ASPIRANTS AND INTERLOPERS: FIRST-GENERATION, UNDERREPRESENTED,

LOW-INCOME MASTER'S STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

ASPIRANTS AND INTERLOPERS: FIRST-GENERATION, UNDERREPRESENTED, LOW-INCOME MASTER'S STUDENTS

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This thesis is based on eleven interviews with seven students enrolled in a social science master's degree program at a small public university in the Western United States (University of the Northwest - UNW). My analysis details the differences in pathways and educational experiences between first- and continuing-generation students in this program. I found that first-generation, underrepresented, low-income (FGULI) students expressed greater difficulty fitting into graduate school, greater doubt about their ability to 'do' graduate school, less comfort interacting with faculty, and less ease with the concept of graduate school and with conceptualizing themselves as graduate students than continuing-generation students (CGSs). This research is important because the master's level of graduate education is an understudied segment of higher education. Furthermore, FGULI students are more likely than continuing-generation students to choose to pursue a master's degree instead of, or before, entering a doctoral program. Bourdieusien analyses explain this education gap as an outcome of group differences in social and cultural capital: the middle- to upper-class white male social and cultural capital that is more abundant among continuing-generation students provides "distinction" in higher education and related connections to direct pathways into doctoral education. This research points to programmatic policies and structures that will likely

support the success of all master's students, but particularly that of FGULI graduate

students at this level.

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INTRODUCTION

First-generation, underrepresented, low-income students have more difficulty integrating into the culture of higher education (HE) than their continuing-generation, white, male, higher-income peers. A first-generation student is one whose parent(s) or guardian(s) did not complete a college degree. The term underrepresented refers to members of groups that were not attending college in significant numbers through the 1970s, when the modern student success programs were being researched and founded. Low-income students tend to come from the working class and usually are solely responsible for the costs of their education.

As students proceed through HE to graduate education, integration into the culture of HE becomes even more crucial to success. I engaged in this research to investigate how FGULI master's students experience graduate school and how institutions of HE approach and potentially influence FGULI master's student success. In this research, I investigated the experiences of graduate students in a social science Master of Arts (MA) program at a small public university in the Western United States. Seven master's students from University of the Northwest (UNW) participated in this study, four of them participating in two interviews early and then later during their first semester of study. My analysis details the differences in pathways and educational experiences between first- and continuing-generation students in this program, as well as their perceptions of institutional approaches and impacts on their success.

Through Bourdieusien analyses, I examine the culture of HE and its forms of distinction. I also consider other research on FGULI student success in HE. The necessity to integrate into the dominant culture of HE increases between the undergraduate to master's education, intensifying the barriers to FGULI integration (Boren 2013; Carlton 2015; Gentry and Whitley 2014; Grady et al. 2014; Jairam and Kahl 2012; Mullen, Goyette, and Soares 2003; Noy and Ray 2012; Ostrove, Stewart, and Curtin 2011; Perna 2004; Rios 2010; Schlemper 2011; Silvester, Loibl, and Roosen 2014; Stephens, Hamedani, and Destin 2014; Stewart and Dottolo 2005; Warnock and Appel 2012).

Through a literature review and interviews, I explore U.S. HE enrollment trends and college-going behavior, FGULI student experiences in HE, and approaches for improving their experiences and outcomes. I highlight a number of findings related to the FGULI graduate school experience. Higher education is based on and informed by middle- to upper-class white men's values and disadvantages those who did not grow up in that culture. As a result of that sometimes hostile culture, FGULI students' trajectory through HE lags behind that of CGSs. There are programs meant to narrow that gap, though some of them are based in outdated research and questionable theoretical foundations. Moreover, busy FGULI master's students often don't have time to engage in many of the activities provided by these programs primarily designed to address gaps for undergraduate students.

Though FGULIs face challenges in HE in general, graduate school poses particular challenges. Research from the past few decades has resulted in approaches that

show promise in addressing the needs of FGULI students. Recent approaches to FGULI success could be effective in mitigating for all students, but particularly for FGULIs, the challenges of a master's education driven by dominant cultural values and norms.

The growing body of research into FGULI success is concentrated on undergraduate and doctoral students, largely ignoring those in master's degree programs. While one might extrapolate the master's student experience from the research on undergraduate and doctoral students, the master's experience itself is unique. Furthermore, the master's degree is a more common graduate degree choice for FGULI students (Millett 2003). There are several reasons we need more research about FGULI experiences at the master's level. Master's program enrollments in general have been expanding. For financial reasons, a growing proportion of FGULIs are enrolling in master's programs. Overall, underrepresented student enrollment has been expanding in the past few decades. From 1976 to 2014, black and Latinx college student numbers have increased in HE by around 400% (NCES 2016). The number of women attending college has also increased (women now outnumber men), and the proportion of whites in HE has dropped from 84 percent in 1976 to 58 percent in 2014 (NCES 2016).

With this many FGULI students in HE, it is important to understand their unique needs. Researchers have found evidence of a relationship between global economic trends, graduate school enrollment, and aspects of the FGULI experience which would indicate the attractiveness of obtaining a master's degree rather than going directly from a baccalaureate program into a doctoral program (Millett 2003). Available research about

master's programs indicates that they are uniquely suited to FGULIs because of these students' levels of financial, cultural, and social capital.

In Conrad, Haworth, and Millar's (1993) book about master's education, *A Silent Success*, the authors recount a short history of HE. According to these authors, the first multi-disciplinary universities were founded as early as the 12th century. Yet higher education as we know it today began around the time of the Industrial Revolution, 1865-1910. Nation-state economies were changing, requiring new forms of education that catered to the needs of the global economy (Conrad et al. 1993). The need for greater vocational applications rather than a primarily 'classical curriculum' shifted the focus of universities (Conrad et al. 1993).

A similar trend has been seen in the decades before and after the onset of the 21st century, as discussed by Laura Pappano (2011). In her article: "The Master's as the New Bachelor's," Pappano describes economic effects on degree attainment. First, institutions of HE are turning out more bachelor's degrees than the market can bear, creating a push effect toward a higher sorting mechanism: master's degrees (Pappano 2011). Second, many of the jobs in our current economy require a skillset so specific, it cannot be gained at the undergraduate level (ibid.). These economic conditions are similar to those described by Conrad et al. in creating the first (1865-1910) and second (1970-1990) expansions of master's programs (1993).

Morgan Teressa Carlton also finds large-scale economic fluctuations driving graduate program enrollment trends (2015). Carlton cites the *Washington Post's* contention that the bachelor's degree is the new high school diploma (ibid.) and a Bureau

of Labor Statistics report that bachelor's degrees do not confer the competitive advantage and job stability they once provided (ibid.). Carlton goes on to cite research finding that there are more advanced skills required of the modern workforce and this global economic trend acts as a push factor in graduate school enrollment (ibid.). Increased enrollment, Carlton continues, leads to an increase in graduate program competitiveness (ibid.).

Scott Davies and Floyd Hammack also point to global economic forces driving an increase in enrollment and competitiveness in North American institutions of HE to keep up with "an emerging 'knowledge economy'" (2005:89). From 1990-2010, HE enrollment grew, leading to greater institutional selectivity and stratification and, as the authors assert, competitiveness, both among students and between universities for funding (Davies and Hammack 2005). The authors note also a concurrent increase in tuition in universities in the US and Canada (ibid.). When enrollment expands, credential inflation occurs, by which the value of a degree begins to decline, necessitating the pursuit of advanced degrees (ibid.).

In other words, as the market is flooded with bachelor's degree holders, the occupational opportunities made available with a bachelor's degree decrease and students increasingly pursue graduate degrees (ibid.). Similar enrollment expansion trends have been observed in other countries as well. In Australia, researchers are finding that increases in enrollment are driving an unprecedented expansion in master's degree seekers (Forsyth et al. 2009). Expansion in enrollment is creating increased differentiation between baccalaureate and post-baccalaureate education (ibid.).

Marilyn Gilroy, a researcher of graduate education trends and statistics, also finds that students are feeling the shift in the economy and are responding by enrolling in graduate education: "the increasingly complex economic environment means that students can no longer assume a bachelor's degree is enough to stay competitive in the work force" (2016:1). Gilroy finds that there is a "high demand" for master's degree programs because they can bring economic gains through more desirable employment (2016:2). According to Dr. William Pepicello, president of the University of Phoenix, the master's degree "is the new standard people need to progress in their careers" (Gilroy 2016:4).

The field of HE is based in cultural values that seem alien to many FGULI students. Their struggle to adopt forms of capital and adjust their habitus represents a standpoint faculty and administrators would benefit from comprehending. With the growing importance of a master's degree in establishing and maintaining a baseline standard of living and providing a step out of poverty for underrepresented, low-income people, now is the time to examine FGULI experiences in master's education. This paper is a first step in understanding FGULI master's student experiences and how they conceptualize and navigate graduate school. From the first tentative expressions of desire to earn an MA to the labyrinth of responsibilities, interactions, novel events, and milestones that constitute participation in a master's program, FGULI students convey hope, fear, strength, and, overall, adaptation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Pierre Bourdieu and Vince Tinto were contemporaries researching HE in the 1970s from different theoretical perspectives. Tinto conceptualized attrition through Durkheim's theory of suicide and integration through Van Gennep's theory of rites of passage (Fischer 2007; Rendón, Jalomo, and Nora 2000). While Tinto understood college integration as a transition by which one leaves one life behind to find another life, in other words, as a process of assimilation by which students gain social mobility, Bourdieu conceptualized institutions of HE as social and cultural gatekeepers, safeguarding the status quo of social immobility. Tinto took a structural-functionalist perspective, asserting that assimilation to the culture of HE was beneficial for the student while not challenging that culture, thereby preserving social stability. Bourdieu, on the other hand, coming from a background in critical theory, challenged the dominant cultural foundation of HE and its role in the preservation of social inequality.

From these two theoretical perspectives come two somewhat related ways to view college success. From Tinto, we can understand college integration as a process of leaving behind one's home culture to take on the culture of HE. Bourdieu would agree with this process, but through Bourdieu we could glimpse the raced, gendered, and classed hegemonies of the institution and make the case for institutional transformation. Through ethnography, Bourdieu found that schools reproduce upper-middle-class culture and that lower- and working-class students withdraw from that culture and have lower rates of success than their higher-class peers. Bourdieu, through this empirical research,

determined that "universal pedagogy" is needed, though the education system is structurally resistant to this change in direction (Nash 1990:436).

Bourdieu

Applying a critical theory analysis to education, Bourdieu found that institutions not only reproduce, but reinforce social inequality. Educational institutions are mechanisms by which the upper classes receive a degree for demonstrating their learned cultural capital and continue their trajectory of upward mobility; in this way, the myth of meritocracy gains credibility (Bourdieu 1986; Dumais, Kessinger, and Ghosh 2012; Edgerton and Roberts 2014; Hong and Youngs 2008; Lareau and Weininger 2003; Sullivan 2001 and 2002). Bourdieu's concepts of social and cultural capital, habitus, and field are particularly useful in the context of student development.

Social and Cultural Capital, Habitus, and Field

Social and Cultural Capital

Bourdieu defines social capital as access to relationships which bestow social credit on the holder (1986). As Bourdieu describes it, social capital requires constant sociability, an active process requiring time, effort, and energy: "a continuous series of exchanges in which recognition is endlessly affirmed and reaffirmed" (1986:22). The acquisition of social capital requires a learned disposition toward sociability and skill at obtaining and maintaining relationships (Bourdieu 1986).

Cultural capital is understood as the degree of familiarity an individual holds with the dominant culture, passed on from parents to children (Bourdieu 1986). Bourdieu

asserts that ability and talent can be seen as a result of cultural capital, as children are better able to develop in areas to which their parents regularly expose them (1986). Cultural capital is not only intellectual, but also embodied (Bourdieu 1986). One's class can be betrayed by posture, gait, or a hand gesture. Overcoming the cultural capital an individual learns in the home can take practice, concentration, and training – in short, time, effort, and energy (Bourdieu 1986).

It is through the variability of social and cultural capital that Bourdieusien researchers Annette Lareau and Erin McNamara Horvat find a point of entry for researchers to examine race and gender through the theories of Bourdieu, to be discussed in the Bourdieusien Gender and Race Theories section. I use the term 'Bourdieusien' because it is seen as the correct French term meaning 'of or about Bourdieu' (BSA 2012). It is important to note about social and cultural capital that, "rather than being an overly deterministic continual process, reproduction [or activation] is jagged and uneven and is continually renegotiated by social actors" (Lareau and Horvat 1999:38). Learning classed forms and levels of social or cultural capital as a child does not in all cases necessarily translate into facility in their activation or even knowledge of the proper contexts in which that activation should occur (Lareau and Horvat 1999). As noted by Bourdieu, appropriate use of forms of capital requires practice (Bourdieu 1986).

Habitus

Bourdieu's concept of habitus describes a complex and prolonged interaction between society and individual; a subconscious dialectic of patterned and spontaneous attitudes and behaviors, boundless possibilities and possible boundaries; an eternal

moment consisting of the past, the present, and the future. Bourdieu asserts that the range of messages individuals receive through social construction allows a commensurate range of actions and attitudes on the part of the agent. Or, in Bourdieu's words, habitus is "the durably installed generative principle of regulated improvisations" (1977:78).

In planning their futures, students do not choose from every possible option, but from every option which is perceived as possible *for them.* Bourdieu describes this phenomenon as the *hysteresis effect*, which he explains is the: "lag between opportunities and the dispositions to grasp them" (1977:83). The perception of potential futures possible for an individual is a function of habitus: "through the mediation of the specifically familial manifestations of [economic and social necessity] (sexual division of labour, domestic morality, cares, strife, tastes, etc.), produce the structures of the habitus which become in turn the basis of perception and appreciation of all subsequent experience" (Bourdieu 1977:78). Bourdieu is not saying here that structures cause families to train their children to perceive this or that, but that families may act as prisms through which experiences of the social world are understood and form the habitus.

Bourdieu describes the formation of habitus as the unconscious interpreting of experiences and information through one's life conditions to produce an undetectable schema of possibilities which guide dispositions, behavior, attitudes, and preferences (1977; 1990). Habitus plays a role in social reproduction by presenting as 'common-sense' the range of possibilities available to an individual based on their perception of what a person 'like them' does or doesn't do (Bourdieu 1977; 1990). Bourdieu contrasts decision-making through habitus with scientific analysis of probabilities, suggesting that

habitus draws on multiple and sometimes conflicting past messages and experiences to prompt action, unlike the methodical, mechanistic statistical analysis of precise and established data (1977; 1990). Habitus, Bourdieu asserts, is "the internalization of externality," (1990:55) by which social forces have influence, but only to the extent that this influence makes sense to the individual.

Dumais (2002) underlines the importance of Bourdieu's concept of habitus by explaining that the habitus orients the application of cultural capital. The habitus, as a conglomeration of past experiences acting as a loose guide for decisions about possible futures, may steer individuals to consider how and when and where and even whether to use the cultural capital they possess. As habitus is the result of socialization, Dumais notes that two people from the same social class may have different habitus (2002). Dumais also argues that, in the US, habitus may be a more relevant concept than cultural capital in examining student performance in HE (2002).

> In the United States, then, it may not be so much whether one participates
> in cultural activities, but whether one has the habitus that leads one to
> expect an upper-white-collar career, that affects educational success and,
> in the case of social class, perpetuates the existing stratification structure."
> (Dumais 2002:57)

Field

Bourdieu and Wacquant define field as "a patterned system of objective forces (much in the manner of a magnetic field), a relational configuration endowed with a specific gravity which it imposes on all the objects and agents which enter in it" (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992:16). As opposed to seeing the social world as a uniform 'society,' Bourdieu conceives of various fields, each with a set of procedures and

attributes, roles and struggles specific to that field. A field is the product "of a long, slow process of autonomization" (Bourdieu 1990:67), by which it evolves from a loose collection of activities and purposes to become its own autonomous realm with rules and laws, a site of contestation and upheaval, which may overlap and interact with other fields.

Essential to the concepts of cultural capital and habitus, a field is a site in which specific forms of cultural capital may be valued or rejected and in which one consults habitus in order to navigate (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992; Mills 2008). Habitus and field are also related in that, to Bourdieu, they both represent "bundles of relations" (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992:16). Forms of capital, habitus, and fields interact with and impact each other in intricate ways; fields are formed, sustained, and at times reformed through the activation and acquisition of forms of capital and, alternately, fields pattern the realm of possibilities for reformation perceived through the habitus (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992; Mills 2008; Reay, Crozier, and Clayton 2009). Wacquant clearly states that the concept of habitus is incomplete without "the notion of structure that makes room for the organized improvisation of agents" and the concept of field is incomplete without agency (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992:19).

As Dumais showed the interconnectedness of cultural capital and habitus, Carmen Mills (2008) underscores the link between the concepts of habitus and field. Mills indicates that practices do not manifest solely from habitus, but from the interplay of habitus and the particular fields with which individuals interact (2008). These interactions are patterned by the distribution of resources and forms of capital (Mills

2008). Reay, Crozier, and Clayton add to the discussion of this dynamic relationship by examining Bourdieu's contention that fields may be sites for habitus transformation (2009). Reay et al. studied working-class, first-generation students at an elite university and explored the ways they creatively adapted their habitus to their new field (Reay et al. 2009). The authors found that students were able to re-orient their habitus to better fit into the new field while retaining aspects of their working-class habitus (Reay et al. 2009).

Students in their study showed resilience and adaptability; due, according to the authors, to the fact that they had begun to work on re-orienting their habitus in childhood because of their early interest in schooling (Reay et al. 2009). This evinces the dynamic interplay between habitus and field, as working-class, first-generation students adjusted their class-influenced habitus to obtain forms of capital valued in education and use these strategies to adapt to the field of elite HE. Some students reported this early experience of obtaining cultural capital and adjusting habitus caused them discomfort in childhood. As one participant reports of their experience navigating both their working-class field and the field of education: "I never ever fitted in" (Reay et al. 2009:1106). Another participant reports that when he was 13, a fellow student called him a nerd and told him he was supposed to go on welfare when he grows up, not pursue HE (Reay et al. 2009). This shows the power of habitus to shape perceptions of possibilities, aspirations, and preferences, which some accept without question and others work to re-orient (ibid.).

Bourdieusien Gender and Race Theories

Bourdieusien theorists use the concepts of social and cultural capital, habitus, and field, which Bourdieu theorized in relation to social class, to examine the experiences of people of color and women in HE. What these researchers find is that race and gender impact students' experiences in sometimes similar ways to the way Bourdieu found class impacted students' lives. In many instances, researchers find that the effects of race and gender can supersede the effects of class. For example, Bourdieusien race researchers find that white instructors may block cultural capital application attempts by people of color and Bourdieusien gender researchers find that the acquisition of social and cultural capital through student-faculty interaction is a very different experience for women and men. Examining students of color and women students' experiences in HE, Bourdieusien gender and race researchers add richness, depth, and broader applicability to Bourdieu's concepts.

Bourdieusien Gender Theories

Feminist theorists have a complicated response to Bourdieu's treatment of gender, generally due to issues related to agency, embodiment, habitus, and the primacy he placed on class in relation to race and gender in impacting lived experience (Lovell 2000; McCall 1992). However, McCall asserts that feminists might find common ground with Bourdieu through his "epistemological and methodological approach to social science research" (1992:837) informing his contention that theory and politics are embedded in social relations, which speaks to reflexivity. In feminist research, reflexivity is

considered crucial in unveiling previously unexamined Eurocentric and androcentric

assumptions in scientific research (McCall 1992). Reflexivity is necessary to lessen the

influence of power and politics in knowledge creation (McCall 1992). Andrea Allard

(2005) contends that Bourdieu's concept of habitus is generative rather than deterministic

in her examination of marginalized young Australian women of low SES. Allard finds

that social support can be highly effective in aiding poor, marginalized women in

adapting their habitus and accruing the social capital necessary to navigate various fields

successfully (2005).

Bourdieusien gender researchers describe that cultural capital, through habitus,

may take different forms and be sourced and applied in different ways even among

individuals with similar backgrounds. In her study of the effects of parental occupation,

social and cultural capital, and gender on the life choices of working-class Finnish youth,

Tarja Tolonen evokes Diane Reay to explain that thorough reading of Bourdieu's concept

of habitus can disabuse researchers of assumptions of determinism in Bourdieu's theory

(Tolonen 2005). Bourdieu explained that habitus is experienced through choices even

when individuals are entirely unaware of its influence (Tolonen 2005). Social and

cultural capital are also employed more or less unconsciously; the decisions feel natural

(Tolonen 2005).

Tolonen's study demonstrates the agentic nature of habitus in the face of

sometimes very similar socialization. Similar to Allard's Australian study, many of

Tolonen's low-income women participants came from families with high levels of

substance use and had taken over family and home care duties, which they learned from

their mothers, when their parents' addictions caused them to be unable to carry out these duties (2005). Tolonen posited that it was through the habitus that young women in her study perceived which futures were possible for them (2005). While some chose higher-income careers through HE, others eschewed HE and remained in lower-paying jobs (Tolonen 2005).

Susan A. Dumais similarly explains the concept of habitus as a site where gender socialization impacts the acquisition and use of cultural capital (2002). Going beyond theorizing habitus, Dumais, through Mickelson, operationalizes the concept, creating a measure for habitus in her study of gendered difference in school performance by examining occupational expectations (Dumais 2002). Dumais describes how occupational expectations may illuminate the role of habitus in educational attainment: young women receive many different messages about women in society which may be incorporated into the habitus in their formative years and throughout their lives (2002). The development of the habitus is largely an unconscious process, which helps explain how individuals may internalize sometimes conflicting social messages.

Mickelson suggests that women students have integrated into their habitus gendered socialization about women and education that can be empowering or discouraging or both at different times in different situations, affecting their accumulation and application of cultural capital (Dumais 2002). The creation of the habitus through gendered socialization influences a gendered perception of possible occupational opportunities (Dumais 2002). If a woman student has internalized the message that women are not as analytical as men, for example, she may not consider a career in

STEM, influencing her educational decisions and possibly her future income potential.

And, rather than see this career choice as a result of gendered socialization, a young

woman might perceive this decision to be merely her own 'natural-born' tastes or

dispositions (Dumais 2002). Dumais' study found that women were more likely to

engage in cultural activities and activate their cultural capital to improve HE performance

and that men were less likely to have engaged in cultural activities before and during

their HE careers (2002). The author suggests that habitus plays a dominant role in these

choices through socialization of traditional gender roles, which may steer cultural capital

accumulation and application (Dumais 2002).

<u>Bourdieusien Race Theories</u>

Lareau and Horvat's qualitative research finds that black parents show differing

levels and forms of interaction with their grade school children's teachers (1999). The

patterns of interaction (forms and frequency of parent/ teacher interaction) matched

Bourdieu's description of cultural capital and had similar effects on black children as had

been found in previous Bourdieusien research on lower-class students (Lareau and

Horvat 1999). These patterns of interaction appear to show that "being white became a

cultural resource that white parents unconsciously drew on" (Devine-Eller 2005:5). In

subsequent research, Lareau investigated childrearing practices among a small sample of

black and white families to further tease out racialized cultural capital development and

found that parenting styles were more different along class than racial lines (2002).

While this article and later book have been criticized for insufficient attention to the

effects of racism on blacks in all social classes (Devine-Eller 2005), Lareau and Horvat

remain an important entry point for Bourdieusien race scholars.

Roscigno and Ainsworth-Darnell (1999) conducted a longitudinal study using the

National Educational Longitudinal Survey (NELS) and, later, the National Center for

Educational Statistics (NCES) survey to find that blacks have less of the forms of cultural

capital that are valued in predominantly white institutions (PWIs); furthermore, blacks

who have higher levels of the dominant forms of cultural capital (operationalized as

educational resources in the home such as computers, books, and cultural classes and

activities) reap less rewards from their cultural capital than whites. Roscigno and

Ainsworth-Darnell found that black students had lower grade point averages (GPAs) than

their white peers across SES levels and posited that there were micropolitical processes at

work between teachers and students which might account for these differences (1999).

The authors call for observation of teacher-student interactions to better understand the

nature of the micropolitical processes which lead to racial disparities in educational

outcomes (Roscigno and Ainsworth-Darnell 1999).

Harper (2008) found that black men at PWIs gained access to dominant forms of

social and cultural capital through black mentors on the faculty and by participating in

leadership, academic, and minority-centered extracurricular activities and associations.

Harper conducted interviews with 32 "high-achieving" (2008:1032) black men, as

determined by administrators in their respective universities, based on academic

performance. Harper posited that these students had, prior to attending their universities,

learned forms of social capital which, while perhaps not the dominant form practiced in

HE, were used to initiate and strengthen ties with faculty at their institutions (2008). The

students then learned from their mentors a greater facility and comfort with the form of

social capital practiced in HE (Harper 2008). In their meta-analysis of Bourdieusien race

research, Carla O'Connor, Amanda Lewis, and Jennifer Mueller (2007) caution that some

of this research can mask the heterogeneity of the black experience. The authors call for

a micro-meso-macro analysis, investigating the student, the campus climate, and the

institution of HE, to better grasp the context of black students' experiences.

Amaury Nora, creator of the Nora Student Engagement Model, operationalizes

the Bourdieusien concepts of cultural capital and habitus (much like Susan Dumais,

discussed in the previous section) to better grasp the student experience, specifically

focusing on Latinx student success and, in some studies, their participation in STEM

disciplines. Nora defines cultural capital as "a student's perception that there was

significant support and encouragement from family and community upon which a student

could draw to influence his or her desire to attend college and to formulate a support

system" (2004:182). The effect of habitus is seen in the sense of fit between the

"student's values and belief system" and the "academic environment" (Nora 2004:182).

Nora's student surveys aim to capture the role of habitus and cultural capital in student

persistence, including items which measure:

> student attitudes and behaviors regarding their college choice including
> institutional attributes, self-awareness perceptions of personal acceptance
> and safety, goals, the campus visit, precollege experiences, perceptions of
> personal support, institutional support, academic preparation, and
> extracurricular experiences. (2004:182)

Nora's definitions of the concepts of cultural capital and habitus, while useful for capturing student experiences and attempting to identify at-risk students, may not be strictly Bourdieusien. As Nora uses cultural capital, the concept drifts from a socialized disposition for classed, raced, and gendered activities, modes of interaction, and situations and toward a feeling of community support. While Nora has created what may be a more sensitive and responsive model than early Tinto instruments or deficit models, it appears to take some liberties with Bourdieu's theoretical concepts. However, survey items such as a student's sense of "personal acceptance" and "institutional support" might tease out whether the student feels comfortable with dominant forms of cultural capital in HE. "Precollege experiences" and "academic preparation" could also be illustrative of students' levels and forms of cultural capital. As Dumais used "occupational aspirations" to understand habitus in her participants, it appears "goals" in Nora's survey might serve a similar purpose. Also, student "attitudes and behaviors regarding" "institutional attributes" could show interactions with institutions possibly arising from a student's habitus.

Many theorists conduct Bourdieusien analyses aimed at understanding the social and cultural capital of communities of color and calling for HE to incorporate these other ways of being/ knowing/ learning. Strayhorn (2010) finds that lower SES black and Latino men may have acquired a form of social capital which emphasizes communitarian, interdependent values, which are not valued in HE. Similarly, Yosso (2005) finds a wealth of social and cultural capital in schools with high proportions of students of color, albeit in forms which do not carry distinction in HE. Morris (2004) expands on this

critique of the deficit model of the race-based use of Bourdieusien theory. Drawing on research into black schools founded in the pre-integration era, Morris describes an exemplary academic environment, strengthened by community interaction, civic involvement, and political engagement (2004). Morris' study of two elementary schools - almost entirely staffed, taught, and attended by blacks - found very high levels of social and cultural capital informed by interdependence and mutual uplift and support (2004). The forms of capital found at minority-serving institutions (MSIs) are in stark contrast to the independent norms informing the culture of HE (Stephens et al. 2012).

Brown and Davis (2001) find a similar dominant culture in historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) due to their founding in the pre-integration era. The authors assert that "a primary role of the Black college is that of social capital purveyor" (2001:41). Since these institutions developed separately from the model informing PWIs, they were free to determine norms based on black cultural values (Brown and Davis 2001). The authors provide an overview of recent research that shows HBCU students have higher grades and eventual earnings and are more likely to pursue graduate school than blacks at PWIs (2001). It is normalization of whiteness for some student success researchers to describe black students as having a deficit of social or cultural capital, since black students have a great deal of social and cultural capital, but in forms not valued by the dominant culture of HE. When whites see forms of social and cultural capital that do not mirror their own, the wealth of social and cultural capital possessed by blacks is discredited. However, social and cultural capital is there in abundance, but in

forms that are communitarian and interdependent, as found by Morris (2004) and Yosso (2005).

Desdemona Rios' (2010) research adds to the findings of Morris and Brown and Davis that the majority status of white men in HE, combined with the historical culture of HE based on upper-class cisgendered heterosexual white masculine values, causes lower rates of success among those who do not "fit" this cultural model. Even those who are "legitimate members of the academy" may perceive that they do not "fit" (Rios 2010:10). Rios' findings support the findings of Brown and Davis that, while there are gaps between the performance of whites and students of color at predominantly white institutions (PWIs), minority students at MSIs perform as well as whites at PWIs (Rios 2010).

Abigail Stewart and Andrea Dottolo eloquently describe why whites may perform better at PWIs: "white heterosexual sons of educated parents bring identities that are deeply compatible with those of the institution" (Stewart and Dottolo 2005:168). These findings support Bourdieu's theory that institutions of HE are modeled on upper-class white men's culture and value upper-class white men's forms of social and cultural capital. The culture of HE privileges a sense of entitlement, independence, individuality/ individualism, liberal concepts such as colorblindness, objectivity, meritocracy, white supremacy, Eurocentric history and epistemologies, and an assumption of facility interacting with authority figures (Delgado Bernal 2002; Reay et al. 2010; Rios 2010; Stephens et al. 2012; Warnock and Appel 2012). Students with other forms of social and cultural capital, such as those described by Morris and Brown and Davis, pay high

psychological costs adapting to the dominant culture of PWIs (Stewart and Dottolo 2005).

What this research highlights is Bourdieu's contention that the system of HE is founded on, reproduces, and privileges a specific form of culture that is raced, classed, and gendered. Many Bourdieusien race and gender scholars, Critical Race Theorists, HE researchers, and a handful of those who study student success are calling for an inclusion of epistemologies of people of color and women in HE, which would necessitate the valuing of a wider range of forms of capital in HE. Education researchers have found that all students perform better with the inclusion of non-traditional knowledges and practices in HE (Cabrera et al. 1999; Cabrera et al. 2002; Chang 2002a; Clark 2005; Cohen et al. 2006; Cole 2007; Gurin et al. 2003; Higbee 2010; Hurtado 2001; Hurtado 2007; Hurtado et al. 1999; Kim and Sax 2007; Milem 2001; Packard 2013; Sciame-Giesecke, Roden, and Parkison 2009; Stephens et al. 2014; Terenzini et al. 2001; Umbach 2006; Zúñiga, Williams, and Berger 2005). Taken together, these fields of research show that it is the system of HE that must assimilate and not the growing proportions of underrepresented, low-income students enrolled.

<div align="center">Student Success, Retention, and Graduation Programs</div>

The majority of Tinto's empirical research, which is the basis for the modern system of student success and retention programs and policies, was undertaken through surveys in the 1970s, when the majority of college students were middle- to upper-class white men. In researching student success, Tinto used Durkheim's theory of egotistical

suicide and Van Gennep's theory of rites of passage as guiding principles for attrition (dropping out of college) and college success, respectively (Guiffrida 2006; Rendón, Jalomo, and Nora 2000; Tierney 1999; Tinto 1975; Zepke, Leach, and Prebble 2006). Tinto's use of Durkheim's theory of egotistical suicide, by which leaving college is analogous to committing suicide due to an inability to integrate into the dominant culture (Rendón et al. 2000; Tinto 1975), places the blame for dropping out solely on the individual student and elides the role played by the culture of the institution.

This way of viewing FGULI experiences in institutions of HE has been critiqued as assimilationist, meaning that students must embrace the dominant culture and leave behind their cultural heritage in order to succeed (Guiffrida 2006; Tierney 1999; Rendón et al. 2000; Zepke et al. 2006). Guiffrida (2006), Tierney (1999), and Zepke, Leach, and Prebble (2006) argue that using Van Gennep's theory of rites of passage to describe how a low-income Latina, for example, adapts to the middle- to upper-class white men's culture of HE is not remotely applicable, because rites of passage occur within and not between groups (1999). Van Gennep's study investigated groups' rites of passage (from childhood to adulthood, for example) *within* groups and not *between* groups (from Navajo to white culture, for example) (Guiffrida 2006; Tierney 1999; Zepke et al. 2006). Expecting FGULI students to reject their home culture to embrace the dominant culture of HE can be very harmful, as research shows that students who maintain strong ties to their cultural heritage actually perform better in school (Tierney 1999; Zepke et al. 2006).

Tinto's quantitative measurement instruments were designed with the purpose of devising exactly how students assimilated into the culture of HE. The majority of

students in Tinto's studies had higher retention rates when they engaged in activities

hypothesized to increase integration, such as interacting with faculty, engaging in campus

activities, and joining campus clubs and organizations (Tinto 1975). Tinto's aggregate

results were reported, with the small percentage that didn't fit this aggregate, or general,

profile seen as outliers. These general results were both quantitative and replicable and

came to form the model for student success research throughout HE. Less analyzed at the

time were the students for whom the activities Tinto used to predict integration did not

produce the general effects, but conditional effects, meaning simply that some students'

grades did not improve with increases in faculty interaction, for example. At the time of

this research, the majority of the HE population shared a similar culture, being primarily

white, men, and middle- to upper-class, with 'minorities' making up a small proportion.

Tinto's findings shaped generations of student success policies and programs which

remained in place long after greater proportions of women and people of color slowly

began to enter HE.

Many student development theorists have been revisiting Tinto's results by

investigating the students who did not fit the aggregate model and by looking at the

integration mechanisms he proposed. The students who were not in the aggregate

population also fit the definition of 'at-risk' students: they tended to be the first in their

families to pursue higher education (first-generation); people of their race, gender,

disability, or sexuality were traditionally seen in fewer numbers in HE

(underrepresented); and came from low socioeconomic status (low-income) (FGULI).

Some of the more recent student development theory looks at how FGULI students perform in HE when they engage in integration mechanisms.

For example, Kim and Sax (2007) disaggregate their sample of students by race, gender, and socioeconomic and first-generation status in order to see how integration mechanisms affect each of these groups. By disaggregating their sample, Kim and Sax are able to more accurately pinpoint effective integration mechanisms by looking at how FGULIs actually perform when they have engaged in activities proposed by Tinto to lead to better performance. Kim and Sax found that interventions had conditional effects on students dependent upon their gender. Men, for example, reported GPA improvements through conducting volunteer research with faculty, while women did not. Men also had gains in the domains of political engagement, social activism, and liberalism through faculty interaction, while women's physical, emotional, and academic well-being were stimulated by interacting with faculty – a research finding which is reflective of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs.

In the ordering of human needs, physiological needs, safety needs, belongingness and love needs, and esteem needs must be met before self-actualization needs can be met. Esteem is understanding one's self, valuing one's self for simply being that self. Maslow defines self-actualization as "the desire to become more and more what one idiosyncratically is, to become everything that one is capable of becoming" (Maslow 1987:22). In the context of Kim and Sax' research into the conditional effects of student-faculty interaction, it appears that men have received a message from society that they are valued for who they are by the time they reach university, while women are meeting their

esteem needs through faculty interaction, completing a process society has left unfinished.

In one study cited by Kim and Sax, blacks and American Indians reported the least gains from student-faculty interactions while working hardest of all groups to meet faculty expectations (2007). Their study found that gender, race, socioeconomic status, and first-generation status had statistically significant effects on access to student-faculty interaction and also on the impacts of student-faculty interaction (Kim and Sax 2007). Essentially, if a student is an upper-class white man, they will generally have more access to faculty and have better outcomes (higher grades, higher rates of retention and graduation) than students of color and women as a result of those interactions (Kim and Sax 2007).

Kim and Sax' research findings reinforce the Bourdieusien race research findings. Upper-class white men have forms of social and cultural capital more valued in HE, as HE was modeled after upper-class white men's culture (Bourdieu 1986; Delgado Bernal 2002; Rios 2010; Stephens et al. 2012; Stewart and Dottolo 2005; Warnock and Appel 2012). When individuals start from the same point, exchanging the same forms of social and cultural capital as are valued in HE, student-faculty interaction can be more impactful because there is less effort and energy expended on habitus re-patterning.

Kim and Sax (2007, 2009) and Sax, Bryant, and Harper (2005) analyzed student-faculty interaction not only quantitatively, in numbers of hours of interaction, for example, but also qualitatively, with self-reported measures of satisfaction with those interactions, among other variables. Studies such as these are crucial for understanding

student success. With only the Tinto model, it was difficult to understand student

attrition rates when students who dropped out had high rates of student-faculty

interaction, for example. Campus climate has also been found to be a very important

predictor of underrepresented student success, which is not an individualized trait

students bring to HE, but an example of institutionalized racism and bias inherent in HE

(Ancis 2000; Cabrera et al. 1999; Daniel 2007; Ellis 1997; Engberg 2004; Fischer 2007;

Hurtado et al. 1999; Hurtado 2001; Hurtado 2007; Johnson-Bailey 2009; Keels 2013;

Kim and Sax 2007 and 2009; Morfin et al. 2006; Parker and Stovall 2004; Reid and

Radhakrishnan 2003; Saenz 2000; Sax, Bryant, and Harper 2005; Solórzano, Ceja, and

Yosso 2000; Stewart 2011; Tanaka 2002; Weidman, Twale, and Stein 2001).

As seen in Bourdieusien research, students of color have forms of social and

cultural capital not valued in HE and face obstacles to integration such as feeling

threatened by hostile campus climates. As most of the student success/ student

development research points to integration as the primary predictor of success, it

becomes clear that the culture of PWIs and HE in general is a causal factor in low

retention/ graduation rates, as integration into a campus that feels hostile to a student can

be very difficult. To continue to search for personality traits in underrepresented students

to explain why they have lower grades and rates of retention and graduation than whites

is pointless and an example of white-centric policy-making: "I succeeded, THESE

students succeed, why can't THEY succeed?" As Fischer asserts: "The fact that these

differences [in grades and retention] are only partially explained by differences in family

background, resources, and academic preparation suggests that these poor outcomes

emerge from events and circumstances that occur in the college environment"

(2007:128). It is important to note that student success research investigating the

differential effects of integration mechanisms would benefit considerably by including

more than two genders in their studies and in general being more representative of actual

student populations.

Taken together, much of the student development research tends to report the

same findings as Bourdieusien race and gender scholars about the variables that

contribute to student success. The most important elements are: integration, defined as

the degree of social and academic involvement of the student into the culture of the

university; student-faculty interaction; and campus climate. Student-faculty interaction

and campus climate contribute to overall integration. Campus climate can influence

student-faculty interaction and ultimately overall integration. What we have found in the

prior sections is that there are students who encounter roadblocks to integration due to

their social location. People of color, white women, the lower classes, and people living

at intersections of these social locations have forms of capital that are not valued at the

university. For these students, integration requires vast amounts of effort and energy in

order to interact with faculty and build resilience to hostile campus climates.

<u>Graduate School and Student Success Research</u>

As I am specifically looking at the experiences of FGULI students in master's

programs, it is important to look at how graduate school is different from undergraduate

education. While some of the experiences of undergraduate FGULIs will be similar to

those of graduate students, whether enrolled in master's or doctoral programs, there are a

few differences that are important to briefly point out. Researchers who study the

differences between baccalaureate and graduate education indicate that graduate school,

compared to undergraduate school, involves more intellectually complex, added

responsibilities such as assisting professors with teaching and research, internships,

conducting original research, and an expectation that students act as if they are already

professionals on the level of those with whom they intern, research, and teach (Carlton

2015; Gentry and Whitley 2014; Stephens et al.2014). In short, in graduate school, there

is a need to interact with faculty more frequently than in undergraduate school, and the

nature of these interactions change from interactions with authority figures, as in

undergraduate school, to interactions with those more on a peer level, as in graduate

school.

Most graduate school activities listed by education researchers require close

interaction with mostly white faculty and a 'professionalism' modeled on middle- to

upper-class white men's values (Bourdieu 1986; Daniel 2007; Delgado Bernal 2002;

Martin and Brown 2013; Misawa 2010; Rios 2010; Stephens et al. 2012; Strouse 2015).

Graduate school also requires a large investment of time, as Bourdieu (1986) discussed in

relation to the adjustment to the dominant culture of HE. Susan Gardner, in her

examination of first-generation graduate students (FGGSs), points out the difficulty of

graduate school, especially as experienced by a FGGS, who is more likely than a

continuing-generation graduate student (CGGS) to be a person of color, low-income,

older, a woman, have a disability, have dependent children, and be financially

independent from their parents (2013). FGGSs do not have highly educated models in

the home. Without these models, FGGSs do not have "cognitive maps" of graduate

school and struggle to understand the "rules" (Gardner 2013:47).

First-generation graduate students in Gardner's study not only did not know the

questions to ask about navigating graduate school, they didn't know to whom those

questions should be addressed (2013). Another way to understand the experiences of

FGGSs is through social and cultural capital. Parents who attended HE are better able to

pass on the forms of social and cultural capital valued in HE to their children. FGGSs

tend to feel a sense of "otherness" in graduate school, described by Gardner as belonging

in "two worlds" (2013:49). This appears to be more strongly felt by students of color

(Gardner 2013). Very similar to "otherness" is impostor syndrome, a feeling that the

student doesn't belong in graduate school because the students' forms of capital do not

match the forms they find in HE; impostor syndrome is frequently reported by women

and people of color (Gardner 2013).

In a study conducted by Seay, Lifton, Wuensch, Bradshaw, and McDowelle, the

authors examine the distinct challenges faced by FGGSs. Their findings indicate that

FGGSs were less likely than CGGSs to complete graduate school (Seay et al. 2008). The

authors cite Horn and Premo's 1995 attrition risk index that identifies 'nontraditional'

students who could use additional help in completing their degrees. One of the risk

factors of graduate students dropping out is scant interaction with faculty. Faculty

interaction, a form of mentoring, is one practice of students who complete their degrees

discovered in Tinto's original research of undergraduate students as well. Seay et al.

(2008) find that FGGSs interact with faculty far less than peers with more highly

educated parents. As will be discussed in the following section, high levels of faculty interaction can feel uncomfortable for people of color; women; lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans*, and queer (LGBTQ) persons; the lower and working classes; and students who live within intersections of these (Kim and Sax 2009). Kim and Sax find that faculty interaction has a conditional impact on students, meaning that there are race and gender differences in the effects of student-faculty interactions (2009).

Student Success Terminology

While the assimilationist tenets of Tinto's model have been critiqued and HE demographics have changed, Tinto's model is still a relevant base or starting-point for HE student success programs. However, many researchers are looking for ways of making this model more inclusive: more representative of modern HE demographics and more responsive to all HE students. If a student success program is built only on an assimilationist or deficit model, students that face roadblocks adapting to the dominant culture, which Bourdieu posits is modeled on middle- to upper-class white men's culture, will struggle to succeed. Going a step further, many scholars are calling for a re-working of HE culture to include a wider range of ways of knowing/ epistemologies. These researchers are devising curricular interventions that are drawn from the knowledges and epistemologies of people of color, women, those who are gender non-conforming (GNC), LGBTQ communities, and the lower- and working-classes.

Resistance to the dominant forms of capital of HE can be a difficult topic to explore, as the terminology can seem redundant and is sometimes confusing. It is important to note that pedagogy informs many approaches to dismantling hegemonic

power structures in HE and the following approaches often overlap and intertwine. The following should not read like a list of possible options from which to choose, but like a recipe, with ingredients that come together to lead to a greater sense of inclusion for FGULI students.

Research on student success, retention, and graduation is coming from a variety of fields: critical race theory (CRT), Latinx critical theory (LatCrit), queer theory, critical pedagogy, Black Feminist Thought, intersectional feminist theory, social psychology, counseling, and education research, to name a few. Because there are so many researchers looking into this subject from a variety of perspectives and disciplines, it is important for the sake of clarity and consistency to agree upon common terms.

Institution-Level Student Success, Retention, and Graduation Programs. These are institution-level programs designed to assist students succeed in HE. These can include obvious student success programs like mentoring programs, cultural centers, and low-income student success programs such as Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOPS) as well as subsidized child care and campus jobs, including research and teaching assistantships.

Educational Interventions - Faculty and Student Courses and Seminars. This term encompasses seminars, required courses, and trainings (for example, required race and gender courses; themed race, gender, and sexuality seminars; and faculty 'diversity trainings') designed to reduce racial and gender bias and aid in the success and retention of FGULI students by improving perception of campus climate. Mark Engberg defines educational interventions as "multicultural courses, diversity workshops and training,

peer-based interventions, and service-based interventions" (2004).One of the problems associated with studying the efficacy of multicultural courses is that some students are resistant to learning when courses are required (they are 'forced' to take the course) and also students who choose to take these courses/ seminars are predisposed to be more open and inclusive (Engberg 2004). This means sometimes the analysis of the programs shows no change in level of bias before and after the intervention (ibid.). Students who feel 'forced' don't learn what they are resistant to learning and students who already show low levels of bias take interventions because they are drawn to the subject and often won't show measurable change in bias level after attending the course or seminar (ibid.).

Curricular Interventions. This term encompasses course material, in-class activities, and discussions in all courses across all disciplines which are designed to decrease bias, improve FGULI perception of campus climate, and therefore increase integration of FGULI students. Curricular interventions are meant to be effective integration tools for students for whom faculty interaction and other Tinto-based activities are not the panacea they are for primarily white, middle-to-upper class students. Another significant benefit of curricular interventions is that they help increase student integration without taking time outside the classroom many students, particularly graduate students, often do not have.

Pedagogical practices. This term encompasses pedagogy designed to stimulate critical engagement in all demographics of students. As stated above, these aspects of student success are often linked and intertwined. For example, educational interventions,

specifically faculty trainings, can improve pedagogical practices, while pedagogical practices can inspire curricular interventions.

Alternative Epistemologies

Critical Race Theory (CRT), Latinx CRT (LatCrit), queer theory, critical pedagogy, and intersectional feminist theory inform critical pedagogy toward the inclusion of critical raced-gendered epistemologies and alternative knowledges in HE. While Eurocentric epistemologies reinforce the divide between FGULI and CGS student experiences, critical pedagogies highlight and value knowledge that is marginalized in the traditional classroom (Freire 1993). Gregory Martin and Tony Brown describe alternative knowledges as "affective, sensuous, and imaginative" (2013:385). Martin and Brown draw on Freire (1993) suggesting that HE should be the site of creation of knowledge rather than merely transmitting knowledges created by the holders of power to people who historically have held little power (2013). Eurocentric epistemologies further marginalize students who come from marginalized groups (Delgado Bernal 2002). Dolores Delgado Bernal highlights the importance of including critical raced-gendered epistemologies in HE to foster the questioning of privileged epistemologies and the limitations endemic to Eurocentric systems of knowledge (2002).

Julia Sudbury and Margo Okazawa-Rey describe the public reaction to a speech by Sunera Thobani critiquing US foreign policy that had led to the 9/11 attacks and the subsequent US military response. Thobani was described by the media as "hate-mongering, vicious, anti-American, and unscholarly" for denouncing Canada's support for Bush's "war on terror" (Sudbury and Okazawa-Rey 2002:2). Thobani responded to

the backlash, which centered on her passionate language: "I have always rejected the politics of academic elitism, which insist that academics should remain above the fray of political activism and use only disembodied, objectified language […] My work is grounded in the politics, practices and languages of the various communities I come from…" (Sudbury and Okazawa-Rey 2002:2). Thobani, as a woman of color and immigrant, has a unique perspective on patriarchal, xenophobic foreign policy and it was precisely her gender, race, and status as 'non-American' (Thobani is a Tanzanian immigrant) that were most critiqued about her speech, her otherness which offended detractors. But it was this positionality, these intersecting identities, which so informed her commentary. It is precisely intersectional analysis, coming from alternative epistemologies, which is necessary in HE to not only deconstruct the oppressive epistemologies currently privileged, but to inform and expand the knowledges available to students.

CarolAnn Daniel (2007) examines the experiences of students of color engaging in professionalization activities in Social Work programs and finds that professionalization in the academy is based in Eurocentric practices and is experienced as hostile to black and Latinx students. A key source of frustration for these students was the lack of alternative epistemologies in their programs (Daniel 2007). In Daniel's study, students felt not only frustrated and even angry about a curriculum informed exclusively by Eurocentric epistemology, but felt course materials were not relevant or applicable to their future careers (2007). Students reported not being allowed to discuss readings in class with faculty, as the courses were faculty-led and devoid of student input, which

exacerbated a feeling of hopelessness FGULI graduate student participants experienced
(Daniel 2007). Strouse (2015) argues that professionalization is also gendered and calls
for a 'queering' of HE epistemologies and practices, defining "queer" as "any kind of
nonnormative gender performance, sexuality, or desire" (p. 122). Mitsunori Misawa calls
for the inclusion of Queer Race Pedagogy (QRP) in HE to introduce intersectional
epistemologies and unsettle entrenched power imbalances endemic to HE (2010).
Daniel, Strouse, and Misawa argue that many of the components of HE can be racially
biased and heterosexist and are based on the norms of "class-privileged male actors"
(Strouse 2015:122) and incorporating alternative epistemologies could be one avenue
leading toward a greater sense of inclusion for FGULI students.

Curricular Interventions

Some researchers are finding that curricular interventions (course content and
activities, discussions, and assignments) which increase understanding of diversity and
inclusion topics (learning about people of color, women, LGBTQ persons, those who are
GNC, and the lower and working classes) achieve at least two important goals: they tend
to create a more inclusive campus climate, which improves the academic performance of
members of those groups, and they also improve the performance of those who do not
identify as members of those groups. In short, diversity and inclusion curricular
interventions improve the chances of success for all students (Cabrera et al. 1999;
Cabrera et al. 2002; Chang 2002a; Clark 2005; Cohen et al. 2006; Cole 2007; Gurin
2003; Higbee 2010; Hurtado 2001; Hurtado 2007; Hurtado et al. 1999; Kim and Sax
2007; Milem 2001; Packard 2013; Sciame-Giesecke, Roden, and Parkison 2009;

Stephens et al. 2014; Terenzini et al. 2001; Umbach and Kuh 2006; Zúñiga, Williams, and Berger 2005). Some studies found that curricular interventions buffered against increases in feelings of intolerance reported by undergraduate students (Chang 2002b; Henderson-King and Kaleta 2000).

Education researcher Mark Engberg calls for greater consistency in several dimensions of pedagogical practices including curricular and educational interventions: agreement on common terms and uniformity of terms used; rigorous and regular evaluations with research- and evidence-based instruments; research-based instruments to more accurately measure student change in reported bias; as well as a host of other benchmarks in research consistency. In an exhaustive study, Engberg analyzes many variables involved in and influencing students' experiences in various interventions, calling attention to the need for not only more research in the field of educational research, but greater communication and collaboration between researchers in operationalizing the field (2004).

In their investigation of programs designed to assist first-generation students (FGSs), Stephens, Hamedani, and Destin (2014) use the term "background-specific obstacles" to describe the challenges faced by FGSs which lead to trouble navigating university (p. 944). Students don't know the 'right' questions to ask, who to ask, how to look for help; nor do they recognize the need to be 'engaged,' the importance of finding a mentor and, related, assistantships and internships (Stephens et al. 2014). The curricular intervention in their study (which they call a 'difference-education activity') helps students understand that their college success can be affected (positively or negatively)

by the social conditions of their individual backgrounds – including race, gender, sexuality, and social class (Stephens et al. 2014). FGSs and continuing-generation students (CGSs) share their stories with each other and begin to understand the differences between the groups and how these differences impact their university experience.

Comparing students' survey responses after a standard college preparation program and one that included a difference-education activity, the authors found that FGSs in the program with a difference-education activity better understood that 'people like them' could succeed (Stephens et al. 2014). Furthermore, FGSs in the program which included a difference-education activity had higher grades (.24 higher GPA than the control group) and a lower achievement gap than FGSs in the standard college preparation program. Continuing-generation students in the program featuring a difference-education activity showed no negative outcomes (Stephens et al. 2014). In a follow-up study conducted two years after the initial study, the authors found the effects were enduring (Stephens et al. 2015). Students who engaged in the difference-education activity handled stress in more proadaptive ways and had better health outcomes than students in the control group (ibid.).

Financial Capital, FGULIs, and the Master's Degree

There is one more area of literature review findings that needs to be discussed in considering FGULI master's students: their approach to graduate education in the context of financial capital (money). In her study of the influence of higher education funding policy on enrollment in graduate school, Catherine Millett highlights the importance of

master's-level FGULI research. Millett finds that, of students who enrolled in post-baccalaureate education, 70 percent enrolled in a master's program while only 18 percent enrolled in a doctoral program and 12 percent enrolled in a first professional program (2003). Considering this significant difference between enrollment trends in master's and doctoral programs, the lack of research about FGULI master's students is surprising and a gap that must be addressed.

To introduce the findings that show FGULI enrollment trends, we begin with FGULIs' choice to attend college at all. Laura Perna (2005) finds that low-income people, blacks, Latinx, and those whose parents did not obtain a bachelor's degree were less likely than others to go to college and if they did attend, they chose less expensive and less selective institutions. There are 30 percent less low-income students than higher-income students in HE, similar to the gap that existed in the 1960s (Perna 2005). Susan K. Gardner (2013) cites studies finding that first-generation students are more likely to have attended a community college than continuing-generation students. This means that FGULI students are less likely than continuing-generation, upper-income white males to even attend college and when they do, they are more likely to choose community college over four-year universities than continuing-generation, upper-income white men.

Catherine Millett finds that 70 percent of students who intended to pursue graduate education did not go on to graduate school within one year of attaining a bachelor's degree (2003). The study showed that as students' debt increased, their likelihood of enrolling in post-baccalaureate education decreased (Millett 2003). The

more debt a student has accrued by the time they receive their bachelor's degree, the less

likely they are to go on to graduate school. This finding points to student perceptions of

debt and their level of willingness to accrue more debt or wait several years while they

attain an advanced degree before beginning to pay it off. The link between

undergraduate debt and post-baccalaureate goals was also found in Carlton's examination

of the effect of first-generation status on students' decisions to pursue graduate education.

Her study also finds that undergraduates with debt were less likely to pursue graduate

school (Carlton 2015). Gardner also cites reports that show that first-generation students

are less likely to attend an elite institution like the ones participating in the NLSF study

than continuing-generation students (2013).

Carlton's research shows that first-generation students attend graduate school at

lower rates than continuing-generation students, are more likely than their continuing-

generation peers to be self-supporting in graduate school, and are disproportionately

underrepresented in graduate school compared to continuing-generation students (2015).

Carlton's results are similar to Millett's, finding that greater undergraduate loan debt was

correlated with decreased likelihood of attending graduate school (ibid.). Gardner finds

that first-generation students had accrued greater undergraduate loan debt than

continuing-generation students (2013). Further, first-generation students, even when

controlling for race, gender, and income, were less likely than continuing-generation

students to attend graduate school than their continuing-generation peers (Carlton 2015).

Millett also found that low-income students were up to two times less likely than

higher-income students to apply to graduate school (2003). Gender was also a predictor

of application to graduate school, with men almost two times more likely to apply for post-baccalaureate education than women (Millett 2003). Students who attended a less competitive or noncompetitive university were also less likely to apply to graduate school (ibid.).

As for actually enrolling once a student had applied and been accepted, black, Latinx, and Asian American students were up to 3.4 times less likely to actually attend graduate school than white students (ibid.). Students who were offered financial aid from an institution were two times more likely to attend (ibid.). The students who were most likely to have debt were found to be first-generation students and those who came from low socioeconomic status (ibid.).

Taking these findings together, FGULI post-baccalaureate decision-making becomes clear: FGULI students are, overall, far less likely to attend graduate school than continuing-generation, traditional, higher-income students. Students who attend 'affordable' (less competitive or noncompetitive) universities for their undergraduate education, who grew up poor, and whose parents did not attain a bachelor's degree are making decisions about whether to go to graduate school based on financial considerations.

METHODS

I began reviewing the higher education literature in April of 2016. I was initially interested in the first-generation graduate student experience. That interest became more nuanced as I read literature that highlighted graduate students who were not only first-generation, but also from underrepresented groups who were low income. While parental education mattered in the graduate school experience, it was only one part of a more complex picture. As I read literature related to the FGULI experience, I began to reflect on my own experience and that of other FGULI students enrolled in master's programs.

I started out using search terms such as "first-generation graduate students" and "graduate school." From the results of these initial searches, I pursued lines of research I discovered in these articles, chapters, and books. It was at this point that I found the intersections of race, gender, class, and generation status weaving together to produce several different standpoints from which to observe the graduate school experience. The disciplines and sub-disciplines investigating the FGULI experience include: counseling, HE research, student success research, sociology, psychology, teaching and pedagogy, Critical Race Theory, LatCrit, gender studies, feminist theory, student support administration, and others. The wide range of available perspectives on the FGULI experience expanded the lines of inquiry I felt were relevant to my topic of study.

It was at this point that I discovered how little research existed on the topic of master's education. From what I had found in the research, and through my own observations, FGULIs were drawn to master's programs rather than stopping with a

bachelor's degree or going on to a doctoral program. Another area of the research that piqued my curiosity was a pedagogical method the counseling and CRT literature referred to in some papers as "curricular interventions." My research revealed that activities associated with graduate school leave little time for students to engage in activities recommended to lead to student success (attending themed seminars and visiting campus race, ethnicity, and gender centers, and taking time for self-care, for example). Curricular interventions, being built into classroom content students are exposed to during class, seemed as if they would be better represented in the student success research.

Participants

This research is based on 11 interviews conducted in 2016 with seven graduate students enrolled in a graduate program in a small public master's university (CPR 2016) in the Western United States: University of the Northwest (UNW). In September of 2016, a staff member offered me the opportunity to conduct and co-conduct semi-structured interviews with incoming graduate students in a single program. The sample was made available to Josh through his friendship with a graduate program coordinator at UNW. The participants were almost a full population sample of a cohort of graduate students in a single program. I received a list of names and email addresses from the graduate program coordinator and composed and sent out an email inviting new graduate students to participate in interviews (see Appendix A).

The staff member had created the interview guide for the purpose of understanding master's student construction of graduate student identity and a corresponding consent form (see Appendices B through D). While the informing literature and emphasis of the lead interviewer's research were somewhat dissimilar from mine, having a social psychology perspective on identity creation, many of the participants had experiences also linked to my research interests.

Of the seven participants, four of them were first-generation, underrepresented, and low-income (see Table 1). Three of them were continuing-generation, underrepresented, and middle-to-upper income. I refer to these students as CGSs.

Table 1: Participant Demographics

Participant Pseudonym	Reported Gender	Race/ Ethnicity	Generation Status	Age	Socioeconomic Status	First Interview	Second Interview
Miguel	Man	Latino	First	20s	Working-Class	Yes	No
Eva	Woman	Latina	First	20s	Working-Class	Yes	Yes
Amanda	Woman	White	First	20s	Working-Class	Yes	Yes
Emily	Woman	White	First	20s	Working-Class	Yes	Yes
Anna	Woman	Latina	Continuing	20s	Middle-Class	Yes	No
Elizabeth	Woman	White	Continuing	20s	Upper-Middle-Class	Yes	No
Michelle	Woman	White	Continuing	20s	Upper-Middle-Class	Yes	Yes

All of the participants were in their twenties. Six of the participants identified as cisgender women and one identified as a cisgender man. There were three Latinx students, one man and two women. In keeping with Gardner's (2013) findings that first-generation students were more likely to attend community college, three of the four first-generation participants attended community college before entering four-year institutions as juniors, whereas none of the CGS participants reported attending community college. Three of the participants were attending master's programs at the same institution at

which they earned their bachelor's degrees (UNW). Many of the first-generation

doctoral students in Gardner's 2013 study remained at the same university from which

they received their bachelor's degree because "it felt more comfortable" for them

(2013:49).

Data Collection

Interviews mostly took place over two sessions: at the beginning (September) and

the end (December) of the Fall 2016 semester. Four of the seven participants participated

in both waves of interviews, with three students unable to schedule an interview in the

second wave. Interviews took place in a student lounge in an academic building at UNW

off a hallway clustered with faculty offices. It is possible that the location may have

caused the participants some reticence in being entirely honest, for fear of being walked

in on or overheard by a professor. The staff member transcribed the audio recordings

using Rev.com. I received the transcripts in March 2017, three months after completion

of the final interviews. We protected participant confidentiality by keeping audio

recordings only on a separate flash drive kept in a secure location until after they were

transcribed. At that point, the staff member deleted the audio files. I replaced all names,

including those of participants and professors mentioned, with pseudonyms and masked

other identifying factors in the data analysis in an attempt to prevent the detection of their

identities.

Data Analysis

I analyzed the transcripts in three waves: first the FGULI students, then the CGS students, then all of them together. I looked at the transcripts in Microsoft Word, highlighting passages that illuminated aspects of the graduate student experience. I used the Review function of Microsoft word to make notes next to passages that indicated similarities and differences in students' experiences. Themes emerged from the interviews as I read and re-read the transcripts. I kept careful notes about the transcripts in a separate Microsoft Word document. It is important to note that, since I had already conducted much of my literature review before interviews were conducted, I may have been sensitized toward finding themes in the transcribed interviews which fit with literature review themes I had already found.

INTERLOPERS AND ASPIRANTS

Imagining Graduate School and Getting There

In this section, I compare the experiences of FGULI and CGS students reflecting on their conception of graduate school and their journey getting there. Participants were asked what they thought about graduate school and whether their future plans included a PhD. Most of the students, whether CGS or FGULI, talked about graduate school as an opportunity to focus more on subjects they cared about and appreciated being around others who shared a common interest in their discipline. Participants' love for and historic facility with the core concepts of their discipline informed a sense that graduate school was the right place for them, with some stark distinctions between the groups. The FGULI participants spoke about graduate school as if it were almost inconceivable that 'someone like them' might consider it, let alone attend, and expressed fear at the thought of pursuing a PhD. The CGS participants responded to the same questions with anticipation, confidence, and a sense of inevitability.

In *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (1977), Bourdieu explains the role of habitus in an individual's imagining of their life trajectory:

> but habitus which have been produced by different *modes of generation*,
> that is, by conditions of existence which, in imposing different definitions
> of the impossible, the possible, and the probable, cause one group to
> experience as natural or reasonable practices or aspirations which another
> group finds unthinkable or scandalous, and vice versa. (P. 78) (Emphasis
> in the original.)

The FGULIs and CGSs in this study offered glimpses of classed socialization when they discussed their trajectory to graduate school. As Bourdieu found in his research, being

exposed in the home, during childhood, to forms of capital also valued in HE can give

students a hint at what may be possible for them in the future and a level of facility with

the forms of social and cultural capital found in HE.

The CGS participants spoke of seeing themselves as graduate students from a

young age. Elizabeth had high levels of social capital, to the point that social interaction

with people from any socioeconomic background seemed effortless to her. Both of

Elizabeth's parents attended college as well as her older sister, and she grew up upper-

middle-class. For Elizabeth, there was never any doubt that she would attend college and

even graduate school. She has seen herself getting at least a master's degree since she

was a young girl:

> There was just no question, it was like, 'You're going to college.' There
> was never a thought in my mind that there was an alternative, it was like,
> 'Oh, you need to go to college.' […] there was no other option in my
> mind. It's like, you apply to a four year school. […] When I was 13, like
> my eighth grade class, we all did 'Where do you want to be 10 years from
> now?' […] And apparently I was going to have a condo and I was gonna
> have a master's of Arts. I thought by the age of 23 I was gonna have a
> master of Arts. I don't even know... what I thought that meant then? But
> apparently, I was gonna have one. […] But yeah, so I think on some level,
> I had some idea of wanting to do graduate school. I probably didn't know
> what it meant at the time but it was in my mind.

So even though the details of graduate school were not fully formed, the idea or image of

herself in that field had been developed from an early age. Another CGS, Anna, a Latina,

also saw herself as a future graduate student from a young age: "I'd always wanted to do

grad school and get my master's because I want to be a college professor. That was

already the goal." Michelle, the third CGS, was also very young when her much older

brothers completed their master's degrees.

In contrast to Elizabeth and Anna's experience: being a young girl seeing her future self as a graduate student, and Michelle's experience as a young girl seeing her family complete degrees, FGULI respondents did not have stories of seeing their family members or of imagining themselves as taking an academic path. Eva never even considered going to college at all upon graduating from high school and hadn't considered graduate school upon completion of her bachelor's degree:

> No one in my family had ever gone to school so I didn't even really know what I was doing or getting myself into, it was just kind of something I had to do for high school. No matter which school I would've picked, I don't think I was going to know anything, really. I didn't visit before I came, I was just kinda like, I'm supposed to go now.

Before being accepted to UNW, she hadn't seriously considered going to college, but applied as part of a high school assignment. It was the reality of the acceptance letter that first led her to think about furthering her education:

> It was kind of, not by accident, but part of my high school. We had to apply to a certain amount of colleges if we wanted to graduate. It was like a fake threat, but I didn't know where, I didn't know anything about college and I was like asking for, well, where are you applying? Where should I apply? And someone was like, '[go to this school].' I was like, okay, I just need places to apply and since you're doing the same application - on the [university system] website, it's all the same, you just pick -and so it was one of the ones that accepted me. I think it was the first one to send the acceptance letter. So then I actually started to research the school and got kind of attached 'cause it was the first one. So I didn't end up picking the one that I wanted to… but I didn't really know anything about [UNW] or any other school.

Eva adapted her vision of academic and professional possibilities for herself to include both college and graduate school when institutional structures created that opportunity. She applied as a requirement for high school graduation – she had to. She

got accepted, so she decided to go to college. One of her undergraduate instructors

suggested she apply to the master's program, so she did. She got accepted, so she

attended. Though she did not grow up with highly educated models in the home

(Gardner 2013), Eva was experiencing HE without "disquiet, ambivalence, insecurity and

uncertainty" (Reay et al. 2009:1105). It seemed somewhat straightforward to her,

including her conception of graduate school:

> I honestly didn't even really know much about grad school a semester ago,
> a couple months back. I didn't even really know what it meant to be in
> graduate school. I'm just kind of like, as I go, learning more about it.

Eva's experience choosing a university, based on a classmate's recommendation

without knowing anything about the school or its location is reminiscent of participants in

Holley and Gardner's (2012) study of FGGSs in which they interviewed 20 first-

generation doctoral students and found that they had a great deal of anxiety about feeling

as if they were in 'free-fall' through graduate school and into future careers. Not having

educated models in the home or cognitive maps of graduate school made sometimes

immense differences in participants' future life trajectories. As with my study's

participants, this sense of 'free-fall' caused a great deal of anxiety for FGULIs. One

participant in Holley and Gardner's study noted:

> I didn't know what to look for [in a doctoral institution]. I thought you just
> went to the cheapest one. Why would you do anything else? I didn't
> understand the value of going to a school that might have a nice name […]
> [My peers] made much more informed decisions. I kind of fell into it, and
> am still falling into it in so many ways. It's a frightening feeling.
> (2012:117)

The FGULIs' sense of 'falling into' their futures is in sharp contrast with the school

choice process of two of the three CGSs. Michelle and Anna both researched several

options weighed against their financial interests, personal preferences, and future career

choices. Michelle was already friends with a faculty member (Professor Melissa) at

UNW (which speaks to her familiarity with forms of social and cultural capital valued in

HE) and weighed what she learned from her insider against what she knew about another

option:

> I knew [Professor Melissa] already. When I was looking around at
> schools, I messaged her on Facebook and was like, 'Hey, you and
> [Professor Melissa's partner] seem to be enjoying [UNW]. Can we talk
> about it?' Then she gave me her email. We emailed back and forth for a
> while about it. Then I applied to both here and [another university], but I
> really wanted to go here because from what [Professor Melissa] told me,
> like everyone was really good and good teachers. There were people here,
> like study things that I want to study, whereas [other university] didn't
> really have anyone focused in [interest]. Then also this place has more
> money to give to students. Like I'm [academic job for a graduate student],
> whereas that would not have been a possibility at [other university]
> because they are completely out of money. They have nothing.

Anna also put a lot of thought into which university to attend. Though neither Michelle

nor Anna state that their parents suggested they 'shop around' for a school based on their

interests, the fact that their parents (and Michelle's siblings) went to college and they

both grew up with messages about HE suggests that they understood that not every

university can offer them the same experience and they should conduct research on

universities before creating a 'short list.' Anna also intentionally chose a different field

from the one where she grew up:

> Well, when I was researching schools to go to, […] I like [UNW] because
> I saw how small of a school [UNW] was. I like that they said that you'll

> have one-on-one time with your teachers, the classrooms are smaller. This is a more intimate setting, which was really different from where I was going to school at my community college. I really like that and I like that the program had an emphasis on [an application of discipline] specifically.

Compared to Emily's choice to attend the master's program at UNW because it was located in her home field, where she would feel more comfortable and could ease into graduate education, Anna's choice to relocate to somewhere she knew would be a different field from her home field showed a willingness to adapt to a new field and a sense of confidence in her ability to do so.

When participants were asked what they thought of graduate school so far, responses were clustered mostly around two poles, with FGULIs and CGSs having very different levels of stress in graduate school. Anna, a CGS, expressed very little stress and felt, at the time, that graduate school was very similar to her undergraduate program:

> I don't know. I feel like [the classes are] similar to the undergrad. There's a lot more readings, that's for sure. I've noticed at least with the readings that I've had for some of the classes, it's not... For some classes, it's not as dense as other classes, like other undergrad classes that I've taken. For other classes, a lot of the stuff overlaps. I feel like I don't need to really focus and read every single thing completely all the way through. I can skim it, some of it, but still get the full...

Anna's feeling of not being extremely challenged by graduate school was in stark contrast to that of Emily, a FGULI, who grew up in the area where the community college she attended and UNW are located. Emily indicated the highest level of discomfort getting to and engaging in graduate school of all of the participants. While she was very social and an excellent student, she felt alienated transferring from community college to UNW, where she achieved her bachelor's degree and was enrolled

in a master's program at the time of our interviews. Her discomfort in her undergraduate

program was so acute as to necessitate attending mental health counseling:

> Integrating was really hard. I wasn't prepared for it, I guess. […] I went
> and received mental health help, just from, I wasn't happy here. It was
> really weird because it was not like I was taken out of, it's not like I
> moved away. […] And then I think coming here [from community
> college], it was not really having people I knew in my classes. All of a
> sudden, it felt like there was more pressure […] But where I got
> concerned is I'm the kind of person where if I'm stressed or there's an
> issue in life, I throw myself into school work. But when I didn't want to
> go to class anymore, that's when I reached out for help, because I
> acknowledged that that was an issue.

For Emily, the stress of graduate school began with the application process to the

same department and university from which she received her bachelor's degree:

> My partner has expressed that the stress of grad school got to [me] before
> [I was] even in grad school. And I was like, the application process is
> stressful! Not even just - I was already stressed about grad school and I
> don't even think I had graduated yet!

For working-class students, the culture of HE can feel intimidating, even for students

with high levels of social and cultural capital and who earn high GPAs. Even seemingly

small aspects of the graduate school experience, such as participating in a class

discussion, can seem foreign and like new territory to FGULIs:

> Even though I'm trying to navigate… Do I still raise my hand? Or do I
> just attempt to interject and let someone else talk? So, it's trying to learn
> the proper etiquette of how to talk. […] I'll sometimes shoot it up kind of,
> just so everyone knows I have something to say. [Puts her hand up,
> haltingly, to shoulder level.] Yeah, so, mid, so everyone knows, then I can
> put it back down and talk. We're working it out.

Coming back three months later for our second interview, Emily indicated that, while her academic performance remained consistently excellent, she continued to attend counseling:

> …to try and help talk out the feelings that I'm having because… I may have talked about this earlier, about how like school's always come easy for me. It was something I felt I belonged in. It was fine. And now coming here it's like everything's horrible! Nothing makes sense! But I'm still here so something's going right. […] I feel you're doing grad school wrong if you don't have an existential crisis like planned on your weekly schedule. You have your tantrum on Thursday, you have your crisis on Friday, and by Saturday you're like taking your mental health break. On Sunday, you're like 'I'm gonna do it 'cause I have to show up on Monday.' So I feel like you're doing it wrong if you're not questioning every moment of it, but I think that's just part of the journey of it.

Like other FGULIs Eva and Amanda, Emily indicated that "nothing makes sense" in graduate school. Eva says of graduate school: "it's scary, but it's fine." Amanda indicated that "[e]verybody feels like they don't know what's going on. Not a big deal. It's going to get figured out." For working-class students, and specifically the women working-class students in this sample, graduate school feels like loosely planned chaos and navigating that can be stressful.

Amanda, like Emily, another FGULI, also attended the same institution for her undergraduate as for her graduate program. She experienced some discomfort fitting into the culture of graduate school, mitigated by her relative familiarity with faculty she interacted with while earning her bachelor's degree and from the information she received during the incoming master's student orientation put on by her department. While Amanda saw graduate school as "intense," she drew on messages she received at orientation to contextualize her own experience:

> Okay, this is normal. No problems. Everybody feels like they don't know what's going on. Not a big deal. It's going to get figured out. […] I'm still very confused. Like I don't really know, pretty unsure, but orientation told me that's how you're supposed to feel, so it's fine. Or that it's okay to feel that way.

First-generation, underrepresented, low-income students don't have highly educated family members, so when school feels like it is out of control, unpredictable, and overwhelming, there are no trusted resources to turn to for insight, advice, and understanding. As discussed in the previous section, though participants report that most faculty are approachable, the perceived risk to FGULIs of appearing as if they are not in control of the situation can inhibit their use of that resource. Overall, FGULIs reported feeling like they were in freefall (somewhat mitigated by messages they received at orientation) while CGSs reported feeling more relaxed.

Anna, a CGS, felt quite relaxed about graduate school, but qualified that sense of comfort by acknowledging that she was only four weeks into the program: "It's not as stressful, honestly, these last four weeks. It's not as bad as I thought it was going to be, but it's still just the first four weeks, so yeah." Michelle, another CGS, also didn't find graduate school to be very intimidating:

> Well, I expected it to be a lot of work, and it's definitely a lot of work. I expected it, actually, to be a lot more work straight out of the gate than it's turning out to be. […] That was something that I was expecting: that it was going to be really hard right from the get-go, and then it's not.

Coming back to our second interview a week before the end of the semester, Michelle had only slightly modified her previous answer to our question about what she thought of graduate school:

>Yeah, I feel like with grad school, I don't think that any amount of mental preparation can get you quite, you know what I'm talking about? […] because I feel like, I knew it was going to be really hard. [Professor Melissa], I've heard from other people in grad school that it's a lot of work and stuff like that, so I was expecting that, but it still surprised me just how much work it was, especially how much reading there was and all that. And this isn't a bad thing. I've been enjoying most of the readings and I've been getting through it and stuff like that. I have learned that I need to take some time during the week to just watch TV or something.

Contrast Michelle's breaks to "just watch TV or something" to Emily's coping mechanism of getting mental health counseling to help deal with the work of graduate school (work using the dominant forms of capital in HE in addition to coursework). Also, having fewer jobs than Emily, Michelle was able to "Yeah, yeah, like, let myself have a day on the weekend where I don't do anything and I just veg for a while." It's possible that, because Michelle had an upper-middle-class childhood, she felt less fear of falling into poverty than Emily did, having grown up in poverty, and maybe was receiving gifts from her upper-middle-class parents while the cost of Emily's education was completely on her own shoulders.

When participants spoke about doctoral programs, there was a wide range of reactions. Latino FGULI Miguel was approaching master's education as a way of 'feeling out' graduate school and starting a career that might lead to a PhD down the line: "PhD? I'm not really sure, maybe later on in life. Right now I just want to get my feet wet, I want to start teaching and do that." Emily, a white FGULI, expressed terror at the thought of doctoral education and felt the need to start off with a master's degree at the same institution at which she received her bachelor's degree. Perhaps because of her sense of unease and discomfort transferring from the institution where she received her

associate's degree to the institution where she received her bachelor's degree, Emily was

worried she would have a similar experience going directly into a doctoral program after

receiving her bachelor's degree:

> …I never wanted my educational plan to end at a bachelor's. […] At the
> time, I didn't know if it was master's or doctorate, but then, I was looking
> at programs for grad school, and realizing there's some where you go
> straight into the PhD program. I was like: 'Oh, my god! That sounds
> terrifying!'

There was a much narrower range in CGS feelings about doctoral study, with

Michelle and Anna talking about their 'inevitable' entry into PhD programs casually,

calmly, as if it were the most natural thing in the world. Both Michelle and Anna

selected PhD programs offering courses in the specializations they were most interested

in. They made these plans before they applied at UNW and were engaging in work and

making connections at UNW which would lead to greater odds of being accepted at their

chosen doctoral programs.

Time. As has been noted previously in this paper, Bourdieu pointed out that

engaging in non-native forms of capital requires a large investment of time, effort, and

energy. All respondents spoke of having very little time for activities not strictly related

to graduate school, including activities important to them, self-care activities, and, in a

couple of cases, activities that were very important to participants' sense of self. When

asked what it meant to be a graduate student, Miguel began "A grad student, well, so far

is time-consuming, very time-consuming. I wasn't really expecting..." In a nine-page

transcript, Miguel brought up time 21 times. When the current iteration of student

success research recommends students take time out of their schedules to join clubs and

organizations and attend race and gender-themed seminars, curricular interventions represent the only student success activity for which FGULI master's students might actually have time.

Fitting In

In this section, I compare the experiences of FGULI and CGS students as they tried to find a sense of 'fit' in graduate school. There was a range of experiences fitting into graduate school, with most of the FGULI students having difficulty finding their footing in the program. The CGS students felt more comfortable fitting in and seeing themselves as graduate students. Miguel, a Latino FGULI, was having the greatest difficulty feeling as if he fit. While the biggest differences in sense of fit occurred between the FGULI and CGS students, two Latinx FGULI students, Miguel and Eva, had very different feelings about how they fit in the program. There was a casualness and confidence in the tone of voice and body language of CGS students as they spoke about how they fit into graduate school, as opposed to the FGULI students' expressions of doubt and almost manic tones.

The FGULI students seemed to be somewhere in the process of adjusting their habitus to the new field of graduate school, reconciling their sense of dedication to their discipline with a sense of being a fish out of water. In comparison, the CGS participants, all of whom came from middle-to upper-middle-class backgrounds, had more familiarity with the more highly-classed norms in the field of HE, so there was less habitus adaptation necessary.

All of the FGULI students in my sample came from a working-class background. While a working-class background doesn't guarantee insurmountable difficulty in graduate school, the lack of familiarity with the middle- to upper-class norms of HE can serve as a detriment to feeling as if they 'fit.' Each of the FGULI participants had forms of cultural capital that they perceived to be at odds with forms of cultural capital valued in HE. The FGULI participants attempted to find their fit in the dominant form of cultural capital of HE tentatively, with clumsiness, and uneven confidence.

The FGULI participants spoke about feeling as if they knew graduate school was the right choice for them intellectually and academically, but often reported experiencing something similar to "otherness," a term Susan Gardner uses to describe students' sense of "belonging in two worlds" in her study of first-generation students (2013:49). Because first-generation students, unlike their continuing-generation peers, weren't exposed to the dominant culture of HE in the home, from their parent(s) or caregiver(s), they had no reference point for experiences in HE and lacked close, trusted sources of information about how to navigate HE. Not having a "cognitive map" of graduate school, first-generation students didn't know the "rules," and felt as if they were strangers to the culture of HE (Gardner 2013:47).

Miguel, a Latino student who grew up in Southern California, experienced difficulty fitting into the dominant culture of not only graduate school, but to a new field in a completely different area, which is a smaller town than he grew up in and a majority-white area. Miguel's struggle to fit in was one of the more difficult experiences emerging

from the interviews as it was occurring on two fronts: the home front and the field of

graduate education:

> …and culture wise, I'm just gonna... because […] I don't know... Southern
> California is way different than over here. We have to adapt to that as
> well. Over here it's just so spread out - small town community. There are
> a lot of small towns in [Southern California], but demographically it's just
> different. We also have to adapt to that. I consider myself a people person,
> I like to be around people and so does my wife. It's been a change. […]
> I'm not from here, I still have to catch up to the culture here, the system
> here.

Miguel was the only FGULI participant out of four who did not attend the same

university for his bachelor's and master's program. This seemed to have an effect on his

perception of his ability to fit in, which he blamed on himself. Since the historically

dominant view of student development is rooted in pointing out deficiencies in students,

this is perhaps not a surprising perspective for Miguel to have. He also compared his

perspective to the perspective of other members of his cohort who earned their bachelor's

degrees at UNW and found his perspective wanting:

> …whatever I learned at [university located in Southern California] as an
> undergrad, it's similar to what they are teaching us here, but I still have to
> catch up. I feel like I'm behind the people that got their undergrad here. [I
> have to get] used to the teacher, you know, the teachers' methods and
> lecture style. I'm still trying to catch up. Unfortunately, that's one of my
> faults as a student is adapting to the teacher, adapting to the system, that's
> where I am.

As Stewart and Dottolo (2005) point out, there are high psychological costs

associated with socializing oneself to the culture of HE and Miguel must adapt to the

culture of graduate school, a new and very different area, and interact with a much lower

proportion of people of color. Bourdieu (1986) also stressed the amount of time, effort,

and energy associated with supplanting the cultural capital one learns in the home and in one's home field with the cultural capital valued in a new field (Bourdieu 1986). What Miguel saw as "one of [his] faults," experiencing difficulty adapting to a different culture in an at times hostile field, is actually a social fact encountered by many FGULIs. Miguel expended a great deal of effort adapting his habitus for the sake of his and his family's future. Strayhorn (2010), whose research examines the experiences of black and Latino men in higher education, points out that Latinos encounter unique obstacles "that inhibit their sense of belonging on campus," particularly at PWIs (p. 311).

One resource Miguel drew on in his experience adapting to multiple new fields was his friendship with a friend from Southern California who also left home to attend a master's program far away in an area demographically different from where both of them grew up. Since Miguel identified with this friend, he was able to draw strength and inspiration from his friend's experience:

> I remember one of my friends, he went to [university far from Southern California] to get his master's in Social Work. He told me "our life is just different. Don't be afraid, just go ahead and do it. You will adapt to it eventually, just stay with it." It's helping. I've actually been talking to him, texting him and stuff.

Bourdieu's depiction of the interplay between habitus and field (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992; Mills 2008; Reay, Crozier, and Clayton 2009), provides some context to Miguel's struggle to adapt his habitus and thereby his application of cultural capital to the new field in which he found himself. However, the time and effort involved in this adaptation (Bourdieu 1986), coupled with the time and effort Miguel was expending balancing his

personal life with his curricular commitments, caused him difficulty 'fitting in' to the

level necessary for graduate school retention and success.

> I'm still trying to force my way in. It's difficult, you know, especially…
> I'm already naturally quiet and keep reserved, keep to myself. It's a
> challenge […] it's just kind of hard to find an equilibrium. Eventually I
> think we will get there, but time is a factor.

Miguel asserted that he was "naturally quiet and keep reserved, keep to myself." As

sociability is a learned disposition which helps build the capacity to acquire social capital,

this may be an obstacle for Miguel (Bourdieu 1986). As he saw his sociability as

"natural" and not as a learned skill, he may not have realized that he could aid his

adaptation to his new field through expanding himself socially, though, by most accounts

in the student success literature and found by the Bourdieusiens, it is a difficult process to

adapt one's capital to different forms of capital valued in new and unfamiliar fields.

Adding to the sense of 'otherness' first-generation students feel in graduate school

(Gardner 2013), Miguel also dealt with assimilating to a majority-white area and

attending a PWI, so, as many Bourdieusiens point out, his potential for feeling like an

"outsider" is multiplied. In this small sample, Miguel was also the only FGULI

participant who did not attend the same institution for his bachelor's degree as he

attended for his master's degree, which added even more to his perception of himself as

struggling to belong. As Miguel explained, his feeling of struggling to 'fit' in graduate

school persisted despite his sense of belonging in the discipline:

> I know it's the old cliché of feeling like the one left out, the outsider, the
> one coming in and stuff, I know I have to adjust to that or get over that
> hump, but right now I'm kind of feeling like that. I know we talked about
> the impostor feeling, I don't know if I get that because I know I am

passionate about [studying the discipline] and what I want to get out of this, but I just feel like the outsider.

Eva was a Latina student who grew up in Southern California and came to UNW to obtain her bachelor's degree before being admitted to a master's program at the same school. Like Miguel, Eva was also experiencing difficulty fitting into the field in which she found herself:

I grew up in [a town in Southern California]. It's predominantly people from Mexico. Although, I mean, there are people from other places, but at least in [town in Los Angeles area], it's mostly people from Mexico. And it was good. It was a good experience. I like it down there. It's a lot different than up here. […] The culture is completely different. The noise. The amount of people. The tall buildings. The traffic.

Eva was acutely aware that the culture of her predominantly-Latinx hometown was very different from the community in which UNW is located. Her level of awareness was similar to that of Miguel, who also came from a predominantly Latinx area. Bourdieusien theorists describe this situation of moving from a familiar field to a new, unfamiliar field as being a fish out of water. Jason Edgerton and Lance Roberts (2012) describe students' fish out of water experiences as a result of the level of congruence between their habitus and their new field. If a student enters a new field which values forms of cultural capital the student has not incorporated into their habitus, the student will encounter difficulties adapting to that field, or fitting in (Edgerton and Roberts 2012).

Diane Reay, Gill Crozier, and John Clayton describe the different experiences of fish out of water FGULI students as occurring somewhere between two poles: "when habitus encounters a field with which it is not familiar, the resulting disjunctures can

generate not only change and transformation, but also disquiet, ambivalence, insecurity and uncertainty" (2009:1105). While Miguel was experiencing "disquiet, ambivalence, insecurity and uncertainty," Eva presented her experience of adjusting to her new field more closely to "change and transformation," although students may experience a range of adaptations including and between the two poles at different times (Reay, Crozier, and Clayton 2009).

In a 2010 study conducted by Reay, Crozier, and Clayton, the authors attribute the range of outcomes associated with fish out of water experiences to students' sense of learner identities (2010). Students who self-identified as strong learners more easily transformed their habitus to better fit the cultural capital of HE, whereas students who identified as weaker learners tended to have a more difficult time adjusting to the cultural capital of their field (Reay, Crozier, and Clayton 2010). In their study, Reay, Crozier, and Clayton found that the women students in their study had weaker learner identities than the men students (2010), while Miguel and Eva defied these gendered findings. Miguel and Eva may have been experiencing higher education in similar ways to the students in Dumais' (2002) study examining gendered socialization and habitus. In her work, Dumais found that women students were more likely to accrue and apply cultural capital in an educational context while men students were socialized to be less academic (2002).

Any of these works' descriptions of the fish out of water phenomenon could be applicable here; however, Miguel had also spent less time in his present field (three

weeks) than Eva had (two years) at the point of the interviews, which may also partially explain their different experiences.

Some of the comfort with graduate school that Eva professed in our interviews could be attributed to the fact that, in a very specific and technical sense, she was not yet a 'graduate student.' Her interviews are still a valid means of investigating forms of capital and habitus, but more in a sense of looking at the forms most valued in HE and adaptation of habitus to better fit the field of HE. It must be noted, however, that graduate school is very different from undergraduate education, as has been touched on previously in this paper, and Eva's experience definitely differed from that of other participants.

Eva discussed having forms of social and cultural capital that were valued in her home field, but not as highly valued in her new home or in the field of HE. However, as Eva continued in the interview, she revealed that she has worked on adapting her habitus to her new field. When Eva discussed her transition from mediocre to excellent academic performance in her undergraduate program, she was almost quoting student success literature in her conscious connection between engagement and success. She touched on some difficulty integrating during her undergraduate years and clearly enunciates the connection between integration and academic performance cited in student success literature (Kim and Sax 2007, 2009; Sax et al. 2005; Tinto 1975):

> Yeah, [grades are] really important to me. They weren't before because when I started, I didn't really know much about being here and I didn't really... I didn't get the good grades and I didn't really... And now, once I started getting good grades and got into it and started engaging more, then they became really important for me.

The way Eva described the connection between integration and grades made it seem as if one does not precede the other. The two seemed to happen simultaneously for her. There were times during the interviews at which I wondered whether Eva had been unconsciously engaging in habitus re-formation throughout her academic career without much apparent effort or if she was engaging a form of social capital by which she projects more facility with an unfamiliar field than she felt.

It is possible that she did not share her potential struggles with me, as I am a white woman, easily 20 years older than she is, and, as the interviewer for an academic journal, in the role of something of an authority figure to her. If this is the case, it is possible she was activating the form of social and cultural capital she considered to be applicable in HE in this situation by appearing self-reliant, competent, an effortless scholar. This theme comes up again with other participants (see Interacting with Faculty In and Out of the Classroom).

<p style="text-align:center">Can I Do It? Generating Cognitive Maps for Success</p>

In this section, I compare the experiences of FGULI and CGS students feeling doubt about their ability to 'do' graduate school. The FGULI students expressed greater levels of doubt than CGSs, as evidenced through time and detail related to expressing their concerns. While performing well academically was a source of pride for all participants, FGULI graduate students were aware of blind spots in their cognitive map of graduate school that overpowered their self-perceptions as 'good students' and caused uncertainty in their ability to 'do' graduate school. While all students expressed doubt at

some point in the interviews, the FGULI students expressed deeper and more frequent and sustained moments of doubt than the CGS students.

Clearly, there is more to the ability to 'do' graduate school than just studying and completing assignments. At the graduate level, there is an increased necessity, compared to undergraduate education, for building intellectual networks of colleagues/ peers with common research focus, as well as developing nuanced research ambitions and strategies, among many other forms of specialized cultural capital.

As confident as Eva was and as much as she took her education in stride, the lack of a cognitive map of graduate school had at times caused her to wonder if she was the type of person to gain a master's degree. It was not that she doubted her academic ability necessarily, but that the people with whom she identified, the people she grew up around and with, do not have advanced degrees. Is she the kind of person who goes to graduate school and does well and finishes?

> I do get kind of worried, like, can I do it? But I figure, hey, I'm not going to lose anything in trying. So yeah, I think that's the only thing, not knowing how it's gonna work, what to expect of being in a graduate program and being in a class and can I handle this? Can I do it? Am I capable?

Eva, like the other FGULI participants, felt confident in the work. She felt able to take on the coursework and didn't feel as if the work itself or the academic demands were too hard (though they all worked hard to get coursework done well and on time). However, not knowing the rules of graduate school can cause first-generation students to have doubts, although they may not be able to articulate exactly where these doubts are

coming from. When asked if there was anything about graduate school that she struggled

with, Eva replied:

> Just myself, my own "oh, am I gonna be able to do it?" But the work
> itself I don't struggle with. It's just, I think my "me trusting myself that I
> will do good."

An aspect of Can I Do It? that emerged in the interviews was the financial

challenge associated with supporting oneself through graduate school and, in some cases,

influencing decisions related to graduate school. Emily is a white woman FGULI who

grew up poor. Emily's concern about finances was very strong, possibly due to her

history in poverty, and this concern led her to take on several paid positions. Financial

concerns came to the forefront of the theme of Can I Do It? for Emily when she discussed

her difficulty balancing the time demands of her paid work and coursework. This

balancing act made work and school more difficult for Emily, which led her to feel at

times as if she was unable to 'do' graduate school:

> Oh my God! It's really hard. I don't even know how to describe it. I've
> never worked this hard in my life. There's definitely been challenges
> specifically with understanding that I belong here, understanding I should
> stay here. […] I still have those moments of feeling like I'm not gonna be
> able to do it.

Even Eva, this study's one FGULI Latina, who took her journey through HE in stride and

traversed this field with confidence, had her moments of doubt. While she spoke about

her academic performance positively, she still seemed to realize that 'doing' graduate

school is about more than getting assignments done on time:

> I'm like, well, I'm gonna do it and I'm gonna try it and if I'm trying, I'm
> not going to just fail at it. And even if I did, I'm like, you don't just fail if

you try! But if you did, knowing what I'd done, I wouldn't actually be
failing.

Michelle, an upper-middle-class white woman CGS, also spoke of sometimes having
doubts about being able to 'do' graduate school. While she spoke very confidently about
most aspects of graduate school, she admitted to feeling a hint of anxiety about her ability
to finish the program. To put this in context, Michelle went from stating that she felt
"really positive about everything" and that she was "going to actually be able to get
through this program" to:

I mean a part of me is still worried that I'm not going to get a B in one of
my classes this semester and then I'm going to get kicked out of the
program. Which I know is ridiculous but this is my anxiety is just - in that
- a little part of me is like that.

Then, a few minutes later, Michelle asserted: "I'm not too worried about anything next
semester actually."

All of the participants, whether FGULI or CGS, were afraid to give professors (or
others they saw as HE 'authorities') the impression that they 'needed help' or couldn't
'do' graduate school, which will be discussed in more depth in the next thematic section:
"Interacting with Faculty In and Out of the Classroom." It is possible the CGS
participants were displaying forms of capital with me and the other interviewer which
would make them appear more confident in their performance than they perhaps were.
All that I can say, having examined the literature, is that enacting forms of capital with
the interviewers (who were peers more than authorities) that allow participants to save
face shows a facility with social and cultural capital that the CGS participants may have
learned in the home.

Interacting with Faculty In and Out of the Classroom

In this section, I compare the experiences of FGULI and CGS students interacting with faculty members. Faculty interaction is the primary site of contact students have with the forms of capital most valued in HE and, as such, can be pivotal in how comfortable students are with their graduate programs. The differences in patterns of faculty interaction between FGULI and CGS students was manifested in their comfort levels interacting with faculty and the different effects these interactions had on them. First-generation, underrepresented, low-income students expressed feeling hesitance and anxiety when interacting with faculty. Continuing-generation students expressed more comfort with faculty interactions, though both groups expressed particular comfort interacting with Professors Sarah and Greg, both formerly working-class, first-generation students themselves. Even a CGS who had been friends with a faculty member for years reported feeling more comfortable with Professors Sarah and Greg than other professors.

It is perhaps surprising that greater frequency or longer time periods interacting with faculty did not lead to greater comfort interacting with faculty for FGULI participants, with one FGULI remarking that, while she spent a lot of time interacting with faculty, she continued to experience high levels of nervousness in these interactions. It is important to note that, while CGSs expressed greater comfort with faculty interaction overall than FGULIs, some level of discomfort with faculty interaction was a strong theme running throughout interviews. It may be, as Kim and Sax (2007, 2009) suggest, that faculty interaction is more difficult for women than it is for men. Women are overrepresented in my sample (six out of seven participants were women), which,

coupled with Kim and Sax' findings, might explain the consistency of discomfort with faculty interaction in this dataset.

A sub-theme of the Faculty Interaction theme was also heavily represented in the data: In the Classroom. When participants were asked about their relationship with faculty, they tended to talk about two levels of contact: outside and inside the classroom. Their responses indicated that one-on-one faculty interaction tended to make CGSs and FGULIs uncomfortable, but that interacting with faculty in the classroom shaped their perceptions of HE and, to a certain extent, where they as graduate students stood within that field.

The theme of Faculty Interaction highlights the concepts of social and cultural capital and habitus examined by Bourdieu and the Bourdieusiens, as the level of comfort a student feels interacting with officials who are gatekeepers to the degree and career the participants desire might differ depending on the student's perception of what is possible for 'people like them.' What is seen as possible for an individual is patterned in the habitus and the forms of capital learned in the home. Faculty Interaction also draws on student success literature, specifically the findings of Kim and Sax (2007; 2009) that FGULI students experience faculty interaction differently from, for example, white, middle- to upper-class, continuing-generation men. A great deal of student success research emphasizes the importance of faculty interaction to better student outcomes. Yet, more recent research finds that faculty interaction is approached and experienced differently based on the student's race, gender, and forms of capital and habitus.

Amanda is a white woman FGULI who grew up in a small town similar in size to the one in which UNW is located. In the first interview, just a week into the program, Amanda was asked what she thought about graduate students' relationships with faculty members:

> And that's another thing I kind of have to get used to, because there's a familiarity between professors and grad students that is probably really nice, but something that I still have to work on because I still feel... kind of strange coming to them outside of class. I feel like I mostly just want to talk to them in class during class time, but a lot of people just make appointments with them and that's… probably really helpful. So that's something that I'll have to get used to. It's like just… making an appointment to talk about what I'm going to do? And that's like… so weird!

When asked about her interaction with faculty three months into the program, Amanda expressed an ongoing reticence she attributed to nervousness. Also hinted at, but not outright stated, seemed to be a desire to appear self-reliant, to project independence. Amanda seemed to feel that attending office hours would lead faculty to think she needed help.

> It feels like I still need to be really formal and professional. I guess I'm just still a little bit nervous. It might just be because I haven't been in the grad program for that long. […] That's I think mostly just me and mostly just because, I don't know, I never really ask my teachers for help or anything. I was just like, 'Okay, I'll just figure it out myself.'

Kim and Sax (2009) find that low-income, first-generation women students tend to have the lowest levels of interaction with faculty, and Amanda's statements offer a clue to some of the reasons this might be true. Amanda was used to limiting her interactions with faculty in order to prove herself to be self-sufficient and self-directed. She felt as if interacting with faculty sent the message that she couldn't take care of

herself or was 'needy.' She also felt the need to act with faculty in a way that didn't feel authentic for her ("formal and professional"). She showed a level of awareness that faculty interaction is a key component of graduate education, but felt that would necessitate acting "really formal and professional." Uncomfortable acting, she limited her interactions with faculty, as her performance could be discovered and she would risk being revealed as an interloper in the field of graduate school. Three months into the program, Amanda's level of interaction with faculty was still low:

> It's not that the faculty make me feel uncomfortable, but I'm just not really used to seeking out people. They're also supposed to be less of an authority than they were in undergrad because the lines are a little bit less clear now that I'm a graduate student, but they don't feel any less like... I don't know, 'teachery' or something.

Amanda, as well as every other respondent, whether FGULI or CGS, was clear that the faculty is approachable, but she simply felt uncomfortable with their role of "authority." As Bourdieu has pointed out, the acquisition of social capital requires a learned disposition toward sociability and skill at obtaining and maintaining relationships (Bourdieu 1986). In other words, sociability is a disposition which can be learned. Amanda and Miguel, as discussed in an earlier section, had an opportunity in graduate school to acquire the propensity to work on social relationships in academia and therefore gain and nurture relationships which, in turn, build social capital. The way Amanda talked about social capital ("mostly just me") indicated that she felt her current pattern of low levels of faculty interaction was just a natural part of her personality, as opposed to a skill that could be developed and strengthened.

Emily, a white FGULI woman, was very integrated into the program and with the faculty. She was also very sociable, interacting with people from different class backgrounds with apparent ease. She said: "I mean I know that when I talk to my cohort I seem to be the one that's always in [office hours]. I'm always in their office all the time." Yet, Emily reported feeling high levels of anxiety around faculty. The regularity of her interaction with faculty meant she was in danger of being discovered as a cultural capital 'faker,' or an interloper, at any time. But Amanda and Emily both expressed, in their own ways, that they must act differently than they normally do when interacting with faculty. Emily, who admitted to spending a great deal of time with faculty, added:

> For [one class] there's been a lot of miscommunications I feel like, and I think it's because of the professionalism of the professor that I have. I feel like there's a disconnect between what my expectations of a professor should be in my opinion and there's definitely a traditional form of professionalism that comes into play. Whereas we know that [Professor Sarah] and [Professor Greg] are both also working class first-generation college students, and so maybe that's why I feel more comfortable with them. That's why they're able to talk with me in a way that is understanding for me. While challenging me but also supporting me, whereas I feel there's been a lot of misfires with another professor. It's definitely been an adapting moment. I think it is good in the sense that these are the kind of professors that you are going to run into in a doctorate program and so understanding sometimes that while in grad school you just need to do what you have to do in order to get through the course. That's a learning situation for me is understanding until I am there.

Emily appeared to be exhibiting what Seay, Lifton, Wuensch, Bradshaw, and McDowelle (2008) would describe as hardiness, or adaptability, in conceptualizing her interactions with professors with whom she felt uncomfortable or from whom she felt distant. She was aware of this process, even stated that these interactions constituted an "adapting moment." Emily expressed in her interviews that she was very driven and

determined to achieve her goals and the work she was undertaking to interact professionally with Professor Steve, though humbly understated, was clear.

Michelle, a white CGS woman, felt very comfortable interacting with faculty, counting among her friend group a faculty member (Professor Melissa) at UNW. While she reported general comfort interacting with faculty, including the faculty member with whom Emily expressed discomfort interacting, Michelle also remarked on the comfort she felt interacting with two particular faculty members (Professors Sarah and Greg) who came up in most of the interviews: both former working-class, first-generation students, whose interaction patterns might feel more familiar to students.

> But yeah, we can talk about stuff that's bothering us or that we are confused about and stuff and I do like that with [Professor Sarah] and [Professor Greg] I don't have to worry about them thinking that I'm, I don't know, stupid or just something like that, you know?

For the CGSs, who expressed more comfort than the FGULIs with faculty interaction patterns, Professors Sarah and Greg's comforting presence allowed them to let down their guard and let their doubts and concerns show. As Michelle communicated, she was able to be more herself without 'acting' and without worrying about looking as if she was not up to the challenge of graduate school. Although Michelle had been friends with Professor Melissa for years, she remarked on her comfort level interacting with specifically Professors Sarah and Greg, the two instructors all the participants spoke about, who are both formerly working-class and first-generation students. It seemed as if, even for CGSs, who grew up learning about how to act in the field of HE, it was just more comfortable interacting with those who grew up in lower classes than they did.

Maybe it felt less like being "on the job," less of an effort expended, less like a role or an act.

Elizabeth, another CGS, had been working in local government for several years and her partner was a faculty member at a different school and she admitted this affected her feelings about faculty interactions. When asked how she thought faculty interaction would be different in graduate school from undergrad, she replied:

> I think it's different in the sense that it doesn't feel like ... And I don't know if it's because I've just been working in [an official capacity in government]... I mean, so [her partner] teaches at [another institution] and so I've been around faculty for some time.... I guess the idea like, 'Oh the professor.' Like, oh, like... I don't know. I don't know how to describe it. Of like feeling like I need to be fearful of the professor or something like that? I think I don't have as much of that? I'm sure if I'm going into a class that feels very challenging, I'm sure maybe I will feel very differently and be like, 'I am very scared of this professor.' But I feel like overall that it's like a different type of relationship. Where... And I think in undergrad all the professors are there to help you but like in a graduate program it's so focused, all the faculty are there to help you get towards this particular goal. Doing your project, do your thesis. And like everything's building up to that, whereas [in an undergraduate program] you could be taking a class with a professor and that's the one time you've interacted with them in four years and, you know...

It could be said that Elizabeth had practice interacting with officials who hold some form of authority through her work in local government, through which she herself wielded some authority, which aided in her interactions with faculty. It could also be said that that position of authority in government was something that seemed possible to her because she learned that possibility in childhood, with the influence of her college-educated, upper-middle-class parents.

In the Classroom. When discussing faculty interaction, participants touched on their sense of class climate so far in the graduate courses they had been attending. The way participants spoke about class climate was all wrapped up in the level of comfort they felt with the instructor. Participants, both FGULI and CGS, were more comfortable in classes taught by professors they felt were less authoritarian or who had been working-class or first-generation students themselves. Students spoke about whether they felt their input and ideas were respected or if they felt comfortable in class. They described faculty almost across the board as 'nice.' In the context of the interviews, nice tended to mean approachable, helpful, supportive, and willing to listen to students. As a theme, "In the Classroom" fits well nested under "Faculty Interaction," because when participants were asked about how their classes were going, they would remark on faculty interaction and when asked about what a graduate student's relationship was to their faculty, they would bring up class climate. The two concepts were very closely related for participants.

Anna, an upper-middle-class Latina CGS, indicated that she felt some trepidation about faculty interaction, but came to understand faculty's role in helping students succeed through classroom exchanges with Professor Sarah, as other participants also expressed:

> They seem to want to be more connected with us. One professor, we had a paper to write and she gave feedback. She was like, 'You know, if you guys want to meet with me one-on-one, we can have a meeting and talk about it if you want to revise it.' They seem more invested in us, I guess. That's really nice. It's going to take a little getting used to, I think. I still feel a little like, 'Oh, they're my faculty.' Like they're an authority almost, but I just need to get over that.

Professor Sarah, whose interactions with students are informed by her experience having

been a first-generation, working-class student, helped FGULI and CGS students feel

more at ease with faculty interaction, helped students understand that interacting with

faculty at UNW might be a more interactive experience than in undergrad but also a less

intimidating relationship than their conception of graduate school might suggest.

Miguel, a Latino FGULI, sensed that he was 'behind' other members of his cohort

in feeling comfortable with faculty, specifically the students who got to know the faculty

while attending UNW as undergraduates. When asked how his classes were going, he

spoke more about his levels of comfort with faculty than his actual academic

performance:

> I love [Professor Greg's] class, it's just comfortable... very comfortable
> setting. The other ones are more challenging because whatever I learned
> at [university in Southern California] as an undergrad, it's similar to what
> they are teaching us here, but I still have to catch up. I feel like I'm behind
> the people that got their undergrad here. Used to the teacher, you know,
> the teachers' methods and lecture style. I'm still trying to catch up.
> Unfortunately, that's one of my faults as a student is adapting to the
> teacher, adapting to the system, that's where I am.

When Miguel described Professor Greg's class as "comfortable," he was

describing how he felt when interacting with Professor Greg, who shared a similar class

background with Miguel and was also a first-generation student. Miguel's familiarity

with the material ("It's similar to what they are teaching us here") shows he was not

overwhelmed with the concepts or work at UNW. It's not that he found the coursework

too hard, but the difficulty he associated with graduate school was rooted in "adapting to

the teacher, adapting to the system." To look at Miguel's experience through a

Bourdieusien lens, Miguel was expending a great deal of effort and energy enacting unfamiliar forms of capital in, and adapting his working-class habitus to, a new field (Bourdieu 1977, 1986).

Being hesitant to interact with faculty in less structured environments, white FGULI woman Amanda's primary source of faculty interaction came from the classroom. She touched on a sense of comfort with faculty members by describing coursework assigned in a course taught by Professor Sarah. As discussed in the literature review, the incorporation into curricula of materials in which FGULI students might see themselves ('people like me') can improve perceptions of campus and classroom climate, both of which improve the academic performance of students. Amanda recognized herself and 'people like her' in the reading assigned by Professor Sarah:

> We actually did this reading in my […] class, and it made me realize something about myself. It was like this reading about kids coming from different socioeconomic backgrounds. […] There is working class families. She got all the demographics. There were so many, it was crazy. Then upper-middle-class families or something. Then she studied the different parenting styles, and middle-class families, the parents talked with the children and didn't really boss them. They would negotiate with them. If the kid didn't want to eat his dinner, they'd be like, 'Well, what if I make you blah blah blah,' and everything like that. Then the working class parents were like, 'Okay, eat your dinner.' It was more direct. These [middle- to upper-class] kids were all in all pretty disrespectful to their parents, and they also had a lot going on because their parents stuffed them in a bunch of extracurriculars, stuff like that. But they were really good at advocating for themselves when they're talking to somebody who is a grownup or an adult or a position of authority. They were comfortable with interactions, and [working-class] kids weren't as comfortable. I was like, 'Oh my gosh!'

Amanda was referring to a book by Bourdieusien race and gender scholar Annette Lareau entitled *Unequal Childhoods: Class, Race, and Family Life*, from which Professor

Sarah assigned excerpts. The book describes how parenting is a classed endeavor: lower-class parents have a parenting style (accomplishment of natural growth) which encourages their children to defer to and keep their distance from authority figures while upper-class parents have a parenting style (concerted cultivation) which encourages children to negotiate with authority figures and interact with them almost as peers (Lareau 2003). In *Unequal Childhoods*, Amanda recognized her parents' style of parenting and her own discomfort with authority figures. It was a profound moment of epiphany for her.

Through that reading, Amanda was able to understand the roots of her discomfort interacting with faculty. As discussed in the literature review, curricular interventions such as this one, incorporating works that allow students to see themselves, improve student success as well as retention and graduation rates. All of these measures are beneficial to the students and the institution. While Amanda expressed nervousness that instructors might think she was not up to the challenge of graduate school, she was very clear that, in the classroom, UNW professors were willing to help when she was confused:

> Yeah, they're just really nice and cool. I think the amount of support was unexpected. I was really nervous about everything, but, yeah, I wasn't expecting the professors to be so understanding and ready to explain things and help me out like that. I'm confused a lot of the time, so I need them to back it up and slow it down for me a lot, and they're more than willing to, and I was surprised because I was worried about just having to figure it out myself. They're helping me grow with the tools to navigate the program, I guess.

When Amanda described instructors as 'nice and cool,' she was drawing on her sense of comfort with faculty who interact with participants in ways with which students are familiar and act in ways that are not authoritarian. While most participants expressed discomfort fitting into graduate school and levels of unfamiliarity with the dominant forms of capital in HE, Amanda's assessment that faculty were helping her "navigate the program" was an observation which echoed throughout the interviews.

One exception to this statement from participants lauding the approachability and comfort of instructors in the classroom is Professor Steve, the one faculty member with whom Emily reported having difficulty interacting. There was one respondent, Michelle, a CGS, who did not hesitate to express how she felt about Steve's class:

> And then if it's not something he's interested in studying, he's not even willing to listen about it and stuff. I was talking to him at one point [in a class discussion] about intersectionality […] and I was talking about Kimberlé Crenshaw and everything- and he was like, "What is that?" And then he just, it didn't- […] and he just kind of dismissed it. And I was like, okay this is a really big thing- as a theory. This is really important. If he doesn't care about it, he doesn't want to know about it sort of thing. And he doesn't really take into consideration our points of view.

While it can't be ascertained whether Steve "care[d] about" intersectionality, his interaction with students in this particular discussion communicated to Michelle the impression that he didn't care about it. Michelle did not feel 'listened to.' Steve presented an authoritarian teaching style, which left the students feeling as if their knowledge did not matter, that the only epistemology worthy of the University was epistemology constructed and informed by middle- to upper-class white men. Michelle

felt comfortable enough to continue about what seminars in Steve's classroom felt like to students:

> And it was really annoying, even from the get-go, because people would be going and doing their thing [presenting course material to the class] and then he would interrupt them. Like mid-word sometimes. And I […] hate that. And he would just do that consistently.

For one assignment, students had to meet with Professor Steve to discuss their paper topic. This was an opportunity for students to interact with him outside of the classroom, perhaps establish a different sort of relationship with him, even though it was the final assignment in the class and late in the semester. According to Michelle, this interaction did not go well. She saw it as an extension of his established authoritarian classroom 'teacher identity:'

> And then we had to go in and we had to see him to discuss what we were going to be writing for our […] paper- He told me to do [one single author] and stuff, which is fine because [that single author] is good because I'm doing [subject], and everything like that. But it was literally a five minute conversation, that's it. […] And then, I don't know, just- Thought that was kind of disrespectful, yet- Kind of dismissive. He was really dismissive. He did that and then he was like, "Okay, so you're good then, right?" I was like, I mean there might be other [authors and their ideas] that I want to bring in that I'm discussing, but okay, I guess we're done. Yeah. I'm like, the less time I have to talk to you, the better.

Faced with Professor Steve's "dismissal," Michelle, a CGS, was able to turn that around into feeling like she "dismissed" Professor Steve, wanting no more to do with him. Yet, consider Amanda, the FGULI student who expressed nervousness about professors seeing her as needy. While she did not discuss Professor Steve, we can only guess what an interaction like this might be like for her. Imagine how Amanda might have felt about herself as a self-sufficient, self-driven graduate student when, after finally

overcoming her anxiety associated with 'asking a professor for help,' she was brusquely "dismissed" as Michelle described.

In the interview, Michelle brought up her perception of Professor Steve's interactions with Emily, the FGULI woman who spoke of adapting to Professor Steve's "professional" style, which felt alien to her. Emily spoke in the interview very reservedly, though honestly, about her interactions with Professor Steve. Michelle was somewhat blunter when she described the relationship she observed between the two: "And then I feel like he's been really rude to [Emily] in particular. I don't know why he seems to really hate her." Since the only time Michelle saw Professor Steve and Emily interacting was in a classroom setting, this admission revealed much about the classroom climate in Professor Steve's class; that Professor Steve had created a chilly class climate that the students picked up on. This is in stark contrast to how participants described Professors Sarah and Greg's classrooms.

DISCUSSION

The institution of HE is slow to change. While the transformation of HE into a more egalitarian system is still far on the horizon, there are things that can be done now to narrow the achievement gap between middle- to upper-class white CGS men and FGULIs. There are global economic factors that have led more FGULIs to enroll in master's programs in recent decades, creating a need for those working in HE to better understand the experiences of FGULI students in master's education. In this paper, I have presented literature which shows that the culture of HE is raced, classed, and gendered: HE was founded on and continues to reflect the values of middle- to upper-class white men. Furthermore, the model of student success programs that are in use today was created using research on primarily white middle- to upper-class men.

It is for this reason that these programs can take a sometimes white-centric, deficit model approach: expecting FGULIs to assimilate to the middle- to upper-class white men's culture of HE. The research I have included herein also shows that there is greater need to integrate into the culture of HE as students progress through HE to graduate school. I have presented literature which shows some of the experiences of FGULIs in graduate school, and some experiences of FGULIs in master's programs. In general, FGULIs tend to have greater difficulty integrating into master's programs than continuing-generation, white, higher-income men.

The interview findings were very close to the theoretical concepts and the literature findings. The two participants who exhibited the greatest difficulty integrating

into the culture of their master's programs were both FGULIs. There was one FGULI

participant whose experiences were different from the other FGULIs and also different

from the literature about FGULIs and student success research. While this could be the

result of the participant pretending to be more confident and having greater facility with

integration into HE than she actually felt, Eva's professed experiences in HE may also be

indicative of the heterogeneity of Latinas' life experiences. Latinas are not a

homogeneous group and their experiences may differ from one another. Taking the

interview findings together, overall, the FGULI students experienced greater difficulty

with master's education than did their CGS peers, which is in keeping with the findings

of Bourdieu, the Bourdieusiens, and the student success literature.

   A limitation and a weakness of this paper is the fact that I am a master's student

working on deadline while juggling the other responsibilities of graduate school, and it is

possible that there are some lines of inquiry related to this topic that I may have missed.

Given more time, I might have found more about curricular interventions. In hindsight,

conducting internet searches with the keywords "pedagogical practices" may have led to

more information about this tactic for improving perceptions of campus climate and

aiding in FGULI integration. However, it is very puzzling to me that research about

curricular interventions is not more readily available to the novice researcher. It is my

opinion, admittedly a less-informed opinion than I feel confident expressing, that there

should be more empirical research into the effects of curricular interventions.

   Most of the research on FGULIs takes place at the bachelor's and doctoral level,

conducted by professors at elite universities. For example, Morgan Teressa Carlton

(2015) uses the National Longitudinal Survey of Freshmen (NLSF) dataset for her study, which, as the name suggests, collects data over time on freshmen at 28 elite colleges and universities granting bachelor's degrees or higher. Excluded from this dataset by definition would be students who transfer from a community college at the post-freshman level. Future research should include transfer students in their datasets, if only to attempt to increase numbers of FGULI student participants, who are very likely to attend community college before transferring to a 4-year university for reasons related to their applicable levels of financial, social, or cultural capital (Gardner 2013). If there is to be a robust investigation into the experiences of FGULIs in master's programs, it might need to come from less elite universities and universities which offer master's-terminal programs.

From what I have found, this body of research would benefit from the inclusion of strategies that lead to better integration for FGULI master's students, aside from the complete transformation of the institution of HE to privilege feminist epistemologies and epistemologies coming from people of color and Indigenous communities rather than Eurocentric epistemologies. This paper presented one strategy, student-faculty interaction, the effectiveness of which is raced, classed, and gendered, and one strategy, curricular interventions, which has been shown to be effective for students in all race, class, and gender categories. Future research should look into more strategies that lead to greater integration for students, particularly FGULIs, in order to create a host of approaches that can be used by educators and administrators in HE.

The body of student success and FGULI research would benefit from the inclusion of a few more layers to its respondent demographics. The inclusion of investigations into the experiences of those outside the gender binary and lesbians, gays, bisexuals, and those who identify as queer would lead to broader applicability of this body of research. People with a disability represent another group that deserves a larger share of student success and FGULI research.

I am very fortunate to have had seven very intelligent and thoughtful students share their experiences with me. Knowing their intended thesis topics, I am very encouraged by the thought that they might be adding their research to the body of scientific inquiry. Though some of them face many difficulties that could get in the way of completing their programs, I have hope that their futures will be bright. I also hope that more FGULIs are able to access the potential lifetime benefits that a master's degree might confer. More research into FGULI master's student success will help students achieve their goals.

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Appendix A - Invitation to Participate Email

Hello [Student],

I hope your semester is going well!

We are interested in hearing more about your experience as a graduate student this semester for a research study we are conducting on the challenges and perceptions of students entering graduate school. We are hoping to hear about your expectations, obstacles you are facing, as well as your perspective on different experiences.

Your participation is completely voluntary. If you are interested, we would like to schedule an interview with you in the next week. Please let us know some times that will work with your schedule. The interview shouldn't take more than 30-40 minutes.

We appreciate your participation in this project!

Thank you for your consideration!

Appendix B - Consent Form

Study Purpose
The purpose of this study is to understand how graduate students view their identity and experiences at Humboldt State University. You are being invited to answer several questions about your experience and yourself through this interview; your identity will be removed from your answers so that you can't be linked with the answers you provide. I hope that the information participants provide will be used by HSU or other colleges to improve the graduate student experience. It may also be used in conference presentations, publications and other professional contexts.

After you have read the information regarding the interviews, if you agree to participate, check the consent option below and sign the document to continue.

About the Interview
During the interviews I will ask you questions about how you feel about your experience at HSU as well as some information about yourself, how you deal with challenges and your outlook on education. The interview will take about 30-45 minutes to complete. Each interview will be recorded for transcription. Participation is completely voluntary. Declining to participate will not result in any penalty and you are free to stop at any time. We do not anticipate any discomfort or risk associated with your participation. However, if these questions create stress for you, there are resources available to assist you with handling that stress (see handouts). The interview data will be stored securely for the federally mandated minimum time of 3 years.

Confidentiality
Every effort will be made to maintain the confidentiality of your responses. We may use direct quotes from your responses but will not link them to you in an identifiable way for publication purposes.

Further Information?
The Investigator will answer any questions you have about this study. Your participation is voluntary and you may stop at any time.

If you have any concerns with this study, contact the Chair of the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, Dr. Ethan Gahtan, at eg51@humboldt.edu or (707) 826-4545.

If you have questions about your rights as a participant, report them to the Humboldt State University Interim Dean of Research, Mr. Steve Karp, at karp@humboldt.edu or (707) 826-4190.

If you agree to voluntarily participate in this research as described, please check the consent option below and provide your signature. Thank you for your participation in this research.

I have read and understand the information provided, and agree to participate in this interview

Signature

_____Date_____

Appendix C - Interview Guide (Interview 1)

Introduction

1. Please tell me a little bit about yourself.
    a. From where did you get your undergraduate degree?
    b. Did you move to come to school at HSU?
        i.   If so, from where did you move?
    c. Tell me a little bit about your family.
        i.   What did your parents/guardians do for a living?
    d. Are you one of the first people in your family to attend college? Graduate school?
    e. What was your neighborhood like where you grew up?
        i.   Talk a little a bit where you grew up?
        ii. What did your parents/guardians do for work?
    f. Where do you currently live? (On campus? If not, where?)
    g. How did you end up at Humboldt State?
    h. Can you talk about what your thoughts are regarding the classes you will be taking?
        i.   What excites you about the classes?
        ii. What worries you?

2. What are some reasons that you are pursuing your graduate degree?
    a. What are your long term plans for using your degree?
    b. How about shorter term plans?

3. Do you plan to be done in 2 years?
    a. How confident are you that you will finish up in that time frame?

Self-View:

4. When you think about what it means to be a graduate student, in **general**, how would you describe that person?
    a. What are their qualities? What are they like?
    b. How do you imagine they spend their time?
        i.   Do you see them as having leisure or free time? What types of things do they do in their down time?
        ii. Do you think they socialize a lot?
        iii. What type of relationship do you think they have with other students from their program?

        iv.   How about with faculty?

    c.   Where do you think these ideas about being a college student come from?

5. How do you anticipate being a graduate student is different than being an undergraduate?
    a. Academics?
    b. Social?

6. What sorts of things do college students NOT do, in your mind? (Is there a difference between what successful and unsuccessful students do?)
    a. What makes you think that those are differences?
    b. Figuratively speaking, what does a successful graduate student look like to you?

7. When you think of **yourself** as a graduate student, how would you describe yourself at this point?
    a. What are your qualities?
    b. How do you spend your time? What about your free time?
    c. <If different than #3> Explain a little more about <notate the difference>

8. Think about other, important people in your life, how do you think **they** would describe you now as a student?
    a. <If different than #3 or #6> Talk a little bit about <the differences>

9. When did you first start thinking about going to graduate school?
    a. What influenced you to pursue your masters degree?

10. Is the graduate school experience that you are having now what you expected?
    a. Why? Why Not?
    b. What expectations did you have that are not being met? (if any?)
    c. Talk a bit about the orientation – how was that?

11. Have you attended any classes yet?
    a. If so, how has that experience been?
    b. What has surprised you?

Self Expectation

11. How well do you expect to do this semester in your courses?

      a. If you had to guess on your grades this semester what do you think those would be?
   - i. How important are grades to your view of yourself as a student?
      b. What do you think might be affecting how well you will do – positively or negatively?
      c. How does this match with how well you did in undergraduate school?

12. Are there experiences that you are looking forward to?
      a. Socially?
   - i. How important is the social aspects of being a student for you?
      b. Academically?

13. Are there experiences that worry you?
      a. Socially?
      b. Academically?

14. Have you decided on an area to concentrate on at this point?
      a. What is that concentration?
      b. Why that area of concentration?
      c. How confident are you in your choice?
      d. Why or why not?

15. How likely do you think it is that you will stay at HSU?
      a. How likely do you think it is that you will receive your master's degree at this college?

Is there anything else you would like to add?

Appendix D - Interview Guide (Interview 2)

Self-View:

1. How is the semester going so far?

2. Can you talk a bit about how your classes are going so far?

    a. Any surprises from the classes? Can you talk about those?

3. Looking at those around you, in your cohort and other cohorts, when you think of a graduate student, in **general**, how would describe that person now?
    a. What are their qualities? What are they like?
    b. How do they spend their time?
    c. Where do you think these ideas about being a college student come from?

4. A similar question, when you think of a graduate student how would you describe what they are **not**, in general?
    a. what sorts of things do graduate students NOT do, in your mind? (Is there a difference between what successful and unsuccessful students do?)

5. When you think of **yourself** as a college student, how would you describe yourself at this point?
    a. What are your qualities?
    b. How do you spend your time? What about your free time?
    c. <If different than #2 and #3> Explain a little more about <notate the difference>

6. Think about other, important people in your life, how do you think **they** would describe you now as a student?
    a. <If different than #3 or #5> Talk a little bit about <the differences>

7. Think back to when you first started thinking about going to graduate school and the image you had of yourself as a graduate student – has that changed?

8. How has your image of what it means to be a graduate student changed?

Self Verification

6. How are you doing, overall, in your first Semester?

    a. What was are your grades so far on papers and such?

    b. Did you do as well as you were expecting to do?

    c. How did that make you feel?

7. When completed, how well do you expect to do this semester in your courses?

    a. If you had to guess on your grades this semester what do you think those would be?

    b. What do you think might be affecting how well you do – positively or negatively?

8. Tell me about what types of feedback you receive in your courses? (might be in form of grades, comments on papers or projects, response if/when you speak up in class…)

    a. Let's talk about a few examples…. (for instance, positive/negative feedback…)

9. Has that feedback changed your view of yourself as a student?

    a. In what ways?

10. When you received that feedback, how did that make you feel?

11. When you received that feedback, how do you think that <instructor, student, other> saw you as a graduate student?

    a. How about others? Friends, family, other students?

    b. Did you tell anyone you had gotten that feedback? Or did you keep it to yourself?) Why or why not?

    c. What type of reaction did you have to that feedback?

        i. Do you recall any emotions you might have had?

12. Did you take any action as a result of the feedback?

    a. Why or why not?

13. Do you think you are the type of graduate you student you thought you would be?

    a. Why or why not?

Resources:

14. What types of challenges or obstacles have you run into during the semester?

    a. Tell me about those

    b. How did you address those obstacles?

      c.   Were you expecting these obstacles when you started college?

15. Do you believe you have access to everything that you need to be the type of graduate student you want to be? Such as books, help with coursework, and the like?
      a.   Why or why not?

16. Have you used any of the services available on campus such as the tutoring center, advising, counseling center or the like? (which ones)
      a.   Why or why not?

17. Tell me a bit about how you think the Sociology program is working?
      a.   What are some of the positive aspects of the program?
      b.   Where do you think it can improve?

18. I'd like to talk a bit about some of the things that students can experience while at college that are difficult. I would like to understand your experiences with any of these …
      a.   Do you ever not buy required class materials like books or software programs because of cost? (Explain a bit)
      b.   Do you have a reliable form of transportation? (Talk about that a bit)
      c.   In a normal week, do you feel you have enough to eat? Do you ever have to skip meals because you don't have enough money?
      d.   Do you have a stable place to live? (or are you living from house to house? Or in a car?)

Retention Plans:

19. How likely do you think it is that you will come back to HSU in the Spring?
      a.   How likely do you think it is that you will receive your degree at this college?

Wrap-up:

Is there anything else you would like to add?