration in seeking information. Many of the participants were the first in their family to go to college and did not have a family member to guide them through the process. In addition, a few participants noted that the information was only given in English, and their parents did not understand what they were going through. High school personnel can look for ways to collaborate with community resources to ensure that college-going information is given to students and parents in timely and understandable ways.

Findings from this study can help inform college retention and recruitment programs. Participants indicated that they sought the connection with other Hispanic students. Many of the participants joined Hispanic or multicultural student organizations in order to increase their sense of belonging to the campus. However, a few participants noted that ethnicity only was not sufficient to ensure their sense of belonging; similar home communities and generational status could also affect the sense of belonging. In addition to student organizations, participants reported the presence of multicultural or diversity offices increased their sense of belonging. The participants who saw Hispanic faculty or administrators felt more connected to the campus in general. A sense of belonging and campus involvement are factors that can increase student retention (Tinto, 1993). College administrators who seek to increase retention may consider instituting an

office of multicultural affairs and seek to increase the diversity of faculty and administrators.

Community organizations providing scholarships to Hispanic college students may use the findings from this research to improve collaborations with high schools and colleges. Community organizations can assist schools to deliver college-going information to students and families. Participants reported participating in community-based programs during high school that offered opportunities to explore college options. Community organizations can extend their programs to offer another avenue for students to find information about college application and financial aid. In addition to deficiencies in college-going information, participants expressed confusion about college enrollment processes and choosing a program of study. Community organizations can support students through this process by providing mentors or connection to the larger community through internships and other work study programs.

In addition to offering information to assist Hispanic students with access and persistence information, community organizations can improve financial assistance. Participants reported the amount of money awarded, though helpful, did not alleviate the financial burdens from college costs. Many of the participants had to work through college in order to meet the financial costs. Community organizations offering financial assistance might consider increasing the award amount. Furthermore, a few participants reported having to reduce the number of courses in order to afford the college costs, thus forfeiting any financial assistance that required full-time student status. Community organizations offering financial assistance might consider making the award possible for part-time students.

Recommendations for future research. The current study findings suggest additional opportunities for research in the future. The sample was limited by those past recipients who completed the 2012 GKC-HDFSP survey. These participants had maintained contact with the scholarship program, and most had achieved or were in the process of achieving their educational goals. Future studies could include recipients who did not succeed. By including these recipients, future research may identify causes for non-persistence.

Participants represented a cross-section of the general population of recipients of the GKC-HDFSP. Future studies could refine the sample to focus on a specific grouping. The college-going research could be extended by comparing and contrasting the type of high school attended (public vs. private) or by the location (suburban vs. urban). Persistence research could be extended by comparing and contrasting type of college (2-year vs. 4-year) or by studying a college individually.

The current study focused on examining the impact of the scholarship through the lens of social capital and persistence theory, concentrating on social networks. The GKC-HDFSP provides support to Hispanic college students through community networks. Future research can extend this study by examining access and persistence issues through another lens such as Cabrera's Ability to Pay and College Persistence Model.

Concluding remarks. The college experiences of recipients of the GKC-HDFSP were examined to explore the impact of the scholarship on Hispanic students' college access and persistence. The participants indicated the deficiency of college-going information affected their ability to attend college of their choice. Additionally, each of

the participants reported their ability to afford college was dependent on receiving financial support. Encouragement from others provided participants with confidence necessary to continue their education. Likewise, participants reported feeling that a sense of belonging to the college community prompted them to continue their education. Finally, internal motivators enabled participants to achieve their educational goals.

The participants described how these themes shaped their college experiences and careers. Findings from the interviews and data analysis confirmed existing literature and expanded it to a growing population. By extending the research to Midwest Hispanic students, the current study provided a deeper insight to access and persistence factors to college completion. The current study's findings present implications for high schools, colleges, and community organizations involved in meeting the needs of a growing Hispanic population. Although experiences of the participants varied, each expressed an appreciation for the community support received during their education and a desire to inspire the next generation of Hispanic scholars.

References

- Adam, F., & Rončević, B. (2003). Social capital: Recent debates and research trends. *Social Science Information, 42*(2), 155-183.
- Adelman, C. (2007, August). Do we really have a college access problem? *Change, 39*(4), 48-51.
- Alfred, M. V., & Nanton, C. R. (2009, Summer). Survival of the supported: Social capital networks and the finish line. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education, 122*, 83-93.
- Arzy, M. R., Davies, T. G., & Harbour, C. P. (2006). Low income students: Their lived university campus experiences pursuing baccalaureate degrees with private foundation scholarship assistance. *College Student Journal, 40*(4), 750-766.
- Astin, A. W. (1993). *What matters in college*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Bassani, C. (2007). Five dimensions of social capital theory as they pertain to youth studies. *Journal of Youth Studies, 10*(1), 17-34. doi:10.1080/13676260701196087
- Bautsch, B. (2011, July). Investing in higher education for Latinos: Payoffs for state economies. *National Conference of State Legislatures*. Retrieved from <http://www.ncsl.org/documents/educ/PayoffsForStateEconomies.pdf>
- Berger, J. B., & Milem, J. F. (1999). The role of student involvement and perceptions of integration in a causal model of student persistence. *Research in Higher Education, 40*(6), 641-664.
- Bogdan, R. C., & Biklen, S. K. (2003). *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theories and methods* (4th ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

- Cabrera, A. F., Castaneda, M. B., Nora, A., & Hengstler, D. (1992). The convergence between two theories of college persistence. *Journal of Higher Education, 63*(2), 143-164.
- Cabrera, A. F., & LaNasa, S. M. (2001). On the path to college: Three critical tasks facing America's disadvantaged. *Research in Higher Education, 42*(2), 119-149.
- Chrispeels, J. H., & Rivero, E. (2001). Engaging Latino families for student success: How parent education can reshape parents' sense of place in the education of their children. *Peabody Journal of Education, 76*(2), 119-169.
doi:10.1207/5153279327930pje7602
- Coleman, J. S. (1988). Social capital in the creation of human capital. *American Journal of Sociology, 94*(s1), S95-S120.
- Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry & research design choosing among five approaches* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Diaz-Strong, D., Gomez, C., Luna-Duarte, M. E., & Meiners, E. R. (2011). Purged: Undocumented students, financial aid policies, and access to higher education. *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education, 10*(2), 107-119.
doi:10/1177/1538192711401917

- Edwards, K., & Sawtell, E. (2013, July). *The demographic wave: Rethinking Hispanic AP trends*. Paper presented at the Advanced Placement annual conference, Las Vegas, NV. Retrieved from http://research.collegeboard.org/sites/default/files/publications/2013/8/presentation-APAC-2013-hispanic-ap-demographic-wave_0.pdf
- Engstrom, C., & Tinto, V. (2008). Access without support is not opportunity. *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning*, 40(1), 46-50.
- Fischer, M. J. (2007, April). Settling into campus life: Differences by race/ethnicity in college involvement and outcomes. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 78(2), 125-156.
- Fontana, A., & Frey, J. H. (2005). The interview. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed., pp. 695-727). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Foss, S. K., & Waters, W. (2007). *Destination dissertation: A traveler's guide to a done dissertation*. Lanham, MD: Rowman Littlefield Publishers, Inc.
- Fry, R. (2002). *Latinos in higher education: Many enroll, too few graduate*. Washington, DC: Pew Hispanic Center. Retrieved from <http://www.pewhispanic.org/files/reports/11.pdf>
- Fry, R. (2004). *Latino youth finishing college: The role of selective pathways*. Washington, DC: Pew Hispanic Center. Retrieved from <http://www.pewhispanic.org/files/reports/30.pdf>

- Fry, R. (2011). *Hispanic college enrollment spikes, narrowing gaps with other groups*. Washington, DC: Pew Hispanic Center. Retrieved from <http://www.pewhispanic.org/files/2011/08/146.pdf>
- Fry, R., & Taylor, P. (2013). *Hispanic high school graduates pass Whites in rate of college enrollment*. Washington, DC: Pew Hispanic Center. Retrieved from http://www.pewhispanic.org/files/2013/05/PHC_college_enrollment_2013-05.pdf
- Gandara, P., & Contreras, F. (2009). *The Latino education crisis: The consequences of failed social policies*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Gansemer-Topf, A. M., & Schuh, J. H. (2005). Institutional grants: Investing in student retention and graduation. *NASFAA Journal of Student Financial Aid*, 35(3), 5-20.
- Garcia, M. (2007). *Strategies that contribute to academic success of first semester Hispanic community college students* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3284860)
- Garcia, M. (2010). When Hispanic students attempt to succeed in college, but do not. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 34, 839-847.
doi:10.1080/10668926.2010.485003
- Gardner, S. (2005). Easing the college funding crisis for Hispanics. *Education Digest: Essential Readings Condensed for Quick Review*, 70(7), 58-62.
- Gieser, J. D. (2012, Summer). Financial aid through a Bourdieu-ian lens: Inequality perpetuated or an opportunity for change? *Journal of College Admission*, 9-14.
- Gloria, A. M., Castellanos, J., Lopez, A. G., & Rosales, R. (2005). An examination of academic nonpersistence in decisions of Latino undergraduates. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences*, 27(2), 202-223. doi:10.1177/0739986305275098

- Gonzalez, K. P., Stoner, C., & Jovel, J. E. (2003). Examining the role of social capital in access to college for Latinas: Toward a college opportunity framework. *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education*, 2(1), 146-170. doi:10.1177/1538192702250620
- Greater Kansas City Community Foundation. (2014). *Hispanic Development Fund Scholarship Program*. Retrieved from <https://www.growyourgiving.org/scholarships/hispanic-development-fund-scholarship-program>
- Gross, J. P. K., Hossler, D., & Ziskin, M. (2007). Institutional aid and student persistence: An analysis of the effects of institutional financial aid at public four-year institutions. *NASFAA Journal of Student Financial Aid*, 37(1), 28-39.
- Heller, D. E. (2002, July/August). Is merit-based student aid really trumping need-based aid? *Change*, 34(2) 6-8. doi:10.1080/00091380209601843
- Heller, D. E. (2003). Aid matters: Merit aid is the wrong tool to attract the best and the brightest. *Connections: The Journal of the New England Board of Higher Education*, 18(1), 24-25.
- Heller, D. E. (2004). Pell Grant recipients in selective colleges and universities. In R. D. Kahlenberg (Ed.), *America's untapped resource: Low-income students in higher education* (pp. 157-166). Washington, DC: Century Foundation Press.
- Heller, D. E., & Marin, P. (2004). *State merit scholarship programs and racial inequality*. Cambridge, MA: The Civil Rights Project at Harvard University.
- Henry, G. T., & Rubenstein, R. (2002). Paying for grades: Impact of merit-based financial aid on educational quality. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 21(1), 93-109.

- Hernandez, J. C. (2000). Understanding the retention of Latino college students. *Journal of College Student Development, 41*(6), 575-588.
- Hernandez, J. C., & Lopez, M. A. (2004). Leaking pipeline: Issues impacting Latino/a college student retention. *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory and Practice, 6*(1), 37-60.
- Hispanic Development Fund. (2014). *30th anniversary awards*. Copy in possession of author.
- Holland, N. E. (2010). Postsecondary education preparation of traditionally underrepresented college students: A social capital perspective. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education, 3*(2), 111-125. doi:10.1037/a0019249
- Homeland Security. (2014). *Deferred action for childhood arrivals*. Retrieved from <http://www.dhs.gov/deferred-action-childhood-arrivals>
- Hu, A. (1997, September 15). Education and race: The performance of minority students in affluent areas refutes the prevailing educational shibboleths. *National Review, 49*(17), 52-54.
- Hu, S. (2010). Scholarship awards, college choice, and student engagement in college activities: A study of high-achieving low-income students of color. *Journal of College Student Development, 51*(2), 150-161.
- Hurtado, S., & Carter, D. F. (1997). Effects of college transition and perceptions of the campus racial climate on Latino college students' sense of belonging. *Sociology of Education, 70*(4), 324-345.

- Irizarry, J. G. (2012). Los caminos: Latino/a youth forging pathways in pursuit of higher education. *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education, 11*(3), 291-309.
doi:10.1177/1538192712446322
- Israel, G. D., Beaulieu, L. J., & Hartless, G. (2001). The influence of family and community social capital on educational achievement. *Rural Sociology, 66*(1), 43-68.
- Janesick, V. J. (2003). The choreography of qualitative research design. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Strategies of qualitative inquiry* (2nd ed., pp. 46–79). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Jenkins, A. L., Miyazaki, Y., & Janosik, S. M. (2009). Predictors that distinguish first-generation college students from non-first generation college students. *Journal of Multicultural, Gender and Minority Studies, 3*(1). Retrieved from <http://www.scientificjournals.org/journals2009/articles/1429.pdf>
- Kansas Dream Act, HB 2145 (2004).
- Kash, J. P., & Lasley, S. (2009). Defining merit: The impact of award structure on the distribution of merit aid. *Journal of Student Financial Aid, 39*(1), 30-40.
- Katsinas, S. G., D'Amico, M. M., & Friedel, J. N. (2011). Access and funding in public higher education - The 2011 national survey [Report brief]. Tuscaloosa, AL: The Education Policy Center at the University of Alabama. Retrieved from http://www.cci.edu/multimedia/market/Alabama_the_2011_state_survey.pdf
- Kinzie, J., Gonyea, R., Shoup, R., & Kuh, G. D. (2008, Fall). Promoting persistence and success of underrepresented students: Lessons for teaching and learning. *New Directions for Teaching and Learning, 115*, 21-38. doi:10.1002/tl.323

- LaNasa, S. M., & Rogers, S. (2009). Financial aid and engagement: An examination of how a private scholarship program facilitates access, retention, and success for low-income students. *Enrollment Management Journal*, 3(1), 30-45. Retrieved from <http://www.tgslc.org/pdf/emj-sp09.pdf#page=31>
- Lane, A. A. (2009) *Private scholarship aid, access, and success for African American and Hispanic students attending a public, large, rural-serving associate's college* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3385386)
- Li, D. (2008). Degree attainment of undergraduate student borrowers in four-year institutions: A multilevel analysis. *NASFAA Journal of Student Financial Aid*, 37(3), 5-16.
- Lillis, M. P., & Tian, R. G. (2008, Summer). The impact of cost on college choice: Beyond the means of the economically disadvantaged. *Journal of College Admission*, 4-14.
- Lin, N. (2000). Inequality in social capital. *Contemporary Sociology*, 29(6), 785-795.
- Linares, A. G. (2008). *Factors associated with successful Hispanic students in higher education* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3338727)
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.

- Liou, D. D., Antrop-Gonzalez, R., & Cooper, R. (2009). Unveiling the promise of community cultural wealth to sustaining Latina/o students' college-going information networks. *Educational Studies: Journal of the American Educational Studies Association*, 45(6), 534-555. doi:10.1080/00131940903311347
- Longanecker, D. (2002a, April). Is merit-based student aid really trumping need-based aid? *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning*, 30-37.
- Longanecker, D. (2002b, August). Rebuttal. In D. E. Heller, Is merit-based student aid really trumping need-based aid? *Change*, 34(2) 6-8.
doi:10.1080/00091380209601843
- Longanecker, D. (2006, February). A tale of two pities: The story of public higher education finance in America. *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning*, 14-25.
- Longerbeam, S. D., Sedlacek, W. E., & Alatorre, H. M. (2004). In their own voices: Latino student retention. *NASPA Journal*, 41(3), 538-550.
- Lunenburg, F. C., & Irby, B. J. (2008). *Writing a successful thesis or dissertation: Tips and strategies for students in social and behavioral sciences*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Marsico, M., & Getch, Y. Q. (2009). Transitioning Hispanic seniors from high school to college. *Professional School Counseling*, 12(6), 458-462.
- Martinez, S., & Cervera, Y. L. (2012). Fulfilling educational aspirations: Latino students' college information seeking patterns. *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education*, 11(4), 388-402. doi:10.1177/1538192711435560
- Martinez, T. P. (2006). Cost-free financial aid focuses kids on college. *Education Digest*, 71(8), 51-56.

- Merriam, S. B. (2001). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education* (2nd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Munoz, D. (1986). Identifying areas of stress for Chicano undergraduates. In M. A. Olivas (Ed.), *Latino college students* (pp. 131-156). New York, NY: Teacher's College Press.
- Museus, S. D. (2010). Understanding racial differences in the effects of loans on degree attainment: A path analysis. *Journal of College Student Retention, 11*(4), 499-527.
- Nora, A. (1990). Campus-based aid programs as determinants of retention among Hispanic community college students. *The Journal of Higher Education, 61*(3), 312-331.
- Nora, A., Rendon, L. I., & Cuadraz, G. (1999). Access, choice, and outcomes: A profile of Hispanic students in higher education. In A. Tashakkori & S. H. Ochoa (Eds.), *Education of Hispanics in the United States: Politics, policies, and outcomes* (pp. 175-199). New York, NY: AMS Press, Inc.
- Nunez, A. (2009). Latino students' transitions to college: A social and intercultural capital perspective. *Harvard Educational Review, 79*(1), 22-48.
- Obama, B. (2009, February). *Address before a Joint Session of the Congress*. Retrieved from <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=85753>
- O'Connor, N. (2009). Hispanic origin, socio-economic status, and community college enrollment. *The Journal of Higher Education, 80*(2), 121-128.
- O'Connor, N., Hammack, F. M., & Scott, M. A. (2010). Social capital, financial knowledge, and Hispanic student college choices. *Research in Higher Education, 51*, 195-219. doi:10.1007/s11162-009-9153-8

- Oldfield, K. (2007, February). Humble and hopeful: Welcoming first-generation poor and working-class students to college. *About Campus*, 2-12.
- Olivares, R. R. (2011). *Exploring variables predictive of bachelor degree completion among Hispanics: A focus on persistence, perseverance, and prosperity* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3459710)
- Orozco, V. (2007). *Ethnic identity, perceived social support, coping strategies, university environment, cultural congruity, and resilience of Latina/o college students* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3275216)
- Orrenius, P. (2004, June). Immigrant assimilation: Is the U.S. still a melting pot? *Southwest Economy*, 3. Dallas, TX: Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas. Retrieved from www.dallasfed.org/assets/documents/research/swe/2004/swe0403a.pdf
- Oseguera, L., Locks, A. M., & Vega, I. I. (2009). Increasing Latina/o students' baccalaureate attainment: A focus on retention. *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education*, 8(1), 23-53. doi:10.1177/1538192708326997
- Patel, R., & Richburg-Hayes, L. (2012, May). Performance-based scholarships: Emerging findings from a national demonstration. *MDRC Policy Brief*, 1-12.
- Perez, P. A. (2010, Winter). College choice process of Latino undocumented students: Implications for recruitment and retention. *Journal of College Admission*, 206, 21-25.

- Perna, L. W. (2000). Differences in the decision to attend college among African Americans, Hispanics and Whites. *The Journal of Higher Education, 71*(2), 117-141.
- Perna, L. W. (2006). Understanding the relationship between information about college prices and financial aid and students' college-related behaviors. *The American Behavioral Scientist, 49*(12), 1620-1635. doi:10.1177/0002764206289144
- Perna, L. W., & Titus, M. A. (2005). The relationship between parental involvement as social capital and college enrollment: An examination of racial/ethnic group differences. *The Journal of Higher Education, 76*(5), 485-518.
- Portes, A. (2000). The two meanings of social capital. *Sociological Forum, 15*(1), 1-12.
- Putnam, R. D. (1993, Spring). The prosperous community: Social capital and public life. *The American Prospect, 35*.
- Rios-Aguilar, C., & Deil-Amen, R. (2012). Beyond getting in and fitting in: An examination of social networks and professionally relevant social capital among Latino/a university students. *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education, 11*(2), 179-196. doi:10.1177/1538192711435555
- Rubin, H. J., & Rubin, I. S. (2005). *Qualitative interviewing: The art of hearing data*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Sandefur, G. D., Meier, A. M., & Campbell, M. E. (2004). Family resources, social capital, and college attendance. *Social Science Research, 35*(2), 525-553. doi:10.1016/j.ssresearch.2004.11.003

- Sander, L. (2012, March 13). 45 years of survey data show first-year students' financial concerns are on the rise. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Retrieved from <http://chronicle.com/article/45-Years-of-Survey-Data-Show/131149/>
- Santiago, D. A. (2011, February). The roadmap ensuring America's future by increasing Latino college completion. Washington, DC: *Excelencia in Education*. Retrieved from <http://www.edexcelencia.org/research/roadmap-ensuring-americas-future>
- Santiago, D., & Solis, M. (2012). *Ensuring America's future by increasing Latino college completion: Latino college completion in 50 states* [Full Report]. Washington, DC: Excelencia in Education.
- Saunders, M., & Serna, I. (2004). Making college happen: The college experiences of first-generation Latino students. *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education*, 3(2), 146-163. doi:10.1177/1538192703262515
- Seidman, I. (1998). *Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in education and the social sciences* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Sergiovanni, T. (2000). *The lifeworld of leadership. Creating culture, community, and personal meaning in our schools*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Spradlin, T. E., Burroughs, N. A., Rutkowski, D. J., & Lang, J. R. (2010, Fall). *College persistence and completion strategies: Opportunities for scaling up* [Education Policy Brief, 8(4)]. Bloomington, IN: Center for Evaluation & Education Policy.
- Stader, D. L. (2013). *Law and ethics in educational leadership* (2nd ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson Education.

- Stake, R. E. (1995). *The art of case study research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Stanton-Salazar, R. D. (1997). A social capital framework for understanding the socialization of racial minority children and youth. *Harvard Educational Review*, 67(1), 1-40.
- Stanton-Salazar, R. D., & Dornbusch, S. M. (1995). Social capital and the reproduction of inequity: Information networks among Mexican-origin high school students. *Sociology of Education*, 68, 116-135.
- Stern, G. M. (2009). Why Latino students are failing to attend college. *Education Digest: Essential Readings Condensed for Quick Review*, 75(1), 46-49.
- Strayhorn, T. L. (2008). Sentido de pertenencia: A hierarchical analysis predicting sense of belonging among Latino college students. *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education*, 7(4), 301-320. doi:10.1177/1538192708320474
- Strayhorn, T. L. (2010). When race and gender collide: Social and cultural capital's influence on the academic achievement of African American and Latino males. *The Review of Higher Education*, 33(3), 307-332.
- Swail, W. S., Cabrera, A. F., & Lee, C. (2004). *Latino youth and the pathway to college*. Washington, DC: Pew Hispanic Center. Retrieved from <http://www.pewhispanic.org/files/reports/31.pdf>
- Tanner, R. M. (2012). *Federal student aid: Access and completion* [White paper]. Washington, DC: Association of Public and Land-grant Universities. Retrieved from <http://www.aplu.org/document.doc?id=4276>

- Terenzini, P. T., Springer, L., Yaeger, P. M., Pascarella, E. T., & Nora, A. (1996). First generation college students: Characteristics, experiences and cognitive development. *Research in Higher Education, 37*(1), 1-22.
- Tierney, W. G. (1999). Models of minority college-going and retention: Cultural integrity versus cultural suicide. *Journal of Negro Education, 68*(1), 80-91.
- Tinto, V. (1993). *Leaving college: Rethinking the causes and cures of student attrition* (2nd ed.). Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.
- Tinto, V. (1998). Colleges as communities: Taking research on student persistence seriously. *The Review of Higher Education, 21*(2), 167-177.
- Toby, J. (2010). How scholarships morphed into financial aid. *Academic Quarterly, 23*, 298-310. doi:10.1007/s12129-010-9174-y
- U.S. Census Bureau. (1980). *1980 census characteristics of the population*. Retrieved from <http://www.census.gov/prod/www/decennial.html>
- U.S. Census Bureau. (1990). *1990 age, nativity, and citizenship for the United States, states, and counties*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Commerce. Retrieved from <http://www2.census.gov/prod2/decennial/documents/1990/CPH-L-114.pdf>
- U.S. Census Bureau. (2000). *2000 census characteristics of the population*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Commerce. Retrieved from <http://censtats.census.gov/pub/Profiles.shtml>
- U.S. Census Bureau. (2010a). *2010 census questionnaire reference book* [No. D-1210]. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Commerce. Retrieved from http://www.census.gov/2010census/partners/pdf/langfiles/qrb_English.pdf

- U.S. Census Bureau. (2010b). *Summary file 1*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Commerce. Retrieved from <http://www.census.gov/2010census/news/press-kits/summary-file-1.html>
- U.S. Census Bureau. (2011). *Hispanic heritage month 2011: Sept. 15 - Oct. 15* [CB11-FF.18]. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Commerce. Retrieved from http://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/pdf/cb11ff-18_hispanic.pdf
- U.S. Department of Education. (2011, April). *Winning the future: Improving education for the Latino community*. Retrieved from http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/rss_viewer/WinningTheFutureImprovingLatinoEducation.pdf
- Wells, R. (2008). Social and cultural capital, race and ethnicity, and college student retention. *Journal of College Student Retention, 10*(2), 103-128.
doi:10.2190/CS.10.2.a
- Witham, L. (2003, January 28). Churchgoing Hispanics do better at school, study finds. *The Washington Times*, A03.
- Wolanin, T. R. (2001). *Rhetoric and reality: Effects and consequences of the HOPE scholarship* [Working paper]. Washington, DC: Institute for Higher Education Policy. Retrieved from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED451819.pdf>
- Yamamura, E. K., Martinez, M. A., & Saenz, V. B. (2010, Spring). Moving beyond high school expectations: Examining stakeholders' responsibility for increasing Latina/o students' college readiness. *The High School Journal, 126*-148.
- Zarate, M. E., & Burciaga, R. (2010, Fall). Latinos and college access: Trends and future directions. *Journal of College Admission, 24*-29.

Zurita, M. (2005). Stopping out and persisting: Experiences of Latino undergraduates.

Journal of College Student Retention, 6(3), 301-324.

Appendices

Appendix A: GKC-HDFSP Survey

Greater Kansas City Hispanic Development Fund Scholarship Program Survey

1. Last Name
 - Optional: Maiden Name
2. First Name
3. Email
4. Phone Number
5. Current Address
6. Permanent Address
7. Country of Birth
 - Optional: What is your residency status?
 - Optional: What is your heritage?
8. Gender
9. Name of High School Attended
10. What year did you graduate from high school or receive your GED?
11. Are you currently enrolled in a higher education program?
12. Current year in college?
13. Are you enrolled as a full-time student?
14. What is your current job title and how many years have you been in this position?
15. What is the current size of your household?
16. What is your current family income?
17. Did any of your siblings receive a scholarship from HDFSP?
18. If so, who? Please list their email?
19. What was your family's income at the time you applied for your most recent HDFSP scholarship?
20. At the time of your most recent application, how well did your mother speak English?
21. At the time of your most recent application, how well did your father speak English?
22. What was your father's highest level of education?
23. What was your mother's highest level of education?
24. What is your highest level of education?
25. What is your latest major?
26. What is your latest cumulative Grade Point Average?
27. Did you participate in any of the following programs? If so how influential were the following high school outreach programs in your decision to apply to and attend college?
 - a. Talent Search
 - b. LULAC/ LNES (HLOP)
 - c. Latinos of Tomorrow
 - d. Prep KC
 - e. College Early Academic Outreach
 - f. Upward Bound
 - g. Migrant Education Program

- h. SAT/ ACT Workshops
28. Were there any other outreach programs you participated in during high school that were influential in your decision to apply to and attend college? Please tell us how influential they were.
 29. How important were the following factors in deciding which college or university to attend?
 - a. The strong reputation of the school's academic programs
 - b. Low expenses (tuition, books, room and board)
 - c. Availability of scholarship or grant
 - d. Ability to attend school while living at home
 - e. Within home state
 30. Please list the colleges and years you have attended (or are going to attend this fall) and what degree you received from each institution.
 31. How difficult were the following factors when starting college?
 - a. Keeping up with your coursework
 - b. Managing your time effectively
 - c. Paying for college expenses
 - d. Managing your money effectively
 - e. Getting help with academic work when you need it
 - f. Making friends
 - g. Having a comfortable living environment
 - h. Getting to know your way around
 - i. Managing family responsibilities
 - j. Lack of campus diversity
 32. What other scholarships/ grants did you receive to pay for college? How much did you receive from them?
 33. To date, how much money in the form of PERSONAL SAVINGS have you used to pay for your college education?
 34. To date, how much money in the form of FAMILY CONTRIBUTIONS have you used to pay for your college education?
 35. To date, how much money in the form of STUDENT LOANS have you used to pay for your college education?
 36. Have you attained your educational goals?
 37. How influential were the following in your decision to discontinue your college education?
 - a. Financial hardships
 - b. Academic hardships
 - c. Difficulty fitting in socially
 - d. Marriage
 - e. Military service
 - f. Found job I wanted
 - g. Cultural differences
 - h. Sickness/ disability
 - i. Family issues/ commitments
 - j. Lack of connection to campus
 - k. Legal immigration status

38. Are you interested in resuming your education?
39. How did you first hear about the HDFSP scholarship?
40. Have you applied for the HDFSP scholarship more than once?
41. What years did you APPLY for a scholarship from the HDFSP?
42. What years did you RECEIVE a scholarship from the HDFSP?
43. Why did you decide to reapply to the HDFSP?
44. Why did you decide to not reapply to the HDFSP?
45. Would you like to be involved with HDFSP?
46. Have you been previously asked to donate to HDFSP?
47. Tell us how you would like to be involved with HDFSP. I would be willing to...
48. Would you be interested in ...
 - a. Attending alumni events
 - b. Sharing your story with other students and alumni
 - c. Donating money
 - d. Not at this time, but maybe in the future
49. Would you be interested in...
 - a. Receiving eNewsletters
 - b. Viewing blog posts by alumni
 - c. Following us on Twitter for education/ scholarship updates
 - d. Viewing pictures of our events on Facebook
50. We appreciate any other comments you may have:
51. Do you know any other HDFSP recipients? We encourage you to share this survey with other HDFSP recipients
52. What did receiving the HDFSP scholarship mean to you?
 - a. My Latino community supports me
 - b. I am being acknowledged for my hard work
 - c. Gave me the financial opportunity to go to school, that otherwise I would not have had
 - d. Increased my Latino community's chances for success
53. Please list any other ways receiving the HDFSP scholarship has impacted you?

Appendix B: Interview Protocol

Research Study:

The Impact of the Greater Kansas City Hispanic Scholarship Fund Program for Hispanic Students' Access and Persistence in Higher Education

Time of the Interview:

Date:

Place:

Interviewer:

Interviewee:

College/ University:

Questions:

1. How did you hear about the Greater Kansas City Hispanic Scholarship Fund Program?
2. How did the scholarship affect your choice of attending a two-year or four-year college?
3. Why did you decide to start your career at a 2-year or 4-year college?
4. How did this scholarship influence your decision to transfer to a 4-year institution (if necessary)?
5. How did you plan on covering the costs associated with tuition, fees, room and board at your institution? Pell grants? Personal loans? Out of pocket?
6. Did you apply for financial aid? What types of funding were you eligible for when you received your award letter from the school of your choice? Did you accept these funds?
7. What are the advantages and disadvantages of being given the Hispanic Scholarship Fund?
8. Have you ever thought about stopping out or not finishing your degree due to financial, academic, or social reasons?

9. Do you receive support (i.e., financial, emotional, etc.) from your family? If so, what type of support?
10. Have you ever utilized student support services (i.e., advising, tutoring, academic, career, or personal counseling)? If so, have these programs or services helped you remain in college?
11. Do you belong to any student clubs or organizations on campus (i.e., extracurricular activities)? How helpful were they in getting you involved or adjusted to campus life?
12. Have you ever worked a full-time or part-time job while taking 12 or more hours of coursework?
13. What type of academic or social support do you receive for the Greater Kansas City Scholarship Fund?
14. What steps did you take to prepare for college? Did you receive any assistance?

Appendix C: IRB Form



SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
GRADUATE DEPARTMENT



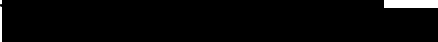
Date: _____
IRB PROTOCOL NUMBER _____
(IRB USE ONLY)

IRB REQUEST
Proposal for Research
Submitted to the Baker University Institutional Review Board

I. Research Investigator(s) (Students must list faculty sponsor first)

Department(s) **School of Education Graduate Department**

Name	Signature	
1. Anne Daugherty	_____	Major Advisor
2. Katie Hole	_____	Research Analyst
3. Tes Mehring	_____	University Committee Member
4.	_____	External Committee Member

Principal Investigator: Julia Vargas
Phone: 
Email: 
Mailing address: 

Faculty sponsor: Dr. Anne Daugherty
Phone:
Email: adaugherty@bakeru.edu

Expected Category of Review: ___Exempt Expedited ___Full

II: Protocol: (Type the title of your study)

Impact of a Private Scholarship on Access and Persistence of Hispanic College Students

Summary

In a sentence or two, please describe the background and purpose of the research.

The purpose of this study is to determine the impact of the receiving aid from the Greater Kansas City Hispanic Development Fund Scholarship Program (GKC-HDFSP) on access to post-secondary education and persistence in college for its recipients. Additionally, the study seeks to identify factors that facilitated or hindered scholars' educational attainment.

Briefly describe each condition or manipulation to be included within the study.

There will be no manipulation or condition within this study.

What measures or observations will be taken in the study? If any questionnaire or other instruments are used, provide a brief description and attach a copy.

Interviews will be conducted with each of the participants. The interview protocol was developed for a study by Dr. Austin Lane. He has granted permission for me to adapt the interview questions for this study. Interview questions and permission are attached.

Will the subjects encounter the risk of psychological, social, physical or legal risk? If so, please describe the nature of the risk and any measures designed to mitigate that risk.

The subjects will not encounter any psychological, social, physical, or legal risk by participating in this study.

Will any stress to subjects be involved? If so, please describe.

The subjects will not be exposed to any stress in the study.

Will the subjects be deceived or misled in any way? If so, include an outline or script of the debriefing.

The subject will not be deceived or misled in any way.

Will there be a request for information which subjects might consider to be personal or sensitive? If so, please include a description.

There will be no personal or sensitive information requested. Interview questions are limited to the college-going experience. Archival data, including scholarship applications, essays, and survey data, contains information on family income history. Study participants may opt out of answering any question during the interview process.

Will the subjects be presented with materials which might be considered to be offensive, threatening, or degrading? If so, please describe.

The participants will not be subjected to materials that might be considered offensive, threatening, or degrading.

Approximately how much time will be demanded of each subject?

Study participants will be asked to participate in one face-to-face interview. Each interview will last 60-90 minutes.

Who will be the subjects in this study? How will they be solicited or contacted? Provide an outline or script of the information which will be provided to subjects prior to their volunteering to participate. Include a copy of any written solicitation as well as an outline of any oral solicitation.

Subjects for the study will be individuals who have received the GKC-HDFSP scholarship in the past 29 years and who have completed the 2012 GKC-HDFSP survey. Participants will be asked to participate in the study through a joint email invitation from the Executive Director of the GKC-HDFSP and the current study's researcher. The study invitation outline is attached.

What steps will be taken to insure that each subject's participation is voluntary? What if any inducements will be offered to the subjects for their participation?

Potential participants will be notified that taking part in the study is voluntary in the study invitation. Participants will be given an informed consent form that will state that participation is voluntary. Participants may withdraw from the study at any time for any reason. A copy of the form is attached. No inducements will be offered to the subjects for their participation.

How will you insure that the subjects give their consent prior to participating? Will a written consent form be used? If so, include the form. If not, explain why not.

There will be an informed consent form. Study participants must sign the consent form prior to their entry in the study. In order to maintain confidentiality, signed consent forms will be stored in a locked cabinet of which only the principal investigator has access.

Will any aspect of the data be made a part of any permanent record that can be identified with the subject? If so, please explain the necessity.

No aspect of the data will be made part of any permanent record of the subject. All study participants will be assigned pseudonyms after their agreements to participate in the study.

Will the fact that a subject did or did not participate in a specific experiment or study be made part of any permanent record available to a supervisor, teacher or employer? If so, explain.

No information will be included in the permanent record to a supervisor, teacher, or employer.

What steps will be taken to insure the confidentiality of the data? Where will it be stored? How long will it be stored? What will be done with it after the study is completed?

Participants will be given a pseudonym to protect their anonymity. The digital recording and transcripts will be stored on the home computer of the principal investigator. This computer is password protected and solely accessed by the principal investigator. The principal investigator will share raw data with only the research committee. Additionally, any written data contained within the study will be kept in a locked cabinet within the principal investigator's residence. The recording and the transcriptions will be destroyed 3 years after the completion of this dissertation project.

If there are any risks involved in the study, are there any offsetting benefits that might accrue to either the subjects or society?

There are no risks nor offsetting benefits anticipated with this study.

Will any data from files or archival data be used? If so, please describe.

Existing data including scholarship applications, essays, and survey data compiled by the GKC-HDFSP will be used to supplement the interviews of study participants.

Appendix D: Permission for Interview Protocol

Vargas, Julia

From: Lane, Austin A [Austin.A.Lane@lonestar.edu]
Sent: Tuesday, July 24, 2012 5:03 PM
To: Vargas, Julia
Subject: Re: Dissertation request

Julia,

Your research topic sounds interesting. Feel free to use my interview protocol. I'd just ask that you give me the appropriate credit when you cite your source.

Good luck!

Dr. Austin A. Lane
 President
 Lone Star College-Montgomery

Sent from my iPad

On Jul 22, 2012, at 3:11 PM, "Vargas, Julia" <Julia.Vargas@Rockhurst.edu> wrote:

> Dear Dr. Lane,
 > I am a doctoral candidate at Baker University Graduate School of Education's Educational Leadership Program. I have come across your doctoral dissertation "Private scholarship aid, access, and success for African American and Hispanic students attending a public, large, rural-serving associate's college." This has been a very helpful find as I am in the early stages of research design.
 >
 > My research will evaluate the impact of the Greater Kansas City Hispanic Scholarship Fund on the access and persistence of Hispanic student in post secondary education. The fund has awarded scholarships for the past 28 years and has not measured its impact. A multiple case study approach would allow me to incorporate several pieces of data to analyze. I am working with the administrator of the fund to obtain the original application, original essay, and recent survey responses for a sample group of recipients. In addition to these sources, I would like to have individual interviews.
 >
 > The interview protocol that you include in the appendix of your dissertation covers many of the topics I wish to ask. May I use your interview protocol in my research?
 >
 > If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.
 >
 > Many thanks,
 >
 > Julia Vargas
 > Director, Center for Service Learning
 > Rockhurst University
 > 1100 Rockhurst Road
 > Kansas City, MO 64110
 > 816-501-4545 phone
 > 816-501-4169 fax
 > julia.vargas@rockhurst.edu
 >

Appendix E: IRB Approval



Baker University Institutional Review Board

Monday, July 21, 2014

Re: IRB Reply

Dear Julie Vargas:

On July 15, 2014, the Baker University Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviewed the research proposal entitled, "Impact of a Private Scholarship on Access and Persistence of Hispanic College Students." The IRB approves the protocol. Work on this project may begin at this time. This approval is for a period of one year from the date of this notification and will require continuation approval if the research project extends beyond that time period.

If you make any changes to the protocol during the period of this approval, you must submit a revised protocol to the IRB for approval before implementing the changes. Furthermore, if the results of the research are used to prepare documents for publication or oral presentations at professional conferences, abstracts must be submitted to the IRB as part of the project record.

If you have any questions regarding the IRB's decision, please contact me at 785-594-8440 or ctodden@bakeru.edu.

Sincerely,

Chris Todden EdD, Chair
Baker University IRB

Baker University IRB Committee
Verneda Edwards EdD
Sara Crump PhD
Molly Anderson
Scott Crenshaw

Appendix F: Invitation to Participate

Dear Greater Kansas City Hispanic Development Fund Scholarship recipient,

My name is Julia Vargas. I am a doctoral candidate in the School of Education at Baker University. I am currently conducting a research study in conjunction with the Greater Kansas City Hispanic Development Fund – Scholarship Program (HDFSP) for my doctoral dissertation. I am writing to invite you to participate in this research study.

The focus of my research is to explore the impact of HDFSP on Hispanic students' ability to attend and remain enrolled in college. My research will consist of interviews with former and current recipients of the scholarship to tell me about your college experience. The interview will consist of questions about the decision making process of going to college and your experience once enrolled in college. The meeting will take place at a mutually agreed upon time and place, and should last about one hour. The interview will be digitally recorded so that I can accurately reflect on what is discussed. Members of the research team who will transcribe and analyze them will only review the recordings.

Participation is confidential and voluntary. Study information will be kept in a secure location. The results will be in my dissertation and may be presented at professional meetings, but your identity will not be revealed. It is my hope that the results of the study will be useful to the HDFSP when making future programming and award decisions.

Taking part in the study is your decision. You do not have to be in this study if you do not want to be. You may also quit being in the study at any time or decide not to answer any question you are not comfortable answering.

I will be happy to answer any questions you have about the study. You may contact me [REDACTED]

Thank you for your consideration. If you would like to participate, please contact me at the number or email listed below and I will contact you to set up our interview. With kind regards,

Julia Vargas

cc: Mayra Aguirre
[REDACTED]

Appendix G: Informed Consent Form

Consent for Participation in a Research Study

Research Title

The Impact of a Private Scholarship Program on Access and Persistence of Hispanic Students

Researcher

Julia M. Vargas

Advisor

Anne Daugherty, PhD.

Baker University

adaugherty@bakeru.edu

Invitation to Participate

You are invited to participate in a research study about the impact of the Greater Kansas City Hispanic Development Fund Scholarship Program. Thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule to consider participation.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to determine the impact of the Greater Kansas City Hispanic Development Fund Scholarship Program (GKC-HDFSP) on access to post-secondary education and persistence in college for its recipients. The researcher seeks to identify factors that facilitated scholars' educational attainment, to understand the role of the GKC-HDFSP on college access and persistence, and to understand the financial need of the scholars.

Description of Procedure

The study will consist of individual interviews and review of survey results, scholarship application form, and essay. The interviews will last approximately one hour. The session will be digitally recorded and transcribed to ensure accurate reporting of the information that you provide. The survey results and application forms will be provided by the GKC-HDFSP.

Voluntary Participation

Participation in this study is voluntary at all times. You may choose to not participate or to withdraw your participation at any time. During your participation you may choose to not answer any question. Not answering questions is not the same as leaving the study. If you do decide to leave the study, the information you have already provided will be deleted from the findings.

Confidentiality

All interview notes, recordings, and transcripts will be password protected and only the research analyst and principal investigator will have access to the raw data. If you choose to participate, you will be given a pseudonym for analysis. Your actual identity will not

be known or available from the transcripts. There will be no names attached to the tapes or transcriptions, and there will be no identifying information or names used in any written reports or publications which result from this evaluation project. Your participation will be strictly confidential.

Questions

If you have questions about this research study, please contact Julia Vargas, at [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

The Baker University Institutional Review Board approved this study on July 15, 2014 and will expire on July 15, 2015 unless renewal is obtained by the review board. If you have any questions regarding the IRB's decision, please contact Dr. Chris Todden at 785-594-8440 or ctodden@bakeru.edu.

Authorization

You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep for your records.

Once again, we thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule to participate in this process.

Participant's printed name

Investigator's printed name

Participant's signature

Investigator's signature

Date

Date

Appendix H: Thank You Note

Dear _____,

Thank you for your participation in the research study on the impact of the Greater Kansas City Hispanic Development Fund Scholarship Program on Hispanic students.

Your generous offering of time and the manner in which you shared your experiences was truly valuable to the project. In addition to your generosity, your openness and honesty was both refreshing and stimulating. The insights gained from you about your college experiences enrich the understanding of college access and persistence for Hispanic students. Your contribution will improve pathways for students pursuing college education and will add to the body of research on Hispanic college students.

If you have any questions or further comments, please do not hesitate to contact me at [REDACTED]. Best wishes on your future endeavors.

Sincerely,

Julia Vargas