CON ILUSIÓN Y GANAS: ADVANCING THE TRANSFER RATES OF LATINO MALE SCHOLARS

Abraham Madrigal Barajas

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CON ILUSIÓN Y GANAS: ADVANCING THE TRANSFER RATES OF LATINO MALE SCHOLARS

By

Abraham Madrigal Barajas

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University of the Pacific
Stockton, California

2022
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CON ILUSIÓN Y GANAS: ADVANCING THE TRANSFER RATES OF LATINO MALE SCHOLARS

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By

Abraham Madrigal Barajas
DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my family: wife Martha Medina Lievanos and son Isaac Madrigal Lievanos. Martha, your support throughout these past few years was tremendous. The caring for our child while I was not present is admirable. Isaac, my apologies for not laying you down in bed at night. I hope that one day you read this manuscript and feel motivated to pursue a higher education beyond a bachelors or masters degree. I love you both!

También me gustaría dedicar esta disertación a mi familia extendida: madre Agripina Madrigal Barajas, padre Jesús Madrigal Orejel, hermana/hermanos Madrigal: Mónica, Fernando, Santiago, Benjamín, y Jesús. Sí Se Pudo! Finalmente terminé mi educación y la terminé en lo más alto, el doctorado. Familia, you were my inspiration and rock for completing this dissertation. Doing agricultural work in the rain, fires, heat weaves, pandemic, and waking up early in the mornings were all motivating factors for me to reach this educational milestone. This is for you all!
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Lastly, I would like to thank the participants in my study. Each one of the Latino males in this study offered intellectual and valuable information and recommendations for further assessment in the area of community college transfer. All your shared stories were motivating for me to continue this research. I hope you all eventually transfer to your desired four-year university.
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CON ILUSIÓN Y GANAS: ADVANCING THE TRANSFER RATES OF LATINO MALE SCHOLARS

Abstract

By Abraham Madrigal Barajas

University of the Pacific
2022

California Community Colleges (CCC) are the largest post-secondary higher education systems in the nation, with an enrollment of over 2 million at a given year. They are also the most affordable and accessible for students after completing K-12 education. With California having the largest Latinx residents (39%), they overwhelmingly makeup 45% of the student population enrolled in CCC. Although Latinx students are pursuing higher education and enrolling in high numbers in CCC’s, they still fall short when it comes to student success outcomes, particularly transfer, when compared with their peers. Only 10% of Latinx students transfer in two years, 16% in four years, and 32% in six years. This number becomes more alarming when only analyzing the Latino male student transfer rate, which is less than four percent in two years, seven percent in four years and 16% in six years.

Aspects of literature attributes the Latinx attainment gap to both institutional and environmental determinants. Institutional determinants include: academic preparedness, the role of faculty, staff, and administration, and faculty diversity. Environmental determinants include: family influences, financial and socioeconomic status, as well as masculinity identity. Given what the literature has provided, this study will look at Latino male students who have indicated progress towards transfer using the Associates Degree for Transfer (ADT). The ADT was
established in 2011 and it was meant to create a clearer path for students to navigate the transfer process and end up transferring to a California State University (CSU).

This study employed Merriam’s (206) basic qualitative research methodology to understand the meaning that students have constructed through their college experience and interactions with peers, counselors, faculty, and administrators. A total of 10 participants, all Latino community college males, were part of this investigation. The data collection process included: semi-structured interviews, which were one hour in length, using thematic analysis as well as a color-coded method. The research data was viewed through Yosso’s (2005) Community Cultural Wealth framework to capture the positive qualities that Latino male students bring to higher education.

The results from this study indicated that Latino male students had a wide range of challenges stemming from environmental to academic challenges. Additionally, findings suggest that many Latino male students are disengaged from campus support services. This may be due to the COVID – 19 pandemic and the services being offered virtually. A third component from the findings suggest that Latino male students need a sense of belonging to the campus. This can be done by establishing a Latino center, male initiative program, greater mentorship, or and designated counselors that can invest as well as dedicate more time in their education. The researcher outlined several recommendations for action in the field of community college practice and for further research.
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

In this 21st century economic circumstance, it is critical to have the necessary education and skill set to enter the workforce. A large number of students begin their careers and occupational journeys in a community college. With over 2.1 million students enrolled in the 116 community colleges in California, the California Community College (CCC) system is the largest postsecondary education system in the nation and remains one of the most affordable and accessible means for students to access higher education (California Community College Chancellor Office [CCCCO], 2020). The majority of students, 57% of graduates from California public high school, set foot in a community college first before entering a profession or transferring to a California State University (CSU), University of California (UC), private university, or out-of-state school (Kurlaender et al., 2018). Hence, the CCC system remains students’ number one option right after high school (Center of Community College Student Engagement [CCCSE], 2014). As such, many minority students, like the Latino male population, begin their educational journey at a community college with the hopes of transferring to a four-year institution. However, their goal of transfer is short lived as only 15% of the Latino male cohort of 2013-2014 transferred to a four-year university (CCCCO, 2021). Clearly, there are educational equity gaps among this population of transfer students. This study solely focused on the CSU transfer pathway as is one that is pushed by reforms like the Associate Degree for Transfer (ADT). Using a qualitative methodology, this study investigated the experiences endured by Latino male community college students that are part of the ADT pathway and are in the process of transferring to a CSU. This study specifically looked at the Latino male ADT
population for several reasons: 1) Latino males are one of the lowest disproportionately impacted groups of community college students who transfer to a four-year university, 2) they encounter unique cultural expectation because of their gender identity, and 3) with now over 10 years of the establishment of the ADT, minimal research has shed light in how the ADT is influencing the transfer process for this marginalized student populations. The critical role community colleges play in supporting student success has evolved over time through an involved process, one that is best told through its background and history.

**Background**

Although the CCC system is recruiting and enrolling students at high numbers, CCCs are falling behind in one of their primary goals: preparing students to transfer to four-year universities (CCCC, 2020). With an enrollment of 2,372,962 students who entered the 2013-2014 cohort in CCC’s, there were a total of 144,307 students who were identified as transfer students. A cohort is defined as first-time students who, during a six-year period of enrollment, show behavioral intent to transfer (CCCCO, 2020). From 144,307 students, 33,634 (23%) of students successfully transferred to a four-year university within four years after being enrolled at the college (CCCCO, 2020). Although the intended goal of community colleges is to transfer their students in a two-year timeframe, so that they can expedite their time to earning a bachelor’s degree, the data below will only analyze the four-year transfer rate because of the very low transfer rate of students transferring within two years.

The data is more alarming when looking at the demographic breakdown by ethnicity and gender. According to the most recent data from the CCCCCO, there were a total of 29,607 of Hispanic male students who entered the cohort of students in 2013-2014 (CCCCO, 2020). Only 4,703, roughly 15% of 2013-2014 cohort students made a successful transfer to a four-year
university within a four-year time frame (CCCCO, 2020). Hence, there is a large transfer gap among general transfer students and Latino male students. Furthermore, the transfer rate of Latino males is noticeably lower than the rates of their White non–Hispanic counterparts. In the same academic cohort, there were 20,379 White non–Hispanic male students who began their academic journey as first-time students (CCCCO, 2020). A total of 6,002 (29%), transferred to a four-year university within four years (CCCCO, 2020). There is a 14% transfer gap between White and Hispanic community college male students. The Hispanic transfer male disparity is larger when compared to their Asian counterpart male students. Analyzing the same cohort, 2013-2014, there were 7,618 Asian male students, from which 2,660, roughly 35% transferred to a four-year university. The gap widens by 20% when comparing transfer Hispanic and Asian male students during the 2013-2014 academic year. As mentioned above, the data examined the four-year transfer velocity, it did not analyze the two-year (the intended goal of community college) transfer rate of those students, which may be substantially lower than the four-year transfer rate. Subsequently, this might be due to the many challenges that students face while transferring to a four-year university.

Students have experienced numerous challenges as they attempt to transfer from a community college to four-year university. Taylor and Jain (2017) discovered that academic credit loss is one of the barriers that students face while they navigate the transfer process. Credit loss refers to the “extent to which students lose college credit while transferring to another institution” (Taylor & Jain, 2017, p. 5). Further, Monaghan and Attewell (2015) looked at the national transfer data and determined that 14% of community college students who transferred lost more than 90% of their earned credit while transitioning from institution to institution. Inadequate articulation is another factor contributing to the ineffective transfer pathway (Taylor
From the 36 states that have transferable general education packages, 14 states do not have articulation policies set at their institution (Education Commission of the States, 2016). Hence, the transferable courses from those 14 states depend on the institution’s discretion (Taylor & Jain, 2017). Moreover, institutions do not provide adequate transfer information, academic and social support services for students that want to transfer, financial incentives, nor do they develop and maintain strong community college and university partnerships to support the transfer function (Bers et al., 2001; Dowd et al., 2013; Reyes, 2011; Tobolowsky, 2012; & Townsend, 2001). The transfer function operation in American Community Colleges (ACC) demonstrates the complex challenges that many students face. For example, the state of California passed a bill into law, SB 1440, which mandates that all CCCs establish an associate degree that prepares students for admissions to the CSU (Padilla, 2010). This reform and articulation agreement became known as the ADT. The ADT pathway reform has increased the number of community college student transfers; however, it does not adequately address the specific hurdles that Latino males encounter as they navigate the transfer process.

The attrition of Latino males transferring to four-year universities depends on how well students are retained by community colleges and the persistence of the students in their educational journey (Nakajima et al., 2012; Urias, 2012; Saenz, & Ponjuan, 2009). Urias (2012) reported that after Latino males complete their first year, 12.9% will not return and re-enroll in college. By year two, the percentage of Latino males not returning to their two-year college education almost triples to 35.2% (Urias, 2012). As they continue their education, the trend increases. After six years of persistence and continuous enrollment, 57.6% of Latino males will not continue their education (Urias, 2012).
Indeed, the aforementioned data is concerning, considering the large number of Latino males who are not able to fulfill their academic potential. As Saenz and Ponjuan (2009) suggest, the Latino male students are “vanishing” from higher education. Latino males are one of the most disproportionately impacted groups of students to enter community college (CCCSE, 2014; Reddy & Siqueiros, 2021; Rodriguez et al., 2021). Not only do they enroll in community colleges in low numbers, but also transfer to four-year universities at staggering low rates (CCCCO, 2020). The fact is that Latino males want to transfer. As indicated by CCCSE (2014), 84% of Latino males report that they want to transfer to a four-year university, however, it is clear that Latino males are not transferring as often as the rest of their classmates.

**Problem Statement**

Although community colleges serve the largest number of students compared to all other higher education institutions in the nation, Latino male students transfer to four-year universities at a significantly lower rate than their peers. This achievement gap has contributed to numerous negative outcomes for these males: (a) fewer professional careers, (b) lower paying work wages, (c) more physically draining positions, and (d) a more difficult time escaping the poverty cycle in which they were raised.

**Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this qualitative study was to reveal the barriers of first generation Latino male community college students, in order to identify ways to improve their transfer rate to a four-year university.

**Research Questions**

1.) What are the challenges, if any, perceived by first generation community college Latino males at a Northern California community college district, as they transfer to a California State University using the Associate Degree Transfer?
2.) What types of community college services or engagement opportunities, if any, do first generation Latino males believe had a positive influence on their ability to transfer to a four-year university

3.) What are the services that first generation Latino male students identify as needing as they attempt to transfer to California State University?

**Significance**

Community college students across higher education institutions have a variety of complex barriers that prevent them from reaching their academic goals of either obtaining a certificate, associate degree, or transferring to a four-year university. In particular, for Latino male students at community college, there is a disproportionate representation compared to their peer counterparts. Much of the empirical research has focused on Latino males’ social environmental factors, such as personal life (Ovink, 2014; Cabrera et al., 2012; Sáenz et al., 2018; Sáenz et al., 2020), financial and employment responsibility (Rendón et al., 2011), masculinity identity (Sáenz et al., 2013; Newman et al., 2015), and enrollment status (Saenz, & Ponjuan, 2009; Nakajima et al., 2012; Ponjuan, et al., 2015). Other studies have reported institutional determinants of aiding or hindering Latino success in community college: faculty and staff interaction (Xiong et al., 2016; Tovar, 2015), academic preparedness (Saenz & Ponjuan, 2011) and overall school environment (Urías et al., 2016).

To date, minimal research has specifically looked at how the transfer reform, CCC-Associate Degree for Transfer (ADT), plays a factor in Latino males transferring to four-year universities. The ADTs went into effect as a result of the California State Legislature signing the Student Transfer Achievement Reform Act in 2010 (SB 1440) which required the CCC to develop a new associate degree for students to transfer to CSU with certain admission guarantees after transfer (Patton & Pilati, 2012). The ADT, which includes the Associates of Arts Transfer (AA-T) and Associate of Science Transfer (AS-T), was created in collaboration with CSUs and
CCC to ensure that transfer students meet the minimum requirements and admissions to any of the 23 CSUs (Hsu, 2019).

Hackbarth (2016) and Hsu (2019) suggest that ADTs are predictive of transfer and students who declare and earn an ADT have a shorter time completing a baccalaureate degree compared to those who do not declare a goal of obtaining an ADT and transfer without an ADT. It is critical to then analyze, to the extent possible, how the ADT is affecting the Latino transfer mobility to four-year universities. As such, this study seeks to fill this gap in research by exploring the role, if any, that the ADT plays in the lives of community college Latino male students that want to transfer to a CSU.

**Theoretical Framework**

Yosso’s (2005) theoretical framework of Community Cultural Wealth (CCW) was chosen to guide this study. Through this framework, Yosso (2005) challenges the assumption that students of color bring cultural deficiencies to the classroom. Rather, in their CCW framework, Yosso (2005) examines six forms of cultural capital that students of color bring to their school setting from their home and community that go unrecognized (Yosso, 2005). The six forms are: 1) aspirational capital, 2) linguistic capital, 3) familial capital, 4) social capital, 5) navigational capital, and 6) resistance capital (Yosso, 2005).

Yosso’s (2005) theoretical framework aligns well with this study because it focuses on students of color and the experiences that they bring to their school environment. Students of color is a broad category that encompasses Latino males. Moreover, CCW acknowledges the lived experiences that they bring to the classroom through six forms of cultural capital. Through the lens of CCW, this study highlighted the lived experiences of Latino males as they navigate higher education.
Methodology and Methods

The methodology used for this study is Merriam’s basic qualitative research (2009). This methodology is based on the notion that meaning is shaped by people’s understanding and influences with their own world (Merriam, 2009). For the purpose of this study, it was used to analyze the meaning the first-generation community college Latino male students have constructed based on their lived experiences as they attempt to transfer to a four-year university.

The participants of this study were from a Northern California Community College that has a local four-year university, in particular a California State University (CSU), where they transfer the vast majority of their students. Furthermore, the researcher used a purposeful sampling technique to capture a specific demographic of community college transfer students. The data collection process was captured by one-on-one semi-structured interviews. There were a total of 10 one-on-one interviews that took place virtually using Zoom because of the Coronavirus pandemic that kept people from coming into contact. For each interviewee the researcher allocated one hour, with the intention that it will take anywhere from 30 – 45 minutes. For the data analysis component, this study used the six phases of thematic analysis, which were then color-coded. The methodology as well as the methods of this research is further explained in greater detail in chapter 3 of this study.

Delimitations

The researcher identified several delimitations to this study. The following are six factors that delimited this study. 1) The study looked at one community college out of the 116 that exist in the state of California. As such, the study may not be generalized across all community colleges in California. Only one community college was selected because of the qualitative methodology, the in-depth interviews used in the research, and the accessibility that the
researcher had to this college. 2) The study only focused on community college students who have identified as males. It does not encompass female college students or any other gender identity as their experiences may differ. 3) This study examined Latino students, including those that identify as Hispanic, Mexican, Latinx, and Chicano. It is not a representation of all cultures. Community college Latino male students were identified because of their low transfer rate to four-year university. 4) This study is not only delimited by race/ethnicity and gender, but also for being first generation college students. Therefore, it is not a reflection of Latino male community college experience across all generations. 5) The study only included students that are in the process of obtaining an ADT. This is only one of the paths in which community college students can transfer. Students also have an option of transferring without an ADT. This particular area was of focus because the researcher analyzed if the ADT pathway is supporting and establishing a clear path for Latino male students to transfer. Lastly, 6) the study included students that will transfer to a CSU. Community college students that decide to transfer also have the option of transferring to University of California (UC), private universities, out-of-state, as well as Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU’s). The students transferring to these universities may have a different transfer experience and this study does not account for general transfer. This study looked at the CSU system because of their alignment with the community college ADT pathway.

**Definitions and Terms**

To better understand some of the wording used in this study, the following terminology below has been adopted.

*Achievement Gap:* It is a term that refers to the disparity of academic performance between groups of students.
**Associates Degree:** A degree earned at a community college, which requires at least 60 completed college units, usually major and general education units (CCCCO, 2020).

**Associates Degree for Transfer (ADT):** “State pathways and programs whereby students earn an associate’s degree and seamlessly transfer from 2-year to 4-year with junior status” (Taylor & Jain, 2017, p. 5). This term is also sometimes called Degree with a Guarantee because of its admission guarantee to a CSU.

**Associates of Arts Transfer (AA-T):** A subcomponent of an ADT, which accounts for the discipline of Arts major requirements.

**Associate of Science Transfer (AS-T):** A subcomponent of an ADT, which accounts for the discipline of Science major requirements.

**Baccalaureate Degree:** A degree that is earned at a four-year university, such as a CSU.

**Credit Loss:** This term refers to the “extent to which students lose college credits when they transfer to another institution” (Taylor & Jain, 2017).

**Credit Mobility:** The transfer of students earned credit from the sending institution to a receiving intuition (Hodara, et al., 2016).

**Disproportionately Impacted:** Is a condition where some “students’ access to key resources and supports and ultimately their academic success may be hampered by inequitable practices, policies and approaches to student support” (Harris, 2013, p. 5).

**Familismo:** This concept refers to the strong bond that Latino male students have with their family and the role of family as social capital (Sáenz et al. 2018).

**First generation college student:** A student whose parents do not hold a baccalaureate degree.

**General Education (GE):** This term refers to the requirements needed to graduate from a CSU. It is part of the baccalaureate degree requirement and ADT requirement (CCCCO, 2020).
Golden Four Requirement: This is one part of the transfer GE requirement to a CSU. The term refers to four categories CSU General Education requirements: GE area A.1 oral communication, GE area A.2 written communication, GE area A.3 critical thinking, and GE area B.4 mathematics and quantitative reasoning (CCCCO, 2020; Hsu, 2019).

Program Impaction: “A campus can declare a program—such as mechanical engineering or nursing—impacted when the number of qualified freshman or transfer applicants to the program exceeds available capacity. Impacted programs may establish supplemental admission criteria for all applicants—local and nonlocal” (Taylor, Constantouros, & Heiman, 2015).

Student Transfer Achievement Reform Act (SB 1440): SB 1440 was signed into law by Governor Schwarzenegger in September of 2010. This legislation creates a seamless transfer pathway for all California community college students regardless of which college they attend. Community college students who successfully complete 60 units of transferable coursework will be awarded an associate degree and receive guaranteed admission with junior standing at the CSU (Patton & Pilati, 2012).

Transfer Mobility: This term is used interchangeably in empirical research with other terms such as traditional, vertical, upward, reverse, or lateral transfer. For this study, this term is used to refer to community college students moving along the educational pipeline towards a four-year university.

Transfer Rate: This term refers to the rate in which community college students are transferring from community college to a four-year university.

Transfer Student: A student who has earned college credit after graduating from school, attended community college and transferred to a four-year university with the intention of obtaining a baccalaureate degree (CCCCO, 2020).
Vertical Transfer: Students that begin at community college and transfer to a four-year institution with or without an associate’s degree (Taylor & Jain, 2017).

Chapter Summary

In summary, community colleges are some of the most accessible higher education institutions for students, particularly for marginalized students. Latino males are entering the community college system, with the intent to transfer; however, Latino males are not transferring at the same rate as their peer counterparts. This achievement gap has resulted in negative outcomes for Latino male students. Research studies have illustrated factors that are affecting the mobility of Latino males in community college to four-year institutions, yet few have explored how the ADT is impacting their transfer process. Using the data gathered from this study, the researcher seeks to identify community college support services for Latino male students as well as interventions that promote successful transfer to a CSU.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Community college students across higher education institutions have a variety of complex barriers that prevent them from reaching their academic goals of either obtaining a certificate, associate degree, or transferring to a four-year university (Boone, 2017, Jabbar et al., 2019). Educators have researched community college Latino/a enrollment (O’Connor, 2009) persistence and completion (Contreras & Contreras, 2015; Harris & Wood, 2014; Tovar, 2015) as well as transfer rates (Rodriguez et al., 2021; Vasquez Urias, 2012). Yet, few have examined the extent in which the transfer pathway of the Associates Degree for Transfer (ADT) is supporting or hindering community college transfer students, particularly Latino male students. This study seeks to add to the literature on this neglected yet critical topic. In doing so, it will reveal the experiences of Latino male community college students pursuing an ADT in order to identify ways to improve their transfer rate to a four-year California State University.

Chapter Overview

This chapter will examine (a) the transfer function in higher education with an emphasis on credit mobility and articulation agreements between California Community Colleges and California State Universities, (b) the Latino educational achievement gap at community colleges, (c) factors impacting Latino attainment and transfer rates with a focus on the two categories of institutional determinants and environmental determinants, (d) a presentation on data limitation with a need of examining community college structural transfer pathways such as the Associates Degree for Transfer and the effects it has on Latino male students, (e) theoretical framework that will guide the research study, and (f) a summary of the chapter.
The Transfer Function in Higher Education

Since the establishment of community colleges in the early 1900s, one of their primary functions was to transfer students to four-year institutions (Cohen et al., 2014). In higher education, there are several transfer functions including: vertical transfer, lateral transfer, reserves transfer, reverse credit transfer, and dual enrollment (Taylor & Jain, 2017). Table 1 addresses the most common transfer patterns and definitions.

Table 1
Transfer Patterns, Terms, and Definitions. (Source: Taylor & Jain, 2017).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transfer patterns and terms</th>
<th>Definition(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vertical transfer</td>
<td>Students who begin at a 2-year and transfer to a 4-year institution and/or with an associate’s degree (Townsend, 2001).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lateral transfer</td>
<td>Students who transfer from a 2-year institution to a 4-year institution, or a 4-year institution to a 4-year institution (Bah, 2009).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reverse transfer</td>
<td>Students who begin at a 4-year and transfer to a 2-year institution, including undergraduate reverse transfer students, postbaccalaureate reverse transfer students, double reverse transfer students, and summer sessioners (Nagedom &amp; Castro, 1999; Townsend, 2001; Townsend &amp; Denner, 1999).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reverse credit transfer</td>
<td>The transfer of credits from a 4-year institution back to a 2-year institution for the purpose of conferring an associate’s degree. (Taylor, 2016).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barriers and alternating enrollees</td>
<td>Students who attend more than two institutions and transfer or who transfer from and to community colleges (Adelman, 2004, 2006; de los Santos &amp; Wright, 1999; Townsend, 2001).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concurrent enrollees. co- enrolment, double-dipping, simultaneous enrollees</td>
<td>Students who attend more than one institution at the same time and who transfer courses (Adelman, 2004, 2006; Crisp, 2013; McCormick, 2003; Townsend, 2001; Wang &amp; Wickersham, 2014).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dual credit, dual enrolment Transient</td>
<td>Transfer of college-level courses taken during high school, Students who take courses as nondegree seeking students at institutions other than home institution with intention to transfer credits to home institution (McCormick, 2003).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Townsend (2001) refers to vertical transfer as students who begin at a two-year college and transfer to a four-year institution with or without an associate’s degree. Hence, this study will only focus on vertical transfer because it will examine the mobility of Latino males from community college to a four-year university. Vertical transfer is one of the most common types of transfer mobility among students (Taylor & Jain, 2017). Over half of students that transfer, nearly 60 percent, transfer from a public community college to a public four-year institution (Hossler et al., 2012). The National Student Clearinghouse (2015) reported that nearly half, (46%) of bachelor’s degree recipients attend a two-year community college institution prior to
receiving a bachelor’s degree. However, within vertical transfer, there are some barriers that are associated. One such barrier is credit mobility.

Credit Mobility

Although the majority of enrolled community college students expressed their desire to transfer to a four-year institution, on average about 25% achieve their goal of transferring (Horn & Skomsvold, 2011). There are many reasons why students do not reach their transfer goals. Researchers such as Xu et al., 2018; Taylor & Jain, 2017; Fortin, 2016; and Hodara et al. 2016, report that a major problem with transfer is credit mobility, in other words, the loss of academic credit because the destination institution does not accept the transfer students’ coursework. In a vertical transfer, about half of transfer students experience some sort of credit loss upon transferring (Simone, 2014). Hodara’s et al. (2016) national research study discovered two reasons why students lose credit: 1) students’ uncertainty about what major to declare as well as choice of transfer destination institution, and 2) the low capacity of advisors offering support.

Additionally, Monaghan and Attewell (2015) reported that community college students who transfer to four-year institutions have equal or similar bachelor degree graduation rates as native freshmen at four-year institutions. However, the widespread nature of credit loss among transfer students is a significant factor to completing a bachelor’s degree: the greater the credit loss, the less likelihood that transfer students complete their bachelor’s degree at the four-year institution (Monaghan & Attewell, 2015). As discussed, credit mobility and credit loss are critical in the vertical transfer pathway. As such, it is important to analyze and understand the current transfer pathway that California has among community colleges and four-year institutions, in particular with California State Universities (CSUs).
California Community Colleges and California State Universities

In California, there are four types of higher education institutions: University of California (UC), California State Universities (CSU), California Community Colleges (CCC), and private colleges and universities. With the recent addition of Madera Community College in 2020, CCCs are the largest higher education system in the nation, comprising 72 districts and 116 colleges serving 2.1 million students per year, making it the leading provider of workforce training in the nation (California Community College, 2021). Created in 1961 with 23 campuses, 450,000 students, and awarding more than 100,000 degrees annually, the CSU is the largest system of senior higher education in the country (California State University, 2021). Both of these higher education institutions have established articulation agreements with their general education pattern.

Articulation Agreements

California Community Colleges have two general education patterns to ease the student mobility to four-year institutions: 1) CSU General Education Breadth Requirements (CSU GE breadth) and 2) the Intersegmental General Education Transfer Curriculum (IGETC) (Patton & Pilati, 2012). Once students complete either the CSU GE breadth or IGETC, and it is certified by the community college, the CSU system and UC system will accept both general education patterns (Patton & Pilati, 2012). The CSU GE breadth requires students to take a total of 39 lower division semester units in approved courses in the following areas: A - English Language Communication and Critical Thinking, B – Scientific Inquiry and Quantitative Reasoning, C – Arts and Humanities, D – Social Science, E – Lifelong Learning and Self-Development, and newly added area F – Ethnic Studies (California Community College Chancellor Office General Education Requirements, 2021). The IGETC general education pattern is similar to the CSU GE
breadth, requiring students to complete 37 lower division semester units in approved course areas (CCCCO General Education Requirements, 2021).

In addition to the general education patterns, California higher education institutions have a statewide articulation resource called ASSIST (Articulation System Stimulating Intersegmental Transfer). ASSIST is the “official statewide database and online resource that shows prospective California transfer students how courses they complete at a community college may be used to satisfy elective, general education and major requirements at a CSU or UC campus” (Assist General Information, paragraph 2, 2021). The articulation officers at each college make yearly articulation agreements updates on ASSIST so that students, higher education professionals, and the general public have this tool readily available (Assist General Information, 2021). Although ASSIST lets students know what courses they need to take at the community college for major specific transfer, it is also a system that provides different routes and requirements depending on the four-year destination school, even within the same major (Patton & Pilati, 2012). In other words, if a student is wanting to transfer to three different CSU campuses as a Criminal Justice major, they might need to satisfy three different major requirements. This brings a complex situation for students to understand and determine which classes to take at their community college and can result in a decrease of students transferring to four-year universities. As such, this study will examine the resources that community college students use to leverage their transfer pathway to the four-year institution. Specifically, this study will investigate the Latino male student transfer rates since this is one research area that needs further examination.

**Latinx Achievement Gap**

Latinx are the fastest growing population nationwide. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the Latinx population grew by 23 percent between 2010 and 2020 making it more than
half (51%) the total U.S. population growth (Jones et al., 2021). This is evident in the state of California, the home to the largest Latinx population, which has grown by 11 percent over the past decade and currently stands at 15 million (39 percent) of Latinx residents (Reddy & Siqueiros, 2021). Following behind the Latinx population in California are whites making up 37 percent, Asian American, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (AANHPI) 15 percent, and Black with 6 percent.

![Figure 1. California population by race/ethnicity. Source: Reddy & Siqueiros, 2021](image)

In respect to their educational attainment, the Latinx community lag behind in K-12 graduation and postsecondary completion when compared to their peers (Valliani et al., 2015). Yosso and Solórzano (2006), reported that for every 100 students of Latinx descent who begin their education in elementary school, only 46 of them will graduate from high school. From those 46 students, 17 will attend community college and nine will directly go to a four-year university. Of the 17 students who enroll in community college, only one will eventually
transfer to a four-year institution. A total of eight from the 100 Latinx students that started in elementary school will eventually graduate with a bachelor’s degree (Yosso & Solórzano, 2006). Figure 2 explains this achievement gap in a visual format.

Figure 2. Chicanas and Chicanos attained low academic outcomes at each point along the educational pipeline in 2000. Yosso and Solórzano (2006).

Although Yosso and Solórzano (2006) might be outdated, past reports showcased a similar model in the lack of Latinx educational attainment in K-12 and postsecondary education (Sáenz & Ponjuán, 2009; Wood & Harris, 2013; and National Center for Education Statistics, 2014). For example, in 2014, it was reported that Latinx students in K-12 education hit an all-
time low dropout rate of 12% (Krogstad, 2016). This is still higher when compared to their peers from a different demographic group, Blacks 7%, and Whites 5% (Krogstad, 2016).

In postsecondary education, Gonzalez-Barrera and Lopez (2015) reported that Latinx students have had the highest community college enrollment, particularly in the state of California, where they comprise over 34% of community college enrollment. Yet, when Perez Huber et al. (2015) revisited the Latinx education pipeline, they reported that small gains have been made in closing the educational gap among Latinx students. We have seen the educational attainment gap among Latinx students 20 years ago with Yosso and Solórzano (2006) educational pipeline in 2000, six years ago when it was revised by Huber et al. (2015), and in recent data reported by the Campaign for College Opportunity (2021), which indicates that educational attainment gap continues to exist in Latinx communities compared to other race and ethnicities.

There remains an abundance of untapped potential in Latinx communities in California. Given that the Latinx community makes up the largest race and ethnicity in California with an increase from 28 percent to 40 percent of adult residents attending college, they still remain as the lowest level of college attendance for any racial/ethnic subgroup (Reddy et al., 2021).
The Latinx population is not just falling behind in attending college, but they are the largest racial/ethnic group that enrolled in college and never earned a degree. Figure 4 illustrates that gap in degree completion among the Latinx student population compared to their counterparts. Half of Latinx students who attended college never earned a degree, while 16 percent earned an associates and 35 percent obtained a bachelors or higher. The outcomes of degree completion among Latinx students reflect a need for greater support for these students to help close the achievement gap.

Figure 3. College attendance among Californians ages 25-64 by race/ethnicity. Source: Reddy & Siqueiros, 2021.
Access to Higher Education

In the most recent couple of academic school years, the enrollment of Latinx students in postsecondary education has been the largest that have seen. For example, during the 2018-2019 academic school year, 90 percent (1.26 million) of Latinx students enrolled in a California Community College (CCC), California State University (CSU), or University of California (UC) (Reddy & Siqueiros, 2021). In particular, CCCs had the largest Latinx student enrollment with 72 percent (1,002,127) followed by the CSUs with 14%. Figure 5 illustrates the enrollment of Latinx students in postsecondary education during the 2018-2019 academic year.
Not only are more Latinx students enrolling in CCCs (the largest higher education system in the nation) rather than CSUs or UCs, but they make up 45 percent of the student body in CCCs. During the 2018-2019 academic year, over 2 million students enrolled in CCCs, of whom 1,002,127 (45 percent) were Latinx students (Reddy & Siqueiros, 2021). The vast majority of Latinx students are enrolling in CCCs, because of their open access and affordability.
Although the outlook for Latinx students accessing higher education is heading in the right direction, there is a gender gap among Latinos and Latinas in college access and completion. Using the same academic cohort as above, 2018-2019, figure 7 shows that 58 percent (over 800,000) of Latinx students were women, while only 42 percent were Latino male students accessing higher education. Not only is there an achievement gap in the Latinx community, but when the Latinx data is disaggregated by gender, Latino males shortfall compared to their female peers.
For many Latino male students, the next step after completing high school is enrolling in community college to receive a degree or eventually transfer, but their aspirations are short-lived. In 2010, Snyder and Dillow reported that from the 85% of Latino male students who attend community college, 14.6% graduate in three years and when compared to their peers, white male and Asia counterparts sit at 22% and 24% respectively. Latino peers, White and Asian males almost double their three-year graduation rates from community college. Vasquez Urias (2012) points out that community college Latino male student persistence in enrollment continues to decline. The researcher reports that after their first year, 12.9% of Latino male students enrolled at community college will leave and not re-enroll, 35.2% will not re-enroll after completing their second year of college, and by year six, 58% were no longer enrolled a community college (Vasquez Urias, 2012).
The achievement gap in Latino students should continue to remain a concern for educators. The 2021 Campaign for College Opportunity reported that Latino male students continue to not be supported to earn associate degrees and certificates at the same rate as their peers. Figure 8 shows that there is a positive trend throughout the years for all subgroups examined; however, fewer than one in 10 (8 percent) Latino male students enrolled in the 2014-2015 academic school year were able to graduate in three years (Reddy & Siqueiros, 2021). The four-year graduation rate increased from 8 percent to 11 percent, but still lagging behind compared to their peers.

*Figure 8. Student Success Metrics. Source: Reddy & Siqueiros, 2021.*

Research has continued to evolve and develop in examining different aspects to the phenomenon of Latino males vanishing from postsecondary education. The following sections
discuss the factors that researchers have identified as being indicators in community college Latino males transfer to four-year institutions. The segments will help in understanding the academic and community influences that Latino male students encounter while being enrolled in community colleges.

**Illuminating Factors Impacting Latino Attainment and Transfer Rates**

Researchers have examined several factors that impact the attainment and transfer rate of Latino males in community colleges. The factors revolving around community college Latino males include: enrollment status (Gaviria-Soto & Castro-Morera, 2005; Yosso & Solórzano, 2006; Clark et al., 2013), faculty and staff interaction (González, 2015; Urias et al., 2016; Xiong et al., 2016; Jabbar et al., 2019), as well faculty diversity (Jackson & Phelps, 2004; Hagedorn et al., 2007; Wood et al., 2012; Tovar, 2015), family influences (Strayhorn, 2010; Cabrera et al., 2012; Ovink, 2014; Peña, 2017; Sáenz et al., 2018; Jabbar et al., 2019; Sáenz et al., 2020; Vasquez et al., 2021), socioeconomic status (Núñez et al., 2013; Ingram & Gonzalez-Matthews, 2013; Luna & Martinez, 2013; Sáenz et al., 2013; Wood & Harris, 2015; Abrica & Martinez, 2016; Carales, 2020), and masculinity identity (Sáenz et al., 2015; Urias & Wood 2015; Wood et al., 2015; Bukoski & Hatch, 2016; Salinas & Hidrowoh, 2018; Rodriguez et al., 2021).

The researcher has cataloged these factors into two categories: Institutional determinants and environmental determinants. Institutional determinants include: academic preparedness, the role of faculty, staff, and administration, and faculty diversity. Environmental determinants include: family influences, financial and socioeconomic status, as well as masculinity identity. Figure 9, demonstrates the interconnectedness of the factors that impact Latinx students and their transfer rates.
Factors Impacting Latino Attainment and Transfer Rates

**Institutional Determinants**

Institutional determinants were identified as factors that surround students’ educational experiences in the school setting. In particular, they are elements that reference the unique characteristics of Latino males in community colleges. It is critical that these determinants are showcased and are understood by community college stakeholders in order to improve as well as support Latino male community college students. This section will further examine each of the institutional determinants that researchers have identified as contributors to either the success or failure Latino men in community college.

**Academic preparedness.** One of the most influential factors affecting Latino’s academic success in community college is academic preparedness (Clark et al., 2013). Academic preparedness was added as an institutional determinate because of the educational structural inequalities that affect disproportionally impacted groups such as Latinx students and extends from primary to postsecondary education. Researchers have identified several indicators that lead to the lack of academic preparedness among Latino students. These indicators include: overrepresentation in special education classes during high school years (Gaviria-Soto & Castro-Morera, 2005), enrollment in remediation courses, and placement in a vocational educational...
path rather than on a postsecondary path (Yosso & Solórzano, 2006). These challenges can result in a detour from achieving a postsecondary degree and instead result in dropping out from high school, enrolling in the military, or working for lower wages (Sáenz & Ponjuan, 2011).

**Role of faculty, staff, and administration.** The role of community college counselors, staff, and administrators are vital to the educational success of males in community college (González, 2015; Urias et al., 2016). Studies that have analyzed successful transfers of male Latino community college students revealed that people, not programs, were the primary determinants in student educational paths (Urias et al., 2016). Most importantly, the relationship building and connectedness that students made with community college counselors, mentors, faculty members, and staff were critical agents of success in transferring from community college to a four-year university (González, 2015). Most recently, Jabbar et al. (2019) reported that community college students seeking advisors and counselors at the community college level were predictors of transfer and ultimately four-year completion.

Furthermore, Xiong et al. (2016) examined the role of community college counselors as validating agents for men of color succeeding in community colleges. Eight themes of academic and interpersonal validation were found to be instrumental to male student success. These include: affirming students’ capability of academic success, affirming students’ voices, validating students as equal contributors to the counseling experience, providing proactive academic support, and proving positive reinforcement of academic success (Xiong et al., 2016). Findings from this study demonstrate the pivotal role that community college agents, such as counselors, play in supporting men of color in their capability to succeed, increase confidence, and overall affirming them as students in postsecondary education (Xiong et al., 2016). Other research studies have found that school administration in all three levels of education, high
school, community college, and four-year universities agreed that they lack awareness of educational obstacles among Latino male students (Clark et al., 2013). This research also revealed that they did not have specialized programs for Latino males but suggested that schools should develop “additional outreach and recruitment programs to specifically focus on Latino male students” (Clark et al., 2013, p. 462). This reaffirms the crucial role that school personnel play in the educational lives of Latino males and in particular the unique outreach, engagement, and persistent activities that are needed for this group of students.

**Faculty diversity.** As mentioned above, research has shown the important role that school officials including staff, administration, and faculty have on student success outcomes. However, the educational system is falling behind on their student to faculty diversity representation (Jackson & Phelps, 2004). According to the Community College Review (2018), 68% of students enrolled in community colleges are identified as being from minority groups, with Hispanic/Latino being the majority making up 37% of student enrollment in CCCs. While analyzing Hispanic/Latino faculty at the community college, there was a 2% increase from 1993 to 2017 (Davis & Fry, 2019). In 1993, the percent of Hispanic/Latino faculty was at 3 and in 2017 sat at 5% (Davis & Fry, 2019). Figure 10, which is desegregated data from Pew Research Center, shows that the largest underrepresentation gap among the diversity of students and faculty is held by the Hispanic population at 15%, (5% faculty vs 20% of students). Blacks follow with an 8% difference (6% of faculty vs 14% of students).
Figure 10. U.S. college students are twice as likely as faculty to be Black, four times as likely to be Hispanic. (Source: Davis & Fry, 2019).

Historically, not much has changed with respect to the representation of student to faculty ratio. As reported by Jackson and Phelps (2004), the Hispanic student population at community colleges in 1993 was between 10% – 13%, while over 75% of instructors and counselors were white. Analyzing the year of 1993 and comparing it to 2017 and noticing that the numbers have maintained relatively stable, tells us that not much has changed in faculty diversity for the past 24 years.

Students will lean towards faculty who share similar experiences and backgrounds (Center for Community College Student Engagement, 2014; Hagedorn et al., 2007). As such, student-faculty interaction is a strong predictor for student success and outcomes including attainment and transfer rates (Wood et al., 2012). Tovar (2015) illustrated Grade Point Average (GPA) as a predictor for Latinx degree completion in community college. Tovar (2015) found a positive correlation between the students’ GPA and their interaction with instructional faculty.
outside of the classroom. Hence, the higher number of times the students seek faculty for guidance, the greater chances the Latinx student has of receiving a higher GPA (Tovar, 2015). In addition to academic preparedness and the role of school personnel, faculty diversity adds an important dimension to the body of research influencing Latinx academic achievement in community college. The next section provides an explanation of several key environmental determinants influencing community college Latino males.

**Environmental Determinants**

Environmental determinants were identified as factors that influence students’ educational experience, but are outside of the classroom. Yosso (2015) refers to these environmental factors as ‘cultural capital’ or elements that students of color bring to the school setting from home and go unrecognized by school institutions. The next section reviews the environmental determinants examined as major contributors to Latino male experiences.

**Family influences.** A central piece of the Latino culture is family. Familial ties, known in Spanish as *familismo*, are an essential component of Latino culture and identity (Peña, 2017). Many research studies (Cabrera et al., 2012; Ovink, 2014; Jabbar et al., 2019) have shown how Latino parents want their children to attend college and motivate them as they pursue their educational goals. For example, Ovink (2014) reported in their research study that 82% of Latinx students pursuing higher education indicated that their motivation to obtain a higher education was due to their parental influences. Another study from South Rio Grande of Texas by Cabrera et al. (2012) suggests that parents push for college-going behaviors, but their students must have the *ganas* to achieve their goals. In other words, parents want their children to go to college, but first, their children must have the drive and willingness to continue their education. In addition, Jabbar et al. (2019) suggest that immediate, extended and other family groups
shaped students’ transfer educational experiences in two ways: “(1) families generally shaped their decisions by transferring cultural values, beliefs, validating experiences, and advice; and (2) through direct and indirect informational supports, such as sharing knowledge about particular institutions” (pp. 263-264). Although family members, particularly parents may not have attended college themselves, they instill work ethic, responsibility, and share knowledge of personal hardships which serve as motivating factors for students to continue their higher education aspirations as an honor of their parents’ sacrifices (Jabbar et al., 2019).

Furthermore, other studies have shown that parents impact their children’s academic grades. For example, Strayhorn (2010) indicated that when Latino men discuss their educational attainment goals with their parents, they tend to earn higher grades in college and persist at higher rates than those students whose parents are not supportive. As such, it is crucial for Latino male students to connect with their families and involve them in their higher education journey. They heavily rely on familial and familismo capital as a source of support and motivation as they navigate the community college environment (Sáenz et al., 2018). Their familial wealth and support strengthens Latinos motivation to persist and graduate from college (Sáenz et al., 2018). Sáenz et al. (2020) and Vasquez et al. (2021) identified the unique role that female family members (mothers, sisters, and significant others) play in Latino males’ achieving their educational goals. Through young Latino male voices, the authors of this research study showcase how “female family members set high expectations for academic success, reinforced a college-going culture, and served as sources of motivation for these young men” (Sáenz et al., 2020, p. 17). This study further emphasizes the importance of including female family figures in Latino male’s higher education experience.
Yet, Sáenz et al. (2018), discuss the struggles that many Latino males encounter in reaching their academic goals. In their research, they report that, “families had complicated feelings about Latino’s educational pursuits, specifically as it related to the amount of time spent on academic obligations rather than familial responsibilities” (Sáenz et al., 2018, p. 43). Although families support students in their educational goals, economic necessity forces Latino families to focus on their current economic situation, rather than investing in their children’s education for the possibility of a better future (Sáenz et al., 2018). Many Latinx students face an economic barrier that is a determinant through their education and it will be discussed in the next section.

**Financial and socioeconomic status.** Though Latinx students enter the community college with an abundance of cultural capital and family support, their need to work and support their families because of their socioeconomic statuses prevents them from fully attending to their academics (Luna & Martinez, 2013). Carales (2020) described that a reported socioeconomic status of middle and high class were predictors of degree completion. In other words, the higher the income level, the higher the opportunity of academic achievement students have. In addition, (Núñez et al., 2013) reported that Latinx students on average receive the lowest amount of financial aid and experience the highest poverty rate. As such, many Latinx students are from a lower socioeconomic status and face many financial obstacles. As noted by Abrica & Martinez (2016), some of the financial challenges that Latinx students experience while in college, ranged from not having enough money to purchase groceries or paying for rent at an apartment to needing to save money to pay for their family’s home mortgage. In this study, the students’ response to their financial hardships were to add one or more jobs to their plate. However, this resulted in negative outcomes in their educational goals (Abrica & Martinez, 2016). These
financial factors among Latino males have been manifested in other research studies. Researchers have also reported that financial instability in Latino students have played a crucial impact in their success in their education (Ingram & Gonzalez-Matthews, 2013; Sáenz et al., 2013; Wood & Harris 2015). In particular, this is evident in Latino male students whose family exert traditional values and add pressure on them to financially contribute to household income (Sáenz et al., 2018). The financial and socioeconomic status of many Latino males has negatively impacted their education. These challenges along with male identity in the Latino culture, have caused a ripple effect in their educational aspirations.

**Masculine identity.** Despite the social, educational, economic, cultural, and political challenges that Latino male students encounter, they recognize that their ethnicity and gender identity are imperative in their educational journey (Sáenz et al., 2013). Researchers have found that male Latino students relate to two key terms: *machismo* and *caballerismo*. *Machismo* is associated with the feeling of pride, or the sense of a proudful man that likes to gain power and have control over others through completion (Salinas & Hidrowoh, 2018). In addition, Sáenz et al. (2013) report that *machismo* has been associated with negative characteristics including: “assertiveness, power, control, aggression, and obsession with achieving status” (p. 84). In response to reframing *machismo* in a positive way, *caballerismo* has been introduced. *Caballerismo* is linked with characteristics of family and emotional connectedness, nurtore, and better psychological adjustments (Sáenz et al., 2013). As researchers have acknowledged, these masculine identities have had effects on community college Latino males (Wood et al., 2012; Urias & Wood 2015; Bukoski & Hatch, 2016).

Community college Latino males’ gender identity encompasses a substantial amount of pressure from family, culture, and overall society. Through the lenses *machismo, caballerismo,*
and the belief that they, Latino men, must financially support themselves and their family without support from others, leads them to disregard their goals of obtaining higher education (Sáenz et al., 2013; Sáenz et al., 2015). Rodriguez et al. (2021) examined the complexities of gender identity among Latino males in community college and found that although masculinities can serve as a motivation to succeed, they can also hinder students from succeeding due to the conflict between masculine identity and college expectations. Although masculine identity “pulls” Latino students from their education, it is vital that institutional structures at community colleges are in place to better support this group of students who are vanishing from postsecondary education.

**Data Limitation**

As discussed above, much of the research studies pertaining to community college Latino students has focused on enrollment, persistence, environmental and institutional determinants that have either hinder or helped students in their educational journey. There is a gap in the research that has not looked at specific institutional structures such as ADTs that CCC’s have implemented for students transferring to four-year universities. Furthermore, this research gap has not examined the findings of the effects of institutional structures by gender. As such, there is limited knowledge on community college Latino male experiences in particular transfer pathway programs. This study sought to discover to what extent the ADT has supported Latino male students in their journey towards transfer to a CSU.

**Associates Degree for Transfer**

Since this research study has a focus on community college Latino males pursuing an ADT, it is important to understand the ADT transfer pathway. Arnold Schwarzenegger signed into law Senate Bill 1440, known as the Student Achievement Reform Act in 2010 to combat the
student achievement gap and better streamline course institution agreements between CCCs, CSUs and UCs (Padilla, 2010). Senate Bill 1440 mandated that CCC’s create a new type of associate degree, ADT that will prepare students for admission to the CSU (Patton & Pilati, 2012). In collaboration with the CSU, they will “guarantee admission with junior status to any community college student who meets the requirements for the associate degree for transfer” (Padilla, 2010). The passing of SB 1440 and establishment of ADTs attempted to simplify the transfer process for students. Students enrolled in one of the 116 CCCs, now have the option of completing an Associates of Science Transfer Degree (A.S.-T) or Associates of Arts Transfer Degree (A.A.-T). Upon completion of an ADT, the courses will transfer and automatically count for lower division general education as well as prerequisite courses needed for the major at the four-year institution. The ADTs consist of 60 units of transferable coursework which includes a minimum of 18 units in major and 39 to 42 units of general education (Taylor, Constantouros, & Heiman, 2015). SB 1440 (Padilla, 2010) outlined the benefits of receiving an ADT from a CCC and transferring to a CSU:

- Students must be accepted somewhere in the 23-campus system into programs that are deemed to be similar.
- Once students have transferred to the CSU, they must be able to complete a baccalaureate program in 60 units.
- Students shall not be required to repeat courses that are similar to those already taken.

The upper division transfer student admission requirements to the CSU are:

- Complete a minimum of 60 semester or 90 quarter transferable units;
- Overall 2.0 GPA in all transferable coursework (GPA varies being accepted into impacted majors);
- Be in “good standing” in your last college or university and;
- Complete 30 semester or 45 quarter units in general education (CSU GE Breadth or IGETC) with at least satisfying the golden 4 (oral communication, written communication, critical thinking, and mathematical/qualitative reasoning) with a C- or better.
To put into perspective the upper division transfer student pathway, Figure 11 illustrates the path students take from community college to reaching a baccalaureate degree. Students begin by enrolling to a CCC, satisfying general education (either following the CSU GE-Breadth or IGETC) and pre-major lower division courses through the ADT. Once students have transferred to the CSU, they must meet 9 units of upper division general education (residency GE units) in areas B5, C, and D. In addition, they must also fulfill upper division major courses.

*Figure 11. Community College Transfer Pathway with an Associate’s Degree for Transfer (Source: Author).*

With SB 1440, CCC students are placed in a pathway to earn a bachelor’s degree from a CSU. Students are able to complete 60 required lower division courses (general education and major) from a CCC and be guaranteed admissions to a CSU where they will have an additional 60 units remaining to complete a bachelor’s degree (California State University, 2019). At the CSU level, they have reduced the number of units needed to receive a bachelor’s degree without jeopardizing the quality of education. In 2015, the CSU reported that “94% percent of all BA and BS degrees now require only 120 units, and at 10 campuses every BA/BS program requires only 120 units” (California State University, 2015). Furthermore, in a recent press release, the CSU reported that since 2012, the percent of students transferring from CCC to the CSU with an ADT increased from 3% to 42% (California State University, 2021). As indicated in table 2
below, nearly half of all incoming CCC transfer students entering the CSU system had received an ADT.

Table 2
*California community college transfer enrollment by academic year (Source: California State University, 2021)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Year</th>
<th>ADT Transfer on a similar pathway</th>
<th>ADT Transfer not on a similar pathway</th>
<th>Transfer with AA or AS Degree</th>
<th>Transfer with No Degree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2019-2020</td>
<td>16,677</td>
<td>11,690</td>
<td>9,964</td>
<td>29,624</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018-2019</td>
<td>14,436</td>
<td>9,000</td>
<td>10,870</td>
<td>27,666</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017-2018</td>
<td>11,898</td>
<td>9,959</td>
<td>8,204</td>
<td>30,344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016-2017</td>
<td>10,965</td>
<td>8,773</td>
<td>9,681</td>
<td>32,493</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015-2016</td>
<td>7,826</td>
<td>6,628</td>
<td>9,833</td>
<td>33,995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014-2015</td>
<td>4,164</td>
<td>4,563</td>
<td>11,478</td>
<td>37,564</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013-2014</td>
<td>6,620</td>
<td>14,351</td>
<td>34,916</td>
<td>44,236</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**California State University Impaction**

Numerous researchers (Boone Rick, 2017; Hackbarh, 2016; Taylor et al., 2015; Neault & Piland, 2014) have focused on four-year student access and program impaction at the CSU level. As stated by Taylor et al. (2015), some campuses and programs are impacted – they cannot offer a seat to all eligible applicants, and therefore transfer students that receive an ADT cannot be guaranteed admissions to their selected campus or major. Instead, under SB 1440, the CSU grants priority admission to local students and to a major that is “similar” to their community college (Padilla, 2010). It is left to the CSU’s discretion to determine what ADT majors are similar to those at the CSU. When factoring in all these variables, one may consider this transfer
process to be cumbersome particularly, for Latino students who are first generation, underrepresented, historically marginalized, and have undergone systems of oppression. The concern still remains as to what degree SB 1440 influences the transfer rates of community college Latino males.

**Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework that was employed in this study is Yosso’s (2005) Community Cultural Wealth (CCW) model. Yosso’s framework of CCW challenges the deficit narrative that students of color such as Latino males, bring to higher education. The researcher does this by examining forms of cultural capital. These six forms are aspirational capital, linguistic capital, familial capital, social capital, navigational capital, and resistance capital. This framework will be used to reveal and acknowledge the types of wealth that Latino male students bring to community college settings.

**Community Cultural Wealth**

The foundation of CCW lays on Bourdieu and Passeron’s (1977) social capital theory. Social capital theory suggests that social and cultural capital is attained by groups of individuals that have a strong socioeconomic standing in society. As such, these groups use their social and cultural capital to preserve their power in society and pass it down to future generations (Bourdieu, 1986). Bourdieu (1986) states that cultural capital can exist in three states: embodied, objective and institutionalized. Embodied state alludes to the interaction of how social capital is assimilated into one’s mind and body. The objective state is when cultural items, material and symbolic, in one’s surroundings can be devoured, like music, painting and writing. Lastly, the institutionalized state is a form of cultural capital, which refers to the recognition that school organizations provide to people such as degrees to legitimize cultural capital.
Yosso’s CCW fabricated on to Bourdieu’s social capital theory to showcase how marginalized and low socioeconomic groups in society can also inherit and hold wisdom and abilities of significant worth. As illustrated by Yosso (2005), Bourdieu’s theoretical insight about social capital value in a hierarchical society is dependent upon “knowledge of the middle and upper class and the potential for social mobility through formal schooling” (p. 70). This framework of thinking has deciphered as an approach to explain why the academic and social outcomes of people of color are fundamentally lower than the outcomes of whites. As a result, educational institutions have worked from the perspective that students from marginalized communities lack knowledge, skills, abilities, and social capital (Yosso, 2005). In response to offsetting some of the deficit-minded thinking towards these groups, Yosso (2005) proposed CCW. Through CCW, marginalized populations can also hold and pass down valuable skills, knowledge and abilities. Hence, Yosso (2005) defined CCW as an “array of knowledge, skills, abilities and contacts possessed and utilized by Communities of Color to survive and resist macro and micro-forms of oppression” (p. 77). Using CCW, Yosso (2005) introduced six types of forms that students of color bring to the classroom: aspirational capital, linguistics capital, familial capital, navigational capital, and resistance capital. Yosso’s (2005) CCW model is shown below in figure 12 and the types of forms are further described.

1.) *Aspirational capital* – refers to having strength and the drive to meet short- and long-term objectives (p. 77).

2.) *Linguistic capital* – involves the relational abilities that are obtained through communicating in more than one language (p. 78).

3.) *Familial capital* – refers to those cultural familiarities sustained among familia that convey a feeling of community history, memory and social instinct. This form expands above the concept of family and goes into having commitment to the community to better understand kinship (p. 79).

4.) *Social capital* – includes networks of people and community resources (p.79).
5.) *Navigational capital* – alludes to the skill and ability of maneuvering through insinuations (p. 80).

6.) *Resistant capital* – signifies information and abilities encouraged through oppositional conduct that challenges disparity among communities of color (p. 80).

*Figure 12.* A Model of Community Cultural Wealth. Adapted from: Oliver & Shapiro, 1995

In this CCW model, Yosso (2005) brings to the forefront six forms of cultural wealth within disadvantaged communities that have rarely been recognized by institutions as cultural and social assets. This framework is not one to be static but rather fluid in nature by which communities of color navigate institutional systems. Yosso (2005) states that one of the main goals for CCW is to “transform education and empower People of Color to utilize assets already abundant in their communities” (p. 82). Similarly, I argue that it is the duty of community
college leaders to acknowledge and value that historically disadvantaged communities, such as Latino males, bring cultural wealth from their community into the institution of higher education. This study will examine the extent to which the ADT has helped or hinder Latino males through the six forms of CCW.

Chapter Summary

This chapter provided a robust literature review focused on vertical transfer and areas of concern for community college transfer students to four-year universities including credit mobility and articulation agreements among CCCs and CSU’s. In addition, this section showed the educational gap that continues to exist in primary as well as postsecondary education among Latino students. The research demonstrated that there continues to be a need for not only an increase in enrollment of Latino students, specifically Latino males, but also their persistence and completion. The next sections covered comprehensive relevant research pertaining to community college Latino students transfer and degree completion with an emphasis on two categorical determinants: institutional and environmental. Furthermore, the chapter provided a review of the data limitation in community college Latino males. Although there have been recent studies on the community college experience among Latino males, none have disaggregated the research into specific transfer programs such as the ADT. The following section went in depth in describing the ADT transfer program. Lastly, this literature review provided a presentation on the Community Cultural Wealth Theory which will be used as the theoretical framework of this research study.
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

California Community Colleges (CCC) remain one of the fastest growing higher education institutions. With student enrollment being over 2 million, CCC continues to be the largest and most accessible for student enrollment (CCCCO, 2020). Although they have high enrollment, CCC needs to improve on the number of students that successfully transfer to a four-year university. The CCC system has established several initiatives to help students transfer. One of these initiatives is known as the Associates Degree of Transfer (ADT).

As discussed in chapter 1, Latino male students are not transferring to four-year universities at the same rate as their peers and this phenomenon may result in many negative outcomes for Latino males such as lower paying work wages and more physically draining positions. With the transfer reform of the ADT being in existence for over 10 years, this study will attempt to discover the extent in which the ADT has impacted Latino male students and their persistence to transfer to a four-year university. Moreover, this study will reveal the lived experiences of current Latino male students mobilizing their community college transfer pathway using the ADT as their platform to transfer to a four-year university, particularly a California State University (CSU). Lastly, chapter 1 discussed the delimitations of the study. The delimitations range from student demographic such as ethnic, gender, transfer bound to member checking.

Numerous literature has focused on the educational achievement gap among Latinos in community college. Chapter 2 examined the transfer function of higher education between California Community Colleges (CCC) and CSUs with a focus on two specific categories:
articulation and credit loss. In addition, factors impacting attainment and transfer rates of Latino students in community college are analyzed in further detail. In particular, the factors were categorized into institutional and environmental determinants. Some of the determinants identified by other researchers include: academic preparedness, the role of faculty, staff, and administration, family influences, and masculinity identity. Further, it also presented background information on Senate Bill 1440 that was signed into law in 2011 and established the Associates Degree for Transfer (ADT) in community colleges. This reform built a partnership among CCC and the California State University (CSU) system, in which community college students would be able to make a lateral transfer with a guarantee to a CSU while still earning an associate’s degree at the community college (Patton & Pilati, 2012). This study is viewed through the theoretical framework lens of Yosso (2005) CCW, which encompasses six cultural capital forms: aspirational capital, linguistic capital, familial capital, social capital, navigational capital, and resistance capital that students of color bring from their community setting to their educational environment. In sum, chapter 2 covered an abundance of literature with a focus on factors that impede the success of Latino students attending community college as well as a discussion on the ADT pathway. The next section will provide a roadmap of chapter 3.

Chapter Overview

The elements discussed in this chapter include: the research design, basic qualitative research methodology, methods, data collection as well as data analysis. This study utilized Merriam’s basic qualitative research to better understand the lived experiences of Latino male college students. The data collection process included interviewing ten participants through a semi-structured interview process. For the data analysis of the study, the researcher used Bruan & Clarke (2006) six phases of thematic analysis; familiarizing yourself with your data,
generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report. In addition, this chapter also includes a review of how the researcher assessed trustworthiness and credibility, research positionality and limitations within the study.

**Qualitative Design**

As discussed in chapter 2, there is a substantial amount of research on the Latino achievement gap in community colleges. However, few have examined the factors that have influenced Latino students to transfer, particularly Latino male students. Moreover, many of these studies have been using quantitative analysis. As such, this study used Merriam’s (2016) basic qualitative research design to help bridge the gaps in the literature about Latino male transfer student experience. Studies that have used a quantitative research design have provided numerical and statistical research; however, there is minimal research detailing and sharing the student voice. Hence, using a qualitative research design in this study provided an equal approach to research. Moreover, a qualitative research design allows for the research to obtain first-hand data and gives meaning to participant’s perception and overall social reality. In this study, the researcher used a qualitative approach to understand and make sense of the community college Latino male experiences as they attempt to transfer to a CSU. A qualitative research approach was appropriate for this study because it investigated the lived experiences of students which were investigated through semi-structured interviews. It is particularly important that interviews were conducted in a type of research because it allows for a richer source of information from participants to help better explain their attitudes, beliefs, experiences, and phenomena.
**Methodology**

Merriam’s (2016) basic qualitative research methodology is used in this study. This methodology offers the most flexibility in studying the experiences of Latino students who intend to transfer from a CCC to a CSU after completing the requirements for the ADT. Merriam (2009) explains that “researchers are interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed, that is, how people make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world” (p.13). Because this study focuses on students’ experiences and the ways they came to make sense of their experiences, Merriam’s qualitative research aligns with the aim of this study.

Basic qualitative research is based on the idea that significance is generally created based on people’s understanding and connections with their world (Merriam, 2009). Individuals create many interpretations and constructs of reality based on their lived experiences at a given time. These interpretations however do change over time as individuals continue to build on their experiences (Merriam, 2009). As such, qualitative research is best used to analyze those interpretations that are in a particular time with a particular context (Merriam, 2009). The student-shared experiences are shaped from their interpretations gathered from what they experienced at Northern College. Their experiences may range from interactions with counselors, advisors, peers, faculty, and administrators.

In a qualitative research study, a research design may consider using an interpretive or critical approach. An interpretative approach is used when a researcher wants to learn “how individuals experience and interact with their social world” (Merriam, 2009, p. 4). A critical approach is considered when a researcher wants to “investigate how the social and political aspects of a situation shape the reality, that is how larger contextual factors affect the ways in
which individuals construct reality” (Merriam, 2009, p. 4). This study used critical qualitative research to discover the barriers Latinos encounter when attempting to transfer to a four-year university.

This study examined Latino males and explored what social factors contribute to their four-year transfer plan. Influences such as their social identity, gender, race, socioeconomic status, and access to resources like mentors, counselors, transfer services, and overall essentials to college life have been examined from a critical qualitative approach. This study provides a clearer understanding of how community college Latino males make sense of their lives and experiences. This qualitative approach has also helped in informing the three guided research questions in this study.

**Research Questions**

1.) What are the challenges, if any, perceived by first generation community college Latino males at a Northern California community college district, as they transfer to a California State University using the Associate Degree Transfer?

2.) What types of community college services or engagement opportunities, if any, do first generation Latino males believe had a positive influence on their ability to transfer to a four-year university?

3.) What are the services that first generation Latino male students identify as needing as they attempt to transfer to California State University?

**Methods**

In this section, the researcher discusses the key components of the research methods that were employed in the study. The facets of the methods included site selection, participants profiles, data collection strategies, data analysis, steps taken to ensure trustworthiness and credibility, and limitations.
Site Selection

The site selected for this study is Northern Community College (a pseudonym). This community college is one of the four community colleges with the same community college district. This district is one of the largest community college districts in the state of California in regard to student enrollment. In a recent report, the district informed that in 2019 there were 67,258 students enrolled in the district. The college in this study remains the second largest student enrollment in the district with 20,157 enrolled students as of fall 2019. The source will be left out for confidentiality purposes and to protect the college’s identity.

Northern Community College meets the following criteria: (a) from the four district colleges, Northern College has the largest Hispanic/Latino student enrollment with over 33% of the student population, (b) is a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI), (c) 40.7% of the students identify as male, (c) Northern College is part of the ADT agreement with all the 23 CSUs, and (d) 25.7% of fall 2019 students have indicated an interest in an ADT as their major. The top ADT majors include Business Administration, Psychology, Biology, Kinesiology, and Sociology. These top five majors encompass over 50% of students interested in a specific ADT program major.

Like many other California Community Colleges, Northern College is considered a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) because of its high Hispanic/Latino student enrollment of over 25% and has a solidified ADT program, particularly because of their partnership with their local CSU. Collaboration between Northern College and their local CSU – CSU, Jackson (a pseudonym), is well developed and established. CSU, Jackson provides students that have an ADT from Northern College a .1 Grade Point Average (GAP) boost to their admission application. In addition, because these are neighboring schools, CSU, Jackson also provides an
additional .1 GPA boost to any student from the local college that transfers to their school. This means that a Northern college student who obtains an ADT and transfers to CSU, Jackson will receive a .2 overall GPA increase for admissions purposes.

**Description of Participants**

The overall purpose of this study is to improve the educational experiences of first generation Latino male community college students who are in the process of transferring to CSU, Jackson with an ADT. Using qualitative methods, this study is composed of students from Northern College. Creswell (2014) suggests that when conducting qualitative research, a small group of participants is best appropriate for the study. As such, this study obtained a sample size of ten participants for one-on-one semi-structured interviews.

Community college students have an array of educational experience with numerous years at the community college. As such, the study is limited to a specific number of years that students have attended Northern Community College. The researcher only analyzed students who have completed one or more years at the community college and have not yet transferred to CSU, Jackson. The reason for analyzing students who have at least one year of attending community college is because they are closer to their goal of transferring to a four-year university and may have had more experience navigating the transfer resources available. This study used a purposeful sampling technique. According to Patton (2002), purposeful sampling techniques allow for in-depth information richness and for the researcher to gather “excellent” participants. Excellent participants are specialists in the field of study and can provide sufficient information on the phenomena being investigated (Jones et al., 2014). As such, following the purposeful sampling technique, the participants were selected based on a specific criterion.
The criteria that was used to select the student population is as follows: (a) self-identify as male and first-generation college student, (b) self-identify as Latino or Hispanic, (c) have attended a community college with the intent to transfer to a CSU, (d) have completed one or more years at Northern College, and (c) are in the path of earning an ADT from Northern College. This student population selection criteria was used in this study because it relates to the purpose of examining the lived experiences of first-generation community college Latino males that intend to transfer with an ADT and overall it strengthens the trustworthiness of the study. Community college Latino males who have identified their goal of transferring with an ADT to a CSU were excellent participants in the study because of their knowledge and current educational experiences. Furthermore, by selecting students that have intent to transfer and who have already completed one year at Northern College, allowed for a rich discussion on the types of barriers they faced up to this point in their higher education journey.

The recruitment of the student participants in this study occurred in collaboration with Northern College office of Planning Research, and Institutional Effectiveness (PRIE) as well as the Transfer Center. The PRIE office is the hub of tracking and compiling student enrollment and outcomes data. The PRIE office provided the list of students based on the criteria that was outlined for this study. In conjunction, personnel from the Transfer Center at Northern College sent an email invitation to the list of students provided by the PRIE office. The email message can be found on appendix A. Students that were interested in being part of the study, email the researcher for further information. Because this study is focused on a qualitative design – heavy on time consumption for participants, there was a complimentary 20$ gift card provided to each student upon completion of their participation in this study. The next section outlines each one
of the ten participants’ personal and educational background, their reasons for attending college and their motives for aspiring to transfer to a four-year university.

**Participant Profiles**

The profiles of students described below are intended to provide a holistic view of the ten Latino male participants outside of their educational environment. The researcher asks participants to share about their family background, employment status, and career aspirations. These questions can be found in appendix b. As per ethical standards of educational research and to protect participants identity, all ten students were given a pseudonym.

**Armando.** Armando was raised in the valley. His mother passed away from a heart condition when Armando was a toddler. At the age of six his dad moved to Mexico and at the age of 12, he returned to take him and his sisters to Disneyland. Shortly after, Armando’s dad committed suicide. Ever since Armando was six, his aunt and uncle adopted him and his sisters into their home. Armando had two sisters, one was a half-sister and they both lived with them. His aunt and uncle had four children of their own, so he was raised in a family of nine. Armando was not employed. He worked at a retail store, but resigned because he was planning on moving locally to complete the Geology program and transfer to CSU, Jackson. However, due to the pandemic and education being online, he stayed with family until classes resumed in-person.

After graduating from high school, Armando enrolled at his local college. He did not have any breaks between high school and college. In fact, Armando began taking college classes in the summer prior to starting his first year. During his two years as a college student, he has always been enrolled full-time and had occasional part-time jobs. Hence, he valued school more than the jobs he has had. Armando wants to continue attending Northern College and eventually
transfer to CSU, Jackson to earn a bachelor’s degree because he does not want “to be stuck working in the fields like my older cousin and uncle”. Furthermore, he stated that “I don't want to be doing all that back breaking labor. Currently my uncle has back problems, and he has a lot of physical problems from working in the fields and I just didn't want that for myself or my future kids”. In the view of Armando, obtaining a college degree will be vital in breaking the stereotype that Mexicans all they do is work in the fields.

**Christian.** Christian a 20-year-old Latino male was born in Nebraska but raised in California. During the interview, Christian lived with his mother, sister, and grandparents. After high school graduation, he enrolled in college and quickly realized that he should have taken a break because school and family demands began affecting his mental health. Christian actually took a semester break prior to participating in the study. He states that “I wasn't doing great mentally and there were a lot of outside things affecting me and I couldn't put the focus I needed to complete my schoolwork so I felt behind in my school work and I ultimately didn't do good that semester. I decided to take a semester break to just reset everything and get my personal life together, so I can put more focus into my schoolwork”.

Christian career goal is to be a music composer and is why he wants to transfer to CSU Jackson. He stated that he wanted to be a music director or composer “so I can make my own music and play it for people so they can have the same experiences that I had during high school… so many feelings go into music”. Christian mentioned that CSU Jackson has a great music program and would like to eventually be part of their band. However, because Christian is a full-time asynchronous student due to not having transportation, he has limited access to in-person music classes at Northern College.
**Erick.** Erick was born in Mexico but was raised in California. Erick has two older brothers and lived with his mother and father. Erick worked for the state as a student assistant. Because this was a student internship position, he worked 24 hours each week. This allowed him to balance school and personal life. Early in his college journey a challenge that he faced was not being prepared. He stated that “one of the issues that I had going straight into college was that I wasn't really prepared. I didn't really have the guidance to know what classes to take. One of the semesters I kind of just went straight into a major that I thought I wanted to do, so instead of enrolling in general education courses, I enrolled in a bunch of computer science courses”. Not having the proper guidance in selecting a major and enrolling in courses that did not apply to his current major, set Erick a semester behind. Erick wanted to further his education because a two-year degree in political science will not be sufficient in reaching his goal in local government. He mentioned that a four-year degree will provide him with more opportunities in his field, have higher pay, and overall job satisfaction. These were three important values in Erick’s career trajectory.

**Gustavo.** Gustavo was raised by a single-parent. He comes from a family of three; mother, younger sibling, and himself. His father has not been in the picture for years. Parents separated when Gustavo was at a young age. His younger sibling decided to not attend college after high school because it was not a need for him to be successful. As for Gustavo, he started attending Northern College after high school. However, he wishes we would have taken a break between high school and college because he was going through personal challenges at home and college was demanding. Gustavo stated that not taking a break “ended up backfiring and did very badly that the first couple of semesters in college. looking back now at those semesters, I should have just taken them off, cleared my head, done something else, and then gone back to
school with a stronger mind”. The pressure of continuing going to school, so that he would not be behind, made him realize that enrolling in college was the best option at that time.

At the time of the interview, his major was graphic design because he enjoyed drawing and taking pictures. However, at times he felt uncertain about the major because he was not sure what kind of career he could end up in. One thing that Gustavo was certain about was obtaining a college degree so that he did not have to struggle like his family. Although he did not have a father figure in his life, he was raised by uncles who began pushing him to work at the age of 12. Gustavo stated that “they (his uncles) treated me more like a man by the age of just 12 years old. I worked full-time in the summers with my uncle gathering oranges and lemons and essentially, we would box them to sell. I also worked with them doing demolition construction, at the flea market, and I did just about any type of job that they had for me”. These experiences made Gustavo realize that college was a way out from the difficult labor. His overall goal is to get a college degree and make enough money to purchase a home for his mother.

**Javier.** Javier was born in the United States but due to some issues with family, he moved to Mexico, and was raised there until he migrated back to the United States at the age of five. Javier comes from a family of seven. Being one of the oldest, he feels the pressure of setting the example for the rest of his family members. During the interview, Javier was working as a student mentor at Northern College. He worked at an equity support center helping connect Latinx students with campus resources. He mentioned that his job is very flexible with his school schedule and that it is beneficial being a peer mentor. He has learned all the resources that the college offers to students.

Upon graduating from high school, Javier enrolled at Northern College. At first, he was very skeptical about attending college right after high school because he thought that his parents
had to pay for college. He did not know about the financial aid application. However, he reported that now as a second-year student, was very close to completing all this coursework and transferring to CSU, Jackson with a major in social and behavioral sciences. Like many of his peers, Javier did not know what to major in but as he started taking classes and being part of the Puente Project, he realized that he can see himself helping other students that have similar backgrounds as him. He selected the major of social and behavioral sciences because would like to work in the field of education and give back to his community.

**Juan.** Juan is a 23-year-old male who was born in California. He was raised by two parents who migrated to the United States from Guatemala to provide a better future to their three children. During the time of the interview, Juan was a student employee at Northern College and at another nearby college averaging 27 hours of work per week. After graduating from high school, he immediately began his college journey at a local college. While attending college, he also worked where he felt more supported. Juan stated “I actually felt rewarded for my efforts at work, then at school”. After a couple of years enrolling at the college part-time, taking semester off, and not prioritizing school, he was placed on academic probation and was eventually academically dismissed.

A human career development class taught by a college counselor changed Juan’s academic life around. He was connected to a counselor that guided him through his educational journey by enrolling in the “correct” courses. After facing so many struggles Juan is near to transfer to a four-year university. He states that he is pursuing an education beyond an associate’s degree “so that my family can feel secure about my future, but for myself and my future family. I want to be able to provide for myself and I want to have a life that's rewarding and I don't want to struggle finding opportunities that are bachelor degrees and so on can offer”.
Marcos. Marcos, a 25-year-old male, was born in California. During the interview he was attending more than one of the district colleges. He was considered the middle child in his family of five. His older sibling did not set the example for him, younger sibling, nor his parents. Hence, he faced family pressure to continue his education and be an example to his younger siblings and those coming after him. Marcos was currently a full-time employee working 35-40 hours per week while also being enrolled full-time at Northern College and neighboring district colleges when completing the interview.

After graduating from high school in 2014, Marcos took a year break to work fulltime before enrolling in college. While attending a local college for a year, he stopped enrolling in classes and took another year from school because he was unsure of what he was doing. He states “I actually stopped taking classes there and I just wanted to focus on work. I didn't really want to know what I was doing at that time, so I was just trying to, you know, maybe work my way up the ladder in the field I was working, so I just took a year off”. Once enrolled back in college, Marcos is determined to receive an associate’s degree for transfer in psychology and transfer to CSU, Jackson. In addition to having job satisfaction and a higher salary, Macros states that he wanted to further his education because “unlike a house, education is something that nobody can take away from you and it will always be important to have”.

Mauricio. Mauricio was a 24-year-old. At the age of six, he relocated because his parents were concerned about the school district he was attending since there were many fights occurring among students. Mauricio lived with his parents for many years until his mom told him that he had to become independent and move out. He is currently renting a house with a girlfriend who also attends college. Mauricio was working 30 hours a week as a bilingual paraeducator at a nearby school district. Mauricio mentioned that his biggest challenge was his
finances. He was not financially stable when he moved out from his home. Although he moved in with his girlfriend and had a roommate, his roommate eventually moved out and it became tough for Mauricio to continue to support himself.

Growing up, Mauricio had complicated dynamics with his parents helping him with school work. Both of his parents worked full-time and were always busy. When they had an opportunity to help him with homework, they took it upon themselves to essentially do it for him rather than tutoring and allowing him to understand the subject. He stated that “they (his parents) wanted to help me grow up and support me with school work, but I feel like they also didn't give me a chance to be independent. When I was younger they would try to help me with homework assignments and tutor me, but I feel like I wasn't really understanding the material well enough and almost like they were trying to take control and finish it themselves. I felt like that kind of almost harmed us in a way because it did not help me prepare for higher education”. When Mauricio took his first college class, he realized that he was not academically prepared and dropped the course. He realized that what his parents had done throughout his education did not benefit him in the long run.

Michael. Michael, a 23-year-old Northern College student, had been moving around across California. He has relocated four times after turning 18. His housing instability has been a main barrier in his education. At a young age, Michaels parents were divorced and he spent much of his life with his mom and younger sibling. Michael took several gaps in his education because he had to provide for himself by working full-time. Many of the jobs that obtained were in sales, hence his desire to continue in this field by majoring in business administration with a focus in marketing. During the time of the interview, Michael was not employed because we
wanted to dedicate all his energy in school to complete his community college coursework and transfer.

As mentioned Michael had many challenges at the beginning of his college journey. He always wanted to go to college, but never knew how to apply. His mother at that time was not supportive and did not want to provide her tax documentation for Michael to complete his financial aid application. He mentioned that he had to hide information from family about his college education, at a point where he had to keep moving locations. However, because of COVID-19 and colleges offering courses remotely, is what eased his way back into the college environment and enrolling full-time at Northern College. One of his reasons for attending college is to eventually land a career in marketing. A bachelor’s degree in the field of Business and Marketing will open more opportunities

**Miguel.** Miguel was born in Mexico and migrated to the United States in 1987. He comes from a family of 8 brothers and three sisters. Miguel began taking community college courses in 1993. Prior to enrolling in college, he was in adult school learning English. Miguel mentioned that one of the challenges of his education was learning English, particularly in science courses. He stated that “When I took a chemistry class, it was very challenging for me, because of the language. I knew about the chemistry, I understood the symbols and all that, but the communication was not there”. He further stated that his teachers were not supportive and patient with him. While attending school, he was also working 40 hours a week to support his family and spouse who at that time was also going to school. Miguel was working full-time for the state as an assistant in the chemistry and pesticides field. Miguel has been in this job for over 20 years. During the time of the interview, Miguel was very close to transferring to CSU, Jackson. After so many years of college drawbacks and personal responsibilities, Miguel was
close to his main goal of transfer. What made this goal possible was finding a counselor that understood him and that was willing to guide him through his education.

**Data Collection**

Prior to initiating the interview process with the participants for this study, the researcher submitted a proposal to University of the Pacific (UOP) Institutional Review Board (IRB) to obtain approval to proceed with the research study. An external research request was also submitted to the PRIE office of Northern College to grant access for study at the college. Following the six phases of thematic analysis for this study, which are mentioned below in further detail, the phenomenon of this investigation was captured through one-on-one in-depth semi-structured interviews. These two forms of data collection are suggested by Merriam (2009) for investigating the experiences of participants.

**Interviews.** This study conducted semi-structured interviews with ten participants to help inform the Latino male transfer mobility experience. There are other forms of interviews such as highly structured interviews, unstructured interviews, and conversation; however, for the purpose of this study, semi-structured interviews were used to facilitate and engage in an informal dialogue while also ensuring consistency across interviews. Jones et al. (2014) describe how semi-structured interviews are developed by the researcher, the researcher develops “a loose interview protocol and several open-ended questions along with clarifying questions such as asking about feelings, what happened next…” (p. 134). Further, in semi-structured interviews, the questions are “worded in a way that gives participants leeway in responding” (Jones et al., 2014, p. 135). As such, participants are part of constructing the structure and process of the interview.
To address the time limitation of community college students whose lives are occupied with school, work, family, and personal obligations, the researcher was available to conduct interviews at a variety of times throughout the week and during the weekend. The interviews were anticipated to take 45 minutes, but there was one hour allocated for each interviewee. Due to the Coronavirus (COVID 19) pandemic and for the health as well as the safety of the researcher and participants, the interviews occurred in a virtue setting using Zoom. Once the dates and times were set with the students, they were sent the Zoom meeting details to their school email address. In addition to avoid any conflict of interest with participants and to attract a greater number of students, the researcher collaborated with Transfer Center personnel from Northern College to help with the dissemination of email messages.

Data Analysis

To analyze this data, thematic analysis was used in this study. Braun & Clarke (2006), describes thematic analysis as “a method for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns within data. Minimally, it organizes and describes your data set in (rich) detail” (p. 79). Thematic analysis differs from other qualitative data analysis like thematic decomposition analysis and grounded theory analysis. This type of analysis is not weaved into pre-existing rhetorical frameworks such as decomposition and grounded analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis is flexible and can be used with essential or realistic method, as well as critical realism, which Bruan & Clarke (2006) defined as “acknowledge the ways individuals make meaning of their experience, and, in turn, the ways the broader social context impinges on those meanings, while retaining focus on the material and other limits of ‘reality’” p. 81).

In this study the researcher used the following Bruan & Clarke (2006) six phases of thematic analysis; 1) “familiarizing yourself with your data”, in this phase the researcher read
and noted down ideas from the participants, 2) “generating initial codes”, in this phase the researcher coded specific characteristics throughout the entire script, 3) “searching for themes”, in this phase the researcher ordered codes into likely themes as well as assembled all information applicable to every theme, (4) “reviewing themes”, in this phase the researcher checked to ensure quality of themes and begin creating a topical; “map” of the investigation, 5) “defining and naming themes”, in this phase there was continuous examination to refine the points of interests of each theme while producing clear definitions and names for each topic, and 6) “producing the report” in the final phase the researcher had the last opportunity for analysis, relating back of the investigation to the exploration question and writing, and delivering an academic report of the study (p. 87). Table 3 represents the six-steps of thematic analysis.

Table 3
*Six Phases of Thematic Analysis. Adapted from Bruan & Clark (2006).*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Description of the process</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Familiarizing yourself with your data</td>
<td>Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Generating initial codes</td>
<td>Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Searching for themes</td>
<td>Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Reviewing themes</td>
<td>Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), generating a thematic ‘map’ of the analysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Defining and naming themes</td>
<td>Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Producing the report</td>
<td>The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis.</td>
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</table>

The interviews were transcribed using a feature on Zoom. The researcher went back several occasions through all the transcriptions and audio recording to ensure that the content
was correctly transcribed. After numerous revisions of the transcriptions, the researcher started searching and coding for themes and subthemes. A color-coding process was used. There was a color for every category of themes and subthemes that was identified. The generated thematic categories were used to present the essential experiences of the participants. Member checking was used to ensure that the information captured by the researcher was accurate and it provided the participants with an opportunity to make changes to their responses. As part of the final report, the researcher used direct quotes from what the participants shared about their experiences of transferring to a four-year university.

**Trustworthiness & Credibility**

One of the steps that the researcher used to show trustworthiness of the data was by allowing member checking. Member checking allows the data to be captured correctly between the researcher and the participants. The participants can go back to the data transcription and make modifications as they see fit. Another area in which the researcher demonstrated trustworthiness of the data was in the collection process. To increase credibility, an interview protocol was developed for the semi-structured interviews. As mentioned by Leech (2002) and Patton (2002), developing a protocol assures consistency in the research and helps the researcher with their rapport, trustworthiness, and credibility. As such, the protocol developed in this study served as the guide to provide consistency to the data being gathered across all the interviews. The questions and probes developed in the protocol will be unbiased, clearly worded, and checked by the dissertation committee, which will add to the credibility. Lastly, although member checking occurred, the researcher cannot trust what the participants have shared.
Researcher Positionality

There were several researcher biases to consider in this study. First, the researcher acknowledged the power imbalance that might exist with the participants as he is currently a counselor at Northern College. One of the measures that the researcher took included not sending messages to the sample population from his work email address. Rather, the researcher used their school email address when contacting students. In addition, the Latino male participants in this study did not have a history of meeting with the researcher for counseling prior to this study. During the interviews, the researcher did not disclose his association with the college as it is not relevant with the overall purpose of the study. Also, although the researcher never experienced the transfer process from a community college to a four-year university, he is a first-generation Latino male who might have encountered similar educational experiences at the four-year university. These preemptive measures were considered to ensure that the role of the researcher at Northern College and personal background did not compromise the data collection as well as the findings.

Limitations

This study had several limitations. The first limitation of the study was the small sample size of ten community college Latino male students who are in the process of transferring to a CSU. As such, the findings gathered from this study cannot be generalized on a state or national level because of the small number of participants in the study. Even though the discoveries from this study cannot be generalized, they can serve as a foundation for further examination on the experiences of Latino male students transferring to a CSU.

A second limitation to this study was the self-selection bias of participants being part of the study. The researcher generated an outreach email to promote the study to participants and
through a snowball effect, students selected to be part of this study. As Creswell (2014) suggests, a self-selection process in a study can adversely affect the internal legitimacy of the study. Although this study used a self-selection bias, the results of the study still represent a baseline for what Latino male students experience while transferring. In contrast to the self-selection bias of the sample, the researcher could have reached out to the Transfer Center Coordinator so they can randomly select participants for this study. This might have resulted in a more generalized study.

A third delimitation was the availability of resources. The data collection process occurred during a pandemic and prompted the researcher to conduct semi-structured interviews virtually. In-person interviews might have provided greater detail to enrich the data. In addition, in-person data collection would have allowed the researcher to distribute opened-ended surveys. This might have provided an even more in-depth data analysis.

Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed a general qualitative research design with a focus on critical research approach to investigate the experiences of Latino male community college students in their attempt to transfer to a four-year university. The researcher in this chapter provides a brief overview of the study, and it reiterates the purpose as well as the research questions. This chapter went into detail describing the researcher’s process in this study including: research design, methodology, site selection, population, data collection, data analysis, and trustworthiness as well as credibility. Finally, the chapter listed the researcher positionality and limitations of the study.
CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

Introduction

As discussed in the previous chapters, CCC serves the largest number of students in higher education in the nation; however, they are failing on the transfer rates of a specific student demographic, first-generation Latino males. This study has investigated how first-generation community college Latino male students navigate the transfer process to a CSU while being on the ADT pathway. The aim of this chapter is to answer the following three research questions through the voices of the students:

1.) What are the challenges, if any, perceived by first generation community college Latino males at a Northern California community college district, as they transfer to a California State University using the Associate Degree Transfer?

2.) What types of community college services or engagement opportunities, if any, do first generation Latino males believe had a positive influence on their ability to transfer to a four-year university?

3.) What are the services that first generation Latino male students identify as needing as they attempt to transfer to California State University?

This chapter begins by categorizing the research questions into the following three themes: challenges of transfer students, services the students have used to transfer, and additional services that students need for academic support such as creating a center for Latino students. Each theme from the questions are cataloged further into subthemes, like students having low GPA, undeclared on what major to select, and inconsistency with counseling.

Challenges That Transfer Students Face

The first research question that guided this study asks students, what their perceived challenges were, if any, as they transfer to a California State University system using the
Associate Degree Transfer? The following questions were asked to participants to help the researcher answer research question one:

- As a first-generation college student, can you please describe what have been some of the challenges that have kept you from transferring to a four-year university?

- Have you experienced any academic challenges while in your transfer process? (low GPA, not re-enrolling each semester, lack of mentorship, undecided on transfer major, not enough transfer credits, not connecting with faculty members)

- As a first-generation Latino male, what outside of the education environment, if any, has impacted your transfer to a four-year university? (Family responsibilities, one or more than one job, socioeconomic status, masculinity identity, first generation)

- Have you faced any challenges understanding the transfer process? If so, share some of your challenges.

These sets of questions allowed the participants and the researcher to have a discussion on the challenges they have faced that revolve around transferring to a four-year institution.

Based on the findings, two themes were extracted from the participants’ responses: academic challenges and environmental challenges. Table 4 shows both of the themes and their respective subthemes from the findings.

Table 4
Challenges that Transfer Student Face (Source: Author)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenges that Transfer Students Face</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theme #1: Academic Challenges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subtheme #1: Clear Transfer Roadmap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subtheme #2: Connecting with Campus Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subtheme #3: Inconsistency with Counseling</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Subtheme #4: Low Grade Point Average (GAP) | Subtheme #4: Masculinity Identity
---|---
Subtheme #5: Lack of Mentorship | Subtheme #5: Mental Health
Subtheme #6: Undeclared Major

**Theme #1: Academic Challenges**

Academic challenges are characteristics that students identify in relation to their educational environment. The challenges that students expressed were categorized in six subthemes. The six subthemes are the following: clearer transfer roadmap, connecting with campus community, Inconsistency with college counselors, Grade Point Average (GPA), lack of mentorship, and undeclared major. The next sections explain each one of the six subthemes from the voices of the students.

**Clear transfer roadmap.** A barrier for students not transferring to a four-year university is not realizing what courses count towards general education or transfer major. From the 10 student participants, six (Christian, Juan, Gustavo, Michael, Mauricio, and Miguel) identified that one of the challenges in their community college journey is not having a clear transfer roadmap of classes to take. Christian mentioned that when he started college, it was hard to identify what courses were needed to transfer. He stated that:

> When I first started college, it seemed like everybody was expecting for you to know how everything works and what I’m supposed to do in terms of what classes to take for transfer. But I kind of just don't really know anything and I still don't know much about the transfer process, just like you need to make sure that the classes you take are transferable, but did not know which ones they were.
Juan also experienced the challenge of having to retake courses because some of them were not transferable. He faced the challenge of playing catch up and enrolled in 18 units in order to transfer by next fall semester. Juan stated:

The challenge with it is thinking that some classes applied [for transfer], but having to retake other classes, because they were transferable. As a result, last semester I had to take 18 units, just to make sure that I got my last semester out the way. I had missed counting my units because I thought that all my courses transferred. Luckily, I went to a transfer workshop and I found out when the time was to apply for the CSU and I was able to get in those 18 units to fulfill the transfer unit requirement.

Similarly, the first college courses that Gustavo was taking in college were not helping him in his transfer process. He stated the following:

My first and second semester [in college] I pretty much took whatever my counselors gave me. Eventually, I found out that the classes I was taking were not helping me towards transfer. Later on, I talked to a friend of mine who was going to UC Davis at the time and he helped me figure out what classes to take to transfer and what courses do not transfer. No offense to counselors. I understand that there are a large number of students who go to the school and that there aren't that many counselors but it didn't help when I would go with a counselor to select classes.

Gustavo was not the only participant who had to reach out to a friend or sibling to support him in selecting his courses because of the challenge of not having a clear transfer pathway; Michael also reached out to a friend who already had a bachelor’s degree for assistance in enrolling in courses. A challenge that Michael faced was not knowing what courses to enroll each semester, which kept him from continuously enrolling at the college. He stated the following about the transfer roadmap.

I’ve delayed actions like re-enrolling or signing up for class because the roadmap is very unclear to me and it's something that up until this semester I haven't been able to do without the help of either a guidance counselor or my friend who actually has a bachelor's.

The transfer roadmap was also not clear for Mauricio who had to take additional courses because the transfer requirements changed. He stated the following:
When you're majoring in one thing, the requirements change, like the classes without you really noticing it. I remember, I was getting ready to transfer and then they added another couple classes, so now I have to take an aquatic fitness class for my major. All I have to take is that and maybe another anatomy and physiology class that I’m planning to take this summer, and I should be fine but that's definitely one you know they changed the required classes frequently and kind of unexpected.

Lastly, Miguel had a challenging time understanding the required classes needed to transfer. He noted that he might need more than one counseling appointment to fully map out his transfer courses since it was hard for him to understand the course articulation process. Miguel stated:

I think it is a challenge to understand what are the classes needed to transfer. When I tried to do it by myself it was very difficult to know what all those requirements were and I didn’t understand it completely. For example, what does the transfer process look like and when I would have everything completed so I can transfer. I’m still a little unsure as to what I need to transfer. I might need one or two appointments with a counselor or somebody who can help me. But I also need to probably go over more and more and more. I have already spent some time reading it and I try to not be discouraged because sometimes after so many years in college I feel like I am going to do it [transfer] and other times I feel that I’m not going to do it and feel defeated.

Miguel discusses that he is still unsure of what classes he has left before transferring. He will continue reaching out to support services and connecting with the campus to make sure that he transfers successfully to his destination four-year university.

**Connecting with the campus community.** Having students connect with the campus is crucial in their academic success. However, not every student establishes a relationship with their instructors or peers. This was the case for 5 out of the 10 Latino male students who participated in this study. Erick, Juan, Michael, Mauricio, and Miguel were the five participants who shared that it was challenging to establish a connection with the campus, particularly with faculty and students.

Erick mentioned that when he started going to college, it was hard connecting with others and that it would have helped him since he had no guidance back home. He stated:
Not connecting with students and people at the college has been tough. Like I mentioned before, I come from a background where I have no one to guide me through my college education. Essentially not having guidance from someone telling you how to do things. If I had known that building relationships with peers early in my education was going to be key in my educational success, I would have definitely done that sooner.

Like Erick, Juan also felt isolated while in college. Not only because he is Latino, but from having a Guatemalan descent. Juan said the following:

I was never really able to connect with professors or students around me because I just didn't feel like I belonged in the class or on-campus. I felt strange when I took classes and I looked around me and I did not really see people with similar backgrounds. Being Latino but especially being Guatemalan I feel like I’m very much alone when I look around.

Michael also felt distant from the college. He spoke about the cultural differences with his course instructor. These cultural differences disengaged Michael from further interaction with the instructor beyond the classroom. Michael stated:

In many of my classes, if not in all so far, I have definitely not connected with faculty members. I just chalk it up a little bit to cultural differences between me and them. It has not resulted in me receiving a bad grade. But my relationships and connectedness with them have been minimal if any at all and it does lower my motivation to continue going to classes.

Like Michael, Mauricio also did not connect all that well with faculty. Rather than talking about cultural differences, he mentioned that faculty were not supportive. Mauricio said the following about his experience with interacting with faculty:

While working with many of my professors, they didn't really have a lot of patience with me. I would begin and start off the conversation either after class or during office hours but once they noticed that I had a difficult time understanding some of the concepts, they would get really impatient and snappy.

Mauricio used the following example when he interacted with a faculty member in his course:

I already had to take the public speaking class a couple years ago and the first time I felt like I did pretty well. I wrote all my speeches and I delivered them the best that I could have, but one of the downsides was that I failed to kind of study for the quizzes and I just
didn't understand … I did my best for the speeches, but the guy [professor] didn't even give me a C or D he gave me a straight up F. After that class, I retook it with a different professor and I got an A. I just didn't know what it was about that instructor at [Northern College], but it is demoralizing dealing with instructors like that you know. I had communicated with him before I told him that I had anxiety and that I was doing my best, but they were still kind of harsh.

Mauricio also had a challenging time connecting with his classmates. He explained:

It was just hard finding classmates to study with and keep me motivated because at the end of class everyone just leaves and does their own thing. I thought it was going to be different, you know I thought it would be easier to find friends or at least study groups or people that I can study with, between or after classes. It’s just been harder than I thought.

Miguel, as his other peers, also reported having a negative experience with many of his instructors. Miguel identified his instructors as not being supportive nor sincere when he reaches out for help. This has caused a disconnect from course content and overall with his academics.

Miguel said the following:

Studying at the college has been very difficult because teachers are not very supportive and sometimes communication is very difficult with them. Reaching out to them via office hours or email is hard when they don’t respond and when they do, they either do not have the time or the patience to help you. I also experienced when I was working with my teachers that their service was not sincere. I have seen them provide the same service to others very differently than they did with me. This has caused me to rethink my schooling.

Miguel’s experience with campus faculty has not been all positive. He has gone through hurdles in connecting with his instructors. Similarly, other participants discussed some of these challenges, but with inconsistency with their counselors.

Inconsistency with college counselors. A huge transfer barrier that mostly all student participants mentioned throughout their interview was the inconsistency with counselors.

Participants in this study discussed that they seek counselors for class planning and ensuring that they are on the path towards transferring. Participants expressed the inconsistency with counselors by sharing that they never had one specific counselor. In the instances where they
had a different counselor, they shared different information about classes and transfer.

Moreover, participants mentioned that it was difficult for them to schedule an appointment. For some students, they had to wait two or sometimes three weeks to see a counselor. From the 10 student participants, 5 (Juan, Mauricio, Gustavo, Erick, and Miguel) expressed some of their experiences with inconsistency and clarity with counselors.

Juan stated the following about his interaction with college counselors:

When I entered community college I was lost. I never found a clear path. I didn't know what I wanted for myself, and it was also hard to discover the way to graduate. I was passed along between counselors telling me I should take these other classes for now and other ones would tell me to focus on these classes, ultimately, I was put on a [educational] plan that was just general education and I didn't understand why and understand any of it really And so, because of that lack of information and lack of disinterest and not knowing what the plan was for my future I started to focus more on working. That is one of the reasons why I have spent 7 years at community college.

Juan was passed along from counselor to counselor without much clarity about his educational plan, which led him to pause his education. Juan felt discouraged from his education and started to focus on working because he had not understood the educational plan that the counselor had planned. Juan encountered this experience in his education more than once, which led him to enroll as a part-time student and eventually spent 7 years before transferring.

Like Juan, Mauricio also met with different counselors. In his case, every time he met with a counselor, they would provide him with different advice which confused him because he did not know which one to follow. As a result, this experience made Mauricio feel uncertain about his transfer journey. Mauricio said the following:

It was kind of daunting trying to figure out what classes I need to take. This leads to me feeling a bit intimidating about the whole transfer process.

Mauricio added that he has not been the only student who has had negative experience about counseling, particularly at the college’s extension center. He mentioned that his peers
have experienced counselors who have “brushed” them off to get to their next student appointment. The quickness of the appointments with their counselor counselors have not settled well with Mauricio and his peers. He stated:

Other students that I’ve gone to school with here at [Northern College], say that to avoid going to counselors at the [college extension center] because they're more just meaner in general and harsher. In addition, they kind of just try to brush you off and get to the next student but I kind of agree with that. I’ve had more positive counseling experiences on the main campus than you know smaller extension sites.

Gustavo was another student who was unsure of why the counselor had selected specific classes on his educational plan. For the first couple of years, Gustavo enrolled in courses that were provided by his counselor but did not know if they were going to help him transfer. Gustavo connected with a close friend who had previously transferred. His friend provided clarity on the transferable courses that he should enroll in. Gustavo mentioned the following:

Essentially, my first and second semester, I pretty much took whatever my counselors gave me [educational plan]. I was left wondering if the classes I was taking were helping me towards transferring…. I understand that there is a large number of students who go to the school and that there aren't that many counselors but it didn't help when I would go with them.

Gustavo also mentioned that prior to attending Northern College, outreach advisors told him that he would have a dedicated counselor. However, throughout his two years at the college, he never had a consistent counselor. Like Mauricio and Juan, every time he met with a counselor, it was different information provided to him. Rather than going to counseling and getting his questions answered, Gustavo left the counseling sessions with more questions than answers. He stated the following about his college experience with inconsistent counseling:

When I graduated high school, I was told by the college that I would have a dedicated counselor. Throughout the two years, not once have I talked to the same counselor. I would talk to a different counselor every time I had a visit and each one gave me different advice. Also, instead of actually answering my questions, it led to me actually having more and it left me wondering if I was even taking the transfer classes at the time. So that was a big barrier to my transfer process.
When Erick began college, his major was business, however after taking several classes he decided that he wanted to change his major to computer science so he visited a counselor. Similar to Gustavo, he left the session not fully understanding the new educational plan that was created for him. There was no clarity with the information he received from the counselor. Erick stated the following about his experience with counseling:

When I first enrolled in college, I was majoring in business. Halfway through it, I had contact with them [counselors] and I told them that I was thinking of changing my major to computer science and they told me well if you're planning on doing that then you'd have to do a whole new ed plan. The ed plan they created for me was confusing and did not understand why I was going to enroll in those classes. They did not explain it to me well. I kind of just dropped what they had planned for me, and started to enroll in computer science classes.

Erick also shared the inconsistency of information that counselors provided him. When he started going to college, a counselor advised him that he did not have to take a foreign language because he had satisfied the requirements in high school. However, he recently met with another counselor who questioned why he had not yet taken a class in the area. Erick is now enrolled in a foreign language to stratify one of his transfer requirements. We would have already taken the course if he would have known sooner. Erick states the following about this counseling experience:

What made me mad was when I first started at the college, a counselor told me that I did not have to take a foreign language since I took it in high school. However, this past semester. I was talking to a counselor and they asked why I haven't taken any classes in that area yet. So now, I am taking beginning Spanish just in order to transfer. If I would have known that I had to take this class from the beginning, I wouldn't be taking that class right now.

Lastly, Miguel also spoke to the inconsistency, clarity, and access with college counselors. He was passed on from counselor to counselor and they would not provide him with a clear answer on what courses could be validated at Northern College from the ones he took in
Mexico. He eventually came across a counselor that did answer many of his questions, but accessing that specific counselor became challenging. Miguel’s experience is shared below.

It became challenging visiting counselors because many of them gave me different responses. For example, I wanted to know if my classes from the university in Mexico City would be validated. One counselor had said yes and that it would count towards [CSU, Jackson], but another said that it was not valid. This becomes very confusing for me. The transfer path is not clear. When I graduated in Mexico City, there was a fixed set of courses that you would have to take, but over here it’s just a challenge. I did come across a good counselor, actually the best counselor I’ve had. She provided me with a clearer transfer path and articulation of credit from Mexico City, but then to get an appointment is so difficult. I tried to get a counseling appointment and there isn’t one, not online, not in person. Very difficult to get a counseling appointment.

Miguel adds on to the interview by stating that there would be many success stories if there were counselors who followed a caseload of students until graduation. However, it is imperative that counselors provide students with the best counseling services. Miguel states the following:

It would be nice if you had a counselor that would follow students until graduation. Having a team of counselors that support students, like me, you know that they need that kind of support and regularly check-in where they create a path and tell students, this is what you need to get to your goal, these are the classes that you need. But I think that counselors that truly would support you with sincerity and provide you with attention. I think that would be a success story for many students.

As discussed my Miguel, having a counselor that is dedicated to specific students until they reach graduation would be a great strategy for the academic success of students. This may also help with the low GPA’s of Latino students, which is mentioned in the next section.

**Low Grade Point Average (GPA).** The findings from this study indicated that a low GPA was a hinder for many Latino male students throughout their transfer journey at the community college. Christian, Gustavo, Juan, and Marcos reported that at one point in their college voyage they had a low GPA. The low GPA from these students did not signify a lack of academic preparation, but rather due to other circumstances outside of their school environment.
For example, Christian expresses that since he started attending college, he has had a low GPA because of transportation issues and mental health. Christian did not have a vehicle or access to public transportation to get to and from college. He mentioned that there have been many issues occurring within his family that worries and stresses him. As a result, he did not start college as he would have wanted. He said the following:

I’ve been having a low GPA ever since I really got into college. I feel like this attribute to my lack of transportation and mental health. I do not drive or own a car. Living in Galt does not help my situation. Also, at home my family obviously isn't perfect and lately there's been a ton of issues happening. I just hear all of that and sometimes I need to step in to calm things down. Worrying about some of my family members has been impacting my health and overall my education.

Gustavo also had many challenges at the start of college. His personal challenges at home took a toll on his GPA. He mentioned that if he could do it again, he could have taken a break before enrolling in college after school, so he could have focused on his personal issues at home. Now that he has resolved some of those issues, Gustavo is doing better academically. Gustavo shared with me the following:

I’ve had a rough couple of semesters when I started college. Like I stated earlier, I was going through some challenging times and I thought I could have managed school, as well as trying to ignore my issues at the time, but it ended up backfiring and I ended up doing pretty bad. For those semesters and I am just looking back now I should have just taken them off, cleared my head, done something else, and then gone back to school with a stronger mind. I was at a point where I had a low GPA, but again, that was more just on things I had going on in my life at the time. I now picked it back up and my academics are doing much better.

Like Gustavo and Christian, Juan also did not do academically well when he initiated college, and fell into academic dismissal. Juan shared that he faced many personal challenges that eventually led to academic dismissal from the college. He mentioned that when he was enrolled in college, he was also working many hours to provide for himself. He grew up in a
low-income household, which required him to work after completing high school. That resulted in prioritizing work over school. Juan said the following:

Coming from a Latino household I had to work for myself because my parents weren’t able to provide for me. We were a low-income family. So, I began working long hours while enrolled in school. I eventually fell into academic dismissal and then I had to build my way up there, and you know now I’m at the point where I can receive my associate’s degree in sociology and transfer.

Marcos was the fourth participant that expressed that his GPA might not be high enough for major admission to CSU, Jackson. He shared that ever since he started attending college, he has always worked to support himself or his partner that he lived with at that time. At one point his workload did take over his academics and as a result, his GPA did go down. His current GPA is two points above the current program admission GPA. Marcos shared the following:

Another challenge would be my GPA. Working has kept me from doing better academically. [CSU, Jackson] psychology’s program is impacted and their major admission GPA is usually a 3.0. Right now, my GPA is two points above the general GPA and I am worried that I might not be admitted.

Marcos fears that he may not be eligible for his desired four-year university because of his major being impacted. These low GPA’s in Latino males may be contributed to the lack of mentorships that they received throughout their education. The next section discusses the lack of mentorship subtheme.

**Lack of mentorship.** Lack of mentorship was reported by several participants in relation to their educational surroundings. This subtheme was identified as a challenge because students indicated they struggled searching for a mentor on campus. For some students, it was challenging connecting with campus staff and faculty because of the low number of male figures in higher education. As such, Latino students in the study identify more with other Latino male instructors. For example, Javier discussed that one of the challenging things about going to
college is not being able to find a Latino male mentor that can guide him through his education.

Javier said:

I would say there was a lack of mentorship. I'm not gonna lie on there's not that many Latino males within the education field. I didn't know or have anybody to look up to. I could not find people that looked like me or that came from similar backgrounds like me and could connect with. So, it's just been hard for me to connect with others that I don’t build relationships with.

Miguel also shared a similar experience when seeking mentorship at Northern College. Miguel felt isolated many times during college because it was hard for him to connect with staff or faculty that did not share commonalities. Miguel explained:

I have definitely felt pretty much alone while attending college. Not many of my faculty members are Latino so it’s been hard finding a mentor that can help and support me. It seems like it’s hard for others to understand my experiences and where I come from.

Gustavo also shared commonalities with his peers by stating:

The lack of mentorships is a challenge for me because I have found it hard to find a person at the college in which I can have a well-established relationship with. For example, it would be nice if there were more Latino male instructors. I would actually find school a bit more interesting, knowing that I can relate with someone who is teaching.

**Undeclared major.** The subtheme of undeclared on major was discussed by many participants. Students in the study began their college journey not knowing what they wanted to major in. However, they knew that college was the best option after high school, rather than the labor force. The participants in this subtheme had minimal to no guidance when they embarked on their college journey. More than half of Latino males in this study indicated that it took them a while to determine which major they wanted to select because of the very few opportunities of career development.

Armando is one of the participants who shared that it was challenging not knowing which major to select. Armando was unsure between selecting chemistry or geology as a major. He
would have liked to major in chemistry, however the workload demand for those classes along
with other responsibilities made it challenging to declare chemistry as a major. He shared the
following about his process of selecting his major:

   Earlier in my college career I was in between switching majors from chemistry to
geology and it was hard to decide which one to select because I knew I wanted to do
chemistry, but it was really hard for me. I decided to select geology as my major and that
was a big step because it changed all my courses for the rest of my semesters. I had to go
to a counselor to seek guidance for my change of major.

   After being enrolled at Northern College for three years, Gustavo is questioning if graphic
design is the major he wants to continue to study. He enjoys drawing and taking pictures, but
Gustavo does not know if it is something that he wants to do as a career. He shared with me the
following:

   Graphic design is my current major, but I'm also unsure about it. I love drawing and
taking pictures but at the moment I am sort of undecided on it. I've been thinking a lot
about it lately, and I just don't know if graphic design is what I want to do for the rest of
my life. Questioning my major is just now starting to hit me and I don't know why.

   Michael also experienced uncertainty in selecting a major. When he started going to
college, Michael chose theater as major because he wanted to be in the field of production.
However, his personal obligations of providing for himself resulted in dropping from college.
He started working full-time in sales. Michael enjoyed his job in sales, which led him to re-
enroll in college and major in business. Michael is now expecting to transfer and eventually
receive a bachelor's degree in marketing. He shared the following about his college, work
experience, and the process of selecting his major:

   I wanted to be in some sort of production field, which is why I was originally a theater
major. Due to personal circumstances, I stopped going to school and began working
full-time in sales. I was a salesperson for multiple companies and my latest full-time job I
consider actually part of my career was I was a sales and marketing for an extraction
firm. After deciding that I really liked sales, I wanted to learn more about the world of
marketing and potentially work in marketing. This prompted me to return back to school
and I switched major to business, specifically to pursue a bachelor’s degree in marketing. I also felt more motivated about attending classes.

Javier was another participant that experienced the challenge of not knowing what major to select and as a result he will not transfer within a two-year time frame.

I started off actually I didn't really know what I wanted to major in. It was probably like one of my hardest times as a student. It's like signing on to what you want to do for the rest of your life. I was thinking of doing communications, or majoring in English. After talking with several people, I figured out that maybe I want to do something within the field of education or working in the community, so I selected the major of social sciences. Selecting a major did take me some time and because of that, I will not be transferring in two years from [Northern College].

Christian selected music as his transfer major, but he still has doubts if it is something that he wants to do for the rest of his life. Christian shared that he was not sure of the next steps needed to transfer as a music major and that he was also unaware of other potential majors he could select. Christian mentioned the following about his experience about declaring a major:

Not knowing what to major in has always been an issue of mine. I like theater arts, like music, but I am still not sure if this is a career that I want to do for the rest of my life. I am also not sure on the steps needed to complete this major to transfer, but I also do not know what else can be out there for me to major in.

Lastly, when Erick started attending college like the rest of his peers in this study, he did not know what major to select. Erick shared that he loaded his class schedule with computer science courses during one of his semesters in college. He shared his experience below:

One of the challenges that I had going straight into college was that I was not really prepared, I didn't really have the guidance to know what classes to take. One of the semesters I kind of just went straight into what major I thought I wanted to do, and so, instead of piling on like gen ed courses. I piled on a bunch of computer science courses, which at that time is what I wanted to do. However, halfway through the semester, I realized this isn't for me and it was way too hard. I ended up dropping all my courses halfway through the semester. I took off the rest of the semester to figure out what I wanted to do. I had to go through a process of actually figuring out how to take the proper classes, without wasting so much time. I took a mixture of great classes that count towards general education and transfer. I took a business class, a political science class,
and I think an English class and then I just narrowed it down from those three classes by selecting which one interests me the most.

Erick shared that halfway in the semester, he dropped all his classes because of the course workload demand. After acknowledging that computer science was not his major, he started taking classes from two majors of interests (political science and business) and alongside general education courses. The next theme discussed the environmental challenges that students reported.

**Theme #2: Environmental Challenges**

The rest of the challenges that students indicated in this study were assembled as environmental challenges. The five subthemes that were identified as part of environmental challenges are the following: family responsibility, financial hardships, first generation college students, masculinity identity, and mental health. The next sections describe what participants said about each one of the subthemes.

**Family Responsibility.** For many Latino male students in the study, they experienced the challenge of having family responsibilities on top of their education and work. This subtheme emerged from a variety of discussions that the participants had about their family responsibility. Michael, Miguel, Marcos, Gustavo and Javier spoke to the challenging aspects of carrying family responsibility and its effects on their education.

Michael shared that while living with his significant other, he had to take time off from school so that he could provide for both of them. His partner was also attending college, but because he was the main breadwinner in the household, he began working full time. Michael returned to school during the pandemic, after being out for several years. Michael shared with me the following:
I moved in with a girlfriend at the time and then took a year or two off from school to provide for us since they were also going to school. Being the main money provider, I had to step in and work more and disregard school. During COVID I decided that although I was working, I had time to go back to college and take classes online. I slowly began to transition to college full-time. This brought me to [Northern College].

Michael was not the only one who had to pause his education to support his significant other. Miguel also shared that his wife and him were both studying concurrently, but at one point, he had to stop and work fulltime to financially support his wife. Miguel mentioned the following:

While being married I told my wife, you know I can support you financially so you can finish your degree. I then stopped attending college and turned my focus to only working. She selected a very expensive medical program that required us to pay.

Marcos shared a slightly different family responsibility in comparison to Michael and Miguel. Although Marcos works to financially support his family, he believes that his main familial responsibility is to communicate with his family and assure that they are doing well. Since his older brother is incarcerated, Marcos feels like he is the person that his family leans on. Marcos said:

I check in with my family as much as I can. I feel like I am the face of my family. They reach out to me just about anything such as translating or helping my younger sister trying to get into college. I am the big brother in the family since my older brother is in jail. It has always been challenging juggling family obligations with my school. There are many issues that happen at home that need my attention.

Gustavo, who was raised by a single mother and is the oldest in the family, shared a similar experience like Marcos. Throughout his life, he has encountered many familial responsibilities. For one, he had to care for his younger brother. He shared that one of the messages that he received from his mom really shocked him. She mentioned to Jorge that if something were to happen to her, such as getting deported, he would have to essentially be responsible for his younger brother. Gustavo shared with me the following:
Growing up my brother and I had very rough childhoods. We were consistently in and out of school mostly going to court [for personal issues]. It hit me when my mother told me that, if anything were to happen to her for example being deported, that I would essentially have to protect my little brother. All my life I have done all I can do to serve and protect him. This has definitely put a lot of stress on me.

Javier, who is one of the oldest in his family, also like Gustavo faces the challenge of having to care for his younger siblings. Javier mentioned that taking care of his siblings is a huge responsibility that was put on by his parents. In addition, he also works and attends college. Javier share the following during our interview:

Like I mentioned, I have a big family that has younger siblings that to look after and you know help with. I’m basically like the babysitter in my family. I have to take care of them so that's one big responsibility I have on my shoulders. I’m the middle child so you know I’m the one that's taking care of them.

For many of these participants who carry family responsibility also have to endure financial hardships, which is discussed in the next section.

**Financial hardships.** Financial hardships stood out as one of the top subthemes from this study. All ten Latino male students indicated that they have endured financial hardships at one point in their college education and their need for work. From the ten, nine students reported that their finances had a direct negative effect in their education. All nine participants worked either in a part-time or full-time job to self-support themselves or their families.

Miguel is a great example of a student who faces financial hardships. He had to put his education on pause because he needed to help support his family. Miguel shared that while being enrolled at Northern College, he stopped taking classes because he was the only source of income they had. His children were not able to work and his wife was also enrolled in college pursuing a physician degree. Miguel explained:

While attending college I had many financial challenges. I had to stop going to school because I was the sole provider for my family. My wife was not working because she was trying to get into the physician program, so all her work and effort went into the
preparation. While my children were too young to work, I had to be the one to step up and provide for my family. So, it did hold me back a couple of years.

One of Michael’s biggest challenges in his education had to do with his socioeconomic status. Michael and his family were considered low income and although part of his education was paid for, he still did not have sufficient funds to pay for other necessities. For example, he did not have the means to purchase a vehicle, so he used public transportation to get to and from school. This was challenging because at times he would miss the bus and would not attend class that day. Michael mentioned the following about his experience with public transportation:

Basically, all of my resources for school have been paid for by me so for the longest time I had no car. I was relying on the bus system to get to school. When I would miss the bus, I was out that entire day of school or maybe not the entire day but that class for that time until I could catch another bus. There would be other times, where maybe I was too sick to go and actually attend classes and I also had no way of meeting the teacher at the end of the day for notes or anything. I’ve had to pay for my own computer access and basically anytime I didn't have money for something that I really, really needed, I wouldn’t turn to anyone since I had no support which as a result slowed my progress in my education.

Michael also added he has to work for long hours a day to support himself. He stated the following:

…And that's usually how it's been. It's either a lack of transportation due to a lack of funds for my early college life and for my later college life I need to work long hours due to my lack of funds. I’m working sometimes 10 hours a day, because I can't find a job in my field down in southern California. I'm relegated to give work more of my time since the money is a little sparse. I spend maybe 50 something hours a week and 10 hours just crunching trying to get at least B plus work and it's really tough.

Carter also shared similar financial hardships like Michael. He also did not have transportation to attend classes in-person. Since he does not have a form of transportation to college, he has not yet taken any major preparatory for transfer courses. Once he noticed that his major courses were in-person, he decided to drop them. Lack of transportation has been a challenge for Carter. He shared with me the following:
One of the biggest barriers is not having transportation to the college. I haven't really found a secure way to get to and from the college since I live in a farming town outside of the city. I haven't been able to work on my classes for my major and for the degree for transfer. This semester when I was enrolling in classes, I was going to take two that go towards my major and I found out that they were only in person. I ended up not taking them because I didn't have a way to get to college.

He also mentioned that he did not have the necessary income to move out from his home, which he wanted to since it was an issue living in a toxic home environment that distracted him from his education. Carter stated the following:

I want to get a job to have enough money to move out and be on my own. I feel like I would be doing much better academically if I wasn't in such a toxic environment. Like I do have worries for my family and what not, but I have been having these worries my whole life and I feel like they just hold me back from my education.

Unlike Carter and Michael, Juan did have his own form of transportation, but he did not have the funds to purchase textbooks or parking passes for school. At times, Juan would not purchase a parking pass and hoped that the school security would not give him a parking ticket. Juan did not want to reach out to his family because he knew that they had a cost of their own. Juan explained:

Is a challenge not having enough money to buy the textbooks I need or struggling to come up with buying the parking permits for school. I remember there'd be semesters that I would wing it and not buy a parking pass and just hope that security would not give me a ticket. I can't go to my parents, because they don't understand that, and they also have their own bills that they have to pay for like the house, food and stuff like that.

Juan also shared that having employment outside of campus affected his academics and therefore, he decided to be involved on-campus and obtain employment. Juan said:

Having a job really affected me in the beginning of college. At first, I wasn't able to balance work life in school, that's why I went into academic disqualification. So that's why I really aimed to work at the college because I heard that a lot of students are successful when they do that [work on-campus]. That's one of the main reasons I try to involve myself with the school, so that I can make schooling easier for me and I wouldn't have to choose between each world.
Erick’s academics suffered from working nine-hour shifts at a restaurant. He mentioned that at times he would work from 4 in the afternoon until 1 in the morning. Erick did not have enough time to allocate for school and that resulted in him not passing a couple of classes. He shared the following:

When I first got into college, I was working at a restaurant. I was working from 4 in the afternoon, sometimes until 1 in the morning, like nine-hour shifts. Having to come home and do homework was not feasible because I was too tired. I would wake up the next day, attend class and head to work. I was not doing much homework and I ended up failing two classes that I ended up having to retake. Having to balance work with school and life is a challenge especially for students like me who have financial hardships and need to work.

Erick was not the only participant who shared that they worked long hours; Mauricio also shared that on many occasions he worked 50-60 hours a week to financially support himself and his family. This financial hardship made him enroll as a part-time student at Northern College. He explained his difficult situation by sharing the following:

I’ve always been working since high school to support me and my family. I worked at my high school, donation center, and at goodwill before it closed. I worked about 30 hours, but in some jobs, I worked between 50-60 hours a week, so I wouldn’t study as much as I wanted to so I had to decrease my enrollment status at the college from full-time to part-time. Working has held me back in my education. I am taking longer to graduate and transfer.

Mauricio also shared that his father is willing to support him financially, but his mother is the one who pushes him to work. He explained:

Probably like the work aspect of it, I know my dad always says, “you know you need to focus on school and we can help you with the financial part of it”, but I feel like my mom does not feel the same way. She was the one who has always encouraged me to start working and she was the one who decided that I should move out from living with them. She also always said that if you want something that I need to earn it myself, and I agree so that's why I started working but it's hard, obviously, to work while you're taking classes as a student in college and it can certainly get in the way. It's harder to study and get my assignments done in time when having to work.
Similarly, Marcos shared that he has two jobs and most likely he will continue having both jobs once he transfers to CSU, Jackson since money is a necessity at the moment. Marcos stated:

I currently work two jobs and once I transfer and finish off at [Northern College] I am going to have to continue having two jobs. While being at [Northern College] for the past years, I’ve had more than one job. It has not been easy since my studies in psychology require a lot of time. But like I said, money is sort of a big issue at the moment.

Marcos expressed that needs both jobs because of the need for money and to save for his education. He plans to continue working after transferring to a CSU because he does not want to take out loans while being an undergrad. His educational goal is to get a masters in psychology, which by then he might need to take out student loans. He added the following:

The money is really the challenge at the moment. I know I’m going to have to open up student loans, but I’m trying my hardest not to open a huge amount of loans for an undergrad degree, because eventually, I want to get my masters as well. So that's really one of the biggest barriers at the moment for me transferring to a four year.

Before Javier started attending college he worked as a painter to save for his college education. Javier mentioned that the monetary compensation from working as a painter was great. However, once he started school, he resigned from his job. He no longer has the source of income as he had before, since now he has a part-time job on-campus. This has led him to question if he made the correct choice of selecting college over his painter occupation. Javier said:

Before I started college, I was working as a painter or commoner with my father in law and with my brother in law. I felt like I was making a good amount of money, but as soon as I started college, I stopped working in that job. I noticed the lack of money coming in from my side since I only work a part-time job on-campus, and that has made me question if it is even worth it going to school and not making the money that I want so I can provide for my family and for myself. That has definitely impacted me.
Not only did participants in this study were faced with financial challenges, but they were also first-generation college students. Meaning that neither of their parents hold a baccalaureate degree. The subtheme of first-generation college student is discussed in the next section.

**First-generation college student.** Although all Latino male students in this study self-identified as being first generation college students, six in particular reported the challenges they faced for being the first ones in their family to attend college. The students expressed that it was challenging not being able to turn to their parents and asking them for college guidance. Rather, for some students, their parents did not understand the process of going to college and being on the computer most of the day.

Armando discussed that his aunt and uncle did not comprehend the amount of time he needed to be on his computer, particularly because all his courses were online. He shared with me the following:

I see the main problem is that my aunt and uncle don't really understand how college works, because sometimes they'd get me in trouble for being on my computer all day, but it would be because I’m doing homework or watching lectures.

Michael’s story also resembles Armando’s to the extent in which Michael could not turn to his family and ask them for college guidance since none of them had ever gone to college. In his case, he turned to a friend, who had already gone through college, for help. Michael said:

The lack of experience with college in my family has left me without anyone to turn to and ask for help. I have a friend, who has his bachelor's and he's being extremely helpful in keeping me on the right track as I continue my college career.

Alan also did not have family to turn to for college guidance. His parents never attended college and although his sibling started going to college first than him, they had a different college path. As such, Alan explained the challenges he faced as a first-generation college student. He mentioned the following:
As a first-generation college student, I was not guided by parents. My siblings and I had to figure it out on our own. Although they were older and started off going to college first than me, they had a different college path than I did, so they didn't really tell me how to do things either. When I first started going to college, there was minimal information that was visible to students. You really did have to search for it on your own. There wasn't a clear step one, step two, or a step three transfer plan to the four-year university. So, I didn't understand how to process that and by the time I got the general education sheets, I didn't know how to translate it.

Erick mentioned that his biggest challenge has been navigating college, since he cannot turn to family for guidance. Being the oldest child, Erick could not turn to his sibling for college advice. He had to do everything on his own. Erick explained:

Biggest challenge has been being a first-generation college student because I did not get guidance from my family, since my parents didn't go to college. Then getting help and the right guidance on how to navigate college becomes very difficult. For others, they may have parents or siblings that went to college and can obviously guide them on how to navigate college, but for me, not having a person in my family to reach out to for assistance is definitely challenging.

Erick also added that his cultural ties had a direct influence on his generational status. His parents were not college educated and as a result they always worked long hours. He mentioned that the Latino culture has a trend of always working and he remembers that as a child, he had to figure many things on his own and it feels the same as attending college. Erick said:

I think one of the disadvantages that we have coming from a Latino household is that our parents are always so busy working or attending other things, so we kind of grow up as lone wolves. So that independence carries you through college and when it comes to you needing help that childhood experiences comes back and it's like “well I don't really need help, I’d just do it on my own”, and so you never reach out for help from either the counselors, peers or teachers. The benefit that you're going to end up winning on your own can sometimes be harmful.

Javier stepped into college with help or guidance from family. Javier had to navigate the college system on his own. He shared his experience below.

As a first-generation college student, I had to learn everything there is to know about college and transfer. My parents can only support me by saying that I should go to
college, but they do not understand how challenging it can get, especially. But my parents do not have the knowledge or like the research in helping me out with that and so it's fully up to me to navigate the college system.

When Gustavo started attending college, he was not aware of all the resources that were available to him. Until later on in his college journey he discovered programs that support first-generation college students. Gustavo would have liked to have been enrolled in programs to support him when he started college, but since he was the first one in his family to attend college, he was the first to break through a college going culture in his family.

When I graduated high school and started attending college I wasn't aware of all the programs that were essentially available to first year Latino students. Up until my second year, I was told about all these programs and the services they provide such as extra money and support helping you pay for books. I wish I would have known about these programs earlier so I could have used them more.

Gustavo also reported that as a first-generation college student, he feels pressure from his family and relatives to do well and set an example of those family members that are going to attend college after him. He explained his story below:

Being first generation stands out the most because growing up, I am the one who stuck around since my other two cousins moved away from home. That made me the oldest in the family. I had uncles and aunts who started having kids and then essentially, I became a pedestal and the pressure started getting up there. I was always told by my aunt's, my uncle's and other family members “you have to go to college, you have to go to college”. At a time, their reasons would vary. Sometimes I was told that I had to go to college to have a better future. I was told I had to go to college, because if I didn't then my cousins would basically start asking questions and if I didn’t go to college, they wouldn’t either. My family looked at me more as someone who needed to set an example for everybody else. To this day, that pressure still hasn't gone away, and I feel the need to consistently be doing either perfect or I’m basically failing. It's kind of why it's really awkward to go to family gatherings.

Not only did the participants feel the pressure of being the first ones in their families to pursue a higher education, but they also encountered the challenges that their masculinity identity brought to their education. Masculinity identity is mentioned in the next section.
Masculinity identity. The subtheme of masculinity identity was one that was brought up by half of the participants. Students like Gustavo, Erick, Javier, Armando and Juan reported that their masculinity identity has impacted their education. Many participants were treated as grown men before reaching adulthood and these were not able to show their vulnerability. These and more situations were described by participants.

Gustavo explained that he was the only child in the family and became the “test subject” of his uncles. From an early age, his uncle taught him that he was not supposed to cry and work in hard labor jobs. He mentioned that those were the characteristics of a Latino man. Gustavo shared the following:

I guess I was a test subject because they [uncles] didn't have kids at the time, so they didn't exactly know how to talk to one. Well, they didn't know how to talk to me at my age, they honestly didn't treat me like a kid, they treated me more like a man by the age of just 12 years old. At that age, when I would work with them in their hard jobs, I should stop crying. I remember working with one of my uncles in Fresno gathering oranges and lemons. We would box and sell them in the street or local markets. I’ve also done demolition construction, worked at the flea market, and I did just about any type of job that they had for me.

Erick discussed that his masculinity identity has to do with issues that he has with his dad. For example, his dad believes that Latino men like himself should be working 50-60 a week, while Erick, his son, only worked 24 hours a week. Erick explained:

Growing up, I was raised in a Latino toxic household. I am currently working on some issues with my dad right now, but one of the biggest issues that I had growing up was my job. So, he grew up in that grind culture where you need to go go go, working 50-60 hours a week and you got to work for what you want. However, I am super laid back. I work 24 hours a week and to him, he sees me as Latino male who does not work hard enough, that I’m kind of lazy. I work from home and he always sees me on the computer, but what he does not know is that I am working and also doing homework, is part of my workload.

Javier also had a similar experience to Erick. He shared that his family, especially his father, believes that he does not work hard enough in school. Javier thinks it has to do with his
major selection in the social sciences. Majors in science, math or engineering is where many of the men are and his father has questioned his major multiple times. Javier shared the following:

There's this stereotype, at least from my dad, that male students in the community need to put in the work and most of the time are in the field of STEM. However, I did not choose a major in STEM, I chose a path in the education field and my dad questions it.

Armando expressed that because of his masculinity identity, it is challenging for him to be vulnerable and ask for help. He mentioned that he feels emasculated having to seek help. In addition, he also said that his aunt and uncle do not understand his busy schedule with school and that they expect him to do labor such as gardening at their house. Armando shared with me the following:

I feel like as a man it's really hard for you to reach out and be vulnerable. For example, asking for help in a subject or feeling that I am not receiving enough attention in the class, I feel like that's a demasculinity. Also, my aunt and uncle understanding, that it takes a lot of work going to school, and most of the time, not being able to go help around the house like pulling all the weeds. Is fine some days, but others I can’t because school schedule does not allow it. I feel like they don't really understand that, especially my uncle because he was raised in a home that he had to always do stuff around the house and I understand why he expects me to do that, but times are changing and he didn't go to college.

Armando also indicated feeling a sense of fear because he sees the statistics of community college males and notices that they are falling behind compared to women. Armando states that he does not want to become another male that did not make it through the college system. Having the statistics as a pressure and adding issues happening at home adds to his challenges of navigating higher education. Armando explained:

I don't really like reaching out and asking for help and that's just me. My sisters always encouraged me to do that, but I feel like it's kind of harder for me, because I don't want to sound weird, but it's like for men going through the college system it's very harder like seeing all these statistics that women are more likely to graduate from college than men it’s kind of scares me. It makes it really difficult for me to be in the right headspace when I have so much going on in the house and then I have to deal with all of my college work.
Lastly, Juan discussed that it was challenging for him to ask for help. Juan said:

There is like no Latino male instructor to connect to and this makes college a very isolated place. As a Latino male, it is also really hard to go out of my way and ask for help. Growing up, it was never rooted in me to ask for help. I always did things on my own.

A similar subtheme to masculinity identity is mental health. Participants navigating multiple identities and responsibilities can lead to an unstable mental health. This subtheme is shared in the next section.

**Mental health.** The subtheme of mental health was not reported consistently through the participants. However, it is brought up as a subtheme in the findings because of the importance and relevance in today’s society. Latino males who expressed mental health as a challenge related it to all the things they have to manage.

For example, Miguel indicated that he went through a mental health breakdown while attending college. Miguel was in a car accident that left him out of work and school for a long time. This experience harmed his personality as well as financially since he was the sole provider for his family and educationally, he stopped attending school. Miguel shared the following:

I had a lot of stress and mental health issues earlier in my education when I started going to college. I was run over by a car and my cognitive skills went down. I also had to stop attending school and working as I recovered. This recovery took a couple of years and during that time, I went through a lot of mental health issues.

Christian is another participant who shared that outside of his education, mental health has been a challenge for him. Although Christian did not go into detail about his mental health issues, he shared that he has been struggling with it for a while. He shared the following:

The main thing that has been bothering me outside of the education environment has just been my mental health. I’ve been struggling with that for a while and college hasn't really been helping with that. I am a little bit better now with that, but at the beginning of my college career, it was very challenging. My college does thankfully have resources for me to reach out to, but is hard to as a man. The stress of completing all of my
assignments has just been affecting my mental health along with tons of personal issues with my family.

Armando also reported the challenges he faced with mental health by stating the following:

I have so much going on with my life that I’ve had mental health breakdowns. Dealing with school and all its assignments, work, and family issues has really affected me mentally. I have not yet reached out to seek professional help because I just don’t know where to find it. I just continue to fight these issues by continuing to move forward.

The next section dives into the findings from research question two, which highlights the theme of services and engagement opportunities that participants utilize.

**Services and Engagement Opportunities that Influence Transfer**

The second research question was the following: what types of community college services or engagement opportunities, if any, do first generation Latino males believe had a positive influence on their ability to transfer to a four-year university? This research question sought to discover the types of services, in this case it was labeled as transfer engagement opportunities, that Latino male students utilize and have had a positive impact in their transfer journey. The following questions were asked to participants to help the researcher answer research question two:

- Besides attending classes, what other transfer related engagement opportunities have you participated in?
- Have you participated in support services such as EOPs, DSPS, Transfer Center, counseling, tutoring, and veterans resource center? If yes, to what degree have these influenced your transfer process?
- Have you participated in any transfer related events? If so, share those events and your experience? If not, why haven’t you attended any transfer events?
- Does your school offer and have you participated in a male initiative program? If yes, tell me about your experience? If not, what recommendations would you have if your college wanted to build one?
• How did you learn about the ADT pathway? What drew your attention about this pathway?

The probing questions allowed for the researcher to gather information on what transfer services students have used outside of their classroom environment, student participation in student support programs who help student completion, transfer activities attendance, and if they had any recommendations for male initiative programs if Northern College did not have one. male initiative at their campus. A total of five themes were obtained from this research question, but only four help answer research question number two. The four themes are outlined in table 5.

Table 5
Engagement Opportunities and Services that Influence Transfer (Source: Author)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Engagement and Services that Influence Transfer</th>
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<tr>
<td>Theme #1: Associate Degree for Transfer (ADT)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Theme #2: Counseling</td>
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<td>Theme #3: Equity Support Programs</td>
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<td>Theme #4 Transfer Engagement</td>
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Theme #1 Associate Degree for Transfer (ADT)

To begin this section of questions, the researcher wanted to identify where participants had learned about the ADT. From the nine that reported on this theme, four said that a family
member, close friend, campus event, or counselor were the ones that shared with them about the ADT. To the extent possible, the researcher wanted to identify to what extent the ADT program facilitated the transfer process.

Marcos first heard about the ADT pathway in his first meeting with a counselor. He was unsure about what he wanted to major in and decided to select psychology. His counselor placed Marcos on the ADT plan and ever since then, he has enjoyed taking the courses. Marcos said:

I learned about the ADT through my first counseling appointment. I was still unsure on what major to select, the counselor told me that I had to pick a major, so I selected psychology, which was something that I enjoyed taking. Once I picked psychology as my major, I also told the counselor that I wanted to transfer, so the counselor put me on the ADT roadmap to transfer.

Juan also did not know about the ADT pathway until he came across a counselor. The counselor explained to him the ADT and how you can transfer after completing the transfer requirements. Marcos shared the following:

I had no idea about receiving an associate’s degree and transferring. I knew that you can just get credits and then you can transfer, but a counselor explained to me this pathway of transferring. If you select a major that falls under the ADT pathway, it allows you to complete an associate’s degree before transferring and you are accepted to any CSU that you apply to, so yeah, I look at his guidance on that.

A counselor was the person who also told Javier about the ADT pathway. Initially, Javier only knew about transfer, but not about obtaining a degree before transfer. Now that Javier understands it, he plans on receiving an ADT and transferring to a CSU. He shared his story about the ADT below.

I learned about the ADT through my counselor. She told me about it when I first started at [Northern College]. I thought you could just transfer, but I didn't know that you could earn a transfer degree for four year. My counselor, who does Puente set up my educational plan to receive an associate degree a while also transferring to a CSU
Michael found out about this transfer pathway when he enrolled in college. He mentioned that the ADT sounded like a great offer since he would receive an associate’s degree and will be accepted to a CSU. Michael explained:

It was explained to me as a transfer path when I first enrolled at Valley College. It was explained to me that I could get associates and then apply to transfer and as a result I could get an associate’s degree for transfer. There are many Cal States that accept people who get their associates for transfer and that sounded like you know, a pretty good offer for me. As somebody who doesn't really know where he wants to end up or where they want to work, just having the guarantee for transfer was very intriguing.

Armando mentioned that he learned about the ADT through his siblings and counseling. He said:

I learned about earning an associate’s degree and transferring from my siblings and counseling. This transfer pathway also helped narrow my major options. It was helpful to know that I can get a degree before transferring to a CSU.

Mauricio discussed that he is following his sister’s footsteps of receiving an associate’s degree for transfer. As such, Mauricio discovered the ADT pathway through his sibling. Mauricio said:

Like I mentioned before, I have been kind of following my sister's footsteps and I was with her throughout her transfer process, so I noticed the types of courses she was taking, so I’ve been trying to kind of follow her in that way, no not copy her or major or anything like that just kind of finding guidance through the same transfer process.

Friends were the ones who told Gustavo about the ADT pathway. One of the reasons why Gustavo is pursuing the community college route is because a friend told him that he transferred from a community college to a four-year university and finished a bachelor’s degree a couple of years after transferring. Gustavo would like to follow the same path. Gustavo said:

Honestly, I think the biggest one would have to be my friends. They were the ones who told me about the ADT pathway, one was going to [Northern College] and the other to a different college. This was essentially the biggest part as to why I am going to community college. So, I can then transfer with an associates degree and then finish off my education at a CSU. My friends are a bit older. One of them already graduated from
UC Davis and he's been through the whole transfer process. Essentially, when I have questions about classes or transfer, I reach out to my friends.

Not all participants like Gustavo had peers that had already gone through the transfer process. Others seek academic counselors to explore opportunities for transfer. Counseling is mentioned in the next theme.

**Theme #2: Counseling**

Outside of their class environment, four participants Erick, Juan, Marcos, and Miguel reported that they seek counseling for transfer support. For all of these students, the only form of advice and guidance on transfer only came from their counselors. For participants like Erick, they have only sought counseling because the rest of the transfer services were online and not engaging.

Erick shared that the only service that he has used so far is counseling. Erick uses counseling when he needs assistance completing his educational plan. The rest if the services are also online, but they do not seem as engaging: Erick said:

> I think the only real resource that I’ve used from the school is just counseling. I reach out to counselors when I need help with the classes each semester. Other than that, I’ve kind of just figured stuff on my own, mostly because of the pandemic. I only had one semester in person and the rest of it was online, so I feel like they are not as engaging, so I don’t attend.

Juan has also only used counseling for career and major exploration. Besides counseling, Juan receives notification from the transfer center of when representatives will be virtually on-campus and when to apply for graduation. Juan explained:

> Honestly, I’ve only just had counseling. I believe that I’ve only used their services for career exploration and major exploration, but other than that, I just received notifications from the transfer center on when representatives are coming and when to apply for graduation, so very limited services, except for counseling.
Counseling is the only service that Marcos seeks when he has questions about transferring. He has kept the connection he had with his student mentor since he was in the first-year program and they were able to schedule a counseling appointment with the same first-year counselor. He explained how he schedules his counseling appointments:

The only service I use is counseling. I actually do have the same counselor, and that was actually set up through the first-year experience program when I was a freshman. I still have the connection with my student mentor and I reach out to him and then he'll go ahead and set up the appointment with the counselor that I had previously, so I consistently have the same counselor all the time.

Miguel shared that he has only used the counseling services at Northern College. He adds that he takes responsibility for not seeing workshop recordings about transferring, specifically on how to fill out the transfer application. He mentioned that he has filled out the application at least five times, but he has never completed it. He said:

The only thing that applies to me is counseling. Nothing else applies to me, but I take responsibility because I know that I need to put more time on this and go through a video on how to fill out the transfer application. I have filled that application or tried to complete more than five times, but then I leave it incomplete. It takes me more than an hour and then I get stuck and I do not know who to ask for help so I get completely disappointed and discouraged.

In addition to counseling, participants also reported using equity support programs as a form of engagement in their transfer process. The theme of equity support programs is discussed below.

**Theme #3: Equity Support Programs**

Equity support programs such as Extended Opportunities Program and Services (EOPS), Disability Services and Programs for Students (DSPS), and Guardian Scholars were reported in this study as transfer related services that Latino male students use. These educational programs have a purpose of closing the education equity gap among disadvantaged groups of students.
Students like Christian, Mauricio, Javier, and Armando mentioned that utilizing these services has played an important role in their transfer process.

Christian shared that he is enrolled in DSPS, but he has not interacted with the program as much as he used to before it went online. Christian said:

Well, I’m currently in DSPS. I haven't really interacted with DSPS as much as I used to before everything went online. Besides asking for class guidance, I know that DSPS has many services that can help students. For example, they put out transfer workshops and they offer advice on anything that has to do with transfer. It would probably make me feel much better about the transfer process if I began using more of their services.

Mauricio highlighted that he is also part of DSPS. He talked about how DSPS has helped him accomplish his academic goals. For example, they provide him with more allocated time to complete exams and assignments which put him at ease since he takes longer to process information.

I’m part of the DSPS program at a [Northern College] and I feel like I really benefit from this program because I have more time on exams and assignments. It’s just harder and it takes me longer to read information and my brain to process it. I am a slower reader than the average person, I guess, so I feel like I really do benefit from this program. Also, this program makes it easier for me to complete my assignments, and it gives me the comfort as well as a peace of mind knowing that I will get more time to complete things, especially with my anxiety.

Javier shared that he is involved on-campus. Not only is he part of EOPS, but he also uses the Transfer Center and tutoring to further support his community college journey. EOPS provides book vouchers, but they also give Javier the confidence to continue towards completing community college and transferring to a four-year university. Javier said the following about EOPS:

I am an EOPS student and that definitely helped me a lot in terms of resources such as book vouchers. I do not need to pay anything out of my own pocket for things like books, especially since they are very expensive. With support from EOPS has definitely lent me a hand and has given me that push to continue moving forward, which has actually made me feel more confident.
Javier shared the following about using the Transfer Center at Northern College:

I use the Transfer Center as well. That is where I go there to learn more about transferring. If I have any questions regarding transferring, I know that they will have a great counselor who is always answering student questions. They also provide me with representatives that come from the university and have transfer workshops for students.

Javier also said that he goes to tutoring:

Tutoring is something I’ve used and is a service that I advocate and tell students to use as well because they help with a lot of subjects that students like myself have a challenging time with. Tutoring has definitely one of those resources that I’ve learned to take advantage of a lot, because it does help a lot.

Lastly, Armando uses Guardian Scholars and EOPS for academic and personal services.

Armando shared the following about his experience in both equity programs:

I am part of Guardian Scholars and EOPS. I use Guardian scholars more because my sister used to be with them and I feel more comfortable. So, I go to their weekly meeting or semi-weekly meeting that they hold on financial aid, transfer, and mental health. Those sessions really help me understand the transfer process and the amount of financial aid I can possibly receive. I do want to continue my education after getting my AA, so they will help with university application waivers which will be a big help. Like I said, I feel a bit more comfortable with Guardian Scholars than EOPS since they have less students and I feel like I’m getting more of that one-on-one counseling that I need.

Students that used equity support programs in their college discussed that they had a positive experience. Other students mentioned that they were engaged in their transfer journey by using the Transfer Center services, as discussed in the next section.

**Theme #4: Transfer Engagement**

To help inform Latino male engagement with transfer, the researcher asked participants if they had participated in any transfer related event. Only three from the ten student participants indicated that they had previously been involved with an activity that had to do with transferring. Marcos, Juan, and Javier were the three students that indicated that they attended a transfer workshop or event.
Marcos attended a collaboration transfer event called Spring Sting that was with the district colleges and CSU, Jackson. This transfer event brought many CSU Jackson impacted majors to do informational sessions about their program. Marcos attended because he belonged to one of the programs in attendance.

I did the Spring Sting this past semester with all the local colleges and [CSU, Jackson]. I did not know about this transfer event until one of my classmates sent me the information. He sent me the link to register for the psychology program since they were going to attend because they are one of the impacted majors at [CSU, Jackson]. What drew my attention was trying to get more information on how to transfer, when to transfer, and trying to just meet those qualifications to be accepted.

Juan also participated in Spring Sting.

I have attended the [CSU Jackson] Spring Sting. In this workshop I was able to learn about the process of applying to the CSU campuses and the required courses needed for transfer for impacted majors.

Javier discussed that he uses the Transfer Center to engage in transfer support.

I attended a few workshops specifically from the transfer department which is where I go to learn more about the transfer process. I usually stick around and ask specific questions that relate to my transfer journey.

The final theme in the findings explored the services that students believe would help them transfer while in their journey towards transferring to a CSU. The theme is reported below.

**Services Needed**

The third and final research question that led this study asked Latino male students to identify services, if any, that they believe are needed in their transfer process to a CSU. There were a couple of probing questions that the researcher asked the participants to help answer this research question. The questions are below:

- As a first-generation Latino male college student, what do you believe can help you complete the transfer process?
- What can the community college do to help students like yourself transfer?
How can the college better prepare and support first generation and Latino male students to transfer?

Although there were three questions asked under these research questions, the qualitative report analysis from these questions resulted in the researcher generating four themes that students identified. The four themes included the following: building positive student relationships and dedicated counselors, establishing a center for Latino students, in-reach to Latino students, and mentorship. The themes are shown in table 6.

Table 6
*Services Needed to Transfer Identified by Latino Male Students* (Source: Author)

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Services Needed</th>
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<tr>
<td>Theme #1: Building Positive Student Relationships and Dedicated Counselors</td>
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<td>Theme #3: In-reach to Latino Students</td>
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<td>Theme #4: Mentorship</td>
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**Theme #1: Building Positive Student Relationships and Dedicated Counselors**

For theme number one, students expressed that the college needs to provide better relationships with college personnel and students and have a dedicated counselor for Latino male students. Students like Miguel voiced that staff and faculty become inpatient while working with
him. Additionally, he also suggested that there should be a counselor specifically for first
generation Latino students because many of the counselors that he has spoken with are
inconsistent with information and are not clear.

Miguel shared the following:

I have experienced how inpatient staff and faculty get with me when they are trying to
help me. I just need a bit more support in getting started with things, once I get it, I
usually know how to complete it. I would also suggest that we have an assigned
counselor that will take you from step one of the transfer process all the way to the end. I
know that many times I have not been able to complete the transfer application. Try to
get a hold of counseling has been very hard as well. Either getting them on the phone,
online, or in-person.

Gustavo shared similar needs as Miguel. He mentioned that having a dedicated counselor
for him would be of great help rather than getting different counselors every time he goes into
the counseling office. Gustavo added that the more he talks to different counselors, the more
confusing he gets about his educational plan. His need is the following:

Honestly, I think that a dedicated counselor would honestly help a lot of somebody who's
not giving me a different answer every time I choose to see them. In high school, I was
very reliant on my counselor. I would go to her for the correct information, like talking
about what colleges I wanted to apply to. I thought it would be the same, but I basically
had to look at the transfer forms myself to see the classes that are needed and I’ve
bothered my friends or I’ve done it myself. Like for my friends who graduated and those
who are still going at the moment to college that's probably the most common issue that
we have is essentially one person, a counselor filling out our ed plan for about two
semesters worth of classes for us, and when we go back counseling we are assigned a
different counselor and they're telling us that these classes are wrong and that we
shouldn't be taking these and we end up taking other classes. I haven't spoken to a
counselor in about a couple of years, just because of the fact that. I don't think it's helpful
at all. In fact, I think it is more confusing and that’s the biggest service I would use right
now.

Students also expressed the need to have a center for Latino male students in which they
are able to interact with others, build relationships, and know that they are not in this college
journey on their own. Establishing a Center for Latino is further explored below.
Theme #2: Establishing a Center for Latinos

The theme of establishing a center for Latino students was discussed by many participants. In their responses, students mentioned the need to create a program or center where the campus recognizes their identity, they can have a sense of belonging with other peers that have similar characteristics, and periodically transfer workshops for them to attend. These and other subthemes comprised theme number two.

Erick suggested the following:

A program where I am able to connect with people like myself, you know, being able to understand that we are not in this alone and if we work together by giving each other information in order to be able to transfer we can be successful. If you think that you're alone, and you never reach out or just want to do things on your own, it can definitely be a hassle.

Marcos focused on a program just for Latino males. He said:

Again, having a program or initiative in educating Latino male students that are pursuing the transfer process would be awesome. Just having more guidance out there for more male students that are trying to transfer to a four-year university would help us a lot. The program could have a workshop at least once a year that's geared towards students that are first generation Latino transfer or that are thinking about transferring, can benefit the current enrolled students in a transfer path and those that were not thinking about transfer can now have that knowledge.

Juan shared a program that he is part of at a different college called CASA and suggested that Northern College develop a similar one that supports first generation Latino male students. He discussed:

There's now a program at [a local college] called MI CASA, and I feel like, if I had something like that, at the start of my career at [Northern College], I probably would have been on a different path, rather than on a 5-year community college transfer path. Developing a program like this one with a focus on Latinos and Latino males would greatly benefit this population.

Similar to the theme of creating a Latino center for students, Javier advised that what he needs is for the college to understand Latinos background, specifically Latino males. In the view
of Javier, it is challenging for the institution to understand the background of Latinos, if there is no program, workshops, or support services directly helping this group. Javier said:

Definitely have a better understanding of where we come from. I feel like that's a big thing that they need to take in consideration because you know it's pretty hard for like you know males within our Community to go straight into only being a full-time college student. For many of my peers like myself, they go straight into the labor market after high school, maybe we will do part-time school, but that is how we were raised. The college doesn’t understand that because they don’t even have a support program to help us so they don’t know where we come from. I feel like they should definitely have better knowledge of where we come from, and our advocacy as well as barriers that we have had and currently go through every day.

Along the same lines were Armando’s needs for greater representation of faculty that share similar backgrounds. Armando advised:

For starters, the places that they [faculty] grew up in were way better like they had more advanced classes, they have more electives in the high school that I went to so whenever they talk about their experience in high school the clubs that they were a part of, I just feel not connected to that because I never had those opportunities that they have and they also did have the struggles that I have dealt with in life. They don’t have the main struggles that come with a family that is new to this country and that didn't have prior experience with the school system. I just wanted to see someone's experience from that angle, instead of having a good college or coming from a wealthy upbringing, because they basically got everything paid for. If they cannot connect with us, then it is hard to build relationships and continue at school, especially when we have so many other things to worry about. There needs to be more connection with students like me. Developing programs or workshops that speak to us.

For students like Armando, it is hard to connect with faculty members who do not share a similar background as his. Establishing a center for Latino students may also point to the need to recruit and hire diverse faculty. The next theme mentions the need for the college to reach out more frequently to this student demographic.

**Theme #3: In-reach to Latino Students**

Based on the findings for this section, in-reach to Latino students was the theme that was revealed by participants. The researcher defined in-reach as community college institutions
reaching out to currently enrolled students. In this theme, the majority of Latino males in the study reported that a service that they need is more outreach by the community college.

Christian used the phrase “more in your face” when referring to how the college should promote their support services program. He mentioned that thankfully he is part of DSPS because his high counselor connected him to the program or else he would not have known that the college had one. He said:

I would say to be more in your face about all of the resources that they [Northern College] has available. For example, I didn't know anything about DSPS and I didn’t even know they had one in college. Thanks to my high school who helped me build the connection with them. I also did not have a transfer workshop until after my first year in college. It was by then that I started getting emails from the college. If I knew earlier about transfer I would have taken different classes. The bottom line is that it comes down to how well the college is promoting their services to current students.

Erick also highlighted the importance for Latino male students to receive information early in their education is critical in their success and something that he strongly advocates the college to do. Erick explained:

I think, pushing that information [of campus resources] out there and letting people know that there's resources that they can use is very important. I know that one thing that helped a lot of my classmates in high school preparing for college was avid. It was a choice you can take and it prepared you for college, but it'd be cool if we had a program where students were enrolled automatically in order to be able to learn the process of what it's like to go to college. Definitely pushing that information out there is helpful because, if I had actually had that information, beginning in college I definitely wouldn't be where I am right now. I probably would have transferred over already but because I didn't have the right tools and information given to me, I am still in community college. It's not toxic but that's very dangerous to us as Latino males if we're not giving that information, kind of like I said earlier, you have to work for it and go after that information, instead of it already being provided for you.

Gustavo mentioned that it was hard knowing about the campus resources while in-person, now online is even more challenging. Having a program designed for Latinos or just Latino males would help him reach his academic goals. Gustavo said:
When we were in-person it was hard knowing all the resources that the campus had, but you would have people passing out information the transition to online doesn't essentially even feel like school anymore. There is a big lack of motivation when you're taking classes at home, it doesn't even feel like school anymore like I don't really feel as if I’m even still going to college compared to when I was going on campus. I am not aware of any programs or events but it would be great if we had programs for Latino students to help us navigate this higher education system.

Although Armando is part of EOPs and Guardian Scholars, he still does not feel fully connected to the campus because of the lack of diversity outreach services. Such as, he suggested that the college outreaches to Latino male students. He said:

Having the campus reaching out would be a first that I would want them to do. I am sure they have records of all Latino male students so emailing and communicating with us about programs and workshops designed for this population would be ideal. I am part of EOPs and Guardian Scholars, but most of the time the people in these programs are white folks that I find it hard to connect with. The college should create a program that reaches out to people like us.

Mauricio also mentioned the importance of reaching out to Latino male students. He explained:

They should have more programs reaching out to these specific students, like Latino males and encouraging them to be involved on campus, especially now that everything's online. For example, having transfer events or motivational speakers where people share personal experiences and provide advice or tips. I would definitely be interested in that. Being online can help by having a larger audience to attend, so it could benefit more students. Essentially so that Latino male students do feel isolated in this online world.

Lastly, Juan expressed like the rest of his peers how the college does not do enough of promoting its services. He has to look and find the services himself, which is hard since they may not be visible. Juan shared:

I feel like you have to journey to look for the support services because they're not explained to you and they're not advertised to you in a simple way. Like I have to find it and that's kind of the struggle. So, I would suggest since our college application we indicate that if you Latino, then they should put you in a pool where you get services towards Latino students. Furthermore, you're put in a cohort with your major or with other Latinos just so that you have some kind of community from the start of college and is also a place where you go for answers. Make their support services well known, I don't know why they are so hidden.
Besides the need to outreach to currently enrolled students, the college also needs to cultivate a mentorship component to support Latino male students. In the nest section, participants reported the need to be connected with mentors on or off-campus.

**Theme #4: Mentorship**

The theme of mentorship came up as a service that Latino males identified as a need in their transfer process. This theme is similar to the subtheme of lack of mentorship reported under the challenges that students face while in their transfer journey. However, in this case, mentorship is something that Latino male students want.

For example, Mauricio discussed that having a Latino mentor to reach out to would be great. He shared the following:

> Having some sort of mentoring program for Latino male students would definitely be awesome. Friends, peers, and classmates are great to have around because they help you stay motivated and on track, but adding another person to reach out to, especially one that I can connect with on a different level would be good. Also adding that meeting with the same counselor on a regular basis to stay on track would all be services that I would need as a first-generation college Latino male.

Armando also mentioned that he would greatly benefit from having a male mentor.

> Having a Latino male mentor that can relate and under the things that I am going through would be something great to have. Like I have said before, it is hard finding Latino male teachers, counselors, and people in student services to help you. But it goes more than helping, someone that you can reach out to for support, advice, and mentorship. That is something that is missing in this college process.

**Chapter Summary**

This chapter provided a robust analysis of the data gathered from this study to recognize the challenges and services that community college Latino male students need in order to support their transfer experience to the four-year university. All ten Latino male participants were self-identified as being part of the ADT pathway to a CSU. A purposeful sampling method was used for recruitment and were each individually interviewed virtually using a semi-structured
interview process. Next, this chapter outlined all the findings according to the research questions. Using Bruan & Clarke (2006) six phases of thematic analysis, the findings were coded based on specific characteristics, which generated themes and subthemes for each of the research questions.

To answer research question number one; what are the challenges, if any, perceived by first generation community college Latino males at a Northern California community college district, as they transfer to a California State University using the Associate Degree Transfer? two main themes were extracted: academic challenges and environmental challenges. Academic challenges had the following six subthemes: clear transfer roadmap, connecting with campus community, inconsistency with counseling, lack of mentorship, low GPA, and undeclared major. Environmental challenges had the following five subthemes: family responsibility, financial hardships, first generation college students, masculinity indemnity, and mental health. To answer research question two; what types of community college services or engagement opportunities, if any, do first generation Latino males believe had a positive influence on their ability to transfer to a four-year university? The following four themes emerged: ADT, counseling, equity support programs, and transfer engagement. Lastly, research question number three; what are the services that first generation Latino male students identify as needing as they attempt to transfer to California State University? four themes arose: building positive student relationships and dedicated counselors, establishing a center for Latino students, in-reach to Latino students, and mentorship.

The findings from this study indicated that Latino male students have external (environmental) and internal (academic) challenges that they face. Their external challenges can be supported by family, friends, and or surrounding upbringing environments. The institution
should support their academic challenges such as having a clear path for transfer and enhancing their counseling program so that students are not misinformed about course planning. Moreover, the discoveries from the data also suggest that Latino male are not fully engaged, particularly during a virtual environment. Participants that reported attending transfer functions were minimal, those that knew about the ADT pathway found out from peers, family, or their counselors. In addition, rather than students sharing about their exposure to a male program on campus, they displayed enthusiasm about sharing the recommendations they had for the college to develop such a program. Finally, the majority of Latino males in this study share the need for the college to implement outreach campaigns specifically for their population and establish a center or program in which they can provide wrap-around services.
CHAPTER 5: INTERPRETATIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This study examined the lived experiences of first-generation Latino males transferring from a Northern California Community College to a four-year university. Research has shown that Latinx students make up 45% of the student population in CCC (Reddy & Siqueiros, 2021). Moreover, Latino male students make up 42% of the demographic in CCC (Reddy & Siqueiros, 2021). Despite high enrollment numbers of Latino males in CCC, their retention, degree attainment, and transfer rate are significantly lower when compared to their peers (CCCCO, 2020). Over a decade ago, California passed into law Senate Bill 1440 known as the Associates Degree for Transfers (ADTs), mandating that the CCC system along with the CSU’s establish a smooth transfer path for students. The ADT path has been effective in increasing the number of students transferring to CSUs, but it does not address the specific challenges that marginalized groups of students encounter while navigating the transfer process. As such, there is a need for an inquiry on the Latino male population since it is also one that will continue to rapidly increase in CCCs.

The purpose of study was to reveal the barriers that first generation Latino male community college students face in order to identify ways to improve their transfer mobility to four-year university. This chapter outlines the key findings by incorporating a discussion on each of the research questions. There are three main themes that will be discussed: 1) challenges that transfer students face, 2) services and engagement opportunities that influence transfer, and 3) services that students need. Next, the researcher integrates CCW and weaves it with the findings of the research by outlining each of the six forms of capital that students bring from
their communities. The implications of the study are discussed following the CCW segment.

Lastly, based on the interpretation of findings and prior research in this field, the researcher provides a set of recommendations for action as well as for further research.

**Overview of the Theoretical Framework, Methodology, and Research Questions**

The theoretical framework that guided this study was Yosso’s (2006) Community Cultural Wealth (CCW). The methodology used in this investigation was Marriam’s (2009) basic qualitative research. This methodology shed light on the notion that meaning is shaped on people’s understanding and influences of their own world (Merriam, 2009). The researcher employed a semi-structured interview process for all 10 Latino male participants. The 10 interviews were conducted and recorded virtually via Zoom. The online platform, Zoom, transcribed the interviews, however the researcher went back to the transcriptions as well as the recording and reviewed for accuracy. A member checking process was employed before initiating the analysis of the data to ensure that the researcher captured their meaning to each question asked. The following three questions guided this study:

1.) What are the challenges, if any, perceived by first generation community college Latino males at a Northern California community college district, as they transfer to a California State University using the Associate Degree Transfer?

2.) What types of community college services or engagement opportunities, if any, do first generation Latino males believe had a positive influence on their ability to transfer to a four-year university

3.) What are the services that first generation Latino male students identify as needing as they attempt to transfer to California State University?

**Interpretation of Findings**

As described in chapter 4, there were several themes and subthemes that emerged from each of the research questions. However, the researcher has condensed the findings to only
showcase three major themes and subthemes that help answer the research question. The three major themes include: 1) challenges that transfer students face, 2) academic services and engagement opportunities that influence transfer, and 3) services that students need. These three themes align with each of the research questions and reflect the lived experiences that Latino male students encounter while in their community college transfer journey.

**Theme 1: Challenges that Transfer Students Face**

As discussed in previous chapters, there is a transfer gap among Latino males and their counterparts. To further explore this phenomenon, research question one sought to investigate the challenges that Latino male students face while attempting to transfer to a CSU. In answering this question, the data gathered from the participants was twofold. Participants discussed that they faced academic and environmental challenges while in their transfer journey to the four-year university. The academic challenges were cataloged by the researcher based on the participants’ responses that were related to their school. Environmental challenges were categorized by the responses from participants that were not related to their school setting. A total of four major subthemes were extracted from the data to answer research question 1. Some of these major subthemes included connecting with the campus community, counselor inconsistency, and family responsibility.

Over 50% of the responses from students indicated not feeling a connection with the campus. The findings of why students did not connect with campus varied. A student indicated that they did not establish a connection with their peers and faculty because they did not see them relatable. Others spoke to the same idea by stating that it might have to do with cultural differences, such as Michael who said, “I just chalk it up a little bit to cultural differences between me and them”. Students connecting with the campus community or instructors go
beyond them attending office hours to formulate a connection. The students need to feel a sense of comfort around them. Other students perceived their faculty and staff members as not being supportive in their educational learning. Creating a meaningful connection with this particular group of students involves understanding their background, affirming their concerns, and supporting them. As indicated by Urias et al. (2016), Latino male students suggested that people at the college, such as instructors and not programs, were instrumental in their college journey. The relationships that students create with instructors are influential in their success. Moreover, González (2015), reported that the connectedness that students created with their counselors, faculty, and mentors were agents of their college success while transferring to a four-year university.

The inconsistency with counselors was reported by half of the Latino male students that were interviewed. Students seek counseling services for many reasons, but for this specific group of students, they reach out for counseling for class planning and guidance in their transfer process. Participants shared their frustration because they would see a different counselor every time they had a counseling appointment. This resulted in students receiving mixed messages about which courses to take for their major and to transfer. For example, Juan stated, “I was passed along between counselors telling me I should take these classes for now and other ones would tell me to focus on these other classes, ultimately, I was put on a [educational] plan that was just general education and I didn't understand why and understand any of it”. Mauricio shared similar experiences like Juan, he said: “I have spoken with many counselors but, I feel like with every counselor I’ve met with it's a different kind of experience, different advice that they give me and so it really confuses me”. The disappointment that students experience with the inconsistency and clarity among counselors has caused a couple of students to pause their
education. Not only does this academic challenge impede student persistence to transfer, but it also adds time towards completing their degree. Several Latino male students shared that because they were not enrolled in the appropriate courses, they were set back a semester or a year from their anticipated transfer timeline. As highlighted by Xiong et al. (2016), community college counselors are validating agents of men of color succeeding in their educational journey; however, they must support students as equal contributors to the counseling experience and provide them with proactive academic support. Community college counselors play a pivotal role in the success of males in college. As such, it is imperative that community college counselors provide comprehensive academic and personal counseling services to Latino community college males, particularly because they are balancing personal obligations at home.

Half of the participants informed that they carried family responsibility while attending college. Family responsibility varied from caring for younger siblings to being the breadwinner in the family and needing to pause their education. Students expressed that carrying family responsibility was not an option, but rather something that is embedded in their culture. As Sáenz et al. (2018) illustrates, in some cases, families of Latino male students had mixed feelings about their educational pursuits. This is due to the substantial amount of time that students spend in their academic obligations rather than their familial responsibilities. Due to familial low socioeconomic status, Latino male students are required to support their families financially while attending college.

Lastly to answer research question 1, more than half of the Latino males reported that their masculinity identity has played a role in their aspirations to transfer to a four-year university. Some participants shared that they were raised from a young age to work in hard labor jobs. For example, one student discussed that at the age of 12, he worked in agricultural,
local flea markets, construction and demolition. He was taught that these tough occupations build character and that working hard and not asking for help was the way to earn his stripes as a man and if he were to express a desire to ask for help or be vulnerable, it would be a sign of emasculation. Similarly, to what his peers shared, these characteristics of doing things on their own, not asking for help, working hard, and hindering personal feelings were associated with being masculine. These traits were modeled after their male figure in the family such as fathers, uncles, or older male relatives. These findings are supported by Sáenz et al. (2013) and Sáenz et al. (2015) who exemplified in their research that Latino male students showcase machismo by having to financially support themselves and their family without support from others, which has led these males to disregard their goals of obtaining a higher education. Congruently, masculinity identity can serve as a motivation to succeed, but it can also hinder students from succeeding due to the conflict between masculine identity and college expectations (Rodriguez et al., 2021).

**Theme 2: Academic Services and Engagement Opportunities that Influence Transfer**

Research question two investigated the types of college services or engagement opportunities that have had a positive influence on Latino male students while in their transfer journey to a four-year university. Findings from research question two determined that students that were engaged with the campus were those that either worked at the campus or were part of an equity support program. Other students were disengaged from student services, particularly because they were offered online. Three key themes were reported: counseling, equity support programs, and transfer engagement.

Several students reported using academic counseling services when they needed assistance planning out their transfer educational courses. Although participants discussed that it
would take them 2-3 weeks to receive a counseling appointment, they had no other option since they could not turn elsewhere for assistance. Other students who shared that they utilized counseling, discussed that they were fortunate to keep seeing the same counselor. These students either had a peer mentor who connected them with the same counselor or had an on-campus job, which they leverage to visit the same counselor. These findings suggest that counseling is essential for Latino male students who want to transfer because it is where students go for academic counseling. It is also important to highlight that participants that utilized counseling as a service for transfer engagement were students who had a connection with someone on-campus. This is critical because the majority of the participants did not feel engaged to the college and as a result they were not using counseling. These results support the data from Lau and Garza (2019) who reported that college counseling is fundamental in course completion, a sense of belonging, campus and engagement. Moreover, Weiss et al. (2019) suggest that students who continue to seek academic advisors at the two-year colleges are predictors of having higher opportunities for completion and transfer. Similarly, students who reported using counseling also mentioned that they were part of an equity support program that has helped them with their transfer process.

Participants in the study informed that being part of equity support programs such as Extended Opportunities Program and Services (EOPS), Disability Services and Programs for Students (DSPS), First Year Experience (FYE), and Guardian Scholars Program (GSP), played a significant role in their transfer process. Students explained that they were offered book vouchers, gas cards, priority registration, extra time on exams, and academic as well as personal counseling whenever they needed it, which positively impacted their college transfer bound experience. This data is supported by Tovar (2015) and Wood and Palmer (2016) who reported
that student support services was a predictor of transfer. Students that were members of support programs had significant higher rates of completion and transfer than students not part of programs.

Lastly, findings reported that only three from the ten participants attended or participated in a transfer related activity outside of their class. These students shared that they attended a spring event that Northern College collaborated with CSU, Jackson. The rest of the students in the study did not report participation in any campus engagement opportunity. They were either not aware or they did not consider themselves ready to use any of the transfer services. Based on these data findings, the researcher concluded that online transfer services have detrimentally impacted Latino male engagement. This disconnect may be due to the college shifting to online services because of the pandemic. However, this raises a concern if the pandemic and online services negatively impacted Latino male student engagement.

**Theme #3: Services that Students Need**

The third and final research question aspired to examine the types of services that Latino male students need as in their transfer journey to the CSU system. An important concept that emerged from this research question was the need for the college to disseminate information about their support services. Overall, Latino male students expressed that they navigate a number of complex issues in and out the school environment, but their aspiration of eventually transferring to a four-year university is a motivating factor for persistence in their education. Revealing the types of services that these students need will help stakeholders in community college better support Latino male students. Two themes were obtained to help answer this question: building positive client relationships and designated counselors and mentorship.
Participants expressed the need to establish a positive relationship with college personnel and have designated counselors that they can reach-out rather than going to a different counselor for every counseling appointment. The need to enhance the relationships between college personnel and students suggests that they have not had a great experience while working with them. Building rapport and having a sense of genuine care should be highly considered as a core value when working with students. Students having an awful experience or interaction with a college employee may lead them to not return and use the service or even not enroll in college. Additionally, Latino male students need a designated counselor. Students shared that they felt confused while seeking academic counseling services because they would receive different advice on course career planning and transferability. The inconsistency of advice from different counselors confused the students and prolonged their transfer plan. Participants suggested having a designated counselor so they can maintain a well-established connection, refer back to them for clarity, and have follow up counseling appointments rather than being passed along from counselor to counselor. This notion is supported by Tovar (2015), who discovered that if students perceive that they matter, feel noticed, instructors and counselors show sincere interest in their lives and in their academics, will lead them to believe that they are valued as individuals. As a result, it will influence their success in college. Latino male students in this study want to feel that they matter and that their school environment cares for them.

Participants also reported needing mentors that can guide them through their educational journey. Mentorship stood out on many occasions as a high need for students throughout the interviews. For many Latino male students, they do not have other male figures in their family to turn for college guidance. Establishing a Latino male support group designed around networking with other Latino male students, workshops on masculinity identity, and male
professional panels were encouraged by participants. One student shared that they would want to learn how Latin male professionals have overcome obstacles they faced to reach their career. A mentorship component will help Latino male students feel that they are not alone in their education and would learn about the experiences of other males who are in their careers. Huerta and Fishman (2014), revealed the positive impact that mentorship has on Latino male students. The mentorship that Latino male students received from educators and peers allowed them to cultivate and have higher educational aspirations (Huerta & Fishman, 2014). The mentorship component goes beyond guidance, as it also sets meaningful and long-lasting relationships among the mentor and mentee. The next section incorporates the six forms of Community Cultural Wealth (CCW) as a discussion based on the findings from the study. It is important to highlight this framework as part of the discussion because it analyzes each of six forms of capital that Latino male students indicated in the findings.

**Community Cultural Wealth Integration to the Findings**

This section discusses how participants from the study showcased the six different forms of Community Cultural Wealth (CCW). This framework challenges the deficit-mind thinking that students of color bring deficiencies to the classroom through six forms of capital: aspirational capital, linguistics capital, familial capital, navigational capital, and resistance capital. Yosso (2005) defines CCW as an “array of knowledge, skills, abilities and contacts possessed and utilized by Communities of Color to survive and resist macro and micro-forms of oppression” (p. 77). The next section presents and discusses each form of capital from the interview findings.
Aspirational Capital

As defined by Yosso (2005), aspirational capital refers to the strength and drive to meet short- and longer-term goals. In spite of all the obstacles: academic disqualification, mental health breakdowns, and having to stop out of college to focus on full-time employment, these Latino male students have shown their persistence and drive to meet their academic goals as well as to get them closer to transfer. For the majority of them, they are a year to a year and half to accomplishing the of being at the four-year institution. Students expressed their educational aspiration to go further in their education after completing a bachelor’s degree by enrolling in a master’s program. Their aspirational capital is driven by many reasons, for example, striving for a higher education, greater opportunities in the workforce, and the most common, being financially stable. For example, Armando said the following of why he aspires to obtain a higher education, “I don't want to be doing all that back breaking Labor. Currently my uncle has back problems, and he has a lot of physical problems from working in the fields and I just didn't want that for myself or my future kids”. Armando’s aspiration to pursue an education beyond high school comes from witnessing how his family members have chronic pain because of their job. Hence, he does not want an occupation that is labor intensive for himself nor future children.

Linguistic Capital

Linguistic capital is defined as “the communication skills that are acquired through speaking more than one language” (Yosso, 2005, p. 78). The students come to community college with a variety of abilities, forms of knowledge, and speaking more than one language. Their diversified communication skill sets were acquired while growing up in their communities and are showcased throughout their education. It is important that higher education institutions acknowledge such capital and adapt in the ways that these students communicate. For example,
having outreach materials available in more than one language. During the interview, a participant, Miguel felt more comfortable speaking both English and Spanish. To fit the student's needs, the researcher modified the interview by asking some questions in Spanish. This made the students feel at ease and they were able to further explain their experience in Spanish. Miguel shared that his linguistics was a barrier to his journey while in college. He said, “when I took a chemistry class, it was very challenging for me, because of the language. I knew about the chemistry, I understood the symbols and all that, but the communication was not there”. Miguel had already passed all the chemistry course sequence in Mexico, but was placed in introductory chemistry when he arrived in the United States. Miguel came to Northern College with linguistic capital, but it was unnoticed by the educational system.

**Familial Capital**

Yosso (2205) documented familial capital as a “deep commitment to family and community” (p. 79). This capital was reported in two ways. First, Latino male students juggle more than one family responsibility. As such, their deep roots are strongly connected to family, which indicates that they value relationships and connectedness. Hence, their desire for the college to establish a center for Latino students, conduct outreach efforts to them, and need to have a designated counselor as well as a mentor to create a solidified relationship. In such environments is where Latino male students thrive. Javier, for example, discussed during the interview the importance of his family. He said, “I am not just an older brother of a family of seven, but I am also their babysitter, and in many times their primary caregiver”. Javier is a great example of a student who has strong familia capital. He also shared that he enjoys collaborating with others in the classroom and with the Puente Project. Recognizing familia capital is instrumental in supporting this group of students to succeed in college.
Social Capital

Latino male students used their social capital to overcome all the challenges they have encountered throughout their college education. Social capital is defined as the “ability for individuals to utilize their networks and community resources to achieve a goal, including networks of people and community resources”: (Yosso, 2005, p. 79). Students shared that they have turned to their older peers who have already gone through the transfer process for guidance and support. For example, Gustavo said “Eventually, I found out that the classes I was taking were not helping me towards transfer. Later on, I talked to a friend of mine who was going to UC Davis at the time and he helped me figure out what classes to take to transfer and what courses do not transfer”. Gustavo was not receiving the academic support in his transfer process and decided to utilize his network by reaching out to a friend that has already transferred to a four-year university. Latino male students often relied on their social capital to keep them moving forward when they face obstacles or are unclear of their next steps. Latino male students also shared the importance of having peer-to-peer support not only for guidance, but also to keep them engaged and accountable. Their social capital allows them to build long lasting friendships to keep them engaged with their studies and motivation to continue accomplishing their educational goals.

Navigational Capital

Despite facing many odds, particularly in their community, Latino male students have learned to navigate through various communities and institutions. Hence, their navigational capital is their motor in looking for opportunities. Navigational capital refers to the “ability for marginalized groups to maneuver through institutions” (Yosso, 2005, p. 80). Institutions of higher education were not designed for the success of Latino male students. However, these
students have shared how they used their navigational capital to maneuver through inequitable practices in order to be academically successful. They accomplish this by connecting with the “correct people” that have provided them with the appropriate resources to thrive in their education. Students are referring to the “correct people” to personnel that work in equity support programs such as EOPS and Puente. The people in those programs have helped these Latino male students navigate some of their challenges while in college.

**Resistance Capital**

Yosso (2005), describes resistance capital as “an opposition skill that is developed from living in marginalized communities” (p.80). In other words, challenging inequity and subornation is a way of resisting capital. Some Latino male students expressed the hardships of returning back and being labeled as dropouts. This negative connotation of dropout, questions students whether returning to college was the right option. However, students resisted the notion of dropout and failure with the concept that there would be hope for them. Juan, a participant from the study, shared that he went on academic dismissal and had to dropout from college for a couple of semesters. He said, “After being academically dismissed from the college for not making grades for a few semesters, I had to stop enrolling. When I returned, I was labeled as a dropout/stopout student. However, I had hope and was motivated to turn things around, but it was challenging”. Juan used his resistance capital by challenging the negative connotation of being academically dismissed. He is now a semester away from transferring to a four-year university. Other students in the study demonstrated resistance capital by challenging microaggressions and stereotypes. Their goal of transferring and being the first ones in their family to graduate with a bachelor’s degree is one of their biggest motivators in resisting obstacles that stand in front of them. The next section highlights the implications for practice,
particularly for community college practitioners, leaders, and educators working with Latino male students.

**Implications**

This section will provide the implications of the study based on the findings, discussion, and conclusion. As discussed in earlier chapters, although community colleges serve the largest number of students compared to all other higher education institutions in the nation, Latino male students transfer to four-year universities at a significantly lower rate than their peers (CCCCO, 2021). This achievement gap has contributed to negative outcomes for these males: fewer professional careers, lower paying work wages, more physically draining positions, and a more difficult time escaping the poverty cycle in which they were raised. To reiterate, the purpose of this qualitative study was to reveal the barriers of first generation Latino male community college students in order to identify ways to improve their transfer rate to a four-year university.

The first guided researcher question spoke to the challenges that Latino male students face while transferring to the CSU system. These challenges included: unclear transfer roadmap, sense of belonging, mentorship, family responsibility, financial hardships, and masculinity identity. Latino students discussed that being first generation college students and low-income were two primary impediments in their college success. Not knowing how to navigate the college environment such as visiting professor’s office hours, understanding academic policies and course transferability, made college more challenging in the beginning of their college years. In addition, being low-income and having the responsibility to juggle a job was challenging for students. Some Latino students could not turn to their family for financial support because they had their own family expenses. These challenges suggest that Latino male students are non-traditional, but yet they attend college by overcoming adversity and obstacles. The results from
this research question are important to consider, especially since the majority of Latino students enroll in a community college.

Findings from research question one has implications for community college practitioners, educators, and leaders who want to support Latino male students through their education journey. Furthermore, these findings help inform the struggles, both personal and academic that Latino male students encounter while being enrolled at the college. Community college leaders should highly consider all of these challenges and begin implementing new forms of structures to better support these students while also dismantling practices that impede Latino male students from succeeding. For example, revising financial aid structures and increasing the access of funds for these students so that they do not have to determine whether to attend class or work. Lastly, utilizing Yosso’s (2005) six forms of social capital while working with Latino males will be instrumental rather than seeing them as students who come to college with deficiencies from their community.

The second research question asks students about their community college engagement with transfer and overall students support services. Several themes that emerged from the data included: counseling, equity support programs, and transfer engagement. The results indicated that less than half of Latino male students participated in some form of campus engagement besides attending class. Those that reported attending a transfer workshop or event, were also part of equity support programs and utilized counseling. Is important for college students to show behavioral engagement with the campuses because they will be more likely to excel academically and have a stronger sense of collection with the campus. Like researchers suggest, Hatch, (2017) and Culver et al (2022), student engagement attributes to higher student success outcomes. These findings display that Latino male students are connecting and formulating
relationships with others in college and as a result, they are isolated during this time of online services.

The data results have implications for community college personnel, particularly those working in student services. Due to the disconnect of Latino male students with virtual student support services, it calls to question the degree in which individuals from student support services outreached and specifically targeted one of the most marginalized student communities on-campus, Latino male students. In the same token, did these students have access to technology such as a computer and internet to work effectively during a time of in-person service closure? These findings are also important because it informs community college personnel that Latino male students are less likely to partake in online engagement opportunities especially those that were not already part of an equity support program. Realizing that online services may hinder access to certain students, is fundamental to pivot and be innovative in establishing online engagement opportunities for Latino students.

The third research question requires students to identify what services they would need to successfully complete their goal of transfer to a CSU. The four themes that were gathered were: building positive client relationships and designated counselors, establishing a center for Latino students, greater in-reach to Latino students, and mentorship opportunities. Many Latino students expressed that they need a counselor assigned to them. An assigned counselor would have more time to connect and establish a relationship with their students than a non-designated counselor. Further, having an assigned counselor will provide students with greater access. Students will not need to wait weeks for a counseling appointment, and counselors with an assigned caseload of students will allow them to interact with their students outside of counseling appointments. Programs in student services that support first generation and low-income
students like EOPs and The Puente Project, have assigned counselors to students. They participate in college field trips as well as provide workshops and events to their students. This identifiable need by Latino male students also relates to their other needs of wanting more mentorship and building a center for them. Ultimately, Latino male students expressed that they need a space and people to connect with them.

Similarly, to the findings from the other research questions, research question three has implications of community college leaders. More than half of students indicated one or more of the four themes: more mentorship, creating a Latino center, outreaching to enrolled Latino students, and having a designated counselor. Their needs suggest that Latino male students feel isolated and not connected to the campus. It is the responsibility of community college leaders to help build a sense of belonging and community with these students, regardless if it is online or in-person. These students need to feel that they are part of the institution and that the institution cares for them. Structuring a space that has designated counselors who are ethnically diverse and want to support disproportionately impacted students such as Latino males, would improve the success outcomes of these students.

**Recommendations**

The enrollment of Latinx students in postsecondary education, particularly in California Community Colleges (CCCs) where they make up 45% of the student demographic have been the largest that have been seen (Reddy & Siqueiros, 2021). This number will only continue to increase as the state continues to see an overwhelming number of the Latinx population occupying rural areas. Therefore, it is crucial that community college stakeholders comprehend the lived experiences, challenges, and needs that Latino male students have shared throughout the study. The following recommendations set forth by the researcher stem from the findings,
implications, and conclusions from this study. Additionally, these recommendations are not only suggested by the researcher, but by the students themselves.

**Recommendations for Action in the Field of Community College Practice**

A recommendation and a common theme among participants is the need for the college, particularly those in the president’s cabinet and others who hold leadership roles to establish a center or program that is designed for Latino male students. A center or program design can be similar to that of The Puente Project. The Puente Project is built on a foundation of offering wrap-around services and a case management model that include academic and personal counseling, English, and mentorship. The Puente Project also exposes students to four-year universities by taking their students to campus field trips. Ramírez (2011), found that students who participated in The Puente Project did not only have four-year university exposure, but the program also valued and leveraged four forms of CCW: aspirational, familial, resistant, and cultural capital. As stated by Ramírez (2011), “students felt that they were part of an extended family on campus and felt supported and encouraged by both Puente counselors and the assigned English instructor” (p. 228). Emulating a program or center with similar pillars as The Puente Project is highly recommended. This Latino male program or center should provide mentorship opportunities, panels of Latino males from the community, university campus trips, and workshops on self-identity. Several students mentioned that it should be catered for Latino male students, while others advocated for the center to be for all Latino students regardless of gender identity. Nonetheless, this group of students need to have a sense of belonging to the campus, meet other students who they share similar backgrounds with, and for the college to recognize their cultural identity. The findings suggest that a vast majority of Latino male students believe that the college does not recognize their identity, feel isolated and need connection, particularly
with other Latino students. Newman et al., (2015) and Urias et al., (2006) highlight the importance of community college students having a sense of belonging at their school. Students that feel included in their education and have a sense of belonging to the campus, are predictors of engagement in and outside of the classroom, higher grades, persistence, and completion of their educational goals (Gopalan and Brady, 2020).

Another recommendation is to provide access and increase the number of students in equity programs, particularly Latino males by outreaching to prospective and currently enrolled students. This recommendation is for equity program coordinators such as EOPS, DSPS, and RISE and those faculty and staff that work in these programs. The data reported that only four from the ten participants were either part of an equity program, worked on-campus or both. Suarez (2003), highlights that although equity support programs are favored by college administration and staff, their access to students is often limited because students are either not aware of programs or are unable to enroll due to the application requirements and timing. As such, revising and enhancing the types of in-reach structures that equity programs have available for students may increase success outcomes for Latino male students.

A third recommendation is to enlarge the number of Latino students who receive financial assistance and provide them with on-campus scholarships that support their educational goals. This recommendation is particularly meant for policy makers in the Student Aid Commission (CSAC) and directors in financial aid offices that help disseminate student aid. All students that participated in this study faced financial hardship at one point in their education and as a result they worked part-time or full-time. Data gathered from this theme informed that students’ economic necessity negatively influenced 90% of students’ academic success. This data is supported by Carales (2020) who illustrated that socioeconomic status of middle and high
class were predictors of degree completion. Despite students realizing that working would hinder their aspirational goals in college, they did not have the luxury of not being employed since their family depended on them for economic assistance. As documented by Abrica & Martinez (2016), some of the financial challenges that Latinos experience while in college, ranged from not having enough money to purchase groceries to paying for rent at an apartment.

Consequently, these Latino males did not see another way of orchestrating their economic situation, but by working while enrolled in college. For example, Michael said, “I mean honestly if work took up less of my time, I would be much more productive academically, but work is a necessity”. Evidently, low socioeconomic Latino male students are not receiving sufficient financial aid while attending college. This is supported by Núñez et al. (2013) who reported that Latino students on average receive the lowest amount of financial aid and experience the highest poverty rate. This recommendation calls for questions on the governmental financial aid structures that are implemented by school institutions and their lack of funding to these groups of students.

Lastly, below are three additional recommendations based on the findings from this study. These three specific actionable items should be implemented at Northern College to increase the success outcomes of disadvantaged groups of students.

1) Enhance the delivery of student service across the college from the receptionist answering a phone call to the faculty member helping the student during office hours. A well thought-out and developed student service plan that can be implemented during orientation of new hires and revisited prior to the start of every semester during the colleges’ convocation. This recommendation should be implemented by the president’s cabinet and be enforced by college’s administration such as vice presidents and deans.

2) Increase the number of full-time counseling faculty members to meet the demand of students and establish a case management model for counselors to directly work with disproportionately impacted students such as Latino male students. Also, include paid by-weekly training for all counseling faculty including adjuncts, so that delivery of information to students remains constant among all the counselors. This recommendation
is meant for a variety of college personnel including district chancellor, college president, vice president of student services, dean of counseling, and counseling faculty chair.

3) Provide greater outreach to currently enrolled students about on-campus support services by increasing the number of presentations in the classroom and being outside in the quad sharing information about their program to students. On-campus college directors and coordinators overseeing equity support programs need to create a robust in-reach recruitment process that targets currently enrolled students.

**Recommendations for Further Research**

Conducting research on the impact that the pandemic had on Latino male student’s mental health was generated by the findings of this study. Latino male students reporting mental health is not typical because it is stigmatized within their community. However, in this study, a couple of participants indicated that a challenge they have experienced is mental health. Two students in particular discussed that they have had mental health breakdowns. Although they did not go into specifics about their situation, they shared that it had to do because they felt overwhelmed with their school, work, and life obligations. It is important that students, especially these males, who have ingrained a traditional form of masculinity identity, realize their mental state of mind, so that their next step towards recovery is seeking assistance.

Historically minimal attention has been given to this topic. However, as recent research is becoming available, particularly during this time of the pandemic, mental health has developed into a trending topic. Madrigal and Blevins (2021) research on college students during the pandemic, indicated negative emotion and mental health as one of the most common challenges that students face. Negative emotion and mental health consisted of students feeling anxious, depressed, feared, sad, angry, and stressed from the pandemic. Similarly, a nation-wide study by Kim et al. (2022) reported that the pandemic may have had an impact on college students’ psychological disorders, which have gone untreated. Although these studies revolve around
mental health, they are generalized and are not tailored to the Latino male mental health experiences.

A second recommendation for further research is to investigate Latino male students and their transfer patterns and challenges to the University of California (UC). This study only looked at students that plan on transferring to their local CSU using the ADT. As such, there is an opportunity to replicate this study to students only transferring to the UC system. Minimal to no research has been conducted on the challenges that Latino male students face in the transfer process to a UC. The UC system does have a different admissions application, transfer requirements, and some UC’s have a Transfer Admissions Guarantee (TAG), which is similar to the ADT for the CSU. It is important to examine this area of transfer among the Latino male student population as well since it is different from the CSU system. Further, investigating this area of transfer may shed light on the challenges that students face, which may result in recommendations for community colleges leaders.

Lastly the purpose of this study was to analyze, from a Latino male perspective, the degree to which the ADT has supported or hinder their transfer mobility. Students reported a sense of confusion whether they were following the ADT pathway or the regular associate’s degree. However, they knew that they wanted to transfer to their local four-year university, CSU, Jackson. Since it seemed confusing for students to understand the ADT pathway, a recommendation for further research is to analyze the transfer rates of Latino male students that completed an ADT from a quantitative perspective. Quantitative research from Hackbarth (2016) and Hsu (2019) has suggested that ADTs are predictive of transfer and students who declare and earn an ADT have a shorter time completing a baccalaureate degree compared to those who do not declare a goal of obtaining an ADT and transfer without an ADT. However, is
it important that further research examine the ADT data by ethnicity and gender to determine if this transfer pathway benefits Latino male students.

**Conclusion**

The purpose of study was to reveal the barriers that first generation Latino male community college students face and to identify ways to improve their transfer mobility to the four-year university. The following three research questions were discussed based on themes that were generated from the student data:

1.) What are the challenges, if any, perceived by first generation community college Latino males at a Northern California community college district, as they transfer to a California State University using the Associate Degree Transfer?

2.) What types of community college services or engagement opportunities, if any, do first generation Latino males believe had a positive influence on their ability to transfer to a four-year university?

3.) What are the services that first generation Latino male students identify as needing as they attempt to transfer to California State University?

The findings and discussion from this study revealed that Latino male students had a wide range of challenges stemming from environmental to academic challenges. Additionally, findings suggest that many Latino male students are disengaged from campus support services which may be due to the COVID – 19 pandemic and virtual services. A third component from the findings suggest that Latino male students need a sense of belonging. Latino male students can be supported by establishing a Latino center, greater mentorship opportunities, and designated counselors, which can help with their isolation from the campus.

An integration of the CCW framework was woven in this chapter and brought to the forefront in how Latino male students showcase all six forms of capital. The researcher shared several implications for community college leaders based on the findings from each of the
research questions. Numerous recommendations are provided for community college leaders including: an establishment of a Latino center, creating a case management model for counselors targeting Latino male students, providing greater out-reach to enrolled Latino male students, and increasing visibility of career services for Latino male students. In addition, the researcher laid out two recommendations for further research: Examining Latino male students' mental health post-pandemic and the experiences of Latino male students who plan to transfer to a UC.
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doi:10.1080/10668920903054931


[Date]

Dear [student name],

My name is Abraham Madrigal, a doctoral candidate in the Educational Leadership and Innovation program at University of the Pacific. Most community college Latino males are not able to transfer to a CSU within a two-year timeframe. As such, I am researching the challenges that community college Latino males face as they attempt to transfer to a CSU while being on the Associate Degree for Transfer (ADT) pathway.

I am inviting you to participate in my research study. The interview will be 30 – 45 minutes long via Zoom. Once you have confirmed your participation, we will set up a day and time. I will then send you the zoom meeting details. The ten participants will receive a $20 credit visa card. The following criteria must be meet to qualify for the study:

- First generation college student,
- Latino/Hispanic male,
- Desire to transfer to a CSU,
- Has been attending community college for one year or more
- And plans on earning an ADT from community college

Your participation in this study will remain confidential. Names will not be shared nor will they be attached to any notes, recordings, or transcriptions from the interview. Interview files will remain locked and only access to me. In addition, you will be free to stop the interview and withdrawal from the study at any time during the process.

If you would like to participate in this study or have any questions, please email me at <email address> or <phone number>. Your insight is very valuable to this study.

Sincerely,

Abraham Madrigal
Doctorate Candidate, University of the Pacific
APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Introduction and Description of Study:
I greatly appreciate you for taking the time for this interview. As part of this study, I am interviewing first generation community college Latino male students who have indicated their intent to transfer to a four-year university while being part of the Associate Degree for Transfer (ADT) pathway. The purpose of my dissertation is to reveal the barriers of first generation Latino male community college students in order to identify ways to improve their transfer rate to a four-year university. The interview might take a maximum of 45 minutes, in which at any point you are free to withdraw your participation.

Informed Content:
Before moving forward with the survey, I would like to remind you that your participation in this study will remain confidential. No names will be mentioned in the study, but rather participants will be given a pseudonym during the transcription and recording process to maintain record and review for accuracy.

When I sent you the Zoom meeting details, I also included the informed consent. Do you have any questions regarding the form?

The following questions that I will begin to ask are intended for discussion flow not to make you feel unconformable. At any point you are free to skip a question or withdraw from the study. With your permission, I would like to audio record this interview using the Zoom recording feature. Do I have your permission?

Survey:

Background:

1) Tell me about yourself?
   Probe questions: where were you raised? What is your family size? Are you currently employed? If so, how many hours do you work a week?

2) Tell me about your education?
   Probe questions: where did you graduate high school? Did you take a break between high and college, if so why? Have you had a break while attending college, if so why? What is your major? How many years have you been a Northern College student? Have you been a full-time student throughout your time at Northern College??

   What are your reasons for attending college & why do you want to transfer? Talk a little about your college experience so far.

Challenges to Transfer:
1) As a first-generation college student, can you please describe what have been some of the challenges that have kept you from transferring to a four-year university?

Probe question: Have you experienced any academic challenges while in your transfer process? (low GPA, not re-enrolling each semester, lack of mentorship, undecided on transfer major, not enough transfer credits, not connecting with faculty members)

Probe question: As a first-generation Latino male, what outside of the education environment, if any, has impacted your transfer to a four-year university? (Family responsibilities, one or more than one job, socioeconomic status, masculinity identity, first generation)

Probe question: Have you faced any challenges understanding the transfer process? If so, share some of your challenges.

Transfer Engagement Opportunities:

1) Besides attending classes, what other transfer related engagement opportunities have you participated in?

Probe Question: Have you participated in support services such as EOPs, DSPS, Transfer Center, counseling, tutoring, and veterans resource center? If yes, to what degree have these influenced your transfer process?

Probe question: Does your school offer and have you participated in a male initiative program? If yes, tell me about your experience? If not, what recommendations would you have if your college wanted to build one?

Probe question: Have you participated in any transfer related events? If so, share those events and your experience? If not, why haven’t you attended any transfer events?

Probe question: How did you learn about the ADT pathway? What drew your attention about this pathway?

Services Needed:

1) As a first-generation Latino male college student, what do you believe can help you complete the transfer process?

2) What can the community college do to help students like yourself transfer?

Probe question: How can the college better prepare and support first generation and Latino male students to transfer?

Additional Information:
If there anything else you want to add that relates to your transfer process and was not covered in the questions?
APPENDIX C: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Research Title: Exploring the lived experiences of first-generation community college Latino male students attempting to transfer to a four-year university

Lead Researcher: Abraham Madrigal

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Nancy Huante-Tzintzun

RESEARCH DESCRIPTION: You are being invited to voluntarily participate in a research study on the lived experiences of community college Latino males that want to transfer a four-year university. The purpose of this qualitative study is to reveal the barriers of Latino male college students in order to identify ways to improve their transfer rate. You will be asked to partake in a Zoom video appointment in which will be recorded by audio. The audio recordings and transcripts of interviews will only be available to the lead researcher, Abraham Madrigal, will be kept in secured files and will only be used beyond the purpose of the study. After three years study completion, all files of the study will be destroyed.

TIME INVOLVEMENT: Your participation will take approximately 45 minutes in length.

RISKS AND BENEFITS: Although there are no foreseen risks with this study, students will be asked to share about their past educational challenges which may result in an increase of stress. The benefits which may reasonably be expected to result from this study include generating a collective of themes that students perceive as barriers to transfer and identifiable services that students need to help in their transfer process. This will inform stakeholders of suggestions and recommendations to improve the transfer process at the college. Your decision whether or not to participate in this study will not affect your grades in school or any other benefits to which you are entitled.

COMPENSATION: You will receive a $20 visa gift card as payment for your participation.

PARTICIPANT’S RIGHTS: If you have read this form and have decided to participate in this research project, you understand that your participation is entirely voluntary and your decision whether or not to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you decide to participate, you are free to discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You have the right to refuse to answer particular questions. The results of this research study will be published in a scientific journal. It is possible that we may decide that your participation in this research is not appropriate. If that happens, you will be dismissed from the study. In any event, we appreciate your willingness to participate in this research.

CONFIDENTIALITY: Confidentiality to your personal information is one of the most important aspects
about conducting this study. We will take the necessary steps to protect information obtained in this study.

The researcher will take several measures to keep confidentiality including not disclosing your name in any reports instead a pseudonym will be used for each participant. Since the study will use Zoom for audio recording, the digital files obtained will be stored in a flash memory device which the researcher will store securely in a lock cabinet only handled by the researcher. After three years of the study being completed, the data will be destroyed.

**CONTACT INFORMATION:**

**Questions:** If you have any questions, concerns or complaints about this research, its procedures, risks and benefits, contact the Lead Researcher or the Faculty Research Advisor, Dr. Huante-Tzintzun

**Independent Contact:** If you are not satisfied with how this study is being conducted, or if you have any concerns, complaints, or general questions about the research or your rights as a participant, please contact Office of Research and Sponsored Programs to speak to someone independent of the research team at (209)- 946-3903 or IRB@pacific.edu.

**Appointment Contact:** If you need to change your appointment, please contact Abraham Madrigal at (209)224-1531 or by email at a_madrigalbarajas@u.pacific.edu

I hereby consent: (Indicate **Yes** or **No**)

- To be audio/video recorded during this study.  
  ___Yes ___No
- For such audio/video records resulting from this study to be used for transcription and data analysis.  
  ___Yes ___No
- I am at least 18 years of age. Being 18 years old is required to participant in this study.  
  ___Yes ___No

The extra copy of this signed and dated consent form is for you to keep.

Your signature below indicates that you have read and understand the information provided above, that you have been afforded the opportunity to ask, and have answered, any questions that you may have, that your participation is completely voluntary, that you understand that you may withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled, that you will receive a copy of this form, and that you are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies.

**SIGNATURE** ___________________________ **DATE** ___________________________

Research Study Participant (Print Name): _______________________________________

Researcher Who Obtained Consent (Print Name): ________________________________