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School Counselors in Large Public High Schools:  
Roles and Responsibilities and Their Effects on Latinos/as  
A-G College Course Completion Rates

By

Patricia Filimaua



## **Approval of the Dissertation Committee**

This dissertation has been duly read, reviewed, and critiqued by the Committee listed below, which hereby approves the manuscript of Patricia Filimaua as fulfilling the scope and quality requirements for meriting the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Education.

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## **Abstract**

School Counselors in Large Public High Schools:  
Roles and Responsibilities and Their Effects on Latinos/as  
A-G College Course Completion Rates

By

Patricia Filimaua

Claremont Graduate University: 2022

This paper explores the research question and literature pertaining to school counselors and their roles and responsibilities and how they can have an effect on Latino/a students and their A-G college course requirement completion rates. Latinos/as students are the lowest academic achieving students in the nation among their peers and the lowest in enrolling in four-year colleges and universities (Ochoa, 2013). This research paper explores the institutional and systemic barriers in large public schools, specifically, the role of the school counselor in assisting Latino/a students prepare, encourage, disseminate information, meet, and apply to colleges and universities. This topic is of importance not only for Latino/a students and their educational success and social class mobility but for the success of all underrepresented, low-income, first-generation students. A mixed methods approach was used with a quantitative method in the form of a survey distributed to all school counselors in one high school district and a survey to junior and senior students of selected classes in the same high school district, and a qualitative method in the form of a semi-structured, open-ended interview to school counselors. Findings indicate that school counselors report that they are not offered professional development, workshops/conferences and that their roles and responsibilities do not allow them to meet with students adequately to provide the college information as set by the American School Counselors

Association (ASCA) standards. These findings are concerning and are a call for immediate action to address the needs of Latino/a students in large public high schools by redefining the role of the school counselor and their true purpose.

*Keywords:* School counselors, Latino/a students, college requirement completion rates, institutional barriers, and social capital

## Dedication

*To my family (all of them): my parents, Felipa & Rodolfo, Grandma Sea, my sisters (all of them on both sides of the family), my nephews & nieces, my friends & colleagues.*

*To my school counselor colleagues, you truly inspire and motivate me every day.*

*To my high school counselor, Barbara Ogenesov, for role modeling what a school counselor should be. I will never forget you.*

*To my children, Pekelo & Leilani, my joy, and pride, you make me proud always, I hope to make you proud as well. Los quiero mucho, besito!*

*And my dogs for being the best writing companions & distraction, Kameha & Kalani.*

*Most of all, I am grateful to my husband, Frankie. Thank you for always supporting my dreams & goals (and paying for them). I love you always.*

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank my advisor, Dr. June Hilton, for her guidance, advice, and lots of patience. She was my school counselor in graduate school. My gratitude and appreciation are beyond words for all the hours of work she put into my dissertation.

I would also like to acknowledge my dissertation committee, Dr. Dina Maramba, and Dr. David Drew for their support and guidance on more levels than just academia.

Thank you to my high school colleagues and second home for the past 24 years, and the high school district in the San Gabriel Valley for allowing me to study this topic which very near to my heart. Thank you for giving me the foundation for my education and continuing to do so for all students.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

### Statement of the Problem

By 2030 Latino/a students between the ages of 5-18 will constitute 25% of the total U. S. school population (Smith-Adcock et al., 2006). Considering that they are the most undereducated ethnic group in the United States, have the highest dropout rates, and spend less time in school than Whites, Asians, and African-Americans, research into this alarming statistic must be a priority for all educators and policymakers (Aviles et al., 1999). Latino/a students are not supported with resources, programs, and enrichment activities that address their unique circumstances as a pan-ethnic group. Many scholars have concluded that overall, the high school experience of Latino/a students is neither productive nor enjoyable and that many of them feel humiliated by, discriminated against, and fearful of the school environment and school authorities (Clark & Vela, 2000). Defining the role of their school counselor is critical because school counselors are some of the closest sources of assistance in the public school setting. They serve as gatekeepers and have in their hands the future social status and life trajectory of millions of Latinos/as and other underrepresented, low-income, first-generation students.

As a high school counselor for the past 24 years, I have had the pleasure of sending many students to college. But sadly, too many have not succeeded. The California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADS) documents the number of students who met the college requirements by ethnicity in public high schools each year. Latino/a students historically lag behind in reaching college. I have also seen the institutional barriers at work that slowly erode the motivation of Latino/a students who already face other hardships in their daily lives. Adequate housing, well-paying jobs, proper mental and physical health care complicate their

success rates in school. At home, familial, and cultural expectations frequently conflict with the goals school present.

The high student-to-counselor ratio creates an overwhelming feat for all school counselors, but especially for school counselors working with Latino/a and other underrepresented, first-generation, low-income students. Their predicament is compounded by the fact that the job duties of many school counselors are ill-defined. Their caseloads are pushed to the limit, are used for duties outside their standards, which limit their individual student attention time. This in turn hurts the school counselor-student relationship. Therefore, the role of high school counselors in the daily lives of Latino/a students needs to be explored in more depth. The issues some of the researchers have uncovered thus far include 1) inadequate advisement, 2) lack of availability, 3) lack of individual counseling, 4) differential treatment, and 5) low expectations (Vela-Gude et al., 2009).

Unfortunately, as a practitioner, I have witnessed first-hand all of these issues. However, in defense of my profession, early findings also indicate that school counselors report that they are not offered adequate professional development, workshops and conferences, and that their roles and responsibilities do not allow them to meet with students adequately to provide the college information recommended by the American School Counselors Association (ASCA). These findings are concerning and need to be immediately addressed by redefining the role of school counselors and their true purpose. With appropriate training, expectations and adequate funding, school counselors would be able to provide quality services and resources to increase the A-G college course completion rates for all students.

For the purpose of this study the A-G college course requirements refer to the minimum set of high school courses required for admission to the University of California (UC) and the

California State University (CSU) systems. These courses can differ from the high school requirements as mandated by each district governing board. The “A-G” courses are (see Appendix D):

- A. 2 years of History
- B. 4 years of college-preparatory English
- C. 3 years of college-preparatory mathematics
- D. 2 years of college-preparatory science
- E. 2 years of a language other than English
- F. 1 yearlong course of visual and performing arts
- G. 1 year of a college-preparatory elective

The UC maintains public a-g course lists online that provide complete information about each high school's approved courses (*CSU-UC Comparison of Minimum Freshman Admission Requirements*, n.d.).

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this mixed-methods study is to investigate the role of the school counselor in public high schools and the effect they have in supporting and encouraging Latino/a students in completing their A-G college admission requirements. At the same time, the study will assess the perceptions of Latino/a students concerning the role and relationship of their school counselors. The importance of studying the Latino/a completion rate of A-G courses in public high schools is to determine what role high school counselors in compiling that record. Ultimately, the research is aimed at helping high school counselors recognize their own personal biases, raise their expectations for Latino/a student success, and remove institutional barriers that retard closure of the achievement gap.

### **Significance of the Study**

Institutional agents are the gatekeepers that make the difference in Latino/a students and children of poor and working-class families. They provide that pivotal moment when a low-

income, first-generation, or underrepresented student realizes that college is possible. They provide the human, social, and cultural capital that is lacking in their habitus. Research on institutional agents is critical to break the reproduction of inequality, especially because Stanton-Salazar explains that most of these practices “occurring within our public schools and classrooms happen at the tacit, hidden, or subterranean level, and that it is these practices that have the most lasting effects on children” (Stanton-Salazar, 2001). For years structural barriers and institutional practices in U.S. public schools have produced breeding grounds for inequality and reproduction of systemic constraints. These systematic practices have continually tracked and labeled Latino/a students preventing them from achieving academic success (Ochoa, 2013). Other societal restrictions such as housing, community resources, healthcare, immigration policies, access to preschool, and many other factors affecting low-income and working-class families are contributing factors, but these are all factors outside of their public school experience. My research questions have always been what we can do as high school counselors to make that connection both with students and their parents to make college happen for first-generation, low-income, Latino/a students. Scholars state that most first-generation, low-income, and other underrepresented college success stories involve an institutional agent that assisted that individual with knowledge, emotional support, guidance, and generally “donated social capital” that otherwise would not have been provided (Fuller & Hannum, 2002). This encouraging but limited research on school counselors and their effects on the success of Latino/a students in public schools will guide this study and the questions being addressed.

### **Research Questions**

The following questions will be addressed and guide this study:

1. To what extent do school counselors play a role in college access for first-generation, low-income, Latino/a students in public high schools?
  - a. What are the school counselor limitations and constraints in their public school settings?
  - b. What personal views do school counselors have in servicing Latino/a students?
2. To what extent do institutional barriers in public high schools impede Latino/a students from achieving their A-G college course requirements?
  - a. What types of tracking systems are in place in public school systems preventing Latino/a students from having access to A-G college prep courses?
  - b. What policies and practices are in place in public schools preventing Latino/a students access to AP/Honors/Accelerated courses?

### **Implications for Research, Policy, and Practice**

The implications for Latino/a students in closing the educational achievement gap is beneficial for the nation as a whole on many levels including bringing social justice, economic prosperity, inclusivity, healing, and redefining the identity of our country as a nation of immigrants. Cesar Chavez stated, “We cannot seek achievement for ourselves and forget about progress and prosperity for our community... Our ambitions must be broad enough to include the aspirations and needs of others, for their sakes and for our own (uflw.org, 2021). Latinos/as students are the largest ethnic minority group in the United States, and the lowest in academic achievement in “nearly every measure of education achievement (achievement tests, high school completion, college participation, and college graduation rates)” (Gonzalez, Stoner, & Jovel, 2003). Education is the answer, but it is even more painful knowing that it is within reach and yet so unobtainable. As educators, especially school counselors, it is our professional obligation,

responsibility, and moral duty to invest our time in fostering trusting relationships with our students that will enable us to transmit the information, skills, and knowledge necessary for them to change their educational trajectory and improve their chances of upward mobility.

As college selectivity and competition increase, the game and the rules change for low-income, first-generation, and other underrepresented students again. Bourdieu claims, that “once a great number of actors gain a great deal of capital, those actors influence and eventually change the structures” (McDonough, 1994). Upper-middle-class students can meet these new demands by getting private college counseling, SAT tutoring, and in general “packaging themselves” for admittance into highly selective colleges that in turn will give them higher employment opportunities, financial success, upward mobility, and social status (McDonough, 1994). Latinos/as and other students of color are falling behind their counterparts and widening the achievement and college enrollment gap.

The implications for educators in the United States are even more relevant given all of the recent social injustice and protests with people of color and law enforcement throughout the country. Latino/a students need college-educated role models and mentors to help them achieve higher education. As Roberta Espinoza explains in her book *Pivotal Moments*, “when educators embrace the role of advocate or mentor and become genuinely supportive, their actions carry the potential to transform students’ educational opportunities in positive and lasting ways” (Espinoza, 2011). There are concrete and tangible ways of transmitting this knowledge to first-generation, low-income, and underrepresented students, according to Espinoza. “They teach their students skills about navigating schools, social networking, utilizing educational resources, and making effective decisions” (Espinoza, 2011). This can only happen if there is a trusting relationship and resources to be able to transmit from institutional agents that are willing to

donate their social capital to make a life-altering effect on low-income and first-generation students.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### Social Capital & Societal Expectations

Sociologists believe that parent involvement and school relationships depend upon their socio-economic status, which would benefit middle-class, White, and other privileged students and disadvantage Latino/a students, students of color in general, low-income students, and underserved students in large public schools (Lareau, 1989). Middle-class parents generally have a “concerted cultivation” approach in raising their children (Lareau, 2003). They enroll their children in enrichment classes, music lessons, sports, and other after-school activities. Most middle-class parents have a college degree and share child-rearing practices with institutions such as schools, thus enabling them to have better teacher-parent relationships and acquire resources and services for their children (Lareau, 1989). Lower-class families generally do not have a college education, distrust institutions such as schools and usually trust teachers with their professional opinions regarding their children. They do not share the same child-rearing practices and generally have a natural growth approach in how they raise their children. Poor and working-class families do not feel welcomed, comfortable, or have a good relationship with teachers and schools. Thus, their children do not have access to the same resources and services as children of middle-class families, putting them at an academic disadvantage and “research suggests that parental involvement, a measure of social capital, is an important predictor of college enrollment” (Perna & Titus, 2004).

Institutional agents are the gatekeepers that make the difference in children of poor and working-class families in transmitting the social capital missing in their lives to be able to succeed academically. They provide that pivotal moment when a Latino/a, low-income, first-generation, or underrepresented student who otherwise not be on equal footing with a middle-

class student, realize that college is possible. They provide the human, social, and cultural capital that is lacking in their habitus (Perez, 2009). Research on institutional agents is critical to break the reproduction of inequality since they have contact with students on a daily basis. Of course, even institutional agents, i.e., school counselors are limited with the social capital they can provide because they are “bounded by the limits” of their community and school resources (Portes, 1998).

One such article that looks at these limits is, “Why Latino Students Are Failing to Attend College,” in *The Hispanic Outlook in Higher Education*. It examines a published work from the University of Chicago’s Consortium on Chicago’s School Research in 2008, titled *From High School to the Future: Potholes on the Road to College*. This study was based on a longitudinal exploration of students in 12 English classrooms in Chicago Public Schools. They presumed that the issues faced in Chicago by underrepresented students were happening in Los Angeles, New York, Miami, and any urban school system. According to the article only 60% of Latino students who aspire to graduate from a four-year college complete it, compared to 77% of African-American students and 76% of White students.

The study found that Latinos “lacked social capital around college,” and they encounter many other obstacles along almost every step of the process. The report indicated that Latinos live in neighborhoods with fewer college-educated residents, and they have less access to college graduates. These college graduates provide critical information and skills to navigate the college application process, write the college essay, handle the complicated financial aid forms that other privileged higher-socio-economic students have. Teachers can be those college graduates they have access to on a daily basis. School counselors should also help Latino/a students how to conduct a college search, how to select a career, and whether to attend a two or a four-year

college. Students can easily give up because of the confusion and fear of cost that may be overestimated. They don't want to waste their parent's money and would rather find something that is concrete and immediate, like a lower-paying job. According to the article, "schools have to do for students what suburban families do for their kids" (Stern, 2009).

The Chicago study recommends three specific actions that schools can take to create a college-going culture: 1) Teachers must make the college process part of the curriculum in all subjects, 2) School staff must be clear with students of the high expectations required to attend a four-year college, and 3) School staff should assist students with filling out applications, writing essays, and financial aid forms. Teachers should have a more active role in promoting college and integrating it into their curriculum, after all, they see that student daily. The study did indicate that career centers were introduced at 100 Chicago schools, and students filling out the FAFSA (financial aid form) went up 13% (Stern, 2009).

### **Cultural and Academic Expectations of Latino/a Students**

Among other factors contributing to the low educational achievement for Latino groups, is familial and cultural expectations of males, societal expectations of them as independent and the wage earner, large, public, underfunded, crowded high schools, and educators who are not prepared to handle the specific needs of this multicultural group (Clark et al., 2013). In an article in the *Journal of Counseling and Development*, "Support and Barriers for Latino Male Students' Educational Pursuits: Perceptions of Counselors and Administrators, (Clark et al., 2013)," qualitative data was used to explore the barriers and resources Latino male students experience with their postsecondary goals and their pursuit of a college education. The study involved high school counselors, principals, postsecondary administrators as well as the perceptions and experiences of Latino students themselves. The theoretical framework used in this study was a

multicultural theory and a social justice advocacy theory. The study took place in a southeastern state with a large and growing Latino/a population where the percent of students on free/reduced lunch was 55% (higher than the national average). Their method was an interview-style of participants, 14 individuals from two high schools, the school district, a community college, and the state four-year university. The researchers were also guided by phenomenology to attempt and interpret the meanings of the participants' life experiences and separate their own judgment.

Clark, Ponjuan, Orrock, Wilson, and Flores (2013), mention that a recent study indicated that Latino male students have negative perceptions of high school counselors. They stated that their counselors provided inadequate counseling, were not available, gave preferential treatment to other students, and had low expectations of them and their college aspirations. The study revealed that there were four major themes: lack of awareness of the educational obstacles of Latinos by educators, the role of Latino families for Latino males, the impact of peers and mentoring on Latino males, and the role of outreach programs and partnerships focused on Latino males. The concern with this study is the number of participants was small at only 14, and of those 14 only two were high school counselors, the rest were school administrators. School counselors work closer with students on a day-to-day basis rather than school administrators.

### **Latino/a Gender Expectations in Public Schools**

Latino students are usually studied as a group, but when studied demographically there are significant differences. This topic is researched in "Catching Them Early: An Examination of Chicano/Latino Middle School Boys' Early Career Aspirations," an article in *Urban Review: Issues and Ideas in Public Education*. Latino students are expected to grow faster than any other minority group in the United States, yet they enroll in college at a lower rate than any other

ethnic group and gender even within their same ethnic group (Martinez & Castellanos, 2018). Research suggests they are dropping out of school and “vanishing” from the educational pipeline (Saenz & Ponjuan, 2009). According to Martinez and Castellanos (2018), lower college enrollment for Latina students compared to Latino students can be explained due to differential treatment in the educational system. Latino male students are tracked in lower educational systems, placed in special education, and are the highest in suspensions and other disciplinary actions. The authors also indicate that Latino students are stereotyped as “deviant,” participants in “gang-related” activity, and are truant to school, which in turn leads to disengagement from school (Martinez & Castellanos, 2018). The research also indicates that by 8th grade only 4% of students of color want to be doctors and lawyers, compared to 27% of nonstudents of color (Cook et al., 1996).

This study by Martinez and Castellanos (2018), focuses on Latino middle school students and how their early career and postsecondary aspirations are formed. The decisions Latino students make in middle school, the classes they take, and the aspirations they have for college begin as early as eighth grade. The question posed was how Latino students formulate their college and career aspirations, what obstacles or resources do they perceive, and what individuals or experiences influence their aspirations? The study took place in a middle school in a historically White community with a recent influx of Latino immigrants in the Pacific Northwest. The results indicated three main themes were present; the first is that students received different types of academic support-parents, family members, and peers offered encouragement, while teachers and other staff members provided more specific advice; the second was that students that engaged with mentors, academic programs, and peers had more

familiarity with the college requirements; and third, students with greater exposure to college information, developed more concrete plans and aspirations.

Martinez and Castellanos (2018) find that the major implications for Latino boys in middle school is for teachers and counselors to have the same high expectations for them as any other student, to create programs and outreach that promote a college-going culture. The authors suggest that the responsibility of college information does not solely lie on counselors, but all school agents. One interesting finding was that out of the 11 Latino boys interviewed, all five who played a sport wanted to be professional sports athletes. It also indicated the impact that school engagement, through sports, academic programs such as AVID, and deeper connections with school agents resulted in a clear and deep understanding of the steps required to pursue higher education.

New data also reveals that overall women are surpassing men in academic achievement, in graduating from high school, enrolling in colleges, and completing degrees. The ratio of women to men in enrollment in undergraduate school is 134:100, and some colleges are enrolling over 60% women according to the article. Statistics from the National Center for Educational Statistics indicate that women are surpassing men in bachelor's degrees and advanced degree completion. What does this mean for Latino men in particular? The gender gap exists across race and socioeconomic backgrounds, but according to Snyder and Dillow (2011), Latino male students have almost four times the high school dropout rate of White male students (19.9% vs 5.4%).

### **Latino/a Student Public School Experiences and Perspectives**

Latino/a students' public school experiences and perspectives are not positive, and in some cases, students are fearful of attending schools and feel that they are racially profiled

(Ochoa, 2013). In her book, *Academic Profiling: Latinos, Asian Americans, and the Achievement Gap* (2013), author Gilda Ochoa describes how Latino/a students perceive they are treated as second class citizens compared to Asian students and AP/Honors students by their own school counselors. According to the student testimonials, they are sent back to class, dismissed, have class schedules that don't lead to meeting their A-G college requirements, among other daily microaggressions that are practiced and tacit (Ochoa, 2000). Similar findings were documented in *Professional School Counseling, "My Counselors Were Never There:" Perceptions from Latino College Students* (2009)." This qualitative study consisted of interviews of eight Latino college students regarding their perceptions of the role of their high school counselors. The findings revealed the following major stressors: 1) inadequate advisement, 2) lack of availability, 3) lack of individual counseling, 4) differential treatment, and 5) low expectations. The article indicates what national census statistics show, that the Latino population is the fastest-growing minority group in the United States and that Latino male students have the highest high school dropout rates in the nation. They address the issue of their perception of the role of their school counselor because they are one of the closest sources of assistance in the public school setting.

The authors, Vela-Gude, Cavazos, J., Johnson, Fielding, Cavazos, A., Campos, and Rodriguez, (2009) review the ASCA National Model (American School Counselor Association, 2005) as a framework for promoting college access for Latino students. In this model, school counselors are urged to encourage Latino students to enroll in honors or AP courses, include individual and group counseling, and be social justice advocates. Out of the eight students interviewed, only one had a positive review of their school counselor, and the other eight said they were never there, they failed them, placed them in the wrong classes, failed to disseminate

important information, had low expectations, or discouraged them, gave preferential treatment to athletes, popular kids, and families that were well-known or rich. Some of the reasons the article indicated why Latino/a students had a poor experience with their counselor were that they lacked the knowledge or training, had a deficit model of thinking about Latino/a students and their abilities, school counselors may be given a large number of administrative responsibilities, and have large caseloads.

These microaggressions and biases are repetitive in an already oppressive educational system and eventually lead to Latino/a students dropping out. In “Perceptions of Chicano/Latino Students Who Have Dropped Out of School,” an article in the *Journal of Counseling & Development* by Aviles, Guerrero, Howarth, and Thomas, (1999), explore this phenomenon. This qualitative study of focus group interviews with Chicano/Latinos who dropped out of high school in the last five years from public schools in Minnesota reveals these concerns. Again, this article confirms that Chicanos/Latinos are the most undereducated ethnic group in the United States, have the highest dropout rates, and spend less time in school than Whites, Asians, and African-Americans. This study found that in 1993-94 Chicano/Latino students in Minnesota had a dropout rate four times higher than Whites, 12% vs. 3%. The Minnesota Spanish Speaking Affairs Council in collaboration with the governor’s office issued a request for proposals to study this concern.

The issues that emerged included problems with attendance and credits, participation in school activities, alternative educational programs, low expectations of teachers and staff, and personal situations. In regard to attendance and credits, students said that missing school inevitably caused them to lose credits because they didn’t understand the school policy on attendance and consequences, didn’t know how to make up missing assignments, felt frustrated

and lost motivation with the insurmountable feeling of recovering credits. They stated that the school was not flexible with their migrant status, especially during the fall harvest season.

Students, parents, and staff are not aware of the complicated attendance policies and their unintended consequences with students already having hardships in their life. They lose motivation, feel alienated and targeted, and thus feel like they are better off dropping out and joining the workforce to help their families. These students in the article also reported being discouraged from participating in extracurricular activities, funneled out to non-mainstream programs such as alternative programs where they had no real instruction, placed in special education, placed in English as a Second Language (ESL) courses based on surname and physical appearance, felt principals and counselors had low and negative opinion of them, disciplined and suspended more often than White students. While these stories were anecdotal, they are valid perceptions and part of their lived experiences that led them to conclude that their power relationship is inequitable.

Latinos and Latinas differ in their educational experiences as reported in, “Achieving the College Dream? Examining Disparities in Access to College Information Among High Achieving and Non-Achieving Latina Students,” according to Kimura-Walsh, Nakamura, Griffin, and Allen (2009). This article in the *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education* explores the college preparatory experiences of Latina high and non-high achievers at an urban school in Southern California where the majority of students are Latino/a. The authors discuss a 74% increase in Latino students enrolling in undergraduate post-secondary institutions from 1991-2001 (Harvey & Anderson, 2005). However, a closer look indicates that two-thirds of those students entered a community college and only a third went to a four-year institution, whereas,

for White students, it was reversed. The purpose of the study within one high school was to explore the micro-level dynamics of how college information is distributed to Latina students.

The conversation again focuses on school counselors as key figures in providing critical and time-sensitive information to students. However, with the school counselor to student ratio in California 1:556, more than double the recommended American School Counselor Association (ASCA) of 1:250, school counselors are also struggling with other duties as assigned. School counselors are spending their time and energy with the highest achieving students or the most disruptive students. Layer that on top of familial expectations and the fear and confusion of the cost of college, and most Latinas are steered away from AP courses and residential or competitive colleges in lieu of local community colleges where they can stay at home and commute as well as work and help the family. College resource information is often allocated to perceived academic ability.

The conceptual framework used in this study was an opportunity to learn (OTL), that was conceived by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) as a measurement tool to determine whether learning was the result of ability or learning differences. It currently is being used as part of federal education reform to close the achievement gap and increase accountability. The article highlights what most researchers overlook: looking closely at Latinos/as in urban schools where they are the majority because they likely are a racially homogeneous group and are often lumped together, overlooking intragroup dynamics in gender, academic achievement, language classification, generational status, and socioeconomic background (Kimura-Walsh et al., 2009).

### **Preferred School Counselor Characteristics**

When surveyed, Latino/a students and parents have preferred characteristics from school counselors that they feel contribute to a trusting relationship but unfortunately are not considered when staffing. In “Latino High School Students’ Perceptions and Preferred Characteristics of High School Counselors” semi-structured interviews were used to interview Latino/a students in a study to address such issues. The article states that many Latino/a students experience high poverty, high teenage pregnancy rates, high rates of dropping out, and low post-secondary educational achievement (Eckenrod-Green & Culbreth, 2008). The authors feel that researchers have neglected minority students’ likes, dislikes, preferred characteristics of school counselors and that research concerning the relationship between school counselors and Latinos/as is scarce. Most of the research that does exist indicates that Latinos perceive their school counselor mostly in a negative way. This research has been conducted predominantly on Latino/a students who have dropped out, have been in dropout prevention programs, or are in community violence prevention programs. More research on Latinos that are considered mainstream population needs to be explored.

The results that emerged included four major themes: 1) preferred school counselor characteristics, 2) student needs, 3) help-seeking concerns, and 4) accessibility of school counselors. Students stated some of them had not had contact with their school counselor, two students mistook other school personnel for their school counselor and did not have a clear understanding of the school counselor’s role and variety of services available. Students reported that they prefer school counselors that are understanding, could relate to students, patient, trustworthy, helpful with problems, took time to listen, are friendly, and speak Spanish. (Eckenrod-Green & Culbreth, 2008). One student felt that the school counselor was not genuine

in helping him make a decision about a class and another did not feel supported concerning a class conflict and stated that they wouldn't come back to them for any help. These studies are important for Latino/a students and other marginalized groups to close the educational achievement gap and increase their social mobility.

In "Culturally Responsive School Counseling for Hispanic/Latino Students and Families: The Need for Bilingual School Counselors," an article in *Professional School Counseling*, by Smith-Adcock, Daniels, Lee, Villalba, and Indelicato, (2006), in which they conducted a study of pupil services administrators in Florida and their concerns over the high number of Latino students dropping out of high school. Their overall level of participation in educational programs is also lower than in other minority populations. This can be in part due to the levels of English proficiency and lack of knowledge of the U.S. educational system that can lead to mistrust and discomfort for both parents and students towards schools and school officials.

The themes covered in the questionnaire measured cultural barriers in the schooling of Hispanic/Latino families, academic, career, and personal needs of Hispanic/Latino students, and the adequacy of current program offerings, and finally the benefit of having bilingual school counselors. The results indicated that most administrators agreed that Hispanic/Latino children are provided necessary guidance in schools (52%) (Smith-Adcock et al., 2006). They also agreed that Hispanic/Latino families and students perceive problems related to academic, career, and personal success and that this group is at risk for not getting the services they need. The participants highly agreed that a high level of need for bilingual, Spanish-speaking school counselors to address these issues. District-level administrators also believed it was necessary for school systems to involve families in the educational process and provide cultural and sensitivity training to the entire school staff.

### **Culturally Deficient Perspective**

Students that are not empowered feel trapped by the norms of the dominant institution and its values. In “Buscando la Libertad: Latino Youths in Search of Freedom in School” in *Democracy & Education Journal*, author Jason Irizarry (2011), raises the voices of Latino youth. This ethnographic study was over a two-year period as the researcher took on a role outside of his university teachings to teach one course in high school at a local high school. This high school is located in the northeastern part of the country and was experiencing a big influx of Latino students and the faculty and administration were not prepared. It is one of the lowest-performing and economically depressed districts in the state. Irizarry uses Latino/a Critical Race Theory as the theoretical lens as he explores the current discourse around the “achievement gap” that shadows the oppressive policies and systemic inequities that exist for these students.

The author claims that to compare students of color and English language learners with White students and wealthier students is not equitable because their educational settings are not on a level par. Students of color and lower-performing schools are correlated to the teacher quality and gains in academic achievement and performance on standardized tests. Research literature suggests schools with large populations of students from low socio-economic backgrounds have the least effective and most novice teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2000). The article also indicates that the narrative in the achievement gap is largely rooted in a deficit and subtractive perspective of Latino/a youth. That is, that they don’t care about their education or that they are not as smart as other groups. Also, the district curriculum is also centered around test-prep pedagogies, ignoring, or suppressing cultural identities and conforming to the norms of the dominant culture (Irizarry, 2011).

The author's interviews with these Latino youth were incredibly powerful and heartbreaking. Students expressed "not being able to breathe," feeling over-policed, always being watched, not being able to speak Spanish, chastised for being Latino, verbally dismissed in class. The author states that the official annual dropout rate of the school he was observing was 4.1%, but a closer look at the data reveals that only half of all Latino students who entered the school as ninth graders were still enrolled in the twelfth grade (Irizarry, 2011).

### **Institutional Agents' Roles, Responsibilities and Practices**

As previously stated, research indicates that parental support is critical for the academic success of all students. Unfortunately, for Latino/a, low-income and first-generation students not all parents have the social and financial capital to donate to their children. When they do not receive it from parents, institutional agents can increase their chances of educational success by mentoring them, encouraging, motivating, and of course donating altruistically their social capital to help navigate the educational process. Educational agents act as "gatekeepers" and can help set the framework for the student's ambitions and most importantly for the trajectory of their educational success and future earnings. Educational support from teachers, counselors, and other staff members to low-income, first-generation, and underrepresented students can be critical in the disruption of educational and societal inequality. School counselors need to be trained in the unique and specific needs of this very diverse Latino/a pan-ethnic group. All institutional agents need to be trained in multicultural competencies and offer services to students and parents in their native languages.

"School Counselors' Intervention in Bias-Related Incidents Among Latino Students" in this article in the *Journal of School Violence proper citation*, Russell and Cassandra (2016), look at school counselor's multicultural knowledge competence, multicultural self-efficacy, and

perceptions of Latino students' experiences of the school environment. They state that nearly one-quarter of Latino/a students report that they have experienced bias-based bullying related to their ethnicity in school and Latino/a students are also more likely to experience hate-related speech directed at them because of their ethnicity. They are also more likely to feel less safe at school than White, non-Latino students. The authors conclude that these experiences ultimately hurt Latinos' mental health and academics, likely resulting in higher dropout rates.

Russell and Cassandra (2016) look at school counselors because they can be the main personnel in public schools who intervene in bias-based bullying, discrimination, or harassment. They surveyed 206 school counselors from six states with the highest proportion of Latino students, mostly in urban districts. Most of the counselors 59.2% identified as White, and a majority of the participants were female, with 85%. The framework used in the study was the theory of planned behavior by Ajzen (1985, 2012) in which it assumes that actual and intended behaviors are guided by individuals' attitudes, understanding of norms, and perceived behavioral control. The results indicated that overall, counselors in this study reported that their schools were relatively safe for Latino/a students, suggesting that there is a disconnect between what they perceive and what Latino/a students are indicating. School counselors also self-reported a high understanding of multicultural knowledge which then made them more likely to intervene in bias-based bullying, harassment, or discrimination against Latino/a students (Russell & Cassandra, 2016).

Another relationship worth exploring in the educational system that directly affects Latinos/as is that of teachers. In "The Disproportionality Dilemma: Patterns of Teacher Referrals to School Counselors for Disruptive Behavior, an article in the *Journal of Counseling & Development* the disproportionality of English and Math teacher referrals of Latinos for

disciplinary behavior to school counselors is explored by Bryan, Day-Vines, Griffin, and Moore-Thomas (2012). They examine this phenomenon of how certain ethnic student populations nationwide have a higher percentage of special education placement, dropout, discipline referrals, suspension, and expulsion rates. African-American students comprised 17% of the public school student population in 1997, yet they accounted for 32% of all suspensions, according to the article.

The article discusses the relationship between discipline history and school success. They find that students lose time in school, feel disengaged, alienated, perceive a negative school climate, which then leads to academic failure, school dropout, and in extreme cases, incarceration. According to the authors, data indicates that students with prior disciplinary referrals have lower levels of academic achievement. Students with no disciplinary history have a higher social responsibility and higher-grade point averages compared to students with previous disciplinary history. The data also suggests that students with prior disciplinary history have higher rates of suspension for attitudinal infractions, which could suggest that they are under more surveillance (Bryan et al., 2012).

The results indicated that males were more likely to be referred than females in both departments, however, in English, race was a predictor of teacher referrals to school counselors. This was not the case in the math department. In both English and math classes, teacher personal expectations and previous at-risk behaviors and prior disciplinary actions were predictors of teacher referrals. In English classes, Black students had 71% greater odds of referrals than White students, and Black females had more than double the odds, multiracial females had three times the greater odds (Bryan et al., 2012). The implications for students of color are devastating and it is no wonder why students of color feel disenfranchised, picked-on, and discriminated

against. Teachers, school counselors, and all school staff, must urgently undergo multicultural training across all public schools in the nation.

“A Social Constructivist Approach to Preparing School Counselors to Work Effectively in Urban Schools” uses a social construction framework to study and improve the effectiveness of school counselors in urban schools with large African-American and Latino/a students. In, *The Urban Review: Issues and Ideas in Public Education*, Martinez and Castellanos (2018), describe school counselors as “mental health professionals.” As a school counselor, I have a conflict with that term because we do not have the appropriate degrees to be mental health professionals. A mental health professional is trained in counseling techniques and does extensive hours of training working clinically in the mental health environment. The school counselors’ national standards include a social and emotional component that is based on general counseling in a high school setting. Regardless, the authors express that school counselors working in an urban setting should have the personal and professional ability to see the student in a “holistic lens,” which means they see beyond test scores, discipline records, and view the student in the context of their family, culture, community, and identity. Most school counselors would concur they work with students in a holistic approach.

The authors also indicate that traditional counseling training programs do not adequately prepare school counselors to be effective in infusing cultural, historical, “social meaning-making” that promotes social justice and advocacy for students in large urban settings. They are correct in assuming that school counselors should have the awareness, knowledge, and skills to identify and address the systemic social injustices experienced day-to-day by students in urban settings. This article is aimed at improving the training of school counselors using a social construction and narrative framework, a worldview that personal experiences are products of

people's interactions with their social contexts. Their social contexts are shaped by social forces of language, culture, and identity. School counselors in urban settings should use this to form genuine relationships with students and have a realistic understanding of their social context to address the academic achievement gap. They recommend that school counselors create a counseling approach that is responsive to their students' life experiences, and not to the counselors' or dominant culture's notion of what 'normal' life should be (Martinez & Castellanos, 2018). Their treatment of students should be respectful and take leadership to create a space that addresses the needs of African American and Latino/a students in urban school settings.

Other risk factors are explored for underrepresented students in "Stand Tall to Protect Students: School Counselors Strengthening School Connectedness." This article in the *Journal of Counseling & Development* takes a report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on effective strategies for increasing protective factors in youth that could help buffer negative risk factors that ultimately affect a youth's academic and non-academic outcomes. Some of these risk factors include poverty, high mobility, environmental conditions, stressful life and events, and trauma in a youth's life. School connectedness was found to be the strongest protective factor for helping students with promoting positive academic and non-academic outcomes. This study looked at over 5500 students in an urban school, in the western United States.

School connectedness according to the CDC is the "belief by students that adults and peers in the school care about their learning as well as about them as individuals" (CDC, 2009). Students who were connected to the school had better attendance, better grades, higher test scores, lower substance abuse, lower likelihood of having early sexual encounters, and being a

victim of violence. The role school counselors have is seen as an important one in fostering school connectedness for all students. They can act as protective agents, with the capability of minimizing some of the negative impacts of risk factors. The authors examine studies that indicate that school counselors' work time is used in ways that reduce their ability to help students connect and divert them to performing duties such as clerical, disciplinary, and "fill-in" as management. Students indicate that they were just another "face in the crowd" (CDC, 2009).

The study concludes that their research questions were supported. That is, that counseling services that are responsive to student needs help students be connected to school, even in the face of extreme risk factors. School counselors who are responsive to these needs create personal relationships, and therefore, help students feel more connected to schools, feel safer at school, and believe their school is actively involving their parents. They are able to buffer students from some of the negative factors that minority students in large, urban, with high poverty schools, face on a daily basis. Students are also more likely to feel that their school is providing educational and career planning services. These results are "pivotal moments," as author, Roberta Espinoza, would say.

### **School Counselors Ambiguous Roles and Responsibilities**

School counselors are sometimes seen as expendable personnel when it comes to budget cuts. Little research exists on their role as leaders to serve as liaisons between administration and teachers. "School Counselors as Leaders in School Turnaround," an article in the *Journal of Organizational & Educational Leadership* explores this topic in a qualitative study about school counselors and their role in "turnaround" schools. "School turnaround" refers to "the rapid and significant improvement in the achievement of low-performing schools" (Peck & Reitzug, 2014). Low-performing schools have a combination of factors including a culture of low-expectations,

limited resources, lack of experienced staff, which in turn, create a cycle of school failure. Usually, low-performing schools enroll underrepresented students, students of color, low-socio-economic backgrounds, and English language learners. Federal and state funding is available to support school turnaround, which allows for a transformation in an organization to shift school culture and systemic barriers that are impeding student success.

The authors claim that school districts, principals, and teachers all have been part of the conversation to improve underperforming schools and school counselors have been left out of the solution. School counselors are in a unique position to be part of the change process because they have a different perspective. School counselors can be part of the leadership to advocate for systemic change because they can collaborate with the different stakeholders. They interviewed three school counselors from elementary, middle school, and high school. They found that school counselors are central to systemic changes by being leaders in the school with a guidance curriculum, supporting the teachers, collaborating with administration, establishing relationships with parents, bringing in resources from the community, and most of all advocating for their students. They are found to be crucial “change agents” when their role aligns with the American School Counseling Association National model. In one case, the school counselor was used for discipline, and he felt it betrayed his relationship with his students (Peck & Reitzug, 2014).

School counselors cannot be effective as leaders to change a school culture or directly affect students when they are used for other duties as assigned. In “Professional School Counselors’ Advocacy: Mandated Testing and Other Inappropriate Roles and how to advocate for change,” this topic is explored. This article in the *Journal for Georgia School Counselors Association* by James Todd McGahey (2017), examines the counselor’s role in mandated testing and its negative effects on the school population. The opening statement claims that “the

pilfering and misappropriation of children's and youth's best advocate and resource, is the Professional School Counselor..." To every school counselor who has ever felt, they went to school to be used as a babysitter by proctoring an exam, used as a substitute, used as a campus or cafeteria supervisor, or used to input hours of data, would strongly agree with that statement. For years, school counselors have had a bad rap because students and parents feel, "they are never there," "they don't know me," "they are always busy." All these statements are true to some extent. They just don't understand what school counselors have to do depending on their administration's philosophy and how they use their school counselors' time and talents.

According to the American School Counselors Association (ASCA, 2019), eighty percent of a school counselor's time should be devoted to student services. This means having a proactive and comprehensive guidance and counseling plan that allows for face-to-face time with students directly. Mental health has become a growing concern worldwide, especially because anxiety disorders amongst 13-18-year-olds has become prolific, reaching a lifetime high of 25%, the author claims (McGahey, 2017). Twenty percent of teenagers will experience depression before adulthood, and the risk of suicide increases 12 times with depression (NIMH, 2015). This is at a time when psychologists and social workers are only employed at a third of the rate of school counselors nationwide (U.S. Department of Labor, 2012), leaving school counselors to be reactive to these needs instead of identifying and treating them early. Instead, mandated testing has overtaken much of the teaching and learning in the classroom, as well as caused increased stress and anxiety to students and teachers alike. According to McGahey's article (2017) in a Georgia state survey of over 55,000 teachers, 44% of them will leave the profession by the fifth year.

McGahey (2017) suggests that school counselors are at the whim of the principal who orders them to proctor and supervise tests with the understanding that refusal will result in poor evaluations, depictions as “not a team player,” or contract non-renewal. McGahey reviews the duties school counselors are supposed to do and the inappropriate duties they actually do on a daily basis. They do offer productive alternatives and solutions for administrators and schools to use instead of wasting the advocacy and leadership of school counselors.

One of the major duties of school counselors is post-secondary planning. However, as previously mentioned, school counselors are often removed from their primary roles and away from their national standards. In a dissertation written by Paolo Varquez (2016), “Career Development Activities of School Counselors at Predominantly Latino High Schools” he studies the career development services provided by school counselors in middle and secondary schools. Varquez states that since Latinos are the second-largest racial group in the United States and are the lowest-achieving group both in academic achievement and unemployment rate compared to other racial groups, it is imperative to evaluate and improve the career development programs in public schools.

Varquez (2016) claims that school counselors are viewed as the main social capital and primary source in preparing students for postsecondary plans in high school. Unfortunately, school counselors spend significantly less time on career development activities, compared to the academic and personal social domains set by ASCA, as well as other non-counseling duties as assigned by site administrators (American School Counselor Association [ASCA], 2019). The ASCA model recommendation is a 250:1 student-to-school counselor ratio, the average in the U.S. in 2013 was 470:1, in California it was 826:1 in 2014, despite the fact that California Latino

students comprised 52% of the K-12 student population (Varquez, 2016). In this study, the participants at this particular high school had over 500 students in their caseload.

The results indicated that there were five main themes that developed from the interviews, and they were: 1) the need for parental involvement 2) counselor's barriers in delivering career activities, 3) perceptions of a potential career development course, 4) career exploration, 5) and lack of accountability for ASCA standards. All counselors in the study indicated that they understood why parents were not involved, due to family and work obligations. They also stated that certain programs, such as Naviance, and Regional Occupational Programs (ROP) classes covered most of the career development competencies of the ASCA model. The participants indicated on the questionnaire that 22 competencies were delivered very frequently and nine competencies that were never delivered. The author is correct in stating that there is no oversight or accountability for school counselors in practicing the ASCA standards and meeting the competencies.

The role of school counselors is explored in "A Phenomenological Inquiry of High School Students' Meaningful Experiences with School Counselors." This study in the *Journal of School Counseling* by Sackett, Farmer, and Moran (2018), focuses on the high school student's experience with school counselors through phenomenological interviews. The following themes were found among the student's interviews: relationship with the school counselor, characteristics of school counselors, benefit received from school counselors, and collaborations with the school counselor. The findings indicated that participants in most cases only saw their school counselors for academic purposes, such as class scheduling and for college and career readiness. Sackett, Farmer, and Moran (2018) state that the school counselor's role and their actual duties are often "incongruent" with their training and values, according to the

recommendations set by the American School Counselor Association (ASCA). Added responsibilities, inappropriate duties assigned by principals and other school personnel take school counselors away from critical and meaningful direct and indirect services to their students. School counselors should be advocates for students, instead of dealing with discipline, substituting for teachers, coordinating special education services, test proctoring, and clerical duties.

The role of the school counselor is not clear among administrators and school counselors themselves. According to a national survey, stakeholders indicated that at both the elementary and secondary levels these stakeholders disagree on the appropriateness of certain tasks related to the role of the school counselor. The study also states Amatea and Clark (2005) found that one-fourth of their sample of school administrators believe that school counselors are part of the administrative team, and should, therefore, share their responsibilities, i.e., an administrative assistant (Sackett et al., 2018).

The findings included four major themes: 1) relationship with the school counselor, 2) characteristics of school counselors, 3) benefits received from school counselors and 4) collaboration with the school counselor. For the theme of relationship with the school counselor, most students described not seeing the school counselor often and not having much of a relationship with them. They look to the school counselor for the information they need, but do not feel a personal connection. Students mostly found their school counselors being helpful, busy, caring, efficient, accessible, and knowledgeable. It was meaningful for the students when the school counselor had a welcoming attitude, smiles, provided honesty, had a caring demeanor, and were easy to talk with. In the third theme, benefits received from school counselors, students expressed it was meaningful for them when they provided information, advice,

affirmation, encouragement, getting help with academic subjects, and peer and teacher issues. The last theme, collaboration with the school counselor, students consistently portrayed their interactions and sessions as collaborative. They mentioned that their counselors were helpful in helping them their courses and that their input was valued.

### **School Counselors' Personal Perspectives**

As previously mentioned, educators in general project their personal biases or adopt generalized stereotypes of Latino/a students. Some of these misconceptions are explored in "Dispelling Seven Myths Concerning Latina/o Students: A Call to Action for School Counselors." This article in the *Journal of School Counseling*, by Cavazos J., Cavazos A., Hinojosa, and Silva (2009), states that school counselors do not provide Latino/a students with enough information about higher education, have low expectations, and fail to provide enough individual counseling and guidance. Cavazos J., Cavazos A., Hinojosa, and Silva (2009) explore seven myths about the growing Latino/a population: 1) parents do not value education, 2) students do not value education, 3) low expectations for Latino students do not exist, 4) students are receiving sufficient guidance, 5) perceived ability is a more important factor in eventual academic achievement, 6) personal barriers are more detrimental than systemic barriers, and 7) students do not have the ability to have a futuristic orientation. This article is a call to action for school counselors to provide quality attention, guidance, have high expectations, and provide more information about higher education.

This qualitative study of Latino/a students reported that they were facilitated out of the K-12 school system, that school counselors had low expectations, felt tracked in non-college or AP courses, were given poor advisement-sometimes too late into their high school career to meet the college requirements, or miss out on scholarships or financial aid, offered them military options

instead of college or other postsecondary options, and assumed that they or their parents did not value education (Cavazos et al., 2009). The foundation of this study was on Critical Race Theory and the institutional racism present historically in the American school system was discussed. Due to this theory, some educators continue to have a negative and deficit view of Latino/a students. Teachers are quoted as stating that “you have to lower the standards for those kids,” or they are not college material,” and “they are not interested in education” (Cavazos et al., 2009). What they did find in this study is that a combination of intrinsic and extrinsic factors is important in a Latino/a student and their academic achievement. Hard work, effort, and family support may be more important than perceived ability level.

Cavazos J., Cavazos A., Hinojosa, and Silva (2009) summarize that systemic barriers are more detrimental than personal obstacles since it is easier to change negative study habits and mentor and advise students than changing a historical system of low expectations, insufficient advising, and/or tracking. School counselors must be trained in current cultural awareness, and that includes an examination of historical practices and policies that have long prevented Latino/a students from succeeding in our educational system. School staff must also evaluate their own personal biases and recognize the institutional barriers within their school system so that they can advocate for Latino/a students.

### **Empowerment and Multicultural Training**

One way to fight institutional racism and academic profiling is by empowering Latino/a students. In “Empowering Chicana/o and Latina/o High School Students: A Guide for School Counselors,” in the *ASCA Professional School Counseling*, Padilla and Hipolito-Delgado (2016) explore Empowerment Theory to guide the work of school counselors. According to the authors, feelings of empowerment are related to psychological well-being, academic engagement, and

academic success in students of color. Some of the strategies they suggest school counselors employ include the importance of relationships, positive role models, building socio/cultural awareness and encouraging community engagement.

Padilla and Hipolito-Delgado (2016) describe three topics that lead to personal empowerment. The first step in the process is critical consciousness. The awareness of oppression is thought to inspire one to critically examine the dominant narrative and accepted ways of thinking that perpetuate structural inequalities. School counselors are called to assist students of color to examine their daily lives and how being a member of a marginalized group impacts their life experiences and most of all their opportunities for advancement. The second step is a positive identity. Students of color should be able to feel pride in being a member of a certain community including gender, race, sexual orientation, religion, or other social identity. Having a positive identity should bring feelings of solidarity, shared culture, traditions, experiences, and collective efficacy. The third step in gaining personal empowerment is social action. The first two steps are considered to be psychological in nature and change the individual, but not the systemic change required to liberate the oppressed and marginalized communities (Padilla & Hipolito-Delgado, 2016). Social action requires students to feel empowered in order to participate in collective advocacy and activism.

The study goes on to give school counselors practices they can apply to their daily duties. Facilitating personal empowerment through supportive relationships is important for students of color because in many cases these students do not have a college-educated adult in their life. They also need to feel supported not just by family and peers, but by school officials in order to form a trusting relationship for the planning of their post-secondary education. Another practice that is critically necessary for American public schools is culturally and socio-politically relevant

curriculum. Students of color need to address issues that impact them, and they need to be taught accurate histories and narratives that have been erased in order to promote personal empowerment. Lastly, school counselors should advocate educators and administrators engage in critical conversation with challenging topics such as racism, oppression, social inequities, in order to push the boundaries of students of color to confront these issues they face and feel empowered in finding solutions (Padilla & Hipolito-Delgado, 2016).

Multicultural training for all current and upcoming school counselors is critical in the disruption of these inequities in our school system. One area that needs more research is the training of upcoming school counselors. In “Examining Hispanic Counseling Students’ Worries: A Qualitative Approach,” an article in the *Journal of School Counseling* by Cavazos, Alvarado, Rodriguez, and Iruegas (2009), a study is recreated for Hispanic counselors-in-training from another qualitative study done in 2004 from Jordan and Kelly with Anglo counselors-in-training. Not much research exists about the worries and concerns of would-be school counselors in general, and this study addresses those of Hispanic school counselors. The authors found that in both studies, the most reported concerns were training and preparedness, competence, effectiveness, and fulfilling requirements of the program. Nelson and Jackson’s (2003) study of eight Hispanic school counselors-in-training found that Hispanic school counselors also worried about relationships, accomplishment, costs, and perceptions of school counselors. The current study found that training and preparedness, non-counseling duties, and finding a school counseling position were the most reported worries of Latino/a counseling students.

The need to study Hispanic school counselors, especially in states with an overwhelming Latino/a population is to see how prepared they are to deal with this underserved population. If certain worries and concerns hold future counselors from growing and expanding in their field,

they would be restricted to following the same duties that are typical of current school counselors, which research shows is mostly on non-counseling duties. In a study of 361 school counselors, Scarborough and Culbreth (2008) found that school counselors with more years of experience were more likely to engage in activities that they preferred.

One of the most alarming and significant concerns in the study was that none of the prospective school counselors worried about helping students pursue higher education. The ASCA model framework indicates that school counselors are supposed to help students explore and plan for their post-secondary goals. Cavazos, Alvarado, Rodriguez, and Iruegas, (2009) could not find a reason as to why this occurred, they suggested maybe participants were not aware of this duty, in which case graduate programs are not informing them of this very important role, maybe they felt confident they could help students go to college or did not understand the questions posed to them in the study. More research is needed in this unexpected and concerning result of future school counselors in their role of assisting students prepare for college.

School counselors have a significant role in the life of all students and their educational trajectories, and ultimately their social status in life. As I have presented in this literature review school counselors have to stand up for their standards as set by the American School Counselors Association (ASCA) and deliver the appropriate services to all students, especially underrepresented and underserved students that have been historically oppressed and neglected by a public school system that is systemically and institutionally racist. Part of the standards includes advocating for students via social justice and promoting higher education (American School Counselor Association, 2020). A trusting relationship can help achieve Latino's postsecondary goals if school counselors have high expectations, speak their language, respect,

and understand cultural backgrounds, promote higher education by breaking down systemic inequality such as tracking, and increase critical race awareness with appropriate curriculum and help empower students. It is a critical time in our nation for all students to succeed so that today's educators create a generation of students that continue the disruption of social inequality.

### **Limitations of the Literature**

Literature relating to educators and their relationship to Latino/a, low-income, and other underrepresented students in public schools exists, but very little research is specific in linking the role of the school counselor and their effect on Latinos/as and their A-G college course completion rates specifically. Several scholars such as Patricia McDonough, Roberta Espinosa, Laura Pena, Ricardo Stanton-Salazar, among others have studied the effects institutional agents can have on students in general in their college awareness, choices, financial aid, motivation, and mentorship. They have mostly been qualitative in nature and express the point of view of either the school counselor or the student and their effects on schooling in general. Some of these studies have also been done in private schools rather than large public school settings with a large Latino/a population. Other studies have explored the views of Latinos/as and their perceived characteristics of school counselors but have not gone as far as being action based to determine if these characteristics would make the difference in applying the desired traits and appropriate multicultural training as well as changing the instructional curriculum to be more diverse and relevant to this population.

These studies, while valuable, provide the foundation for this study to explore the nuances and daily practices of school counselors and their role constraints from their perspective as well as the of Latino/a students and their potential to achieve the A-G college course completion. At the same time this study delves into the phenomenological perspectives of

Latino/a students as it applies to their relationship or lack thereof with their school counselor and how that has an effect on them completing their A-G college courses by the services being provided to them.

Many institutional systems and networks come into play in a Latino/a student completing their A-G college courses that a nonpractitioner would not easily be able to identify. Even most teachers and administrators are not up to date with the latest changing college requirements and often call upon the college or school counselor. As a former teacher and current school counselor for 24 years, I am in the unique position to be able to see the policies, practices, and perceptions up close and personal. I have witnessed the institutional constraints and built-in exclusivity that school counselors must fight through to help all students. I have found that Latino/a students are not aware of these complex systems and networks in practice and behind the scenes. Most first-generation, low-income Latino/a students rely completely on the advice of a teacher or school counselor to inform them of the intricacies and hidden tactics to complete the A-G college courses by scheduling courses around limited or conflicting master schedule, taking AP courses to boost GPA (while avoiding unnecessary non AP courses that dilute the cumulative GPA), enlisting and preparing for college entrance exams (or find quality free online prep courses) taking the SAT twice and the ACT at least once, navigating the different and ever-changing platforms of the college applications, requesting fee waivers for the ever-increasing costs of college applications, writing the perfect college essays while not sounding whining, begging, accusatory, too humble, too aggressive, too ambitious, or too assertive. These systems don't even begin to include the web of networks that a Latino/a student brings with them from home into the educational system that can predispose them to not even consider that college is a possibility academically and financially.

A lack of research exists on the details of assisting, guiding, and mentoring even one student throughout their high school career early enough (which starts well before middle school to be in a high enough math course and reading level) to complete the A-G college course requirements and all of the systems and interactions mentioned above. Imagine having over 400 students, which the California average is 556:1 instead of the ASCA recommended 250:1 and having non-counseling duties such as test proctoring, lunch supervision, discipline, clerical, and administrative duties that take up to 90% of the time. Yes, school counselors get a bad rap for doing the best they can with what they have on top of the institutional restraints and racism that has existed for generations. School counselor intentions and personal practices may also not always be congruent and applied to all students at the same school.

Even the most innocuous of comments can ruin the trust Latino/a students have towards school authority. According to Cook, Grady, and Long (2016) it takes five positive interactions to overcome one negative interaction in a classroom setting (Cook et al., 2016). Latino/a students are a unique population with increasingly diverse needs that are falling back even further from their Asian, Black, and White peers. A mixed-method approach of surveying Latino/a students on the specific role of the school counselor and high quality, honest, and trusting interviews of their lived experiences of trying to meet the college requirements is much needed to improve the role and relationship of the school counselor and this group of underrepresented students.

“Although confidence in and rapport with institutional agents may convey to working-class adolescents that institutional resources are readily available, the actual transmission of resources may never occur” (Stanton-Salazar & Dornbusch, 1995). Stanton-Salazar is accurate in his description of the transmission of knowledge, resources, and social capital to Mexican-

American youth. The need to study the missing link, the break in the chain from school counselor to Latino/a youth is worth exploring in order to close the achievement gap. This is what this study intends to accomplish.

### **Chapter 3: Conceptual Framework**

The theories used in this study include Social Capital Theory, Cultural Deficiency Perspective, and Critical Race Theory (CRT). A review of social capital theory and how it relates to Latino/a students' lack of academic success in completing their A-G college requirements will be explored in this study. Critical Race Theory (CRT) intersects and interacts directly with both social capital theory and cultural deficiency perspective when applied to research on the educational achievement and accomplishments of Latino/a students. In the later part of the chapter, I will argue that in the public school setting institutional agents unknowingly use race, presumed social capital, and have a cultural deficiency perspective of Latino/a students and their academic potential. The use of these theories conceptually applies to this study and can provide insight for the relationship of school counselors and the A-G college course completion rate of Latino/a students in public schools.

#### **Social Capital Theory**

The topic of social capital has been explored by many researchers, but one has to begin with two of the most cited and referenced pundits on the field such as sociologists, Pierre Bourdieu (1973, 1986), and James Coleman (1988, 1990). Bourdieu explains the concepts of social capital in terms of the position one holds in society and the habitus that forms in one's daily life and choices. He also states that cultural capital will also dictate our position within the social order of society. Bourdieu and Coleman propose that social and cultural capital directly impacts educational opportunities, especially for students who do not get these skills at home. Bourdieu claims that schools are in the "pivotal position" to provide the much-needed resources that they may not get at home. Most school counselors recognize that responsibility if they know and understand the population they serve. There is a "web of actors," that donate social capital,

"this includes teachers, high school coaches, and members of school councils. They spend day in and day out contributing to local norms and expectations for children's achievement and mobility, often by building trust through asymmetrical, not reciprocating, relations" (Portes, 1998). Unfortunately, not all students get the same information, services, and attention even from the same public high school and school counselor. School counselor discretion can affect a student's educational trajectory and potentially quality of life and position in social status. This pertinent literature directly affects the work of school counselors in working with Latinos/as first-generation, low-income, and underrepresented students.

One of Bourdieu's most applicable concepts to Latino/a, low-income, and underrepresented students is that of "Habitus." Habitus refers to the habits, skills, and environmental exposure that we experience in our surroundings based on our social class. To know the "rules" or etiquettes of certain social situations to help us navigate social environments. Like those that are from first-generation, underrepresented, minority students in a college environment that are not familiar with that social and cultural environment may not be as successful as students who have grown up in that social environment. He believed that it is often ingrained in us so much that people believe that it is natural instead of culturally developed which often leads to justifying social inequality (Bourdieu, 1986). Therefore, a school counselor is critical in teaching Latino/a students the educational lingo, rules, norms, and subtleties of a college course completion track of study.

James Coleman explains social capital in terms of the creation of human capital. He examines the effect of social capital within the family and in the community. He believes that one is shaped by the environment, that people's actions are shaped, directed, and constrained by the social contexts and norms that surround us (Coleman, 1988). Social capital acquired by

individuals or as part of an organization can be useful or harmful depending on the context and the actor using the appropriate norms and rules of the situation. Social capital can also have an effect on the creation of human capital in the next generation, according to Coleman. Family background is divided into financial capital, human capital, and social capital which in turn have a direct effect on the educational achievement of a child (Coleman, 1988). Having access to the social and human capital of their parents can create an advantage for children whose parents have the expected norms and rules of educational institutions. Coleman also describes the three forms of social capital, obligations and expectations, information channels, and social norms (Coleman, 1990). Latino/a students often do not bring in the human capital from their parents to be on par with their peers and cultural and familial expectations also play a major role. Latina students for example may not be encouraged to move away to college while Latino students may be expected to work full-time to help the family financially.

By definition of the literature on social capital then most Latino/a students in large public schools and other low-income and first-generation students that lack the social and cultural capital enter these institutions at a disadvantage from the beginning. School counselors are critical in bridging the gap between these families and the public school institutions in a way that respects and involves the parent. In her books *Home Advantage: Social Class and Parental Intervention in Elementary Education*, and *Unequal Childhoods: Class, Race and Family Life*, Annette Lareau describes the child-rearing practice differences between middle-income families versus low-income families which have a direct impact on children's educational process. Middle class families practice "concerted cultivation" in which parents, who are usually college educated, enroll their children in many after school programs, sports, educational, and enrichment courses to help succeed academically (Lareau, 2003). The view that middle-class

parents have towards schools and their roles as partners with educators differed greatly from the distrust and fear and even reverence that low-income and working-class parents had towards educators and school communities. Their access to social, cultural, and human capital automatically puts middle-class families at an advantage with the school system because they share the same values and play by the same rules. This is where school counselors play a critical role in advocating for low-income and underrepresented students by showing them the “rules” to the public school system and the college game as mentioned previously.

Family and habitus also play a big role in shaping the views of the students as well as financial considerations. Many of the students in some of the larger public high schools end up attending community colleges for cost effectiveness and they are also geared there by the perception of staff members, i.e., school counselors, who feel they are not prepared to attend a four-year college or university. In “Access, Equity, and the Privatization of College Counseling” (1997), McDonough et al., claim that college access, resources, and information is again limited to those with social capital with the new trend of private college counselors. Students of high socioeconomic backgrounds again have advantages to the application process by supplementing their advice from a hired private college counselor with a more individualized approach.

Habitus forms the educational expectations of youth and “habitus exists not only in families and communities but also in *organizational contexts*. Organizational habitus is a way to understand schools’ roles in reproducing social inequalities,” states Patricia McDonough (McDonough, 1997). Her experience researching various types of high schools demonstrated that high schools located in middle-class communities cultivated a college-going atmosphere from staff (especially school counselors), parents, and their peers compared to larger public schools that encouraged state colleges and community colleges. One of the biggest differences

in her opinion was the student-to-counselor ratio, in which some school counselors at the smaller, private high schools spent over 50 hours college advising, reviewing college essays, assisting with college-entrance exams, and overall personalizing their college application process. In contrast to public high schools like mine, where our ratio is 400:1, and also have the responsibilities of handling school discipline, administrative duties, clerical work, testing, and supervision makes it almost impossible to compete with that kind of personalization. In that sense our students are disadvantaged before they even set foot on our campus and that disadvantage reflects institutional and systemic barriers.

### **Cultural Deficiency Perspective**

Another theoretical framework, the cultural deficiency perspective, places responsibility on the Latino/a student and other students of color for their lack of academic achievement. When institutional agents believe this theory, it is damaging to students of color. Dr. Gilda Ochoa, in her book *Academic Profiling: Latinos, Asian Americans and the Achievement Gap*, indicates that this systematic inequality draws its origins from “justified Americanization programs and vocational tracks for immigrants and groups of color” (Ochoa, 2013). School counselors are institutional agents following these historical Americanization programs and are unknowingly reproducing these inequalities for Chicana/o and Latina/o students placing them in a course of study that often does not meet the A-G college course requirements. As school counselors, they are often at the mercy of district policies and procedures already in place that further these systemic inequalities.

The perceptions of guidance counselors, teachers, school culture and expectations of the school definitely shaped the end result where students applied based on prestige, cost, and acceptance rate (McDonough, 1997). This supports the claim proposed in this study that there is

a cultural deficiency perspective in action among institutional agents. Patricia M. McDonough compares students from different high schools from public to private in her book, *Choosing Colleges: How Social Class and Schools Structure Opportunity* (1997). She contends that despite the gains in enrollment in higher education there still exists a significant gap in attendance based on class and race. She studies several students at different high schools looking at the type of high school, the enrollment, access to college information, college testing, college application, resources available to them, class scheduling, and level of personalized attention given by staff, specifically school counselors.

School counselor and teacher expectations of parental responsibilities are a cause of disadvantage for low-income and working-class parents because they could not physically be present for meetings or help their children at home academically (Lareau, 2000). Many low-income and working-class parents cannot be physically present because of work demands, transportation, childcare, or illness. They often call with questions. In some cases, they come in during their lunch or their day off with children under their care or they request verification they were present at a meeting for their child. Their pay may be cut for attending school-initiated parent meetings. Teachers, school counselors, and school staff may interpret their lack of physical presence as not caring for their child's education, thus applying the cultural deficiency perspective to parents, the family, and their culture. School counselor expectations of parent involvement may in turn lower their perception of the student's academic potential and have significant ramifications of how they will achieve academically, which in turn directly affect the college information services they provide to them.

The pedagogical approach of "Pivotal Moment Educators" is important in the role of a high school counselor. Roberta Espinoza in her book, *Pivotal Moments: How Educators Can*

*Put All Students on the Path to College*, explains that besides their educational responsibilities, teachers, school counselors, coaches, and other staff, that go beyond their pedagogical functions can be “life changers.” Unfortunately, Espinoza is also realistic in stating that low-income and underrepresented minority students are disproportionately underserved with high student-to-counselor ratios, in some cases up to 740 students (Espinoza, 2011). There are school counselors who very candidly share that they are overwhelmed and discouraged from going above and beyond to provide college going services to students that are already institutionally disadvantaged. The American School Counselor Association does call for counselors to advocate for educational equality and access and their principles are based on a social justice philosophy (Espinoza, 2011).

Espinoza touches briefly in her case study the perspective of school counselors and their challenges in serving first-generation students. This is where the gap in research exists in that the duties and responsibilities in school counselors vary greatly, along with student ratio, and personality. Are school counselors who had a first-generation, low-income background more effective than school counselors who did not have such challenges? This is an area in my research that I want to further explore. School counselors with similar backgrounds to underrepresented students are what Andrea Dryness calls in her book *Mothers United: An Immigrant Struggle for Socially Just Educators*, “outsider/within” (Dryness, 2011). It was a personal mission for some school counselors in Espinoza’s case study of pivotal moment educators, such as Mr. Chang, to donate his social capital to first-generation students because of his personal experience as a first-generation student himself. Such is the case for myself.

## Critical Race Theory

Critical Race Theory (CRT) acknowledges that race and racism are “endemic” and permanent in U.S. society. It helps challenge dominant ideology claims of objectivity, merit, equality, and the privilege of the dominant group. CRT is founded on social justice and works to the elimination of racism, sexism, poverty, and toward the empowerment of all marginalized groups. CRT also recognizes and legitimates the experiential knowledge, lived experiences, and histories of all people of color through counter-storytelling methods (Yosso, 2009). CRT was appropriate in this research study because of the institutional and systemic barriers Latinos/as face in our educational system on a daily basis. Part of these barriers are institutional agents, such as school counselors that may or may not recognize these systemic obstacles and may have their own biases and prejudices regarding certain cultural groups and their expected educational achievements.

One of the leading ethnographers that examines CRT in educational institutions is Ricardo D. Stanton-Salazar. He explores the social support networks and help-seeking experiences of low-income Mexican-origin youth of immigrant families, in his book, *Manufacturing Hope and Despair* (2001). Stanton-Salazar divides the constraints on help-seeking and network development into two categories. The first constraint is those that manifest themselves psychologically and socially, such as distrust, fear, and anxiety. The second constraint that harms Latino/a youth is organizational and institutional. For example, large public high schools that minimize opportunities to students with large class size and high student-to-counselor ratios (Stanton-Salazar, 2001). He states that large public high schools make it hard for school counselors to get close and really know each other by their institutional and organizational structures. Stanton-Salazar also looks at the empowerment of relationships

between students and school personnel and the ability of teachers and guidance counselors to either reproduce or interfere with the reproduction of class, racial, and gendered inequality. These hidden practices have the most lasting effects on students, according to Stanton-Salazar, and continue the cycle of poverty that Mexican-American children live in.

Robert Crosnoe supports that notion of social mobility in his book *Mexican Roots, American Schools, Helping Mexican Immigrant Children Succeed*, that students entering educational disadvantaged institutions will be “frozen out of the kinds of information and assistance” that middle- and upper-class students will receive and that the “patterns of mobility will be stagnant over time and across generations” (Crosnoe, 2001). In fact, Crosnoe goes as far as stating that the “disadvantages eventually overwhelm advantages” for Mexican-origin youth and over time generational declines will occur. William Perez also supports this claim that school counselors are the institutional agents acting as “gatekeepers” that can provide the human, social, and cultural capital that is lacking in their habitus, especially with immigrant students (Perez, 2012). In his books, *We Are Americans: Undocumented Students Pursuing the American Dream* and *Americans by Heart: Undocumented Latino Students and the Promise of Higher Education*, he provides powerful and poignant voices of immigrant students claiming to “fight with their counselors,” to get into an AP class or being told, “their people are better off doing housework,” instead of becoming lawyers among other horrific statements (Perez, 2009, 2012).

Another form CRT manifests itself is in national and state policies regarding financial assistance to students and is another form of historical, systemic, and institutional racism built into our public schooling system that hurts predominantly low-income, first-generation, underrepresented students, mostly Black and Latinos/as. Laura Perna is a pundit in the area of

financial aid programs, state policies regarding financial aid and evaluating the continued economic stratification of our nation's higher education system. She argues that students from middle- and higher-income families are enrolling in four-year colleges and universities and less in two-year institutions (Perna, 2004). She cites a report by the Lumina Foundation for Education, "Unequal Opportunity," (2002) that suggests that one reason for the economic stratification in public universities is due to state public policies. Perna reviews the four kinds of state public policies that affect students; direct appropriations to higher education institutions, financial aid to students, tuition, and policies regarding academic preparation at secondary school levels, which directly involves school counselors (Perna, 2004).

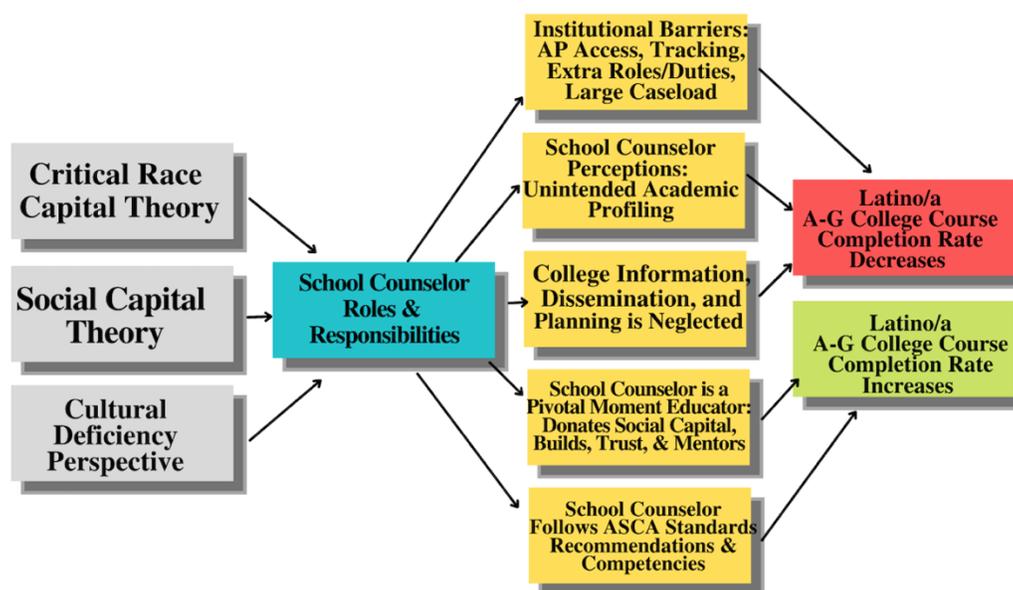
Recent trends show that a growing number of states are devoting funds to merit-based financial aid programs, which ultimately affect low-income students due to inadequate academic preparation due to social and cultural capital compared to middle and high-income students (Perna, 2004). Perna contends that research consistently shows that college enrollment is related to tuition and financial aid. This information is critical and when school counselors are not significantly spending time reviewing this information from early on as freshman, students have misperceptions and feel overwhelmed with the cost of college. When there is an increase in tuition at four-year institutions, two-year institution enrollment goes up, which ultimately includes students of color and low-income students (Perna, 2004).

Perna argues that students make decisions about attending colleges by comparing the benefits with the costs and greatest net benefit. Costs, benefits, financial resources, academic ability, perceived job market opportunities all are considered in individual's deciding between types of colleges, specifically for students of color (Perna, 2004). She also states that research shows that parents and students overestimate college costs and lack accurate information about

financial aid, information they should be getting from their school counselor. Lastly, and sadly she finds that students with low family incomes, have parents who've not attended college, African-Americans, and Latinos/as are less likely than other students to enroll in college (Perna, 2004). When they do enroll, they are largely concentrated in lower price institutions such as public two-year colleges, and less selective colleges and universities. Figure 1 below demonstrates the theory diagram and its effects.

**Figure 1**

*Theory Diagram*



## The Present Study

The proposed study focuses on the roles, practices, policies, and perspectives of current high school counselors and the lived experiences and perceptions of Latino/a students in the services they are receiving from their school counselor. The present study will determine the extent that these roles, practices, policies, and perceptions have an effect on the A-G college course completion of Latino/a students at their own high school. It will also consider the social capital, familial, cultural expectations, perceived racism, differential treatment, and preferred

characteristics of school counselors from Latino/a students at the same high school and their impact on their A-G college course completion.

## Chapter 4: Methodology

This section will provide a roadmap of the methodologies that were used in this study. The mixed-methods research will be explained in detail and an analysis of the data collection will be provided. An expected analysis will also be presented. Lastly, the limitations of the quantitative and qualitative methodologies will be examined.

### Research Questions

The following questions will guide this study:

1. To what extent do school counselors play a role in college access in first-generation, low-income, Latino/a students in public high schools?
  - a. What are the school counselors' limitations and constraints in their public school settings?
  - b. What personal views do school counselors have in servicing Latino/a students?
2. To what extent do institutional barriers in public high schools impede Latino/a students from achieving their A-G college course requirements?
  - a. What types of tracking systems are in place in public school systems preventing Latino/a students from having access to A-G college prep courses?
  - b. What policies are in place in public schools preventing Latino/a students access to AP/Honors/Accelerated courses?

I am studying the A-G college course requirement for Latino/a students in public high schools because I want to find out how high school counselors play a role in order to understand

how school counselors can remove institutional barriers for Latino/a students and close the achievement gap.

### **Research Design**

This study employed a mixed-methods research design combining both quantitative data that is the result of a survey from both school counselors and student interviews and qualitative data generated from a semi-structured, open-ended interview for school counselors. In this study, a mixed-method approach was appropriate as the goal was to get confidential quantifiable data from both high school counselors and students within the same high school while providing qualitatively exploring the phenomenological work experience of school counselors. These interviews will help fill in the gaps from the school counselor participants' survey responses and anything they want to share that may not have been asked on the survey that is of importance to their role and point of view.

### **Quantitative Methodology**

The study includes two surveys, one for the school counselors comprising 49 questions about their role, duties, responsibilities, workshops, training, frequency of time with students, time spent distributing college information, as well as their personal views about students and their A-G college course requirements. The survey for the public high school students has 59 questions and includes questions about their educational background, personal background, educational experience, their perception of the role of their counselor, their perceived relationship, and characteristics of their counselor, and how in and in what manner and frequency they receive college information as well as their knowledge of the A-G college course requirements. The school counselor and student survey questions were generated using the

theoretical frameworks, Social Capital Theory, Critical Race Theory, and Cultural Deficiency Perspective as a guide and driven by the research questions.

### **School Counselor Survey**

The goal was to sample all of the school counselors in one district composed of five comprehensive high schools and one continuation high school in the San Gabriel Valley in Southern California. The district sampled has a full-time college and career coordinator at each comprehensive high school that oversees the career center for the purpose of providing college and career information and will not be included in the sample. The responsibilities of the college and career coordinator differ from those of the school counselor in that the college and career coordinator does not have a caseload of students assigned instead their role is to provide workshops for college applications for both community colleges and four-year colleges and universities, information on financial aid, give presentations on college and career opportunities, host college and career speakers and representatives, and coordinate field trips, among other college and career-related activities to the entire school student body. There are also two school counselors at the continuation high school in the district sampled that will not be included in the survey as they are serving students only trying to meet their high school requirements who are deficient in credits. The school counselors from the five comprehensive high schools were recruited with approval from the school district administration and CGU IRB approval by sending them an email to their school Gmail with the proposed study. The survey was collected using a non-random sampling technique and it was a convenience sampling as an employee of the district.

I included a brief statement at the top of the survey introducing myself and what the study was about without trying to influence or give away the purpose of the survey and why it is

important. Their responses were confidential because they were sent to their school email account. I also offered to provide the findings if anyone is interested. I informed them that the survey would take 8-10 minutes, according to the Qualtrics survey program. In the brief introduction, I explained that participation was voluntary and that by submitting the survey they would be giving their consent to use the results. I sent a reminder email one week later and two weeks after that. The target population was all 22 school counselors in the district. As a school counselor in the district, I was included in those 22 school counselors, but I did not take the survey. That left 21 school counselors eligible to take the survey, and I expected to receive 18 responses, an 85% response rate.

The questionnaire was distributed via the Qualtrics program and emailed to each school counselor via a link to their school Gmail account. The survey included 49 questions that range from Likert scale, dichotomous, and variable (including nominal, ordinal, and interval/ratio). Some questions were multiple-choice, others asked to check all that apply. The full questionnaire is in Appendix B. The data was uploaded to the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), reviewed, cleaned, and analyzed. The answers were coded by number; 1 for strongly agree, 2 for agree, 3 for disagree, and 4 for strongly disagree for the Likert scale questions. The last question was a fill-in and asked if there was anything they wanted to add in reference to their role and responsibility.

### **Student Survey**

The student survey consists of 59 questions and was estimated to take between 10-12 minutes to complete according to the Qualtrics program. Students were selected using a convenience sampling from the high schools in the same district that the high school counselors were surveyed. The classes selected included English and Social Science classes (U.S. History,

U.S. Government, or Economics) and were randomly selected, one at each of the five comprehensive high schools. Their teacher was emailed the information with a script to read inviting the students to the study and that their participation would be voluntary. Permission was requested for minor students from their parents via an electronic or hard copy signature. Students were asked for their assent or consent depending on their age. A total of 14 classes for a total of 434 students were offered the survey questionnaire and 217 surveys were expected to be completed for a 50% response rate.

The survey was divided into three sections, the first section asked general information about their high school, the second section asked specific questions about their perceived relationship with their high school counselor, characteristics, demeanor, and frequency of visits to see them. The last section consisted of demographic information, including, age, year in school, ethnicity, household information, and general financial information (whether they receive free/reduced lunch). The questionnaire was distributed through their school Gmail account via a link. The survey includes questions that range from Likert scale, dichotomous, and variable (including nominal, ordinal, and interval/ratio). Some questions were multiple-choice, others ask to check all that apply, as well as a section to fill in any other comments they feel are essential to their relationship with their school counselor and college information they receive. The student survey is in Appendix C. The matrix Tables 1a and 1b below demonstrate the survey questions in relation to the research questions.

**Table 1a**

*School Counselor Survey Question Matrix Table*

Conceptual Framework	Research Questions	Data Question Topics	Data Collection Method	Analysis
The school counselor survey was created through a Social Capital Theory, Critical Race Theory and Cultural Deficiency Perspective lens and driven by the research questions.	What are the school counselor limitations and constraints in their public-school settings?	<b>Number of workshops</b> , training, and professional development provided and frequency <b>College information</b> dissemination to students, frequency of meetings, type of meetings with students, comfort in knowledge on college information <b>School counselor availability</b> , open-door policy, appointments for students	Qualtrics Survey to the district school counselors of a large public school district in the San Gabriel Valley with a predominantly Latino population.  The survey included 49 questions that range from Likert scale, dichotomous, and variable (including nominal, ordinal, and interval/ratio). Some questions were multiple-choice, others ask to check all that apply, and fill-in.	The data was uploaded to the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), reviewed, cleared, and analyzed. The answers were coded by number; 1 for strongly agree, 2 for disagree, and 4 for strongly disagree for the Likert scale questions.
	What personal views do school counselors have in servicing Latino/a students?	<b>Personal information</b> such as years of experience, college education experience and degrees obtained, classroom teacher experience <b>Personal perceptions</b> on Latino/a students and their A-G college course requirements, reasons for not meeting, characteristics of students meeting or not meeting college course requirements, where students get their college information		
	What types of tracking systems are in place in public school systems preventing Latino/a students from having access to A-G college prep courses?  What policies are in place in public schools preventing Latino/a students' access to AP/Honors/Accelerated courses?	<b>School information</b> and demographics of student population, Title I, urban/rural, number of school counselors and other college staff available  <b>Job duties and responsibilities</b> , such as caseload, duties other than providing college information, college field trips attended, frequency of meeting with each student, part of college planning process involved		

Table 1b

*Student Survey Question Matrix Table*

Conceptual Framework	Research Questions	Data Question Topics	Data Collection Method	Analysis
The student survey was created through a Social Capital Theory, Critical Race Theory and Cultural Deficiency Perspective lens and driven by the research questions.	What are the school counselor limitations and constraints in their public-school settings?	<b>Financial aid information</b> , FAFSA, plans for seniors, scholarship availability <b>School counselor availability</b> , open-door policy, appointments necessary, email response, demeanor in person, individualized attention	Qualtrics Survey to junior and senior students in a large public school district in the San Gabriel Valley with a predominantly Latino population.  The survey included 59 questions that range from Likert scale, dichotomous, and variable (including nominal, ordinal, and interval/ratio). Some questions were multiple-choice, others ask to check all that apply, and fill-in.	The data was uploaded to the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), reviewed, cleared, and analyzed. The answers were coded by number; 1 for strongly agree, 2 for disagree, and 4 for strongly disagree for the Likert scale questions.
	What personal views do school counselors have in servicing Latino/a students?	<b>Personal information</b> such as demographics, first-generation college student, AVID, Athlete, AP/Honors student, free/reduced lunch program <b>School counselor relationship</b> , students' trust of school counselors, perceived personality, college information knowledge, approachability		
	What types of tracking systems are in place in public school systems preventing Latino/a students from having access to A-G college prep courses?	<b>Number of college workshops</b> , presentations, and fieldtrips available, frequency, and time in high school provided <b>College information</b> dissemination, type of meetings with school counselors and frequency of meetings, students' level of knowledge on A-G college course requirements, participation in college enrichment programs, other sources to inquire and get assistance for college information		
	What policies are in place in public schools preventing Latino/a students' access to AP/Honors/Accelerated courses?	<b>Registration experience</b> , time spent with counselor, schedule and class selection, questions answered <b>AP course</b> prerequisites, access, and enrollment		

## Qualitative Methodology

The study was guided by both phenomenology to try and interpret the meanings of the school counselor participants' experiences and perceptions and through the lens of the theoretical frameworks, CRT, Social Capital Theory, and Cultural Deficiency Perspective. The school counselors were selected from the survey questionnaire response that they were willing to be interviewed to expand on their answers. Nine school counselors volunteered to interview and another one reached out via email, for a total of 10 school counselors, a 47% percent rate from the 21 eligible school counselors. They were told that the interviews would last from 30 minutes to 45 minutes in length. The interviews lasted between 22-36 minutes each. The participants were highly encouraged to be interviewed via a video call due to the Covid-19 pandemic health crisis and all agreed and were interviewed via a phone or video conference. With their permission, all interviews were recorded using a digital recorder and then transcribed (See Appendix C). Table 1c below demonstrates the school counselor interview question matrix.

**Table 1c**

*School Counselor Interview Question Matrix Table*

Conceptual Framework	Research Questions	Data Question Topics	Data Collection Method	Analysis and Coding	
The school counselor qualitative interview questions were created through a Social Capital Theory, Critical Race Theory and Cultural Deficiency Perspective lens and guided by the research questions.	What are the school counselor limitations and constraints in their public-school settings?	<b>Personal information</b> such as years of experience, college education experience and degrees obtained, classroom teacher experience, influence during high school <b>Job duties and responsibilities</b> , such as caseload, duties other than providing college information, college field trips attended, frequency of meeting with each student, part of college planning process involved, feelings regarding their roles and expectations of duties as a school counselor	A semi-structured, open-ended interview for school counselors who volunteer on the school counselor survey.	The interview data results were thematically analyzed according to established qualitative methodologies (Saldana, 2016).	
	What personal views do school counselors have in servicing Latino/a students?	<b>Personal perceptions</b> on Latino/a students and their A-G college course requirements, reasons for not meeting, characteristics of students meeting or not meeting college course requirements, where students get their college information  <b>Student and parent relationship</b> , perceived trust	Out of 19 school counselors that answered the school survey, nine volunteered on the survey and one emailed to volunteer. A total of 10 school counselors were interviewed virtually via a video or phone conference and recorded with their permission.	The data was categorized by themes/concepts and then subcategorized. Once the axial coding identified the dominant codes the last coding resulted in the final theoretical coding or concepts.	
	What types of tracking systems are in place in public school systems preventing Latino/a students from having access to A-G college prep courses?	<b>AP access</b> , prerequisites, enrollment  <b>Number of workshops</b> , training, and professional development provided and frequency			
	What policies are in place in public schools preventing Latino/a students' access to AP/Honors/Accelerated courses?	<b>College information</b> dissemination to students, frequency of meetings, type of meetings with students, confidence in knowledge on college information  <b>School counselor availability</b> , open-door policy, appointments for students			

## **Participants**

The adult participants include 21 public high school counselors that range in years of experience, ethnicity, age, level of education, and gender. The student participants will include junior and senior students of diverse backgrounds (including pan-ethnicity within the Latino community, generation, and language), academic standing, gender, and between the ages of 16-18. The students were from five large public high schools (from 1308-1834 students enrolled) in the San Gabriel Valley in Southern California that are predominantly Latino/a and Title I, which are considered low-income based on federal standards from applications for free/reduced lunch. It was important to this study to survey the student population being served by the school counselors at the same school for consistency of rules, policies, and practices.

### *Protection of Human Subjects*

This study carried a minimal risk of harm to the participants. Participants were told that the researcher was investigating how students obtain information from their high school and their high school counselors, and how they receive college information. Per Claremont Graduate University (CGU) Internal Review Board (IRB) protocol, it was clearly stated, both orally and in writing, that participation in any or all of the study would be completely voluntary. All identifying information obtained from both the quantitative and qualitative data collection and/or subsequent analyses would be kept confidential. IRB approval, including the provision of consent and assent forms, were sought from both Claremont Graduate University, and the District in the San Gabriel Valley where said high schools are located.

## **Positionality of the Author**

This topic is incredibly important and one that is dear to my heart, for I was a low-income, first-generation, Latina student from immigrant parents who has benefitted from pivotal

moment educators who were nonreciprocal donors of their social capital, their time, and their kindness for nothing else other than their hopes for me to succeed. As a school counselor for the past two decades, it is my life's work and passion to be that institutional agent that recognizes and breaks down institutional and systemic barriers to all students, especially Latino/a students and all underrepresented, marginalized, and neglected students. It is also my passion to research, explore, identify, and make recommendations to address this issue and present it to other school counselors and secondary school staff, administration, and public school districts.

My personal experience with my own high school counselor during a very tumultuous period in my life would inspire and guide my direction for me to one day be a high school counselor myself. Although I didn't know it at the time, my high school counselor was donating her social and cultural capital, exposing me to the world of college, honors, and advanced courses, college enrichment programs, the application process, and financial aid. She was the only college-educated adult in my life, and I trusted her. She was my pivotal moment educator and later in my educational career my mentor. I practice the donation of my acquired social capital and advocate for all underrepresented students and hope to change their educational trajectory for upward mobility as she did for me. As previously stated, by 2030, Latino students between the ages of 5-18 will constitute 25% of the total U. S. school population, and yet are twice as often as non-Hispanic White students to drop out (Smith-Adcock et al., 2006). This increasing educational achievement gap based on gender and race/ethnicity with high school graduation, dropout rates, and college enrollment and completion for Latino/a students is alarming and a call to action for all educators and policymakers, and thus the impetus for the urgency of studies such as this one.

## **Chapter 5: Results**

This chapter presents the results of the quantitative and qualitative analyses of the data results from three sources: the school counselor survey, student survey, and the semi-structured, open-ended interviews from the school counselors. In the first section, I will provide the school counselor survey descriptive statistics. In the second section I will review the student survey descriptive and inferential statistics. Lastly, I will present the qualitative analysis of the school counselors' open-ended interviews.

### **School Counselor Quantitative Data Analysis**

#### **Description of the School Counselor Sample**

At the time of the study, there were 24 school counselors in the entire district. Two school counselors at the continuation high school were not included in the study because the students are trying to meet high school graduation requirements and do not meet the A-G college course requirements. I am included in those 24 school counselors, therefore, only 21 school counselors were eligible to take the school counselor survey. Out of the 21 full-time comprehensive school counselors, 19 (n=19) school counselors took the survey, for a 90% response rate. Since then, a temporary school counselor for one semester has been added to two campuses due to the pandemic funded by Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, including the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) fund (cde.ca.gov, 2021).

#### **School Counselor Background and Experience**

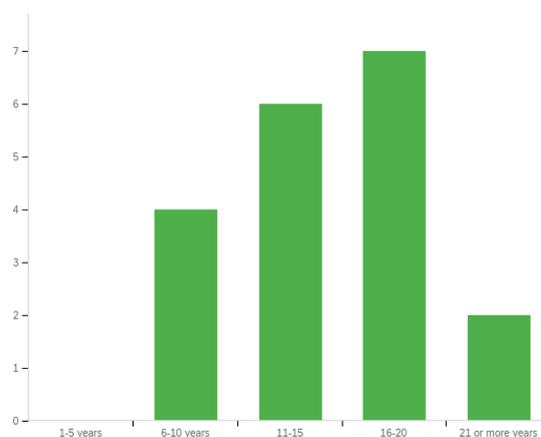
The school counselors range in years of experience, college education experience, and classroom experience. The school counselors were divided in how they view their public schools, eight stated they view their school setting as urban and 11 stated their school setting as

suburban. The school sites are located in three cities in the San Gabriel Valley in Southern California. Of the 19 school counselors, 13 stated they had been a classroom teacher, and six have never been a classroom teacher. Later in this chapter, a comparison of classroom teachers versus those who have never been a classroom teacher and their perceptions on students meeting their A-G college course requirements and their characteristics will be analyzed for any significant correlation.

The majority of the school counselors, 16 (84.2%) stated they were bilingual in a language other than English, although they did not specify. They range in years of experience, four (21%) state they have from 6-10 years of experience, six (31.5%) have 11-15 years of experience, seven (36.8%) school counselors have 16-20 years, and two (10.5%) school counselors have 21 years or over years of experience. None of the school counselors indicated they were new counselors with 1-5 years of experience as seen in Figure 2.

**Figure 2**

*Years of Experience*

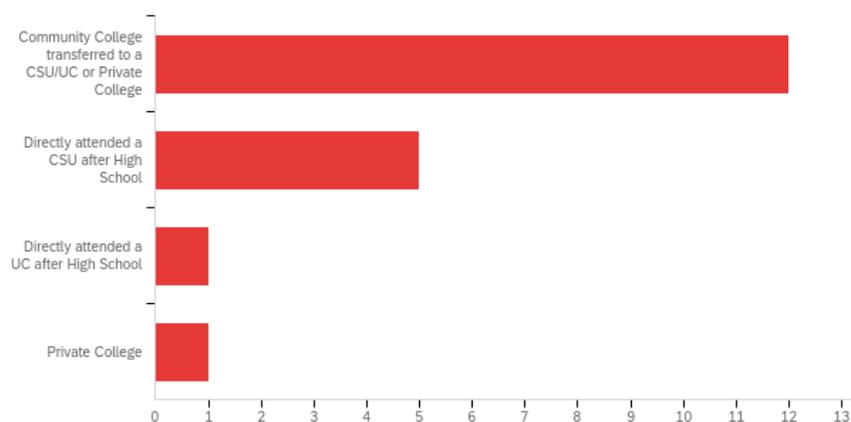


The college experience results from the school counselors indicated that the majority of them, 12 (63%) out of the 19 attended a community college first and then transferred to a four-year college such as a Cal State, a UC, or a private college. Five (26.3%) school counselors

indicated they went straight from high school to a Cal State campus, one (5.2%) school counselor went straight to a UC campus, and one (5.2%) went to a private college as shown in Figure 3.

**Figure 3**

*College Education Experience*



The highest educational degree indicated that 18 (94.7%) of the school counselors have a Master's degree and only one (5.2%) has either Ed.D. or Ph.D. The school counselors described themselves mostly as friendly, 17 (89.4%), six (31.5%) school counselors describe themselves as quiet, four (21%) as outgoing, and some of the fill-in answers; "authentic," "experienced," and "straightforward."

### **Job Duties and Responsibilities**

All 19 of the school counselors indicated that their student caseloads were between 250-500 students. As far as their time spent disseminating college information per day, all 19 school counselors stated they spend 40% or less, with eight (42.1%) school counselors stating they spend 1-10% of the time, five (26.3%) school counselors said 11-20% of their time, five (26.3%) mentioned 21-30% of their time, and one (5.2%) spends 31-40% of their time. None of the

school counselors spend over 40% of their school day on disseminating college information as indicated by Table 2.

**Table 2**

*Workplace Characteristics (n = 19)*

	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Number of students in caseload		
251-500	19	100.0
Percent of day spent disseminating college information		
1-10%	8	42.1
11-20%	5	26.3
21-30%	5	26.3
31-40%	1	5.3
Percent of day spent on other duties		
41-50%	3	15.8
More than 50%	16	84.2
Frequency of formal student meetings		
Once a year	1	5.3
Twice a year	13	68.4
Three times a year	5	26.3
Offer open-door policy for students	19	100.0
Students should be able to just walk into a counselor's office to ask a question without an appointment		
Agree	7	36.8
Strongly agree	12	63.2
Title I School	19	100.0
Number of full-time school counselors at site		
3-4	11	57.9
5-6	8	42.1
Have full-time college/career counselor at site	19	100.0
Handle discipline as part of your job	18	94.7
Frequency of attending professional development provided by district regarding college information		
Once a year	18	94.7
Twice a year	1	5.3
Frequency of attending college workshops/conferences provided by district		
Once a year	16	84.2
Twice a year	2	10.5
Three times a year	1	5.3
Frequency of visiting colleges/universities		
Zero	10	52.6
1-2 times per year	9	47.4

When asked how often they meet with students formally, one (5.2%) school counselor stated they meet once a year, the majority, 13 (68.4%), stated they meet with students twice a year, and five (26.3%) school counselors state they meet three times a year with their students. All School counselors, 19 answered that they have an open-door policy, also all 19, strongly

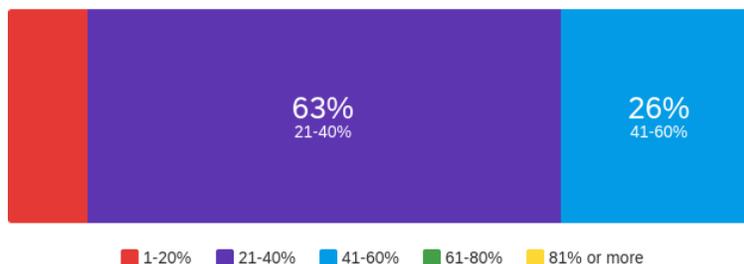
agree or agree that students should be able to walk into their school counselor's office without the need for an appointment. The overwhelming majority of school counselors, 18 (94.7%) indicated that they handle discipline as part of their job description, only one (5.2%) school counselor stated that they do not handle discipline. Additional comments regarding the role as a school counselor: "Counselors should not be involved in higher-level discipline such as when students are involved in altercations, substance abuse, and the investigation of such. They may support the student with counseling resources, restorative meetings, and follow up interventions but not investigations," and "expectations of hours not included in contract time."

### **School Setting and Student Population**

All 19 school counselors describe their public high school as a Title I school, which per federal guidelines indicates a high student population of low-income students and are eligible to receive extra state and federal funding (Title I Part A, 2021). The school counselors were asked the number of school counselors available at each site, 11 (57.9%) school counselors responded 3-4 school counselors, and eight (42.1%) responded 5-6 school counselors at each site (student enrollment ranged from 1308-1834 per school site). All school counselors, 19 also indicated that there is a full-time college and career counselor at their site. The percent of students that go directly to a four-year college/university was divided as follows by the school counselors: two (10.5%) school counselors stated 1-20%, 12 (63.1%) stated 21-40%, and five (26.3%) stated 41-60% as seen in Figure 4.

#### **Figure 4**

*Percent of students that attend a four-year college/university directly*



Regarding the ethnic demographics, 18 (94.7%) of school counselors indicated that Latinos/as are the predominant student population at their site, only one (5.2%) school counselor indicated that Asian and Pacific Islander is the predominant demographic student population. The second-highest student demographic population, 17 (89.4%) of school counselors indicate Asian & Pacific Islander, one (5.2%) school counselor reported Latino/a, and one (5.2%) school counselor, said White.

### **College Workshops and Training**

The school counselors were asked the frequency of professional development provided by the district regarding college information and 18 (94.7%) of school counselors stated once a year, and one (5.2%) school counselor stated twice a year. As far as attending college workshops and conferences provided by the district, 16 (84.2%) of school counselors stated once a year, two (10.5%) of school counselors twice a year, and one (5.2%) counselor stated three workshops/conferences a year. Ten (52.6%) of school counselors stated that zero is the frequency in which they visit colleges, and nine (47.3%) school counselors stated 1-2 times the frequency of college visits per year.

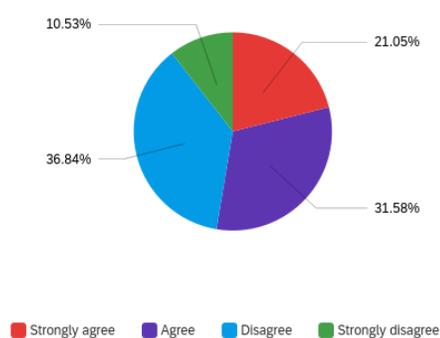
### **Perceptions of Students That Complete A-G College Course Requirements**

School counselors were asked about their perceptions of students who complete the A-G college course requirements on a Likert scale indicating their level of agreement with the following statements from strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree. On the

question, Latinos/as have lower A-G college course completion rate the school counselors were divided almost in half, 10 (52.6%) of school counselors strongly agree or agree, and nine (47.3%) school counselors disagree or strongly disagree as demonstrated in Figure 5. This question will be explored in more detail later in this chapter.

**Figure 5**

*Level of agreement/disagreement of Latinos/as meeting A-G course requirements*



On whether they agree or disagree if students that have completed more A-G college course requirements are highly motivated, 18 (94.7%) of school counselors agree or strongly agree and only one (5.2%) school counselor disagreed. On the level of agreement/disagreement of students that have completed more A-G college course requirements have higher reading and writing skills the overwhelming majority of the school counselors, 17 (89.4%) strongly agree or agree, and two (10.5%) school counselors disagree. The exact same number of school counselors felt the same about students with higher A-G college course completion rates having higher math scores. Students with higher A-G college course completion rates having support at home, 14 (73.6%) of school counselors strongly agree or agree, and five (26.3%) of school counselors disagree. On being more knowledgeable about college information, 14 (73.6%) of school counselors strongly agree or agree, and five (26.3%) of school counselors disagree. Table 3 demonstrates the perceptions of school counselors.

**Table 3***Perceptions of Students Who Complete A-G College Course Requirements (n = 19)*

	Strongly Agree n (%)	Agree n (%)	Disagree n (%)	Strongly Disagree n (%)
At your site, Latinos/Latinas have lower A-G college requirement completion rates	4 (21.1)	6 (31.6)	7 (36.8)	2 (10.5)
Students that have completed more A-G college course requirements are highly motivated	9 (47.4)	9 (47.4)	1 (5.3)	0 (0.0)
Students that have completed more A-G college course requirements have higher reading and writing skills	6 (31.6)	11 (57.9)	2 (10.5)	0 (0.0)
Students that have completed more A-G college course requirements have higher math skills	6 (31.6)	11 (57.9)	2 (10.5)	0 (0.0)
Students that have completed more A-G college course requirements have more support at home	7 (36.8)	7 (36.8)	5 (26.3)	0 (0.0)
Students that have completed more A-G college course requirements are more knowledgeable of college information	4 (21.1)	10 (52.6)	5 (26.3)	0 (0.0)

In my educational experience, classroom teachers have a different insight on a daily basis of students and their work habits compared to those who do not have classroom experience. To explore if there were any significant differences in the perception of school counselors who were former classroom teachers and non-classroom teachers of Latino/a students meeting their A-G college course requirements at their site and other characteristics of students who meet their A-G college course requirements responses were compared in a cross tabulation as seen in Table 4.

**Table 4***Perceptions of School Counselors by Classroom Experience*

	Teaching Experience		No Teaching Experience	
	Agree n (%)	Disagree n (%)	Agree n (%)	Disagree n (%)
At your site, Latinos/as have lower A-G college requirement completion rates	6 (46.2)	7 (53.8)	4 (66.7)	2 (33.3)
Students that have completed more A-G college course requirements are highly motivated	13 (100.0)	0 (0.0)	5 (83.3)	1 (16.7)
Students that have completed more A-G college course requirements have higher reading and writing skills	12 (92.3)	1 (7.7)	5 (83.3)	1 (16.7)
Students that have completed more A-G college course requirements have higher math skills	12 (92.3)	1 (7.7)	5 (83.3)	1 (16.7)
Students that have completed more A-G college course requirements have more support at home	10 (76.9)	3 (23.1)	4 (66.7)	2 (33.3)
Students that have completed more A-G college course requirements are more knowledgeable of college information	10 (76.9)	3 (23.1)	4 (66.7)	2 (33.3)

\*Strongly agree and Agree have been combined into the Agree column; Strongly disagree and disagree have been combined in the Disagree column.

There were no statistically significant differences between those with classroom teaching experience and those without in their perceptions of students who complete A-G college course requirements in the following responses:

- Latino/a have lower A-G completion rates
- Completers are highly motivated
- Completers have higher reading and writing skills
- Completers have higher math skills
- Completers have more support at home
- Completers are more knowledgeable of college information

Those with classroom teaching experience were less likely than those without teaching experience to say Latino/a lacked motivation, as seen in Table 5. None of the other views of Latino/a students differed significantly between the two groups.

**Table 5**

*Reasons Latino/a Students Do Not Meet A-G College Requirements*

	Teaching Experience	No Teaching Experience	$\chi^2(1)$	<i>p</i>
	<i>n (%)</i>	<i>n (%)</i>		
Lack of motivation	8 (61.5)	6 (100.0)	4.6	.032
Study habits	9 (69.2)	6 (100.0)	3.5	.061
Peer/Social distractions	9 (69.2)	4 (66.7)	0.01	.911
Lack of academic skills	8 (61.5)	4 (66.7)	0.5	.829
Parental involvement	7 (53.8)	3 (50.0)	0.02	.876
Familial expectations	4 (30.8)	2 (33.3)	0.01	.911
Cultural expectations	5 (38.5)	1 (16.7)	1.0	.325
Lack of college information	2 (15.4)	2 (33.3)	0.8	.385
Other	2 (15.4)	1 (16.7)	0.01	.943
Come from lower income	7 (53.8)	5 (83.3)	1.7	.198
Are first generation college students	9 (69.2)	5 (83.3)	0.4	.504

Chi-square tests were also run comparing school counselors who transferred from a community college ( $n = 12$ ) to those school counselors that went directly to a four-year college/university ( $n = 7$ ) and there were no statistically significant differences.

School counselors were asked where students obtained college information and all 19 state the career center is the top place where they think students get their college information, followed by 17 (89.4%) of school counselors reporting they are the second resource of college

information. This response by school counselors is a major misconception and will be discussed further in the student survey data analysis. Table 6 demonstrates the results from their responses.

**Table 6**

*Beliefs About Where Students Get College Information (n = 19)*

	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Career Center	19	100.0
School Counselor	17	89.5
College Enrichment Program	15	78.9
Teachers	13	68.4
Friends	10	52.6
Online	9	42.1
Family	6	31.6

Note: Responses total to more than 100% because multiple responses were allowed

### **Characteristics of Students Meeting/Not Meeting A-G Requirements**

In describing students that meet their A-G college courses, 18 (94.7%) of school counselors state students are highly motivated and only one (5.2%) school counselor disagreed. Whether students meeting their A-G college courses have: higher reading and writing skills, 17 (89.4%) school counselors strongly agree or agree and two (10.5%) disagree, with math skills 17 (89.4%) of school counselors strongly agree or agree, and two (10.5%) disagree, in having more support at home, 14 (73.6%) of school counselors strongly agree or agree, and five (26.3%) disagree, and lastly students are more knowledgeable of college information, 14 (73.6%) school counselors strongly agree or agree and five (26.3%) disagree.

The school counselors were overwhelming in agreement, 18 (94.7%) stated that students who do not meet the A-G college course requirements are due to not meeting the math requirement. To meet the A-G college course requirements, both the CSUs and UCs require Integrated Math 3 or Algebra II as the minimum math requirement for admission (see Appendix E). When compared with the science requirement (one year of a physical laboratory science and one year of a life laboratory science is required) eight (42.1%) of school counselors state that is

one of the reasons for not meeting the college requirements. The CSU minimum grade point average (GPA) requirement is 2.5 and the UC minimum GPA requirement is 3.0 (the more competitive the school or the major, the higher the GPA is desired). A little over half, 11 (57.9%) of school counselors responded that not meeting the GPA was one of the reasons students do not meet the A-G college course requirements. Five (26.3%) school counselors state there are other reasons students do not meet the requirements. Some of the fill-in comments include: "higher-level math or science," "world language class is too challenging or student plans on attending community college," "student doesn't want to go to 4-year college right after HS; does not meet world language requirement."

School Counselors were asked if parents were notified if a student drops a college requirement and over half of the respondents 10 (52.6%) school counselors said parents were notified and the remaining nine (47.4%) said parents were notified sometimes. There are many students that meet the A-G college course requirements but do not enroll directly in a four-year college/university. Table 7 illustrates reasons why students who met college requirements did not attend a four-year college/university as reported by the school counselors.:

**Table 7**

*Reasons Students Who Meet College Requirements Do Not Attend Four-Year College/University*

	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Financial obstacles	16	84.2
Fear/Anxiety about being qualified	12	63.2
Parents do not allow them	9	47.2
Misses a deadline	7	36.8
Transportation	6	31.6
Lacks the college application process knowledge	4	21.1
Paperwork bureaucracy	4	21.1
Does not take the appropriate placement exam	1	5.3
Other	4	21.1

The other responses: "They feel they are not ready to choose a major or field of study yet," "Military /job," "They are unclear what major they want to pursue," "To save money or take advantage of free community college available to them."

## Latino/a Students and the A-G College Course Requirements

School counselors were asked about their perceptions of students who complete the A-G college course requirements on a Likert scale indicating whether they agreed with the following statements from strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree. As previously mentioned on whether the school counselors agreed Latinos/as have lower A-G college course completion rate the school counselors were divided almost in half, 10 (52.6%) of school counselors strongly agree or agree, and nine (47.3%) of school counselors disagree or strongly disagree. When asked specifically on reasons that Latinos/a students do not meet the A-G college course requirements, the majority, 15 (78.9%) of school counselors state that study habits are the main reason. Table 8a outlines other top reasons (lack of motivation, peer/social distractions, lack of academic skills, and parental involvement) why Latino/Latina students did not meet A-G college requirements and Table 8b outlines other characteristics of Latino/a students not meeting A-G college course requirements. Other fill-in answers include: “reasons are unique to individual students,” “some students want to pursue a vocational trade after high school, so they do not desire to complete A-G,” and “sports/job more important.”

**Table 8a**

*Reasons Latino/a Students Do Not Meet A-G College Requirements*

	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Study habits	15	78.9
Lack of motivation	14	73.7
Peer/Social distractions	13	68.4
Lack of academic skills	12	63.2
Parental involvement	10	52.6
Familial expectations	6	31.6
Cultural expectations	6	31.6
Lack of college information	4	21.1
Other	3	15.8

**Table 8b**

*Opinions of Latino/a Students Who Do Not Meet A-G College Requirements*

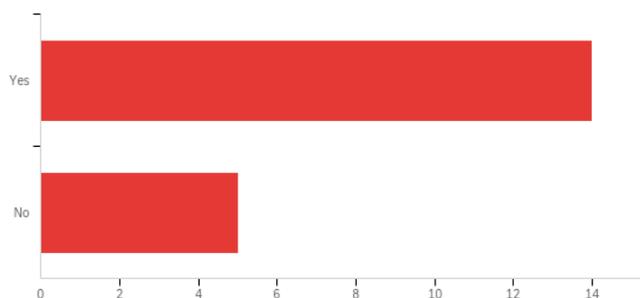
	<i>n</i>	%
They come from a lower income		
Strongly agree	3	15.8
Agree	9	47.4
Disagree	7	36.8
They are first-generation college students		
Strongly agree	4	21.1
Agree	10	52.6
Disagree	5	26.3

The school counselors' opinions on why Latino/a students do not meet the A-G college course requirements, 12 (63.1%) of school counselors strongly agree or agree that they come from lower-income, seven (36.8%) of school counselors disagree, and 14 (73.6%) school counselors strongly agree or agree that they are first-generation college students and five (26.3%) disagree.

The majority of school counselors 14 (73.6%) say Asian students are more likely to meet that A-G college requirements than Latino/a students at their site (Figure 6):

**Figure 6**

*Asian students compared to Latino/a A-G college course completion*



### **Summary of School Counselor Quantitative Data Analysis**

The school counselors were all experienced in their profession with none of them having under five years of experience and over 80% of them had 11 or more years of experience. Most of the school counselors identified themselves as bilingual. They all reported having 250-500 students in their student caseloads. All of the school counselors indicated they spent less than 40% of their time disseminating college information on a daily basis. Discipline was mentioned

by all school counselors as one of their other duties and responsibilities. Most of the school counselors indicated they had workshops, training, or professional development only once a year.

Over 50% of the school counselors were in agreement that Latino/a students have a lower A-G college course completion rate and the majority of them felt that Asian students were more likely to meet the A-G college course requirements. On the characteristics of students that complete their A-G college course requirements, they felt students were motivated, had higher reading, writing, and math skills. The school counselors felt the top place students received their college information from was the career center and secondly with their school counselor. Regarding the overall characteristics of students not meeting their A-G college course requirements, they felt math was the main reason, along with financial obstacles, fear, and lack of confidence. Characteristics of Latino/a students' not meeting their A-G college course requirements school counselors felt study habits were the main reason. Other reasons included; lack of motivation, peer/social distractions, lack of academic skills, and lack of parental support.

## **Student Quantitative Data Analysis**

### **Description of the Student Sample**

The student sample population was a convenience sample as an employee in the district. The criterion for students was to be a junior or senior in an English or Social Science class (U.S. History, U.S. Government, or Economics) within the same school district of the school counselors. The classes were chosen at random from each of the five comprehensive high schools. The principals and assistant principals of each site were notified and provided with the proposed data collection process and CGU IRB approval as well as district approval. The teachers selected were then notified and sent the recruiting materials to have a script read to the

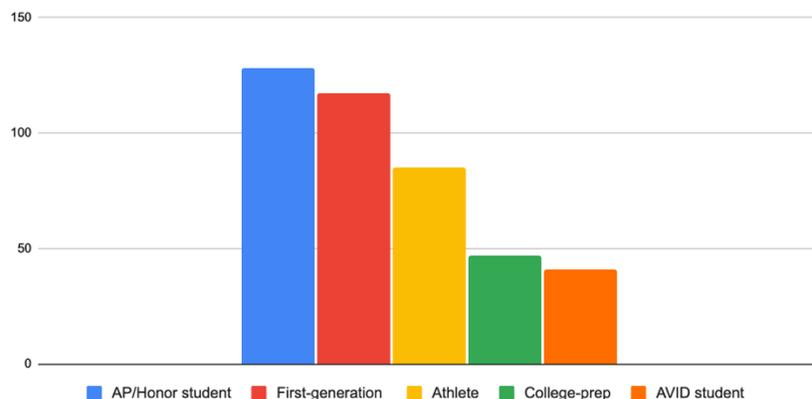
classes on the summary and purpose of the study and asking for their voluntary participation. The teachers were asked for a list of their class roster with the students that agreed in participating and a parent consent was emailed to their parent via their email address. Once the parent consent was obtained with the proper signatures, the student was then emailed the survey with the assent protocol embedded in the survey. Students who were of majority age (18 years in the state of California) who volunteered to participate were emailed the student survey and obtained their consent. A total of 14 classes for a total of 434 students were offered the survey questionnaire and 236 students completed the survey for a 54.3% response rate.

### **Student Background and Characteristics**

The student grade levels 127 (53.8%) were senior students and 109 (46.2%) junior students. An overwhelming majority, 223 (97.8%) students stated they receive free/reduced lunch. Ethnically the majority of students, 140 (59.3%) identified as Latino/a, 83 (35.2%) Asian, one (.04%) White, two (.08%) American Indian or Alaska Native, two (.08%) African-American, one (.04%) Native Hawaiian, and 7 (2.9%) students identified as other. Students were asked to identify if they were a college-prep student, an athlete, an AVID student, a first-generation college student, an AP/Honors student, and/or other. They were allowed to check all that apply, for multiple answers. The highest reported number was 128 (54.2%) AP/Honors student. The second highest was 117 (49.6%) first-generation college student, 85 (36%) athlete, 47 (19.9%) college-prep student, and 41 (17.4%) AVID students as seen in Figure 7.

### **Figure 7**

*Describe Yourself*



In comparing Latino/a students to non-Latino/a student characteristics, Latino/a students were more likely than non-Latino/a students (54.5% vs 41.8%) to say they were first-generation college students. Latino/a students were significantly more likely to be seniors (63.4%) than were non-Latino/a students (38.5%),  $\chi^2(1) = 14.05, p < .001$ . Latino/a students were significantly more likely than non-Latino/a students to say they were AVID students (22.8% vs 8.8%, respectively),  $\chi^2(1) = 7.6, p = .006$ . Latino/a students were significantly less likely than non-Latino/a students to say they were AP/Honors students (42.8% vs 72.5%),  $\chi^2(1) = 20.0, p < .001$ . Less than a quarter of the students, 53 (22.5%) indicated that they were part of a college enrichment program such as Upward Bound, Trio, or Talent Search. There was no difference between Latino/a and non-Latino/a students in being part of a college enrichment program.

Students were divided by ethnicity on the question of taking Honors, Accelerated, or AP courses 44 (30.3%) Latino/a students responded taking none, compared to 16 (17.6%) non-Latino/a students. On taking seven or more Honors, Accelerated, or AP courses only 15 (10.3%) Latino/a students responded compared to 27 (29.7%) non-Latino/a students responded. Overall, Latino/a students took fewer advanced courses than non-Latino/a students (2 or fewer courses 60.0% vs 37.4%, respectively),  $\chi^2(4) = 17.8, p < .001$ . Students were also asked if they had brothers and sisters that have attended a four-year college or university 81 (34.3%) students said

yes, the majority 125 (53%) students said no, 16 (6.8%) said yes but dropped out, and 14 (5.9%) said no but are planning to transfer from a community college. Latino/a students were significantly less likely to have older siblings that attended a four-year college or university than non-Latino/a students, (27.6% vs 45.1% respectively),  $\chi^2(3) = 7.8, p = .049$ . Table 9 demonstrates the participant characteristics.

**Table 9***Participant Characteristics*

	Latino/a (n = 145)		Not Latino/a (n = 91)		Total (n = 236)
	n	%	n	%	n (%)
Grade***					
Junior	53	36.6	56	61.5	109 (46.2)
Senior	92	63.4	35	38.5	127 (53.8)
Year Begin Receiving College Information					
Middle School or Earlier	19	13.1	13	14.3	32 (13.6)
Freshman	54	37.2	36	39.6	90 (38.1)
Sophomore	19	13.1	9	9.9	28 (11.9)
Junior	33	22.8	25	27.5	58 (24.6)
Senior	20	13.8	8	8.8	28 (11.9)
Receive free or reduced school lunch	141	99.3	82	95.3	223 (97.8)
First-generation college student	95	65.5	52	57.1	147 (62.3)
Do you have older brothers or sisters that have attended a 4-year college or university?*					
Yes	40	27.6	41	45.1	81 (34.3)
No	85	58.6	40	44.0	125 (53.0)
Yes, but dropped out	10	6.9	6	6.6	16 (6.8)
No, but planning to transfer from community college	10	6.9	4	4.4	14 (5.9)
Self Description <sup>a</sup>					
College prep student	27	18.6	20	22.0	47 (19.9)
Athlete	51	35.2	34	37.4	85 (36.0)
AVID student**	33	22.8	8	8.8	41 (17.4)
First generation college student	79	54.5	38	41.8	117 (49.6)
AP/Honors student***	62	42.8	66	72.5	128 (54.2)
Other					
Number of Honors, Accelerated, or AP courses**					
None	44	30.3	16	17.6	60 (25.4)
1-2	43	29.7	18	19.8	61 (25.8)
3-4	28	19.3	18	19.8	46 (19.5)
5-6	15	10.3	12	13.2	27 (11.4)
7 or more	15	10.3	27	29.7	42 (17.8)

<sup>a</sup>Percentages add to more than 100% because multiple responses were allowed.

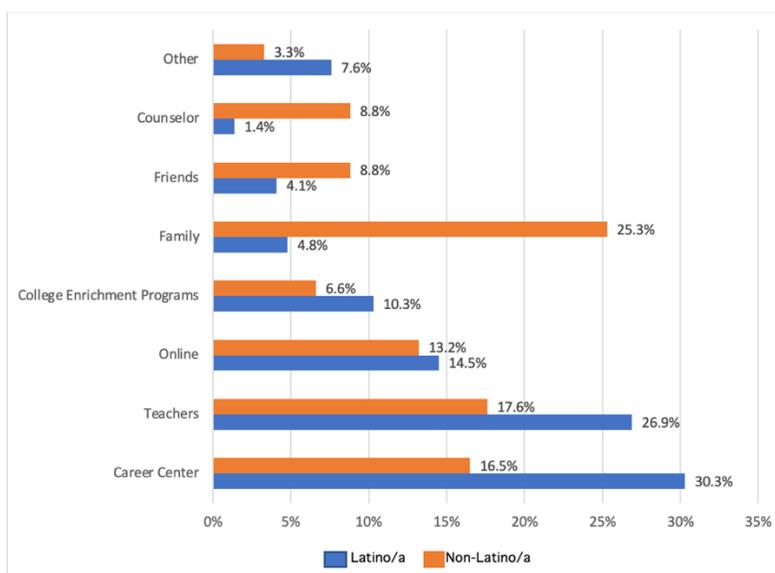
\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ . Significance levels based on chi square.

## College Information

The time that they began to receive college information freshman year was the most, 90 (38.1%) of all students who responded, 58 (24.6%) junior year was the second most identified year, and 32 (13.6%) responded that middle school or earlier (n=236). There was no difference by ethnicity in year they began receiving college information. The top place students indicated they get most of college information is 59 (25%) career center, 55 (23.3%) teachers, 33 (14%) online, 30 (12.7%) family, 21 (8.9%) college enrichment programs, 14 (5.9%) friends, 14 (5.9%) other, and last 10 (4.2%) students said their school counselor. This student response was a stark difference in comparison to the school counselor response on where students get their college information and will be discussed later in findings. There were statistically significant differences in where students got college information by ethnicity,  $\chi^2(7) = 36.7, p < .001$ . Specifically, Latino/a students were more likely than non-Latino/a students to get information from the career center and less likely to get it from their school counselor or family (Figure 8).

**Figure 8**

*Where Students Get Most of Their College Information*



On a Likert scale style questionnaire of whether they strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree, students overwhelmingly agree/strongly agree that they know what the A-G college requirements 138 (58.4%) of Latinos/as strongly agree or agree, and only 7 (2.9%) disagree or strongly disagree compared to 88 (37.2%) non-Latinos/as strongly agree or agree, and only 3 (1.2%) disagree or strongly disagree. Ratings of knowledge of A-G college course requirements did not differ significantly by ethnicity. When asked if the students felt that the A-G college course requirements were explained well to them the overwhelming majority 211 (89.4%) strongly agree or agree and 25 (10.6%) disagree or strongly disagree. Two questions in particular about taking advanced courses were not answered by all students, it is the opinion of the PI that students overall were not confident or knowledgeable about the answers and therefore did not answer the questions. In the first question, students were asked if there were any requirements in taking Honors, Accelerated, or AP courses, on a Likert scale of definitely yes, probably yes, probably not, and definitely not, 121 (64.3%) of students (n=188) state definitely yes or probably yes, and 67 (35.6%) students said probably no or definitely not. In the second question, is anyone able to take Honors, Accelerated, or AP courses at their school, 165 (90.7%) of students responding (n=182) said definitely yes or probably yes.

Although 59 (25%) of students indicate that they get their college information from the career center, 131 (55.5%) of students stated they never used the career center in the past year, and 105 (44.5%) of students indicate occasionally and frequently (students were allowed to answer more than one response). To be fair and put things in perspective the 2020 spring semester and 2020-2021 school year was spent in distance learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but all career centers were operating virtually with live google classrooms during the school day. Students were asked if they go to the career center staff for college information or

their school counselor, 94 (39.8%) of students said neither, 71 (30.1%) students indicate the career center staff, 37 (15.7%) their school counselor, and 34 use both (14.4%) (n=236). When students feel they should first get college presentations on college planning, 40 (16.9%) students say before 9th grade, 84 (35.6%) during 9th grade, 58 (24.6%) during sophomore year, 49 (20.8%) during junior year, and five (2.1%) during senior year. Students were asked if they have done career exploration lessons during high school, 140 (59.3%) of students strongly agree or agree, and 96 (40.6%) students disagree or strongly disagree. Latino/a students will be compared to non-Latino/a student responses for these specific questions later in this chapter.

Regarding the number of college field trips students have gone on during high school the majority 141 (59.7%) students stated none, 84 (36%) students state 1-2 times, 9 (3.8%) state 3-4 times, and two (.84%) students state five or more times. The question did not directly ask if they had gone on the college field trips organized by their school site or if they had gone on their own. This survey was also distributed to junior and senior students during the COVID-19 pandemic and the students had been in distance learning during the spring semester of 2020 and the entire 2020-2021 school year, therefore field trips were not available.

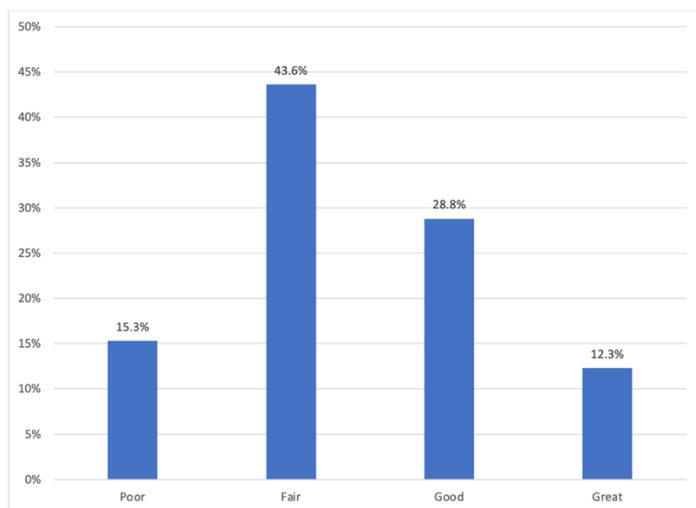
### **School Counselor Experience**

Students were asked a variety of questions about their school counselor experience, including number of visits, relationship, time spent, confidence and trust, availability, and perception of their personality. Latino/a students will be statistically compared to the responses of non-Latino/a students in a section later in this chapter. Students overwhelmingly state they visit their school counselor 212 (89.9%) 1-5 times per year, 19 (8.1%) 6-10 times, two (0.8%) visit 11-15 times, and three (1.3%) visit over 16 times per year. Their relationship with their school counselor was asked to be rated as poor, fair, good, and great. The majority of students,

103 (43.6%) say fair, 68 (28.8%) students say good, 36 (15.3%) students say poor, and 29 (12.3%) students say great (Figure 9):

**Figure 9**

*How Students Describe Their Relationship with Their School Counselor*



There was a section of questions that asked about the frequency and quality of time with their school counselor. One question asked if they felt their school counselor spent enough time with them 147 (62.3%) of students strongly agree or agree and 89 (37.8%) disagree or strongly disagree. A set of questions asked specific questions for example on their school counselor does one-on-one college/career/post-secondary planning, helped them create a four-year plan and if they have an open-door policy and not all students answered them. It is the PI's assumption that students did not necessarily know if their school counselor provided those services, or they did not understand what a four-year plan or open-door policy was. The number of students (n=181), 108 (59.7%) responded that their school counselor definitely yes or probably yes does one-on-one individual college/career/post-secondary planning 73 (40.4%) students responded probably not or definitely not. Students were asked in a different way about an individual plan by asking if their school counselor has helped them create a four-year plan and again not all students

responded (n=180) of those 83 (46.1%) students responded that their school counselor did (Table 10).

**Table 10**

*Student Interactions and Relationship with Counselors (n = 236)*

	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Number of Visits to Counselor per Year		
1-5	212	89.9
6-10	19	8.1
11-15	2	0.8
16 or more	3	1.3
Your Relationship with Your Counselor is		
Poor	36	15.3
Fair	103	43.6
Good	68	28.8
Great	29	12.3
My counselor spends enough time with me		
Strongly agree	21	8.9
Agree	126	53.4
Disagree	70	29.7
Strongly disagree	19	8.1
I trust my school counselor		
Strongly agree	73	30.9
Agree	141	59.7
Disagree	16	6.8
Strongly disagree	6	2.5
I feel my school counselor knows me well		
Strongly agree	22	9.3
Agree	99	41.9
Disagree	96	40.7
Strongly disagree	19	8.1
My parents/guardians trust my school counselor		
Strongly agree	48	20.3
Agree	154	65.3
Disagree	30	12.7
Strongly disagree	4	1.7
If you have a question, do you need to make an appointment to see your counselor?		
Definitely yes	68	28.8
Probably yes	102	43.2
Probably not	52	22.0
Definitely not	14	5.9
My counselor is responsive to my emails		
Strongly agree	79	33.6
Agree	135	57.4
Disagree	20	8.5
Strongly disagree	1	0.4
If you need to visit your counselor are you able to see them right away?		
Yes, same day	105	44.5
No, but within a day	82	34.7
Within 2-3 days	42	17.8
Within 4-5 days	5	2.1
More than 5 days	2	0.8

	<i>n</i>	%
I feel comfortable walking into my counselor's office to ask a question without an appointment		
Strongly agree	65	27.5
Agree	84	35.6
Disagree	67	28.4
Strongly disagree	20	8.5
My counselor has an open-door policy for students ( <i>n</i> = 96)	74	77.1
My counselor is bilingual ( <i>n</i> = 152)	141	92.8
Does your counselor do one-on-one individual college/career/post-secondary planning? ( <i>n</i> = 181)		
Definitely yes	28	15.5
Probably yes	80	44.2
Probably not	47	26.0
Definitely not	26	14.4
My counselor has helped me create a four-year plan ( <i>n</i> = 180)	83	46.1
My school counselor has made a mistake with my classes, credits or college information ( <i>n</i> = 92)		
Strongly agree	11	12.0
Agree	28	30.4
Disagree	0	0.0
Strongly disagree	53	57.6

One of the scheduled times for students to meet formally with their school counselor and is built into the school calendar at this particular school district is during registration which happens two weeks before the start of the school year. It was important to explore how the students felt about their registration experience and how they felt with the quality of time and if their questions were answered. The majority of students 172 (72.9%) responded definitely yes or probably yes and 64 (27.1%) responded probably not or definitely not as demonstrated in Table 11. If they got all of their questions answered about graduation credits, college courses, and requirements during registration the majority 151 (64%) responded definitely yes or probably yes and 85 (36.1%) responded probably not or definitely not.

**Table 11**

*Registration*

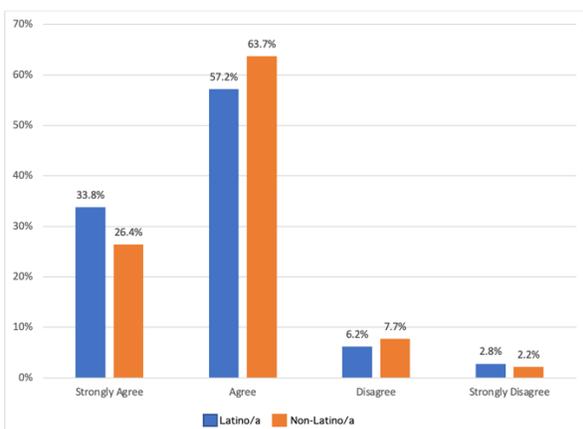
	<i>n</i>	%
Do you feel you got the time you need to spend with your school counselor at registration?		
Definitely yes	47	19.9
Probably yes	125	53.0

Probably not	47	19.9
Definitely not	17	7.2
I got all my questions answered about graduation, credits college courses, and requirements at registration		
Strongly agree	45	19.1
Agree	106	44.9
Disagree	78	33.1
Strongly disagree	7	3.0

Students were asked if they trust their school counselor on a Likert scale of strongly agree or agree and disagree or strongly disagree and the overwhelming majority, 214 (90.6%) of students said they strongly agree or agree, and 22 (9.3%) students disagree or strongly disagree. On whether they feel their school counselor knows them well enough and students were divided almost equally, slightly more than half 121 (51.2%) students strongly agree or agree and 115 (48.8%) students disagree or strongly disagree as demonstrated in Figures 10a and 10b.

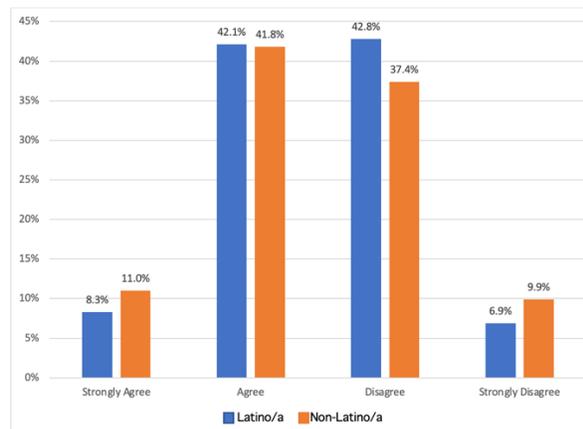
**Figure 10a**

*I Trust My School Counselor*



**Figure 10b**

*I Feel My School Counselor Knows Me Well Enough*



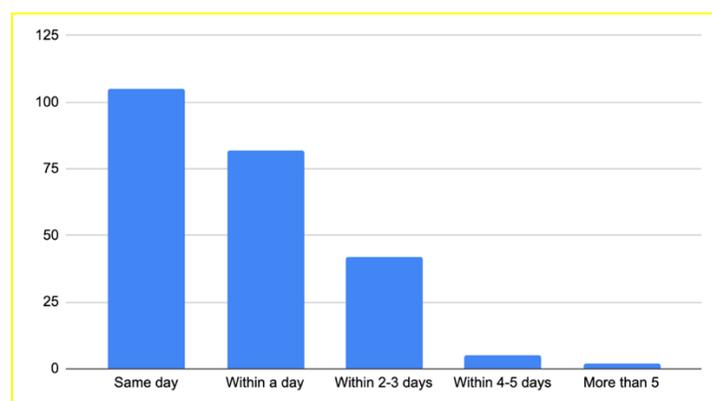
Only 92 students responded to the question on whether their school counselor has made a mistake with their classes, credits, or college information. It is the PI's personal opinion that students didn't respond for possible for fear of getting their school counselor in trouble or fear of repercussion. The majority of students who did respond, 53 (57.6%) students responded that they strongly disagree and 39 (42.4%) strongly agree or agree (n=92). An overwhelming

majority of students felt their parents trust their school counselor 202 (85.6%) indicating strongly agree or agree and 34 (14.4%) disagree or strongly disagree. Most of the students in the district speak another language or come from immigrant or first-generation parents, mostly from Latin-American and East Asian countries. Students were asked if their school counselor was bilingual and only 152 students responded, of those 141 (92.8%) believed their school counselor was bilingual (n=152), and 84 students who did not respond, might not have known.

A section in the student questionnaire asked about school counselor availability and if they have a question do, they need to make an appointment to see their counselor, a majority of students, 170 (72%) indicate definitely yes or probably yes, and 66 (27.9%) indicate that they probably not or definitely not. Another question was posed differently about school counselor accessibility and asked if they feel comfortable in walking into their school counselor's office if they have a question without an appointment, and 149 (63.1%) of students strongly agree or agree, while 87 (36.9%) disagree or strongly disagree. On the availability to visit their school counselor right away 105 (44.5%) indicate yes, the same day, 82 (34.7%) students state no, but within a day, 42 (17.8%) students, within 2-3 days, five (2.1%) students within 4-5 days, and two (0.8%) students state more than five days (Figure 11).

**Figure 11**

*Availability to See School Counselor*



Students were asked if their school counselor had an open-door policy and the vast majority of students (n=96) who responded 74 (77.1%) said yes, however, given the low number of students responding, it is the PI belief that the students did not know the meaning of an open-door policy.

A set of questions were designed to ask about their perceived school counselor demeanor and personality (these questions will also be compared by Latino/a and non-Latino/a responses later in the chapter). Students were asked if their school counselor was friendly and over an overwhelming majority 222 (95.3%) students strongly agree or agree, and only 11 (4.7%) of students disagree or strongly disagree. On whether they thought their school counselor was professional, 228 (97.1%) of students strongly agree or agree, and only 7 (3%) of students disagree or strongly disagree. On whether their school counselor was indifferent, 133 (59.3%) of students strongly agree or agree, 91 (40.6%) disagree or strongly disagree. On whether their school counselor is motivating, 196 (87.1%) of students strongly agree or agree, and 29 (12.8%) of students disagree or strongly disagree. The vast majority of students, 217 (95.2%) of students strongly agree or agree that their school counselor is caring, and 11 (4.8%) of students disagree or strongly disagree. The same holds true for the opposite, on whether their school counselor is cold the vast majority 201 (89.7%) of students disagree or strongly disagree, and 24 (10.2%) of students strongly agree or agree. If their school counselor is strict, 164 (71%) of students disagree or strongly disagree, and 67 (28.9%) of students strongly agree or agree. The overwhelming majority, 221 (94.5%) of students disagree or strongly disagree that their school counselor is mean, and 13 (5.6%) or students strongly agree or agree. Table 12 outlines the attitudes on school counselors.

**Table 12**

*Attitudes about School Counselor (% of respondents who gave only 1 response)*

	Strongly Agree <i>n (%)</i>	Agree <i>n (%)</i>	Disagree <i>n (%)</i>	Strongly Disagree <i>n (%)</i>
My school counselor is friendly	107 (45.9)	115 (49.4)	10 (4.3)	1 (0.4)
My school counselor is professional	116 (49.4)	112 (47.7)	6 (2.6)	1 (0.4)
My school counselor is indifferent	26 (11.6)	107 (47.8)	73 (32.6)	18 (8.0)
My school counselor is motivating	69 (30.7)	127 (56.4)	28 (12.4)	1 (0.4)
My school counselor is caring	75 (32.9)	142 (62.3)	8 (3.5)	3 (1.3)
My school counselor is cold	4 (1.7)	19 (8.5)	143 (63.8)	58 (25.9)
My school counselor is strict	5 (2.1)	62 (26.8)	129 (55.8)	35 (15.2)
My school counselor is mean	2 (0.9)	11 (4.7)	135 (57.7)	86 (36.8)
My school counselor always looks happy to see me	40 (18.1)	144 (65.2)	32 (14.5)	5 (2.3)
My counselor always looks busy when we meet	16 (7.3)	85 (38.8)	107 (48.9)	11 (5.0)
My counselor always takes time to listen to me	55 (24.6)	151 (67.4)	17 (7.6)	1 (0.4)

Students felt their school counselor always looks happy to see them, with 184 (83.3%) of students strongly agree or agree, and 37 (16.8%) of students disagree or strongly disagree. They were divided on the issue of whether their school counselor always looks busy when they meet, 101 (46.1%) strongly agree or agree, and 118 (53.9%) of students disagree or strongly disagree. The majority of students feel their school counselor always takes time to listen to them, 206 (92%) of students strongly agree or agree, and 18 (8%) of students disagree or strongly disagree. Lastly, some fill-in questions on their school counselor, students state: "She is nice i [sic] like her," "Does help me out when i [sic] go in for a visit," "I'm not really close with my counselor," "I only meet with them when I have to, but I usually do not have any questions," "My school counselor has always listened to me when I have a question," "She always smiles and is nice," and "She explains everything that I don't understand."

### **Students and A-G College Course Requirements**

A vast majority of students indicated they were meeting their A-G college course requirements, 204 (86.4%) of students agree or strongly agree, and 32 (13.6%) students disagree or strongly disagree that they are on track. Ratings of knowledge of A-G college course

requirements did not differ significantly by ethnicity. Students overwhelmingly felt they were able to get the necessary courses to meet the A-G college course requirements, 227 (96.2%) of students strongly agree or agree, and only nine (3.8%) of students disagree or strongly disagree.

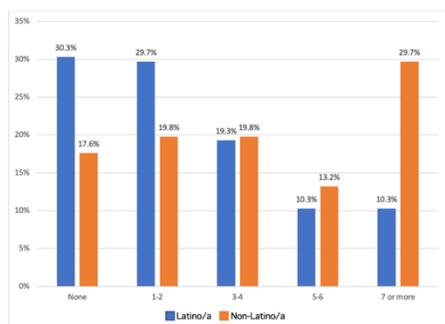
There were no statistically significant differences in level of agreement by ethnicity with:

- A-G college course requirements well explained
- Getting necessary classes to meet A-G course requirements
- Being on track to meet A-G course requirements
- Being able to enroll in courses needed at registration
- School counselor being knowledgeable about A-G requirements

Regarding taking or have taken any Honors, Accelerated, or AP courses, 60 (25.4%) students responded none, 61 (25.8%) students have taken 1-2 courses, 46 (19.5%) of students have taken 3-4 courses, 27 (11.4%) of students have taken 5-6 courses, and 42 (17.8%) of students are taking or have taken 7 courses or more, as illustrated in Figure 12. Latino/a students were significantly less likely than non-Latino/a students to say they were AP/Honors students (42.8% vs 72.5%),  $\chi^2(1) = 20.0, p < .001$ . Most students, 229 (97%) strongly agree or agree that they feel their school counselor is knowledgeable about the A-G college course requirements with only seven (2.9%) students reporting that they disagree strongly disagree. Later in this chapter, the responses of Latino/a versus non-Latino/a students and their A-G college course requirements knowledge and courses taken will be compared in more detail.

**Figure 12**

*Number of AP, Accelerated, or Honors Courses Taken*



## Financial Knowledge

The question was asked if they knew what FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) was, 171 (72.5%) of students responded yes, and over 65 (27.5%) students responded no. Students were divided on whether they knew where to apply for scholarships and other financial aid with 125 (53%) indicating they strongly agree or agree, and 111 (47%) of students disagree or strongly disagree. When students were asked about whether their financial situation will determine whether they apply to a four-year institution or a community college, most students, 167 (70.8%) of students responded definitely yes or probably yes, and 69 (29.2%) of students responded probably not or definitely not. There were no significant differences by ethnicity on knowledge of FAFSA, knowledge of where to apply for scholarships/financial aid, or effect of finances on college plans (Table 13).

**Table 13**

### *Finances and College*

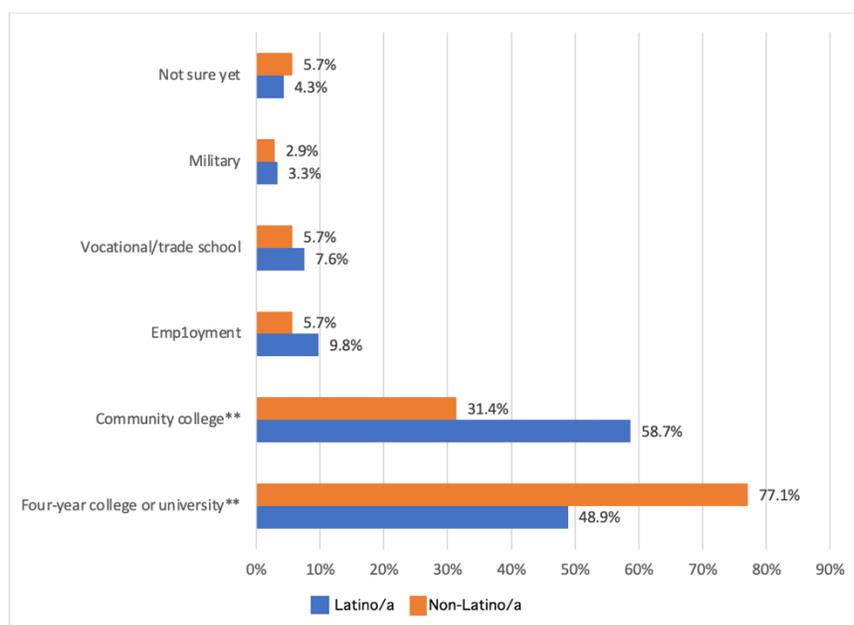
	Latino/a ( <i>n</i> = 145)		Not Latino/a ( <i>n</i> = 91)		Total ( <i>n</i> = 236)	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Will your financial situation determine whether you attend a four-year institution or a community college?						
Definitely yes	29	20	21	23.1	50	21.2
Probably yes	73	50.3	44	48.4	117	49.6
Probably not	34	23.4	22	24.2	56	23.7
Definitely not	9	6.2	4	4.4	13	5.5
Do you know what FAFSA is?						
Yes	110	75.9	61	67.0	171	72.5
No	35	24.1	30	33.0	65	27.5
I know where to apply for scholarships/financial aid						
Strongly agree	22	15.2	8	8.8	30	12.7
Agree	56	38.6	39	42.9	95	40.3
Disagree	55	37.9	33	36.3	88	37.3
Strongly disagree	12	8.3	11	12.1	23	9.7

## Seniors Students

Senior students were asked what their plans were for next year and were allowed to mark more than one answer, 127 (53.8%) students responded that they were senior students (n=236). Most senior students, 72 (56.7%) indicated they were planning to attend a four-year college/university such as a CSU, UC, or private college, 65 (51.2%) students said a community college, nine (7.1%) stated a vocational or trade school, four (3.1%) students stated the military, and six (4.7%) students said they were not sure yet as demonstrated in Figure 13. Among seniors, Latino/a students were significantly less likely than non-Latino/a students to say they planned on going to a 4-year college/university (48.9% vs 77.1%, respectively),  $\chi^2(1) = 8.2, p = .004$ , and significantly more likely to say they planned on going to a community college (58.7% vs 31.4%, respectively),  $\chi^2(1) = 7.5, p = .006$ . There were no statistically significant differences in likelihood of planning on employment; vocational/trade school, military, or being not sure.

**Figure 13**

*Seniors' Plans for Following Year*



\*\*p < .01.

As to whether there are enough CSU, UC, and private college workshops during their senior year most 111 (87.4%) students strongly agree or agree, and 16 (12.6%) of students disagree or strongly disagree. Seniors were asked if they got a Senior Review with their school counselor to update their credits and A-G college course requirements, 90 (68.2%) of senior students strongly agree or agree, and 42 (31.8%) disagree or strongly disagree. Senior students were also asked if they were aware of college deadlines, application websites, and college testing deadlines, 116 (87.9%) of seniors strongly agree or agree, and 16 (12.1%) of seniors disagree or strongly disagree. Among seniors, there were no statistically significant differences by ethnicity in having a Senior Check review or knowing about college deadlines. Although more Latino/a than non-Latino/a seniors disagreed (14.2% vs 8.6%) that there were enough college related workshops during their senior year, the difference was not statistically significant.

### **Latino/a and Non-Latino/a Statistical Comparison**

Throughout the student survey quantitative analysis, a comparison has been made between the responses of Latino/a and non-Latino/a students for some survey questions. Since the study aims to find out how the roles and responsibilities of school counselors in large public high schools affect Latinos/as A-G college course completion rates, it is appropriate to explore the Latino/a and non-Latino/a statistical difference in attitudes and perceptions of their school counselor and access to college information. The following section explores in more detail at the Latino/a student phenomenological experience. Table 14 demonstrates student attitudes about their school counselor.

**Table 14**

*Attitudes about School Counselor*

	Latino/a		Not Latino/a		$\chi^2(3)$	<i>p</i>
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%		
My school counselor is friendly ( <i>n</i> = 145 Latino/a, 88 non-Latino/a)					6.1	.108

	Latino/a		Not Latino/a		$\chi^2(3)$	<i>p</i>
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%		
Strongly Agree	71	49.0	36	40.9		
Agree	70	48.3	45	51.1		
Disagree	3	2.1	7	8.0		
Strongly Disagree	1	0.7	0	0.0		
My school counselor is professional ( <i>n</i> = 144 Latino/a, 91 non-Latino/a)					3.8	.288
Strongly Agree	77	53.5	39	42.9		
Agree	63	43.8	49	53.8		
Disagree	3	2.1	3	3.3		
Strongly Disagree	1	0.7	0	0.0		
My school counselor is indifferent ( <i>n</i> = 137 Latino/a, 87 non-Latino/a)					3.0	.391
Strongly Agree	14	10.2	12	13.8		
Agree	66	48.2	41	47.1		
Disagree	43	31.4	30	34.5		
Strongly Disagree	14	10.2	4	4.6		
My school counselor is motivating ( <i>n</i> = 139 Latino/a, 86 non-Latino/a)					2.5	.484
Strongly Agree	43	30.9	26	30.2		
Agree	77	55.4	50	58.1		
Disagree	19	13.7	9	10.5		
Strongly Disagree	0	0.0	1	1.2		
My school counselor is caring ( <i>n</i> = 141 Latino/a, 87 non-Latino/a)					3.1	.374
Strongly Agree	48	34.0	27	31.0		
Agree	89	63.1	53	60.9		
Disagree	3	2.1	5	5.7		
Strongly Disagree	1	0.7	2	2.3		
My school counselor is cold ( <i>n</i> = 138 Latino/a, 86 non-Latino/a)					12.6	.006
Strongly Agree	1	0.7	3	3.5		
Agree	11	8.0	8	9.3		
Disagree	80	58.0	63	73.3		
Strongly Disagree	46	33.3	12	14.0		
My school counselor is strict ( <i>n</i> = 142 Latino/a, 89 non-Latino/a)					5.3	.148
Strongly Agree	2	1.4	3	3.4		
Agree	33	23.2	29	32.6		
Disagree	81	57.0	48	53.9		
Strongly Disagree	26	18.3	9	10.1		
My school counselor is mean ( <i>n</i> = 144 Latino/a, 90 non-Latino/a)					3.8	.282
Strongly Agree	1	0.7	1	1.1		
Agree	4	2.8	7	7.8		
Disagree	82	56.9	53	58.9		
Strongly Disagree	57	39.6	29	32.2		
My school counselor always looks happy to see me ( <i>n</i> = 134 Latino/a, 87 non-Latino/a)					1.2	.759
Strongly Agree	27	20.1	13	14.9		
Agree	84	62.7	60	69.0		
Disagree	20	14.9	12	13.8		
Strongly Disagree	3	2.2	2	2.3		

	Latino/a		Not Latino/a		$\chi^2(3)$	<i>p</i>
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%		
My counselor always looks busy when we meet ( <i>n</i> = 132 Latino/a, 87 non-Latino/a)					12.5	.006
Strongly Agree	10	7.6	6	6.9		
Agree	46	34.8	39	44.8		
Disagree	65	49.2	42	48.3		
Strongly Disagree	11	8.3	0	0.0		
My counselor always takes time to listen to me ( <i>n</i> = 136 Latino/a, 88 non-Latino/a)					3.4	.336
Strongly Agree	37	27.2	18	20.5		
Agree	90	66.2	61	69.3		
Disagree	9	6.6	8	9.1		
Strongly Disagree	0	0.0	1	1.1		

Note: The software incorrectly allowed more than one answer to these questions. The few students who provided more than one rating were not included in the percentages above, so the sample sizes differ for each question as noted in the table. *P* values based on chi square likelihood ratio.

Latino/a students were more likely to strongly disagree that their school counselor is cold than were non-Latino/a students,  $\chi^2(3) = 12.0, p = .007$ . Non-Latino/a students were more likely (44.8%) than Latino/a students (34.8%) to agree that their school counselor looks busy when we meet,  $\chi^2(3) = 12.5, p = .006$  as demonstrated in Table 14. There were no statistically significant differences in the level of agreement with the following perceptions of school counselors:

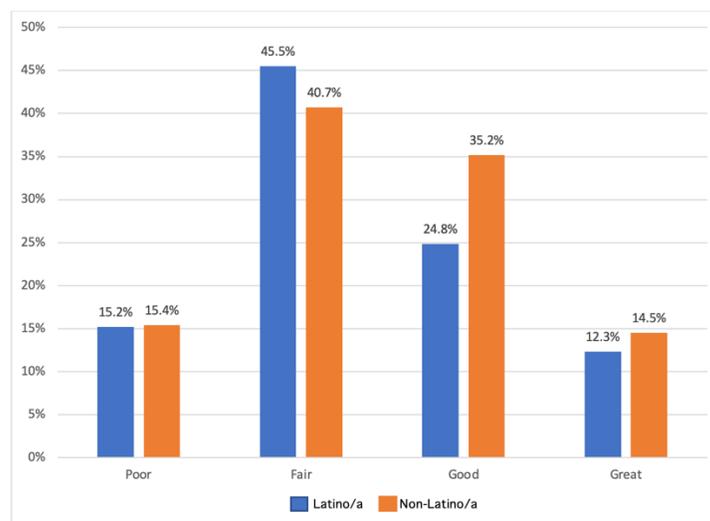
- Friendly
- Professional
- Indifferent
- Motivating
- Caring
- Strict
- Mean
- Happy to see me
- Takes time to listen to me

The differences between Latino/a and non-Latino/a students and their perspectives on school counselor availability, time spent, services provided, and relationships were examined. Latino/a students were significantly less likely (89.2%) than non-Latino/a students (100.0%) to say their school counselor was bilingual,  $\chi^2(1) = 9.2, p = .002$  as seen in Table 15. Latino/a students were significantly less likely than non-Latino/a students (35.8% vs 62.0%, respectively) to say their

school counselor helped them create a four-year plan,  $\chi^2(1) = 11.9, p < .001$ . Figure 14 illustrates how students describe their relationship with their school counselor broken down by Latino/a and non-Latino/a.

**Figure 14**

*How Students Describe Their Relationship with Their School Counselor*



There were no statistically significant differences by ethnicity in:

- Number of visits to school counselor in a year
- Rating of relationship with school counselor
- Rating of enough time spent with school counselor
- Rating of trust in school counselor
- Rating of school counselor's knowledge of student
- Rating of parents' trust in school counselor
- Need to make an appointment to see school counselor
- Rating school counselor's responsiveness to email
- Time to see their school counselor
- Rating of comfort walking into school counselor's office without an appointment
- School counselor has open-door policy
- School counselor does one-on-one post-secondary planning
- School counselor made a mistake in their records

Table 15 demonstrates the students' perceptions of interactions, relationship, trust, and availability of their school counselor by Latino/a and non-Latino/a comparison.

**Table 15***Student Interactions and Relationship with Counselors*

	Latino/a (n = 145)		Not Latino/a (n = 91)		$\chi^2(3)$	p
	n	%	n	%		
Number of Visits to Counselor per Year					3.5	.326
1-5	127	87.6	85	93.4		
6-10	14	9.7	5	5.5		
11-15	2	1.4	0	0.0		
16 or more	2	1.4	1	1.1		
Your Relationship with Your Counselor is					3.9	.275
Poor	22	15.2	14	15.4		
Fair	66	45.5	37	40.7		
Good	36	24.8	32	35.2		
Great	21	14.5	8	8.8		
My counselor spends enough time with me					1.3	.733
Strongly agree	14	9.7	7	7.7		
Agree	74	51.0	52	57.1		
Disagree	46	31.7	24	26.4		
Strongly disagree	11	7.6	8	8.8		
I trust my school counselor					1.7	.646
Strongly agree	49	33.8	24	26.4		
Agree	83	57.2	58	63.7		
Disagree	9	6.2	7	7.7		
Strongly disagree	4	2.8	2	2.2		
I feel my school counselor knows me well					1.4	.694
Strongly agree	12	8.3	10	11.0		
Agree	61	42.1	38	41.8		
Disagree	62	42.8	34	37.4		
Strongly disagree	10	6.9	9	9.9		
My parents/guardians trust my school counselor					4.7	.195
Strongly agree	35	24.1	13	14.3		
Agree	93	64.1	61	67.0		
Disagree	15	10.3	15	16.5		
Strongly disagree	2	1.4	2	2.2		
If you have a question, do you need to make an appointment to see your counselor?					0.9	.832
Definitely yes	39	26.9	29	31.9		
Probably yes	63	43.4	39	42.9		
Probably not	34	23.4	18	19.8		
Definitely not	9	6.2	5	5.5		
My counselor is responsive to my emails					2.7	.446
Strongly agree	53	36.6	26	28.9		
Agree	80	55.2	55	61.1		
Disagree	11	7.6	9	10.0		
Strongly disagree	1	0.7	0	0.0		
If you need to visit your counselor, are you able to see them right away? (df = 4)					6.6	.161
Yes, same day	70	48.3	35	38.5		
No, but within a day	47	32.4	35	38.5		

	Latino/a ( <i>n</i> = 145)		Not Latino/a ( <i>n</i> = 91)		$\chi^2(3)$	<i>p</i>
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%		
Within 2-3 days	26	17.9	16	17.6		
Within 4-5 days	2	1.4	3	3.3		
More than 5 days	0	0.0	2	2.2		
<hr/>						
I feel comfortable walking into my counselor's office to ask a question without an appointment					1.2	.753
Strongly agree	41	28.3	24	26.4		
Agree	52	35.9	32	35.2		
Disagree	42	29.0	25	27.5		
Strongly disagree	10	6.9	10	11.0		
My counselor has an open-door policy for students ( <i>n</i> = 59 Latino/a, 37 non-Latino/a) ( <i>df</i> = 1)	48	81.4	26	70.3	1.6	.208
My counselor is bilingual ( <i>n</i> = 102 Latino/a, 50 non-Latino/a) ( <i>df</i> = 1)	91	89.2	50	100.0	9.2	.002
Does your counselor do one-on-one individual college/career/post-secondary planning? ( <i>n</i> = 112 Latino/a, 69 non-Latino/a)					2.3	.512
Definitely yes	16	14.3	12	17.4		
Probably yes	46	41.1	34	49.3		
Probably not	32	28.6	15	21.7		
Definitely not	18	16.1	8	11.6		
My counselor has helped me create a four-year plan ( <i>n</i> = 109 Latino/a, 71 non-Latino/a) ( <i>df</i> = 1)	39	35.8	44	62.0	11.9	< .001
My school counselor has made a mistake with my classes, credits, or college information ( <i>n</i> = 59 Latino/a, 33 non-Latino/a) ( <i>df</i> = 2)					5.1	.080
Strongly agree	5	8.5	6	18.2		
Agree	15	25.4	13	39.4		
Strongly disagree	39	66.1	14	42.4		

Significance levels based on chi square likelihood ratio with 3 degrees of freedom, except where different *dfs* are noted in column one.

Latino/a students were more likely than non-Latino/a students to visit the career center frequently or occasionally in the past year (50.3 % vs 35.2%, respectively), although the difference was not statistically significant. There was a significant difference by ethnicity in where students go to get college information,  $\chi^2(3) = 12.8, p = .005$  as demonstrated in Table 16. Latino/a students were more likely to go to career center staff but less likely to go to school counselors than non-Latino/a students as seen in Table 16.

Latino/a students were significantly more likely to have taken college field trips (50.3% of students had taken at least one college field trip) than non-Latino/a (27.5% had taken one college field trip),  $\chi^2(3) = 12.8, p = .005$  as seen in Table 16. However, it must be remembered that a greater percentage of Latino/a students were seniors, giving them more time to participate in college field trips. There was no difference between Latino/a and non-Latino/a students in being part of a college enrichment program. There was no difference in when students think they should first get class presentations on college planning by ethnicity. Table 16 illustrates the comparison of Latino/a and non-Latino/a students and where they access college information.

**Table 16***Career Center and College Information*

	Latino/a ( <i>n</i> = 145)		Not Latino/a ( <i>n</i> = 91)		$\chi^2(3)$	<i>p</i>
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%		
How often did you use the career center in the past year? ( <i>df</i> = 2)					5.3	.072
Frequently	22	15.2	9	9.9		
Occasionally	51	35.2	23	25.3		
Never	72	49.7	59	64.8		
Where do you get college information?					12.8	.005
Career center staff	55	37.9	16	17.6		
School counselor	17	11.7	20	22.0		
Both	18	12.4	16	17.6		
Neither	55	37.9	39	42.9		
There are enough workshops on UCs, CSUs, and private colleges during my senior year <sup>a</sup> ( <i>n</i> = 92 Latino/a, 35 non-Latino/a)					1.5	.683
Strongly agree	21	22.8	7	20.0		
Agree	58	63.0	25	71.4		
Disagree	11	12.0	2	5.7		
Strongly disagree	2	2.2	1	2.9		
Was part of college enrichment programs ( <i>df</i> = 1)	33	22.1	21	23.1	0.03	.857
Number of college field trips in high school					13.7	.003
None	72	49.7	66	72.5		
1-2	60	41.4	22	24.2		
3-4	11	7.6	3	3.3		
5 or more	2	1.4	0	0.0		
When do you feel high school students should first get class presentations on college planning? ( <i>df</i> = 4)					4.4	.349
Before 9 <sup>th</sup> grade	21	14.5	19	20.9		
9 <sup>th</sup> grade	52	35.9	32	35.2		
10 <sup>th</sup> grade	35	24.1	23	25.3		
11 <sup>th</sup> grade	35	24.1	14	15.4		

	Latino/a ( <i>n</i> = 145)		Not Latino/a ( <i>n</i> = 91)		$\chi^2(3)$	<i>p</i>
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%		
12 <sup>th</sup> grade	2	1.4	3	3.3		

<sup>a</sup>This only pertains to seniors, so only seniors' answers are reported.

Significance levels based on chi square with 3 degrees of freedom except where otherwise noted in column 1.

### Summary of Student Quantitative Data Analysis

The quantitative data analysis was intended to identify the educational experience of junior and senior students with their school counselor and of school counselors in large public high schools of the same school district. The findings suggest that students found their relationship good with their school counselor, trusted their school counselor, trusted their knowledge of college information and A-G college course requirements, and viewed them as friendly. However, most of the students stated they got their college information from other resources such as their teachers, career center, family, online, college enrichment programs, and friends. In comparing student responses by ethnicity, there were some significant differences in Latino/a and non-Latino students in that Latinos/as were more likely to be AVID students, less likely to identify as AP/Honor students, more likely to identify as a first-generation college student, less likely to be in Accelerated, Honors, or AP classes, and more likely to get their college information from the career center. Among seniors, Latino/a students were significantly less likely than non-Latino/a students to say they planned on going to a four-year college/university and significantly more likely to say they planned on going to a community college. Latino/a students were significantly less likely than non-Latino/a students to say their school counselor helped them create a four-year plan. Lastly, although Latino/a students were more likely to go to the career center staff, they were less likely to go see their school counselor than non-Latino/a students.

### **School Counselor Qualitative Data Analysis**

Data from the school counselor interviews were thematically analyzed according to established qualitative methodologies for a mixed-method approach (Creswell, 2016), as well as focused coding and grounded theory coding methodologies (Saldaña, 2016). The PI asked the school counselors specific questions about their experience, personal counseling experience, workshops, training, professional development, the caseload of students, job duties, responsibilities, time spent with students providing college information, and personal views about students and their A-G college course completion rates and characteristics. As a reminder, the PI is a school counselor, and the epistemological experience of the subjects and the PI may have commonalities in their values and beliefs according to the paradigms of qualitative research terms (Creswell, 2016).

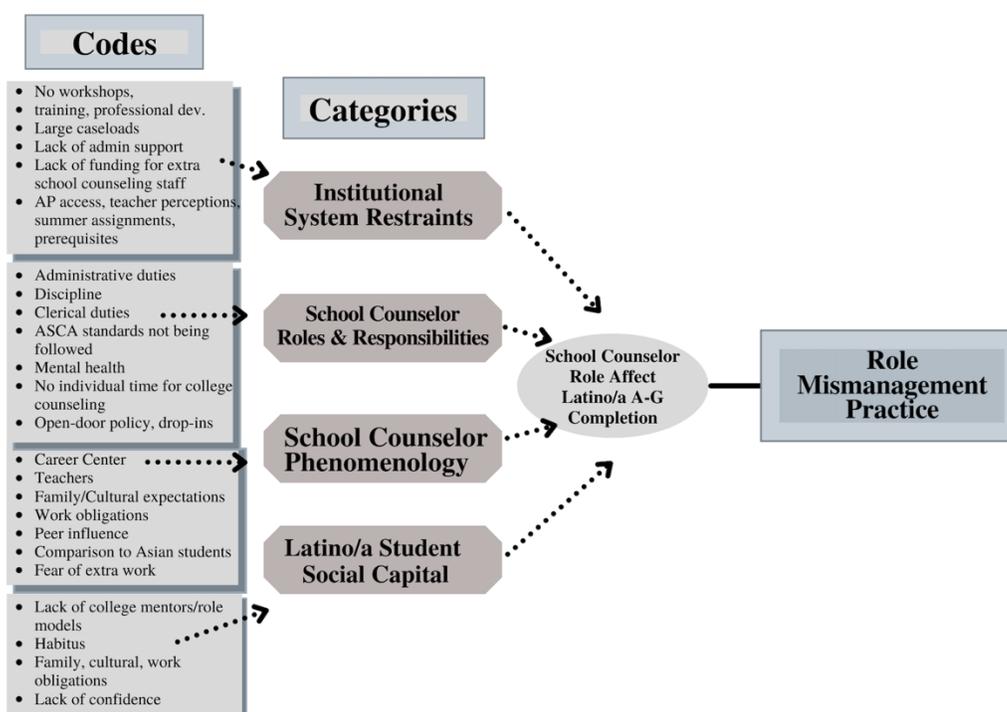
The transcripts were first manually pre-coded to categorize each response in relation to the research questions on the extent to which school counselors play a role in college access in first-generation, low-income Latino/a students in public high schools, what are their limitations and constraints, their personal views, institutional barriers, tracking systems and policies preventing Latino/a students access to AP/Honors/Accelerated courses. For example, references to discipline, busy, other duties, were coded as corresponding to limitations and constraints. The pre-coding phase was then followed by a round of open coding in which personal views and statements were summarized and labeled. In this phase of coding the transcripts were read line-by-line multiple times and statements and comments regarding jobs, duties, views, policies were highlighted in different colors as positive (green), negative (red), or neutral (yellow) impact on school counselor's playing a role in college access to Latino/a students.

The codes were thematically categorized as similar topics emerged and progressed into axial coding to identify relationships in the open coded data. In this phase, the specific jobs, duties, policies, stated by the school counselors that were identified in the open coding phase, were categorized through the lens of CRT, Social Capital Theory, and Cultural Deficiency Perspective, and related back to the research questions of the study. Some of the categories that emerged were lack of workshops/professional development, large caseloads, extra duties/responsibilities, lack of time, career-center, teachers, family/cultural expectations, outreach programs, open-door policy, access to AP courses, and ASCA standards. Of those categories, subcategories were also formed.

Once the axial coding identified the dominant codes the final coding resulted in the following theoretical coding or concepts as described by established qualitative coding methodologies (Saldaña, 2016): Institutional and systemic constraints in public high schools, school counselor roles, and responsibilities not adhering to ASCA standards, school counselor workplace phenomenology, and Latino/a student social capital and habitus. These final themes/concepts lead to the conclusion that school counselors play a large role in Latino/a student A-G college course completion rates and that they do have limitations and constraints, that there are institutional barriers that have an effect on them performing their roles, as seen in Figure 15. A practice that can reasonably be construed as "Role Mismanagement Practice" has been created as a result of these limitations and constraints on school counselors performing their intended role with all the duties and responsibilities that are defined in the ASCA standards. It is a new school of thought that can be applied for school counselors that need further study and research in large public high schools across the United States, especially with a large Latino/a student population.

**Figure 15**

Coding Diagram



### School Counselor Participants

The school counselors totaled 148 years of school counselor experience, 14.8 years was the mean with eight years as the least experienced and 21 years as the most experienced. Table 17 illustrates the school counselor characteristics.

**Table 17**

<b>School Counselor Participants (N=10)</b>			
<b>Sex</b>	9 Female	1 Male	
<b>School Counselor Experience</b>	8 years least	21 years most	148 years total Mean 14.8 years
<b>Classroom Teacher</b>	8 former teachers	2 non teachers	
<b>College Education Background</b>	7 Community College to CSU/UC	3 CSU/UC directly	
<b>Highest Degree Earned</b>	9 M.A.	1 Ed.D.	
<b>Bilingual</b>	9 bilingual	1 not bilingual	

They all varied in how they became interested in school counseling from being motivated by other colleagues, to teaching and wanting to help students further, and wanting to be that person they didn't have in high school.

It seemed like it was a natural progression from teaching because it was a way to find out, the kid's entire life and see, cause no kid is born in a vacuum to see family dynamics and background history.

I really looking back, I feel like I could have benefited from someone encouraging me to attend college. I graduated with decent grades, top 10% of my class, and yet I had no actual direction or plan to attend college. I ended up going to community college. I never applied to a four-year college and, I thought I wanted to give back. I wanted to be that person for someone else.

None of the school counselors interviewed stated that they were encouraged to go to college during high school by their own school counselor. Most school counselors stated they were influenced by teachers, family, or college-enrichment programs in high school. Only one counselor stated, "whoever was around because we were just expected to go to college. That's just the way it was." I asked the school counselor where they attended high school and they stated a private catholic high school in Southern California, the rest attended public high schools.

My teacher is mostly, it was my teachers. I didn't really interact very much with my counselor in high school, but my own teachers helped me to, you know to look into college and to higher education.

I think I just followed my sisters because they were all doing the things with college, getting ready to go to college and get the same things they did.

Mainly Upward Bound was I can accredit that to. The Upward Bound Harvey Mudd chapter was the one that I was involved with.... They're the ones who really identified me, I guess, as a middle student at one point, and then really guided me through the process, not only myself, but my family as well. I felt like they were very good at communicating with parents and guiding them through the steps of how to get to college and what colleges and what it takes to get there and so forth.

## **Workshops and Professional Development**

In the quantitative survey, the school counselors were asked the frequency of professional development provided by the district regarding college information and 18 school counselors stated once a year, and one school counselor stated twice a year. As far as attending college workshops and conferences provided by the district, 16 school counselors stated once a year, two school counselors twice a year, and one counselor stated three workshops/conferences a year. The 10 school counselors that were interviewed on their district and school's services, policies, and practices were asked how many workshops on college information they were provided by the district. Half of the school counselors interviewed stated they had no workshops provided by the district, two said one, two said a few, and three specifically said they attended the CSU or UC yearly workshops. On attending the CSU or UC workshops, they stated that they would prefer to all attend together instead of sending one or two school counselors.

The Cal state and the UC workshops but those aren't from the district and those I do like them, the thing is I would love for all of us to be able to attend something like that. I think it's more beneficial than for one person to go and bring back everything for everybody. I think it's a shame that we, you know, one or two counselors get to go, and the others don't.

You know, and then the last two years, they have not provided workshops that would before the pandemic, there were a few workshops, maybe two, two to three times a year. And in regards to restorative practices, mental health, then, you know, since the pandemic we haven't had those workshops but now... post-pandemic and with the general ed setting counseling job, I feel like it's almost not existent.

The school counselors felt that workshops were beneficial in helping their students to keep them up to date and to see what new policies the colleges and universities had. One of the most significant changes to affect all senior students during the COVID-19 pandemic was the postponement of using the SAT or ACT college testing scores as a requirement for admissions. All of the UCs and CSUs and most private colleges enforced this policy effective the 2020-2021

school year (Office of the UC President, 2020). A lot of new changes have also been enacted in the last five years with applications opening earlier, FAFSA opening on October 1<sup>st</sup>, instead of January 1<sup>st</sup>, among many other significant changes that can help underrepresented low-income first-generation students get an edge if the college information gets to them in a timely manner.

No, I wish they did. I wish we had more, it never fails. I'm always learning something like right when school starts.... And so, I do get frustrated because every year I learned something like that, you know, now chemistry is validated differently. Different things are in the UC doorways. We should have more college training. I would love that. I think that would be so beneficial.

Negative. And the only reason why is because I'm a reader for UCI. That's where I get most of my training about college. And unless you volunteer, you don't get that training.

Complicated question. I would say, because the college and career counselor is here and she helps out so much. She's like our resource, if like the district isn't providing anything because the district doesn't provide hardly anything for us, because nobody at the district's been a counselor before. So, they don't know everything that we do need. And most of our administrators haven't been counselors, so they don't know what's needed. So, I mean a lot of it, we have a look for it on our own, or you know we research from our career guidance counselor or our USC ambassador...but coming from the district it's between slim and nothing, you know, college board sends us more stuff than the district does.

The school counselors were asked if they felt confident and competent in providing all of the college information to students, half of them stated no, others felt comfortable with basic information, others were hesitant, and others indicated they relied a lot on the career center and their colleagues for information.

I feel confident in my understanding of like basic college application, and requirements of the A-G completion of courses, the deadlines, general college information. And then if there's something that I might not know the answer to, I know I can consult with other counselors here on my side or throughout the district or with the college reps that visit our campus, or I can always call admissions office directly.

I don't feel that I know all the information that students need. A lot of time I know the general and the basic information that they need, but most of the times I'm referring them to resources. Here's where you can go to check on this. Here's go talk to this person as well, just to get their input.

### School Counselor Caseloads, Jobs, Duties, and Responsibilities

The school counselors reported having from a little over 300 students to over 400, with several counselors indicating that in the last month an additional school counselor was hired to help with the caseloads at two high schools with ESSER funds due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The school counselors were asked to quantify the percentage of their day they spend on distributing college information to students. Most of the school counselors responded with "not much" "very minimal" "very little" and in terms of percentage of their day, one stated 5-10%, three school counselors said 10%, one 10-15%, one 15-20%, one a third of the time, and one stated less than half (Table 18).

**Table 18**

<i>Time Spent on Distributing College Information (N=10)</i>	
5-10% of the day	1
10%	3
10-15%	1
15-20%	1
A third of the time	1
Less than half of the time	1
Very little	1
Very minimal	1

I also feel that having a college and career counselor at times, it's a great asset for the school and students, but it takes away from at times from the gen ed counselor, who's in the comprehensive setting, who does not attend all of the workshops.

I believe all counselors who work with students directly need to attend all of the UC conferences, all of the Cal state conferences, college board, FAFSA, you know, whatever comes in our, within our territory, we should attend. And I don't see that happening this year which I believe has to happen. But yeah, it seems like it's divvied up by department. So, [name of college and career coordinator] will attend those because that's their specialty yet we're the counselors that also work with our students more on a daily basis and we're missing out on that, and we need that.

Only two out of the 10 school counselors stated that they expected their duties to be what they are because they had seen other colleagues do other duties than college counseling. The

other eight school counselors resoundingly said no, it is not what they expected. In describing some of the duties other than college counseling and information distribution they include, substituting, clerical duties, supervision, drop-in parents, scheduling, socio/emotional situations, and all 10 school counselors mentioned discipline and/or behavior. "I mean, a lot of my day-to-day has been taken up with subbing, you know, and different things like that. Also, we have an open-door policy, so I get parents in here, kids drop in," "I spent a lot of time in my personal social, emotional well-being. I feel like at the end of the day we spent so much time just putting out fires," and others stated:

So, I spent a lot of time and I'm just like addressing incoming situations, like things that are not planned, discipline, and emotional needs of the students. Like risk assessments, conflict, resolutions, program placement also, you know, looking after the different programs at school, like independent study, credit recovery, or the college, a lot of programming and the personal, social, emotional wellbeing of the students.

The discipline, you know, it keeps me away from doing my job that, you know, it takes in fact this morning, I'm still on a disciplinary issue since nine o'clock. So, like three hours. And I'm still dealing with all that. It gets me away from what I do. I like discipline, but I think it needs to be a separate job. Like if I'm going to do all this, do all this, the mixture of the two it's this, everybody, I feel everybody gets shortchanged from running around from one thing to another.

I feel like most of my job, most of my day's spent doing clerical stuff. That's not counselor-related or a counselor role. I feel like we're being asked to stop what you're doing right now and meet with each of these kids specifically to check if they have COVID vaccines or stop what you're doing right now and go do this. And they're not on the big picture. It might be important to the district, but as far as what we're supposed to do individually with our students, it's not our ASCA standards, it's not related, it's not a specific counselor duty.

### **School Counselor Perceptions and Personal Views**

One of the main research questions in this study has been what personal views school counselors have in servicing Latino/a students. On the school counselor survey questionnaire, when asked their level of agreement that at their sites, if Latino/a students have lower A-G college course completion rates they were divided almost in half with 10 school counselors

agreed or strongly agreed, and nine disagreed or strongly disagreed. On the qualitative open-ended questions, the 10 school counselors were also equally divided. Some stated they were lower, others the same, but none of the school counselors indicated that Latinos/as at their school site had higher A-G college course completion rates, even when in some cases Latinos/as were the predominant ethnic group of students at their site. The reasons they gave in their personal views or perceptions include, cultural reasons, family obligations, and expectations, peers, work, low-socioeconomic background, lack of motivation, lack of preparation or challenging themselves with Honors, Accelerated, or AP courses. They felt they had to expand on their answers in some cases when they felt it was family expectations or support and the underlying tone was that they recognized these situations and the complexity and wanted to provide more support and encouragement for the student. In interpreting their responses through Cultural Deficiency Perspective, it seems they were well aware of the disrepute their profession is known for as school counselors in public education as gatekeepers. One school counselor very poignantly stated, "we are not gatekeepers." The school counselors explained their reasoning behind their views on Latino/a students having a lower A-G completion rate from their years of experiences and phenomenology.

I mean, my honest gut reaction is yes. I feel like they do have a lower A-G completion rate. And the why I mean, the why is, is kind of one of those multi-tiered things is I think there's a lot of family dynamics that go into a Hispanic family.... So, I I'm basing this on what I've seen over 25 years of being an education family is very important. And I know that parents are less willing from what I've seen less willing to send their girls, especially anywhere outside of the home.

I think that's what family is and the emphasis on higher education. I just don't think is there in many Hispanic families and whether that's because the parents themselves didn't have higher education, or because they just don't see the value in the benefit for maybe the kind of work they have, you know, for their kids, maybe they want them to join their dad and whatever his business is you know, or whatever. But I do notice that other ethnicities do have higher A -G completion rates.

We are like a majority Latino, so of course, you know, our Latino rate is high at the school, but overall compared to other school districts and in the state there, you know we do know this, Latino students do have a lower A-G course requirement completion rate. And I, I see that math is one of the major reasons why. Like, once the students, you know, don't reach a certain math level, they just, you know, drop from the A-G completion. And it's the math that holds them back.

I think because the students in the community that I work in, their lower socioeconomic households many come from single-parent homes. So, they lack the role models as well. They're first-generation, so they don't have those role models of siblings or parents who have previously attended college that can show them the ropes also feel that a lot of our students have added responsibilities, such as caring for young siblings or working outside the home to help support the family.... Or sometimes it's even just finding a quiet place at home.

One counselor even stated that she argues with parents to push them into taking advanced courses or continue with the requirements to be more competitive:

...They know I'm strict on them and I expect a lot from them.... But I also want them to expect more of themselves because they may not like the situation they're in with their families or their situation at home.... Some of the parents are not thrilled saying, oh, you know, you're always picking on my kid... I'm not picking on your kid. I'm trying to encourage your kid to go to college. Some parents don't like that. Some parents say, well, my kid's not going to go to college. Why are you making them take calculus? And it's sad because they're set in their mind. Like my kid's not going to college. High school was enough.

I think I see a lot of times they do the minimum and maybe one or two courses are AP unless we push it. And that it's not so much, and I think that the Asian kids tend to push each other, and they get competitive, and the Latino kids seem to, they meet the requirements. They're not, they're gonna [*sic*] go to college, but they're not trying to be better than their friends. I don't know if it's cultural.

On what they perceived to be the thing in common with students who have higher A-G college course completion rates some of their responses; resilience, motivation, family support, peers, math level, more involvement in school, part of college-enrichment programs, work ethic, and expectations. Some of their comments about students include: "Mature, focused, driven, you know, they can come in and telling me what they're going do and what they've always wanted to do and where they're going to go to school," "They're motivated. And I think they have

a better grasp of time management and they're able to balance," "I think it's their work ethic, their perseverance, their resilience. I think that those students, have those innate qualities that help them to complete their, A-G," "Expectations. From home, from peers, from teachers, from, you know, just, just expectations".

I think one of the things they all have in common is things like family support, family encouragement, family expectations. They're also more involved in school, whether it's through sports or clubs or different programs like Upward Bound or we have like the teacher prep academy and then we have AVID. So, I think the students who are better prepared are the ones that are the ones that are involved in those programs.

So, I think it's intrinsic. I think it's what the student has within themselves. And while other factors like their environment, the family, what the family expectations are, might play into it. I don't think that those are as influential as what the student themselves wants to do.

I feel that they have resilience for the most part. Because I cannot say that all of them come from households that are very structured and, you know, pro-education, but a lot of them do come from hardworking families who have instilled in them. You know, you have to do your best, whatever it is, do your best. So, they do have that background and, and just resilience.

### **District and School Services, Policies, and Practices**

The School Counselors were asked about limitations in students taking Honors, Accelerated, or AP courses, and an overwhelming majority, nine, out of 10 school counselors stated that any student was able to enroll. Only one school counselor indicated they there were limitations due to the course prerequisites and summer assignments that would hold back students from taking an AP course:

I do feel like we have some limitations, for example, you know, there's of course prerequisites, you know, and some are assignments that can hold students from taking an AP course.

The rest of the school counselors felt they had to encourage, motivate, push, or even go to “bat” for some students.

I think we have to go to bat for some of our kids and let teachers know that we have a policy that allows any student who wants to take an AP class.

There may be some teachers who think that they're, I've heard comments. Oh, no, they're not. They don't meet the scores or they're not this, this they're not AP material or something, but that never prevents them from being able to take it because we advocate for them and they get to take it if they want to.

Most school counselors were proud of their open access policy for AP classes and their encouragement of students to take them. They did acknowledge that there was "hesitation," and damaging their "confidence."

I don't, at least at our site, there are not limited. Students are able to enroll in a class if they feel they want to challenge themselves. There are no prerequisites. Of course, if a student is way below where we feel they're really not prepared, then we try to encourage them to maybe look at the like a sample test, just so and read a little bit more about the course that they know what they're, they're getting themselves into, but we do not discourage students in that we do not restrict in any way.

No. We let everybody who wants to do it and do it. It's just that if they do it and they're not ready, then that's when it really hurts them. And then that it damages their confidence when they're not ready and they're pushed into it and then they hate it and they don't try anything else. So, the first class we give them should be a class that's manageable. Unfortunately, we have world history, which is the most difficult with the most, in so much information. They can't handle it. And then everybody stops taking AP.

I'm very impressed with our school here at [high school] and also [high school]. I felt that students have access to the AP program and advanced program or honors programs. But my issue with the AP access is that a lot of times we give access, but if a student falls short because it's too challenging, we do not allow for a student to drop because the district has paid their AP examinations due to some funding.

No. We're very, if you want to take it, even if, even if we believe as a counselor, I believe, you know, you're struggling, but if the student and the parent says, yes, we have a very open-door policy. *We're not gatekeepers at all* [emphasis added].

School counselors were asked where else they felt students got college information. All school counselors mentioned their career centers, and that they have a full-time college and career counselor. Others mentioned their teachers, siblings, their peers, college-enrichment programs, school clubs, and the internet.

From the college and career coordinator, from the college and career center from the internet, from college campuses. I think a lot of our kids have the foresight to visit campuses either when they're on vacation or when they go on college field trips. If they're part of AVID, if they're part of CSF, NHS, you know, some of those clubs that go on these field trips, I think that they even get some of their information from the college itself.

Teachers, teachers, you know, share information with the students in the career center. We have an Upper Bound Program, and they do a good job with supporting the students and giving them information regarding A-G completion and also career exploration.

Each of our sites in our district has a full-time college and career counselor who helps them throughout the year provides information to the students in the career center is open, you know, at lunch and after school, and then housed in the career center are also college reps that visit the campus regularly. And then we also have students who participate in programs like AVID or Upward Bound or TRIO, they also get information from those representatives.

Our college and career center. We do have a college and career center at every one of our sites and from working with [college and career counselor] at [high school]. And now with [college and career counselor] at [high school], it's a great resource for our students. The only problem is a lot of times the students don't walk through there as they do with the guidance office. So sometimes it's information that doesn't get to them, but the staff there does their best to get that information out, students and families. But again, it's like a third person. So sometimes it feels like there's something falling through the cracks.

### **School Counselor Relationships with Students and Parents**

School counselors were asked how they perceived their relationship with students and parents and if they felt they were trusted. Most school counselors stated they felt their relationship with students was good and that their parents trusted them. The school counselors are divided alphabetically and have many years at their site and have established relationships with some families. A few indicated that they had to work on those relationships because either they were new to the school or because they felt they mostly met with parents when students were being disciplined. One school counselor stated that she sometimes had to push parents to encourage their students to stay in college or advanced placement courses.

I believe I have a good relationship with my students and their parents. The students know I have an open-door policy, they can come and see me anytime. They can reach me

through in person on the phone, email, Google chat, and same thing with the parents. We even now do zoom meetings for them. So, I think that I have a good relationship with them. I think they know that I have the best interest in mind. And I think one thing that makes me a little more credible is that I actually grew up in this community and I attended the high school that I work in. So, you know, I had someone look at me, you know, I sat in your shoes, and I also grew up in a single-parent home and I am a first-generation college student. So, you know I can relate to them.

I think it's a very good relationship. I do the best that I can to make sure that they feel they can come into my office any time that they can trust me to have a conversation, to feel comfortable.... Parents? Same thing. I feel that I do have a connection with my parents. I try to reach out to them, connect with them so that they feel that I am a trusted member of their family that can help their kids.

I believe that when I worked with them for a while, that they do. And I have obviously had some families that I had multiple many children come through students come through. And so, there's a really good rapport there, but in a lot of cases, sometimes it has to be built. I don't think they trust me initially. I think they have to get to know my intention, you know, that I'm sincere about helping them or whatever. And then they, they know they can, they can trust me.

I think so. I mean, the ones that don't trust me are the ones who meet me the first time and got in trouble. Then they don't really trust me at that point because I'm disciplinary at that point.

School counselors were asked if there were any last comments they wanted to say relating to their duties, roles, and responsibilities:

I would like to see, you know, our district shift to a dean of discipline so that we can also address more of our counseling domains. At this district we provide for the whole child approach in which includes, you know, the discipline, but it does take us over most. It does take most of our time to address the discipline, the referrals in which we could be using to address other areas like the college and career information.

I think that the counselors, we need to have more time allowed to be able to service kids in these areas. And I think that as a profession, we need to define our role. We need to have more support from ASCA, and we just need support from administration to allow us to focus more on our, on those duties as opposed to discipline or other administrative duties that they have us do.

I think that, you know, we do need to balance that it should be both, not just one-sided. We are an ASCA counseling team that really should focus on all three domains and not just one. And it seems like we're just focused on emotional, social, emotional.

I just wish that we could spend more time, like just kind of talking about options and what's out there. And I don't know, I guess just give, just give me more time with them to kind of open their eyes to different possibilities, especially if they are like a first-generation college student. Right. So, they aren't necessarily getting that information at home. So, it would be nice to kind of spend more time with them on that and I think too, being able to like consistently give them that information, cause sometimes they might hear a little snippet, but then if too much time passes and it's like a whole other year or two years and they don't really remember, it would be nice to be able to kind of consistently give them those reminders because sometimes they might get misinformation from like a friend or someone else that kind of confuses things. So, it would be nice if we could do that more consistently.

Table 19 summarizes the school counselor limitations and constraints through the theoretical frameworks used in this study and the research questions posed.

**Table 19**

*Theoretical Framework and Research Question Chart*

<b>Research Question</b>	<b>Critical Race Theory</b>	<b>Social Capital Theory</b>	<b>Cultural Deficiency Theory</b>
<b>School Counselor Limitations &amp; Constraints in Public Schools</b>	Large caseloads Duties/Responsibilities outside ASCA role Historical systemic constraints in public schooling Lack of workshops/training/professional development	Public school funding Family and cultural expectations District resources Latino/a habitus	Family and cultural expectations Lack of college mentors Lack of confidence Lack of social and financial capital
<b>School Counselor Personal Views in Servicing Latino/a Students</b>	Lack of time due to large caseloads Excessive outside administrative and clerical duties Lack of support from school & district administration	Lack of staff Lack of support from school, district, Latino/a family expectations Lack of one-on-one school counseling	Family obligations Work obligations Peer relations Sports and other priorities Fear of extra work Comparison to Asian students

<b>Institutional Barriers: Tracking systems preventing Latino/a students from A-G courses</b>	Underfunded schools Socioeconomic barriers Lack of culturally relevant curriculum Systemic bias in college testing and AP exams Eighth grade tracking system into high school placement based on test results and prior placement	Family & cultural obligations Financial obligations Latino/a habitus Lack of one-on- one school counseling Large classrooms	Lack of family support Lack of somewhere quiet to do homework Lack of role models Family and cultural expectations
<b>Policies in place preventing Latino/a students from AP/Honors/Accelerated Courses</b>	Large student: school counselor ratio Open-door policy AP prerequisites, summer assignments Teacher perception of Latino/a student Lack of one-on-one school counseling	Lack of social, financial, and human capital for Latino/a students Lack of tutoring and other support services Lack of preparation	Lack of teacher support Lack of preparation for AP prerequisites Lack of time for summer assignments

### Summary of Qualitative Data Analysis

The qualitative data analysis suggests that the school counselors have altruistic intentions, and all went into their profession to help students with their academic needs, college and career plans, and personal and emotional support as stated by the ASCA standards, however, they feel their roles and responsibilities are assigned elsewhere. They feel frustrated with lack of support, lack of workshops and training, extra administrative and clerical duties that prevent them from meeting with students more frequently. They know what their limitations and constraints are in servicing all students with college information because of their extra duties and responsibilities. The main point of concern from all ten school counselors interviewed was the responsibility of dealing with student discipline which takes a lot of time from spending more intentional time with students in college exploration, planning, and other post-secondary planning. They acknowledge that Latino/a students don't meet the A-G college course requirements at the same

rate as other student ethnicities, Asian students in particular. They describe many reasons for this including cultural, family expectations, work obligations, lack of support, information, confidence, and taking challenging courses such as AP, Honors, or Accelerated courses. They recognize that students get most of their college information from the career center, college and career counselor, teachers, family, friends, and online, and they are disappointed that they aren't able to provide more quality time with students in distributing college information.

The school counselors were not asked directly if they feel their roles and responsibilities, as well as their perceptions, affect Latino/a students' A-G college course completions as to not influence their responses. Instead, they were asked about specific roles and duties for servicing all students and then more specifically about Latino/a students in particular. In their responses, they were frustrated and fully aware of the daily institutional obstructions that prevent them from providing all the college information they thought they would when they decided to go into school counseling. Through the lens of CRT, their individual actions are not intentional but the result of racial inequities that are built into the institutional and systemic system of American public schooling and are preventing school counselors from performing their intended roles and duties as described by the American School Counseling Association standards. The school counselors recognize the social, economic, cultural, and educational capital that is lacking in low-income, first-generation Latino/a students and knowingly want to be that college graduate mentor pivotal educator. Overall, the school counselors' views on Latino/a students and their A-G college course completion rates indicated they are conscientious about the personal obstacles that Latinos/as students experience in their lives and Cultural Deficiency Perspective did not seem to be the dominating factor with them

## CHAPTER 6: Conclusion and Implications

This study explores the relationship between school counselors in large public schools, their roles, duties, and responsibilities, and how they relate to Latino/a students meeting their A-G college course requirements.

### Primary Findings

The main question driving this study was to find out how high school counselors play a role in the A-G college course requirement completion for Latino/a students in large public high schools to understand how school counselors can remove institutional barriers for Latino/a students and close the achievement gap. Research shows that high school counselors can serve as positive institutional agents that can help first-generation, low-income, and underrepresented students navigate the educational system (Fuller & Hannum, 2002; McDonough, 1994; Ochoa, 2013; Perez, 2009; Portes, 1998). The findings below give the results in the research questions stated in chapter 1.

To what extent do school counselors play a role in college access in first-generation, low-income, Latino/a students in public high schools?

**Finding 1:** *What are the school counselor's limitations and constraints in their public-school settings?* The limitations include a large caseload, a role not clearly defined with many duties and responsibilities assigned as has been studied by other authors (McGahey, 2017). Not attending enough college information workshops, training, or meeting for professional development frequently added to their limitations of college knowledge they could have otherwise been providing to students. Another constraint in the school counselor role was not having enough time to meet more consistently with all students for one-on-one college information distribution and post-secondary planning. This is consistent with the literature in the

importance of having a smaller caseload to provide individualized attention (McDonough, et al., 1997; McDonough, 1997). The career center and full-time college and career counselor, although unanimously viewed by all counselors as the source where most students receive their college information and assistance, can take away from the student-school counselor relationship. A surprising and unfortunate data result was that school counselors view themselves as the second place where students get their college information, and in fact they are last to the career center, teachers, online, family, college enrichment programs, friends, and other according to the student responses. Teachers of advanced classes serve as gatekeepers to Latino/a students they don't perceive have the ability as Perez's works have demonstrated (Perez, 2009, 2011).

**Finding 2:** *What personal views do school counselors have in servicing Latino/a students?* Overall, the school counselors have a positive view towards all students and feel frustrated that they cannot help them more with college information. They did view low-income, first-generation Latino/a students as hesitant to take more college preparatory classes including Accelerated, Honors, and AP courses. In their views, this was due to mostly family expectations, peer expectations, family and work responsibilities, lack of confidence, lack of pushing themselves, and lack of wanting to put in long hours doing the academic work which has been documented in other research studies (Cavazos, 2009). Latino/a students are also compared to Asian students in why they are not challenging themselves with more rigorous courses and achieving good grades, as Ochoa has written about the differential treatment of students (Ochoa, 2013). School counselors also perceive some teachers as not having high expectations for Latino/a students in Accelerated, Honors, or AP courses. Lastly, a perceived lack of support from both school administration and district administration for their role as school counselors. The school counselors view both school and district administration as lacking in knowledge of their true role and duties because the administrators never held the position of a school

counselor. Existing research shows administration use school counselors for other administrative duties and do not follow the ASCA standards recommendations (Vela-Gude et al., 2009).

The next part of the research question was to what extent do institutional barriers in public high schools impede Latino/a students from achieving their A-G college course requirements?

**Finding 3:** *What types of tracking systems are in place in public school systems preventing Latino/a students from having access to A-G college prep courses?* The main tracking systems come from the middle school to the high school with results from state test scores and placement in math and science classes recommended by their eighth-grade teachers. Other tracking systems include continued placement in classes by perceived ability, courses having prerequisites, summer assignments, or incoming teacher approval as research on tracking in education has previously demonstrated (Stanton-Salazar, 2001). The prerequisites include certain grades in prior classes and summer assignments include readings, essays, and exams on the first day of class of the new school year. Many low-income, first-generation Latino/a students must work in the summer to help their families. As the results of the survey indicate, over 80% of students indicated they receive free/reduced lunch and all the schools in the district surveyed are Title I schools qualifying for federal programs due to a majority of students at or below the poverty lines as stated by standard guidelines (Title I, 2019).

**Finding 4:** *What policies are in place in public schools preventing Latino/a students access to AP/Honors/Accelerated courses?* The policies in place for school counselors in this particular district include having a holistic approach to counseling which takes the school counselors away from college information distribution and to other duties. The main duties school counselors stated in the results of the school counselor interviews are discipline, clerical, and mental health, and literature suggests this puts them at a disadvantage in forming a trusting

relationship with students (McGahey, 2017; Peck & Reitzug, 2014). The student-to-counselor ratio is higher than the 250:1 ASCA recommended ratio which prevents the school counselors from a more individualized approach (ASCA, 2019). An open-door policy which in theory sounds beneficial to students and parents also takes away time from the school counselors from properly planning college information distribution and meeting with students to plan for their post-secondary plans. The policy of only allowing one or two school counselors to attend college information workshops such as CSU or UC conferences is detrimental to the overall school counseling program in receiving consistent updates on new policies for college admission.

### **Interpretation**

Institutional agents are the gatekeepers that make the difference in a student's life, especially if they are the lowest academically achieving cultural group, such as Latinos/as. School counselors can provide that pivotal moment when a low-income, first-generation, or underrepresented student who otherwise not be on equal footing with a middle-class student realizes that college is possible (Espinoza, 2011). They provide the human, social, and cultural capital that is lacking in their habitus, and according to leading researchers in social capital, habitus plays a major role in determining one's social and economic status (Bourdieu, 1973, 1986; Coleman, 1988, 1990). School counselors play a particularly critical role in class selection, scheduling, planning for post-secondary education, and dissemination of college and career information and options for all students (Lareau, 1989, 2003). It is an overwhelming task to be able to give Latino/a students an individualized, hands-on, intense approach to guidance services when they have duties and responsibilities that take them away from their recommended standards (ASCA, 2019). Large caseloads in public high schools are the norm to maximize the

budget constraints that our educational public school system faces in this country. The results from this survey clearly indicate the concerns school counselors have that their roles and responsibilities are not meeting the ASCA standards in meeting the needs of students in their college and career preparation (Yosso et al., 2006).

My hypothesis that school counselors have a major role in the A-G completion rates of Latino/a students and make a difference either positively or negatively is supported by the data of counselor perceptions and their views that they are not given enough professional development, allowed to attend college workshops, conferences, field trips, able to meet formally with students more often, and have duties outside of their standards (McDonough, 1994). I interpret these findings as school counselors self-reporting that they are not making a positive impact on the completion of the A-G college requirements for Latino/a students. Over 50% of the school counselors interviewed self-reported that they believe that Latinos/as at their sites have lower A-G completion rates, despite the fact that they are the predominant population at their schools. My prediction was that counselors would indicate that they are not being given enough professional development, allowed to attend workshops and conferences for college information, and are not spending the time that they need on preparing Latino/a students for college due to duties and responsibilities outside of their ASCA standards is also supported as the majority of counselors stated they spend over 50% of their day on other duties not relating to college information which prevents individualized attention that Latino/a students desperately need as past literature suggests (McDonough, 1994, 1997; McDonough et al., 1997). Over half of the school counselors also stated that they are only spending 1-10% of their day on college information to students. An overwhelming number of school counselors, in fact, all of them, with only indicating “sometimes,” indicate they handle discipline on a daily basis and have

caseloads as big as up to 400 students. This supports my other research question hypothesis that there are institutional barriers that directly relate to school counselors and their role in Latinos/as completing their A-G college course requirements.

### **Recommendations**

Research on the roles and responsibilities of school counselors in assisting students of color, especially Latinos/as who are the lowest educational achieving cultural group, including meeting their A-G college requirements is critical in breaking the reproduction of inequality. As an educator, especially a school counselor, it is my obligation, my responsibility, and moral duty to invest my time in fostering trusting relationships with my students that will transmit the information, skills, and knowledge for them to change their educational trajectory and improve their chances of upward mobility by meeting their A-G college requirements. As a public school district serving a predominantly Latino/a population we need to address the following issues in terms of the roles and responsibilities of school counselors and their impact on Latino/a students A-G college requirement completion:

### **Implications of the Study**

The implications and recommendations for educators, school counselors, site and district administrations, and policymakers are urgent in helping address the academic achievement gap between Latino/a students and other students nationwide as well as increase the A-G college course completion rates for Latinos/as.

#### **Implications for Educators**

There are three major implications for all educators, teachers in particular who spend more time with students than anyone else on campus. The first is for all staff, especially teachers to recognize their role as pivotal moment educators as well as institutional agents that have daily

access to the students to transfer college information, even if it is through their personal stories and to encourage them to see their school counselor more often. The second implication is to recognize their own biases, misperceptions, and not stereotype students based on perceived ability so that all students have access to Honors, AP, or Accelerated classes. Lastly for all educators to recognize the institutional and systemic barriers in existence that prevent Latinos/as and other minority students from completing their A-G college course requirements.

### **Implications for School Counselors**

There are six major implications for school counselors to lobby for themselves and protect and advocate for their student services program to follow the ASCA standards. The first implication is for school counselors to establish their program and clearly define their roles and educate their site administration on the ASCA professional standards and competencies. The second is for school counselors to recognize tracking practices and restrictions or prerequisites to Accelerated, Honors, and AP courses and have open access for all students. Thirdly, school counselors should work closely with college coordinators and career center staff to follow through with students and their college application process. Fourth, school counselors should meet at least once a month with senior students to ensure they are on track with the college application process, as well as underclassmen to ensure they are on track with their college requirements. The fifth implication is for school counselors to offer parent workshops on college information during the day and afternoon in multiple languages to keep parents informed and supported. Lastly, assess the needs of students, deliver guided lessons to all levels of students, and manage their student services program.

### **Implications for School Site Administrations**

School site administrations have significantly more implications because they directly supervise school counselors and have the most potential for promoting change for the role of the school counselor. The first implication for site administrations is to evaluate and revise the school counselor roles and job duties to be more personalized, hands-on, and intense, especially in low-income large public high schools. Secondly, school counselors and college coordinator staffing should be increased, and lower the student-to-counselor ratio, to the recommended ASCA 250:1 ratio. The third implication for school administrations is to enable school counselors to meet more frequently one-on-one with students to provide not only college information, but student service lesson plans as stated by ASCA. The fourth implication is that school counselors must be given the appropriate training and professional development and allowed to attend conferences and workshops relating to college and working low-income, first-generation college students, and other underrepresented and underserved students. The fifth implication is to offer field trips to colleges and universities to all grade levels and increased to juniors and seniors in large public schools with school counselors attending as many as possible. The sixth implication is to have the Local Control and Accountability Plan Resources (LCAP) funding be used for college enrichment programs, staff, field trips, college resources, and additional staff. The seventh implication for site administration is to attend ASCA and college workshops, training, and professional development to learn the true roles, duties, and responsibilities of school counselors and be more supportive. Lastly, school administrations need to be more supportive of the school counselor's job responsibilities by removing unnecessary and unrelated duties including but not limited to discipline, clerical, substituting, supervising, test proctoring, etc.

### **Implications for District Administrations**

There are five major implications of this study for district administrations. The first is that district offices need to support school administration and school counselors by allowing all school counselors to attend and fund college information workshops. The second is that district offices need to provide and fund a separate Dean of Discipline position to remove discipline from the school counselors' duties and responsibilities, allowing them more time to meet with students one-on-one to plan for postsecondary education and college options. Thirdly, district administrations need to hire other staff for supervision, test proctoring, clerical, and other duties that consume the daily duties of school counselors. Fourth, district administrations need to provide ethnically relevant curricula, such as ethnic studies and gender studies as well as other curricula that can inspire, motivate, inform, and awaken Latinos/as must be integrated into the master schedule. Lastly, district administrations need to hire more culturally diverse school counselors, teachers, and staff that reflect the population they serve to serve as role models for all underrepresented, low-income, first-generation college students.

### **Implications for Policymakers**

The major implication for policymakers at the state and federal levels is to provide funding for additional school counselors, clearly define their role, and earmark this funding for direct one-to-one service for underrepresented students, especially in large public high schools with low-income, first-generation students.

The Role Mismanagement Practice as this study uncovered in the school counselor roles is critical in addressing, especially in the post-pandemic social/emotional adjustment of all students back to in-person learning. All students are affected academically, personally, socially, and need school counselors performing their intended roles more than ever.

## **Limitations of Study**

This study is limited in that it focused on one school district in the San Gabriel Valley in Southern California. It was in essence a microcosm of public education in large urban cities with a large Latino/a low-income, first-generation, student population in the United States. The limitations of this research study included the size of the sample for both the school counselors and the students. Although a 90% school counselor response rate is great, it did only come from one school district. The student response rate of 54% is acceptable but a larger student response rate would have been preferable. The school district is representative of other suburban and urban school districts with large public high schools and similar demographics. The student-to-counselor ratio in our district of 380 is considerably lower than the state average of 760 (NACAC, 2014). Surveying school counselors in public high schools with the state average of 760 students is necessary for a more accurate representation of their roles and responsibilities. Including districts from different parts of the state would be ideal because even within one school district, schools have their own culture, policies, and procedures.

The lack of comparison between middle and high school counselor duties is also a limitation in studying the overall impact of A-G college requirements met. Due to time constraints, surveying middle school counselors was not a possibility because, in the school district that was sampled, there are at least 10 different middle schools, with one high school having four middle schools that feed into it. It also involves working with 3 different school districts within the same city. Most middle schools in the city do not have a school counselor, some share a school counselor a few days a week, with most middle schools having the assistant principal and principal handle the counseling duties.

Within the survey itself, there was a limitation in the questions that were asked about their perceptions about other groups or why they felt Latinos/as did not meet the A-G college requirements. More specific questions needed to be asked about why they agreed with this statement and have follow-up questions. Other follow-up questions about how they felt about only spending 1-10% of their time on college information, meeting with the students less than three times a year, being provided professional development, allowed to attend workshops, conferences, and field trips needed to have been asked. Several questions on the school counselors' roles and duties should have been posed, such as a yes or no question on whether they know the ASCA standards and competencies, provide a list of certain job duties that they are supposed to be doing and have them check all that apply, among other more detailed questions on their roles and responsibilities.

The student survey for this research study was intended for juniors and seniors for two reasons. The first being that it is reasonable to assume that upper classmen such as juniors and senior students become more knowledgeable about A-G college course requirements, college information, and have more an opportunity to establish a relationship with their school counselor than underclassmen. Secondly, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and distance learning for a full school year and 3 months, most freshmen and sophomores never met their school counselor in person. In the future, all grade levels should be surveyed. The student survey should have asked if they know who their school counselor is instead of assuming that they already know or had a relationship. Another question in the student survey that could have been clearer are whether they went on a field trip as a school sponsored event or on their own. Open-door policy should have been explained in parenthesis, the language they believe their school counselor is bilingual in should have been listed, and a fill-in question on what college information they need from

their school counselor. Lastly, a qualitative study for high school students needs to accompany such research to get a more comprehensive understanding, from the students receiving the services and their phenomenological experiences.

The COVID-19 pandemic also brought many limitations that are beyond the scope of this study in that junior and senior students surveyed were at home in distance learning for a year and three months of their high school career furthering the school counselor relationship and access to college information. Also due to the Covid-19 health care crisis, in-person interviews with school counselors were not advisable and were all held on phone or videoconference.

### **Future Research**

There is much to learn about all the experiences, circumstances, and complexities that first-generation Latino/a students endure in large public high schools. For some students, including low-income, immigrant, special education, and other underrepresented students, surviving day-to-day is the only thing on their mind and the last thing on their thoughts is meeting their A-G college requirements. That's why further research is needed in the role of the school counselor and their consequential impact on all students including Latinos/as and their A-G college course completion rates. Research into other institutional and systemic barriers, and other gatekeepers for students of color, low-income, special needs, English language learners, and all underrepresented students in our public educational school system need to be identified, addressed, funded, and rectified.

Federal, state, and local policies need to address the inequities and barriers for these students. Funding at the state level must be a priority in public education. Smaller class sizes and smaller student-to-counselor ratios facilitate these pivotal moments and relationships with educators. School counselors, teachers, administrators, and all support staff must be provided

with professional development with practices for reaching all students, especially low-income, first-generation, underrepresented students, English language learners, immigrant students, special needs students, and students with disabilities. Instead, these students are being excluded, marginalized, and even targeted with racist national immigration policies. School counselor preparation and credentialing programs, teacher, and administrator credentialing programs must also incorporate strategies to address these students, their unique needs, and circumstances.

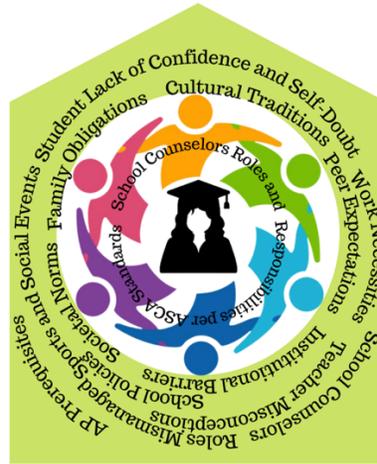
All colleges, but especially selective colleges, have a responsibility to open the doors to these students and support them with college enrichment programs and staff at these school sites as well as summer residential programs. These college enrichment programs need to be all-inclusive and at an early age. Corporate America needs to put in its share of social responsibility with donations for scholarships, mentoring programs, internships, and supporting their local schools. Schools K-16 need to do a better job in involving parents of low-income, first-generation, and underrepresented students in their school communities. Only then can we truly make a dent in the daily lives of Latinos/as and all other students of color as well as low-income and first-generation students and transform their educational opportunities into a ripple effect so that they can one day be college graduates and mentor other students like themselves that donate social capital.

## **Conclusion**

My Mexican immigrant parents have always said that for us to succeed in this country we had to get an education, well I did despite their lack of social, cultural, financial, and human capital. I am forever indebted to those institutional agents, especially my school counselor who changed my life and countless others. It is why I have been a school counselor, one of the most critical “gatekeepers” in our public school system (Perez, 2011). Not only is it my life work to

donate the social capital I have received and the one that I have gained along the way through the social class ranks, but it is the intent of this research study not just to collect virtual dust in the world of digital libraries, but to serve as an action research tool guide.

Let this research study be a call to all school counselors in large public high schools so they can disrupt the social hierarchy by becoming pivotal moment educators that are nonreciprocal donors of social capital. This information needs to reach all the educators in my school community, including but not limited to teachers, paraeducators, administration, faculty, staff, maintenance, college enrichment advisors, college tutors, anyone who has contact with underserved and first-generation students can affect change by recognizing the potential in them and building that into a “pivotal moment.” Most importantly, for district and site administrators to be informed of the serious repercussions of practicing role mismanagement with school counselors considering the low number of Latino/a students meeting college requirements, recognize the institutional and systemic barriers, and assist school counselors by allowing them to carry out their intended roles and competencies. Teachers and school counselors also need to overcome their own preconceived notions and stereotypes of the ideal college-prep student and become advocates of all underrepresented and underserved students nationwide. There are Latino/a students, first-generation, low-income, underrepresented, underserved students counting on us every day. Figure 16 demonstrates how school counselors can shield or buffer some of the reasons Latino/a students do not meet the A-G college course requirements.

**Figure 16***School Counselors Roles Buffer and Shield*

This study presented evidence that will provide insight into educational policy and practice from an experienced practitioner's perspective as well as a former low-income, first-generation Latina student in public schools of immigrant parents.

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## APPENDIX A: School Counselor Survey

### School Counselor Survey

What is your title?

- School Counselor
- College and Career Coordinator
- Comprehensive Student Support Coordinator

Which of the following best describes your school?

- Comprehensive Public High School
- Private School
- Charter School
- Alternative Education High School

Which of the following best describes your school setting?

- Urban
- Suburban
- Rural

How long have you been a counselor?

- 1-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11-15
- 16-20
- 21 or more years

## APPENDIX A: School Counselor Survey

Were you ever a classroom teacher?

- Yes
- No

What best describes your own college education?

- Community College transferred to a CSU/UC or Private College
- Directly attended a CSU after High School
- Directly attended a UC after High School
- Private College

What is your highest educational degree earned?

- Bachelor's Degree
- Master's Degree
- Ed.D./Ph.D.

How many students are in your caseload?

- 1-250
- 251-500
- 501 or more

## APPENDIX A: School Counselor Survey

On average, what percentage of the day do you spend on disseminating college information?

- 1-10% of the day
- 11-20%
- 21-30%
- 31-40%
- 41-50%
- More than 50% of the day

What percentage of the day do you spend on duties other than providing college information?

- 1-10% of the day
- 11-20%
- 21-30%
- 31-40%
- 41-50%
- More than 50% of the day

How often do you meet with each student formally?

- Once a year
- Twice a year
- Three times a year
- Four times a year
- Once a month
- Twice a month or more

## APPENDIX A: School Counselor Survey

Is your high school a Title I school?

- Yes
- No

Is handling discipline part of your job description?

- Yes
- No

How often do you attend professional development provided by the district regarding college information?

- Once a year
- Twice a year
- Three times a year
- Four or more times a year

How often do you to attend college workshops/conferences provided by the district?

- Once a year
- Twice a year
- Three times a year
- Four or more times a year

## APPENDIX A: School Counselor Survey

How often do you visit colleges/universities or field trips provided by the district?

- Zero
- 1-2 times a year
- 3-4 times a year
- 5-6 times a year
- 7 or more times a year

What percent of the students at your school site go directly to a four-year college/university?

- 1-20%
- 21-40%
- 41-60%
- 61-80%
- 81% or more

What is the predominant demographic population at your school site?

- African-American
- Asian & Pacific Islander
- Latino/a
- Native American
- White
- Other

## APPENDIX A: School Counselor Survey

What is the second highest demographic population at your school site?

- African-American
- Asian & Pacific Islander
- Latino/a
- Native American
- White
- Other

Indicate your level of agreement/disagreement: At your site, Latinos/as have lower A-G college requirement completion rates.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Students that have higher A-G college requirement completion rates are highly motivated:

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

## APPENDIX A: School Counselor Survey

Students that have higher A-G college requirement completion rates have higher reading and writing skills:

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Students that have higher A-G college requirement completion rates have higher math skills:

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Students that have higher A-G college requirement completion rates have more support at home:

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Students that have higher A-G college requirement completion rates are knowledgeable of college information:

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

## APPENDIX A: School Counselor Survey

Where do you believe students get most of their college information (check all that apply)?

- School Counselor
- Career Center
- Teachers
- Friends
- Family
- Online
- College Enrichment Program (Upward Bound, Trio, etc)

How often do you meet with students for college planning?

- Never
- Once a year
- Twice a year
- Three times a year
- Four times a year
- Five or more

When you meet with students for college planning, is it on an individual basis or in a group setting?

- Individual
- Group
- Both

## APPENDIX A: School Counselor Survey

How comfortable are you in your college knowledge information?

	Very uncomfortable in my knowledge	Uncomfortable in my knowledge	Comfortable in my knowledge	Very Comfortable in my knowledge
Level of Comfort	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

---

With what part of the college planning process are you involved (check all that apply)?

- Course selection
- College presentations
- College application information
- College testing information/distribution

How many full-time School Counselors do you have at your school site?

- 1-2
- 3-4
- 5-6
- 7 or more

Do you have a full-time College/Career Counselor at your school site?

- Yes
- No

## APPENDIX A: School Counselor Survey

In your opinion, what is the main reason a student does not meet the college requirements?

- They do not meet the math requirement
- They do not meet the lab science requirement
- They do not meet the GPA requirement
- They do not take the SAT/ACT
- Other reasons

At your site, if a student drops a college requirement course, are their parents informed?

- Yes
- No
- Sometimes

What is the main reason a student may meet the college entrance requirements but does not attend a four-year college/university?

- Misses a deadline (statement of intent, housing, etc.)
- Financial obstacles
- Lacks the college application process knowledge
- Does not take the appropriate placement exam
- Parents do not allow them
- Fear/anxiety about being qualified
- Paperwork bureaucracy
- Transportation
- Other, please write-in \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX A: School Counselor Survey

Do Asian Students meet the A-G college requirements more at your site as compared to Latino/a students?

Yes

No

In your opinion what is the main reason that Latino/a students do not meet the A-G college requirements:

Lack of Motivation

Lack of Academic Skills

Lack of College Information

Parental Involvement

Peer/Social Distractions

Familial Expectations

Cultural Expectations

Study Habits

Other write-in \_\_\_\_\_

Do you offer an open-door policy for students?

Yes

No

## APPENDIX A: School Counselor Survey

Please indicate how much you agree with students just walking into a counselor's office to ask a question without an appointment:

- Strongly disagree, students must have an appointment at all times
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree that students can just walk in without an appointment

Latino/a students that do not meet A-G College Requirements come from a lower-income:

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Latino/a students that do not meet A-G college requirements are first-generation college students:

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

## APPENDIX A: School Counselor Survey

How would you describe your personality (check all that apply)?

Friendly

Quiet

Outgoing

Other write-in \_\_\_\_\_

I am bilingual in a language other than English?

Yes

No

Is there anything you want to add that might not have been asked regarding your role as a school counselor (type in below)?

\_\_\_\_\_

Would you be willing to be interviewed and expand on your answers?

No

Yes

## APPENDIX B: Student Survey

### Student Survey

Would you like to help us with our project by completing a survey? Helping with my project may not help you, but it will help us learn about school counselors in large public high schools. You don't have to help us. It's your choice. If you decide to help, it will take about 8-10 minutes of your time. Answering the survey questions will not be dangerous or scary. You should feel about the same as you do when you do normal activities. And remember, you don't have to help us. If you don't feel good, you can stop whenever you want.

**Study Leadership:** This is Patricia Filimaua's project. Patricia Filimaua is a PhD candidate at Claremont Graduate University. Professor Dr. June Hilton is one of the teachers and will be helping with the project.

**Purpose:** The purpose of this study is to learn more about school counselors in large public high schools and their job duties, responsibilities, and how it relates to Latino/a students and their college requirements.

**Eligibility:** To be in this study, you must be an 11th or 12th-grade student in the El Monte Union High School district.

**Participation:** During the study, you will be asked to complete a survey that will take about 8-10 minutes, asking about your classes, experiences with your school counselor, college information, other school experiences, and family background. You will take this survey in your Senior English class, U.S. Government, or Economics class at the beginning or end of the class, and it will not affect your grade in any way.

**Risks Of Participation:** The risks that you run by taking part in this study are minimal.

**Benefits Of Participation:** I do not expect this project to help you. This project will help Patricia Filimaua learn more about school counselors and their job duties in large public high schools. This project will also help me complete my PhD degree in higher education. The project might also help school counselors in large public high schools help Latino/a students with their college requirements.

**Compensation:** You will not get any money or other rewards for helping me.

**Voluntary Participation:** Your mother/father/parents/guardian said it's okay for you to help us, but you don't have to. It's your choice. It's okay if you want to stop because you are scared or uncomfortable. You can stop for any other reason, too. We want your help, but no one will be upset if you don't want to help, or if you decide to stop.

**Confidentiality:** When I finish the project, I want to tell others about it. I will tell them how you helped me, but I won't tell them your name or what answers are yours. I may let people working on other projects see your answers, but I won't tell them that the answers are yours. To make sure no one finds out what answers are yours, we will keep them somewhere safe and private. Only we will be able to see your answers there. To protect your confidentiality, I will only report averages or group statistics.

**Further Information:** If you have any questions about this project, or if you want to know more about it, you can ask your parent(s) or me. If you can't, or don't want to, ask me in person, you can call me or send me a message. You may also call the teacher/professor supervising/helping me with this project. Patricia Filimaua (626) 444-9201 ext. 3855 [patricia.filimaua@cgu.edu](mailto:patricia.filimaua@cgu.edu) Dr. June Hilton (909) 621-8075 [june.hilton@cgu.edu](mailto:june.hilton@cgu.edu) A team of people makes sure our project is as safe as can be for the people helping us. They said this project is okay. You or your parent(s) can also ask them questions. You can call them at 607-

## APPENDIX B: Student Survey

9406. Or you can send a message to [irb@cgu.edu](mailto:irb@cgu.edu).

**If you agree to participate, please indicate your consent in order to access the survey:**

- I agree to participate.
- I disagree.

What is your grade level?

- Freshman
- Sophomore
- Junior
- Senior

In which year did you begin to receive college information?

- Freshman
- Sophomore
- Junior
- Senior
- Middle School or earlier

## APPENDIX B: Student Survey

Where do you get **most** of your college information?

- Counselor
- Career Center
- Teachers
- Friends
- Family
- Online
- College Enrichment Programs (Upward, Trio, etc.)
- Other

I know what the A-G college course requirements are:

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

## APPENDIX B: Student Survey

If you are a Senior, what are your plans for next year?

- Four-year college/university such as a Cal State, UC, or private college
- Community College
- Military
- Vocational/Trade School
- Employment
- Not sure yet
- I am not a Senior

Will your financial situation determine whether you attend a four-year institution or community college?

- Definitely yes
- Probably yes
- Probably not
- Definitely not

Do you know what the FAFSA is?

- Yes
- No

## APPENDIX B: Student Survey

I know where to apply for scholarships and other financial aid:

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

How many times do you visit your counselor every year?

- 1-5
- 6-10
- 11-15
- 16+

Describe your relationship with your counselor:

- Poor
- Fair
- Good
- Great

I feel my counselor spends enough time with me:

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

## APPENDIX B: Student Survey

The A-G college course requirements were explained well to me:

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

I am able to get the necessary classes to meet the A-G college course requirements:

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

I am on track to meet the A-G college course requirements:

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

I was able to enroll in all the courses I needed at registration:

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

## APPENDIX B: Student Survey

How many Honors, Accelerated, or AP courses have you taken OR are currently enrolled?

- None
- 1-2
- 3-4
- 5-6
- 7 or more

Are there any requirements for taking Honors, Accelerated, or AP courses?

- Definitely yes
- Probably yes
- Probably not
- Definitely not
- Don't know

Is anyone able to take Honors, Accelerated, or AP courses at your school?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

## APPENDIX B: Student Survey

Does your counselor do one-on-one individual college/career/post-secondary planning?

- Definitely yes
- Probably yes
- Probably not
- Definitely not
- Don't know

Do you feel you got the time you need to spend with your school counselor at registration?

- Definitely yes
- Probably yes
- Probably not
- Definitely not

I got all of my questions answered about high school graduation, credits, college courses and requirements at registration:

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

## APPENDIX B: Student Survey

I feel my school counselor is knowledgeable about the A-G college course requirements:

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

I trust my school counselor:

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

I feel my school counselor knows me well enough:

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

My school counselor has made a mistake with either my classes, credits, or college information:

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

## APPENDIX B: Student Survey

Is your school counselor bilingual?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

My parents/guardians trust my school counselor.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

For Seniors: I had a Senior Check review from my school counselor to update my credits and A-G college course requirements?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- I am not a Senior

## APPENDIX B: Student Survey

For Seniors: I am aware of college deadlines, application websites, and college testing deadlines.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- I am not a Senior

How often did you use the career center in the past year?

- Frequently
- Occasionally
- Never

Do you go to the career center staff for college information or to meet with your school counselor?

- Career center staff
- School counselor
- Both
- Neither

I feel there are enough workshops on CSUs, UCs, and Private colleges during my Senior year.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

## APPENDIX B: Student Survey

Were you a part of any college enrichment programs (such as Upward Bound, Trio, etc.)?

- Yes
- No

How many times have you gone on a college field trip in high school?

- None
- 1-2
- 3-4
- 5 or more

When do you feel high school students should first get class presentations on college planning?

- Before 9th grade
- 9th grade
- 10th grade
- 11th grade
- 12th grade
- Other

## APPENDIX B: Student Survey

Describe yourself (check all that apply):

- College prep student
- Athlete
- AVID student
- First-generation college student
- AP/Honors student
- Other

Do you receive free/reduced school lunch?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

I have done career exploration lessons during high school.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

## APPENDIX B: Student Survey

My counselor has helped me create a four-year plan.

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

If you have a question, do you need to make an appointment to see your counselor?

- Definitely yes
- Probably yes
- Probably not
- Definitely not

My counselor is responsive to my emails.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

If you need to visit your counselor are you able to see them right away?

- Yes, same day
- No, but within a day
- Within 2-3 days
- Within 4-5 days
- More than 5 days

## APPENDIX B: Student Survey

Does your counselor offer an open-door policy for students?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

I feel comfortable walking into my counselor's office to ask a question without an appointment.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

How would you describe yourself (check all that apply)?

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Latino/a
- Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
- White
- Other

## APPENDIX B: Student Survey

Do you have older brothers and sisters that have attended a four-year college/university?

- Yes
- No
- Yes, but dropped out
- No, but are planning to transfer from a community college

Are you a first-generation college student?

- Yes
- No

My school counselor is friendly.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

My school counselor is professional.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

## APPENDIX B: Student Survey

My school counselor is indifferent.

Strongly agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

My school counselor is motivating.

Strongly agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

My school counselor is caring.

Strongly agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

## APPENDIX B: Student Survey

My school counselor is cold.

Strongly agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

My school counselor is strict.

Strongly agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

My school counselor is mean.

Strongly agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

## APPENDIX B: Student Survey

My counselor always looks happy to see me.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

My counselor always looks busy when we meet.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

My counselor always takes time to listen to me.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Is there anything you want to add about your experience with your school counselor (type your answer below)?

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## APPENDIX C: School Counselor Interview Protocol

### School Counselor Interview Protocol

Interview Protocol: The interview will consist of questions to gain a more in-depth experience of the individual's survey responses and gather additional information that they feel they want to share. I will have the survey in hand at the time of the interview.

#### School Counselor Interview Protocol

1. You indicate that you have been a school counselor \_\_\_\_\_ years? How did you become interested in being a school counselor? Who influenced/helped you with your college information during high school?

#### District and School Services, Policies, and Practices:

1. You indicated that your district provides \_\_\_ workshops for school counselors, do you feel they are beneficial in helping you, service students?
2. How do you feel about having \_\_\_\_\_ caseload of students? You indicated you spend \_\_\_\_\_ time on providing college information, is that what you thought your job duties would be? What is the duty that most keeps you from helping students with college information? How do you feel about that?

#### Personal views/observations:

1. You indicated that Latinos/as have/don't have lower A-G college course requirements met, why do you feel that?
2. Students that have higher A-G college course requirements have what in common? Do you feel that you are able to provide all the college information to students that they need to plan for their post-secondary plans?
3. Do you feel the district/school restricts certain students from AP courses? How?
4. Where else do you feel students get their college information besides their school counselor?
5. What do you feel your relationship is with your students? With parents? Do you feel they trust you?
6. Do you feel competent and confident in providing all of the college information students need? Do you feel the school provides enough training, workshops, to keep you up to date?

## APPENDIX D: CSU-UC Comparison of Minimum Freshman Admission Requirements

### CSU-UC Comparison of Minimum Freshman Admission Requirements

	California State University (CSU)	University of California (UC)
<b>SUBJECT REQUIREMENTS</b>		
	15 yearlong/30 semester college preparatory A-G courses are required with letter grades of C or better <sup>#</sup> :	
		11 UC-required college-preparatory courses must be completed prior to senior year (including summer courses)
<b>A   History/Social Science</b>	<b>2 years/4 semesters of history/social science, including one year of U.S. history OR one semester of U.S. history and one semester of American government, AND</b>	
	1 year of history/social science from either the A or G subject area	1 year of world history, cultures, or historical geography (including European History) from the A subject area.
<b>B   English</b>	<b>4 years/8 semesters of college preparatory English composition/literature (including no more than 1 year of Advanced ESL/ELD):</b>	
	Advanced ESL may be substituted for the first year of the 4 years of English.	ESL/ELD cannot meet the senior year of English.
<b>C   Mathematics</b>	<b>3 years/6 semesters of mathematics (including or integrating topics covered in elementary algebra, two- and three-dimensional geometry, advanced algebra)*</b> (Also acceptable are courses that address the above content areas, and include or integrate: probability, statistics or trigonometry.)	
	Students applying to CSU and UC must complete a geometry course (or integrated math courses with geometry content).	
<b>D   Science</b>	<b>2 years/4 semesters of science</b>	
	At least 1 year of physical science and 1 year of biological science, one year must be from the D subject area and the second year may be from the D or G area**  Integrated/Interdisciplinary courses may be used to fulfill either physical or biological science.	Must include at least two of the three foundational subjects of biology, chemistry, and physics (including Biology/Earth & Space Sciences, Chemistry/ Earth & Space Sciences, and Physics/Earth & Space Sciences as part of the Next Generation Science Standards [NGSS] models); or two years of a three-year NGSS integrated science model; or one year of biology, chemistry or physics and one year of an approved science chosen from the earth & space sciences or interdisciplinary sciences disciplines. <i>Approved courses in the applied science, computer science, and engineering disciplines may only be used for a 3<sup>rd</sup> year (or beyond) of the science requirement.</i> Courses must be from the D subject area.
<b>E   Language Other Than English</b>	<b>2 years/4 semesters (or equivalent to the 2<sup>nd</sup> level of high school instruction) of a language other than English*</b> (Courses must be in the same language, American Sign Language allowed)	
<b>F   Visual and Performing Arts</b>	<b>1 year/2 semesters (or two one-semester courses in the same discipline) required, chosen from the following disciplines:</b> Dance, Music, Theater, Visual Arts or Interdisciplinary Arts	
<b>G   College Preparatory Elective</b>	<b>1 year/2 semesters of elective course work chosen from any area on approved A-G course list</b>	
<b>REPEATED COURSES</b>		
	California State University (CSU)	University of California (UC)
	<b>CSU and UC do not use plus/minus grades in the GPA calculation; for example, a C- = C.</b>	
	Required A-G courses must be completed with a grade of C or better <sup>#</sup> . Any course may be repeated with the exact same course. There is no limitation on the number of times a course can be repeated. Repeated courses are only used once and the instance with the highest earned grade will be used in the GPA calculation.	Required A-G courses must be completed with a letter grade of C or better <sup>#</sup> . Courses with D/F grades may be repeated. There is no limitation on the number of times a course can be repeated. Repeated courses can have the same or similarly named course titles (e.g. English 9 or English 1). The first instance of a letter grade C or better will be used in the GPA calculation.

<sup>#</sup> Pass/Credit grades allowed for A-G coursework completed in winter 2020 through summer 2021.

\* High school-level coursework completed in 7<sup>th</sup> and/or 8<sup>th</sup> grade can be used to meet the area C and/or E requirements.

\*\* It is best to prepare for both UC and the CSU by completing two laboratory courses from the D subject area.