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Addressing Higher Education Issues of Latino Students in Greenville County, South Carolina

Sandra Elizbeth Portillo de Yúdice
Walden University

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Review Committee
Dr. Joyce Haines, Committee Chairperson,
Public Policy and Administration Faculty

Dr. Ernesto Escobedo, Committee Member,
Public Policy and Administration Faculty

Dr. Morris Bidjerano, University Reviewer,
Public Policy and Administration Faculty

Chief Academic Officer
Eric Riedel, Ph.D.

Walden University
2015

Abstract

Addressing Higher Education Issues of Latino Students in Greenville County, South

Carolina

by

Sandra Portillo de Yúdice

MA, University of Maryland, College Park, 1996

BS, State University of New York, Old Westbury, 1992

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Public Policy and Administration

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December 2015

Abstract

Latino college enrollment rates in South Carolina do not reflect the overall increase in the Latino population in the state, which suggests that schools, colleges, and universities may be unprepared to serve the unique needs of Latino students. Consequently, Latino students are less likely to pursue opportunities in higher education than their non-Latino counterparts, which raises significant public policy concerns about equity and the potential economic contributions of the Latino communities. The purpose of this narrative policy analysis (NPA), based upon critical race theory, was to explore the perceptions of Latino students, parents, and advocates related to opportunities in pursuing education after high school in Greenville County, SC. Criterion and snowball sampling identified 15 individuals from whom interview data were acquired. Participants included 7 Latino students, 3 of their parents, and 5 advocates of Latino student attainment of college education. Secondary data consisted of higher education related legislation, policy documents, and reports. Data were inductively coded and analyzed using Roe's NPA procedure. These findings suggest that, at least according to these 15 participants, multiple barriers to college enrollment exist, including cultural expectations and unfamiliarity with the college application and financial aid processes. This study could encourage policy makers to consider perspectives of critical race theory as they create policies and support culturally relevant programs and financial aid guidance to Latino parents, students, and high school counselors. Such programs would lead to positive social change by promoting higher educational achievement, which is essential for the profitable employment of Latinos in the private and public sectors in South Carolina.

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Dedication

       To God. For granting me strength to take on and complete this long and lonely journey. To my family. To my deceased parents, for their commitment to education and legacy that only education can give; to my husband, for his patience and silent support; to my children, for their unconditional love and words of encouragement; and to my grandchildren, for their future successes thanks to the educational foundation of their ancestors. Also, to all Latino students in Greenville County, South Carolina, whose silent voices came alive and will be heard through my research.

Acknowledgments

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my dissertation committee members. I could not have completed my dissertation without the guidance and commitment to excellence of Dr. Joyce Haines, my committee chair and content expert, whose words of encouragement and feelings of pride towards her mentees will resonate forever in my mind: "Onward and Upward!" Thank you Dr. Haines for recognizing that this study is "unique, authentic, important!" To Dr. Ernesto Escobedo who offered to be my qualitative methodology expert at first sight during my advising session at my last residency without me asking him! His gesture made me realized that my research topic was of great need and importance. To Dr. Morris Bidjerano, my University Research Review member, whose attention to details assisted me with making sure that there was coherence and logic in the information presented. To Dr. Tanya Settles for her expert advice on methodology and dissertation abstracts. I will be forever grateful and in debt to all for their dedication to Walden University's mission to effect positive social change. To my participants, who graciously gave their time and coped with me during the interviews! Without their willingness to participate, this research would not have been possible.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

The Latino population increased drastically in the United States since 2000

(Ennis, 2011). The southeast region is experiencing most of this growth, particularly

states that are considered "'non-traditional [Latino] settlements'" (Dondero & Muller,

2012; Kochhar, Suro, & Tafoya, 2005; McLaughlin González & Raymond Ting, 2008;

Wainer, 2006; Young, 2005, p. 1). Trends indicate that the Latino population will

continue to grow in South Carolina (Young, 2005) and the sudden increase of Latinos in

South Carolina since the 1990s presents challenges for public administrators and

educators. Community leaders and businesses in Greenville County, South Carolina, have

long recognized the changing demographics affecting the local workforce and the

necessity to "pay special attention to the educational needs of African-American and

Hispanic students" (Prince, 2006). The continuous increase of Latinos in South Carolina

will present challenges if this segment of the population remains behind in higher

education achievements.

Researchers studying the increasing Latino population in the southeast United

States have focused attention on general needs such as housing, health, transportation,

safety, and education, including a few studies on the general needs of the adult Latino

population in South Carolina. The literature review revealed only one study in Columbia,

South Carolina, that explored the experiences and academic achievements of high school

students who were born in Mexico and had recently migrated to the United States

(Castillo-González, 2011).

The purpose of this NPA study was to identify the barriers and opportunities to

higher education among Latino students in Greenville County, South Carolina. Located

in the northwestern part of South Carolina known as upstate South Carolina, Greenville

County is approximately 100 miles from Columbia, the state's capital. The county has a

mix of rural and urban environments and economic development experts consider

Greenville County the economic engine of the region (Greenville Area Development

Corporation, 2015). Latinos have lived in this region for decades in relative small

numbers, but the population began to grow in the late 1990s, from 0.80% of the

population in 1980 (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2008) to 8.5% of the population in

2014 (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2014). Discovering the obstacles and opportunities

may contribute to the scholarly body of knowledge on the specific educational needs of

Latino students in South Carolina.

By identifying obstacles preventing and opportunities bridging Latino college

enrollment, such as academic barriers, circumstances, parental support, and public

policies hindering or encouraging college access, the findings of this study may also

promote positive social change by increasing the number of Latino students who earn

higher education degrees. By increasing awareness of their own situations, Latino

students may cultivate their "college-going literacy" (Gildersleeve, 2010, p. 21) when

afforded the opportunity to recognize, critique, and visualize their own participation in

the college-going process. In addition, by becoming aware of the needs and

circumstances of Latino students, teachers and professors would be able to understand

social realities for these students and, hopefully, construct a learning environment that

encourages postsecondary education, and, hence, social change. The social change

implications include (a) increasing awareness among Latino students and their parents about student circumstances and opportunities that may be available to them to pursue higher education; (b) the potential resilient behavior that student participants may develop; (c) the awareness of high school teachers and local colleges and universities recruiters of Latino student obstacles and needs after disseminating results; (d) the potential impact of policies and local programs addressing needs; (e) and the potential impact of uneducated or educated Latinos at the state level if the status quo remains.

Problem Statement

Researchers have conducted studies on the Latino community and its needs. A review of the literature revealed several studies conducted in traditional Latino settlements such as California, Texas, Florida, New York, New Jersey, and Illinois (Castillo-González, 2011; McLaughlin González & Raymond Ting, 2008; Vásquez, Seales, & Marquadt, 2008). Other studies have focused on the general needs and profiles of Latinos in the southeast United States, where researchers consider some states as nontraditional Latino settlements (Cooper-Lewter, 2013; Lacy, 2007; Wainer, 2004). Only Castillo-González (2011) specifically explored the experiences of recently arrived Mexican students in South Carolina. I did not find a study in the reviewed literature that addressed the obstacles and opportunities facing Latino students in South Carolina in their pursuit of higher education. In this study, I attempted to fill the gap in the literature. The findings may provide much needed understanding of the emerging Latino population, culture, and educational needs of Latino students in South Carolina.

A common theme that I found in the literature review is that the Latino population

is growing throughout the United States. The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that Latinos now compose 17.2% of the population and that number would increase to 31% by 2060 (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2013). Several states in the southeast United States, including South Carolina, are considered emerging states where Latinos began establishing permanent communities in the 1990s (Fischer, 2010; González Sullivan, 2007; Wainer, 2004; Young, 2005). Projections also indicate that the Latino population will grow significantly in South Carolina (Young, 2005). Table 1, on next page, provides the 2010 composition of the Latino population in Greenville County, South Carolina, that is, those from Spanish-speaking Latin American and Caribbean countries only. The majority, or 52.37%, of Latinos are of Mexican origin or descent, followed by (a) South Americans (18.51%), with a majority population from Colombia; (b) Central Americans (15.07%), with a majority from Guatemala; and (c) Caribbean (14.06%), with a majority from Puerto Rico.

The rapid increase of Latinos in South Carolina (i.e., 148% between 2000 and 2010) presents challenges and issues in the human services field, including education (Young 2005). As a result, personnel found themselves unprepared to deal with the sudden influx of Latino students in schools (Delgado-Romero, Matthews, & Paisley, 2007; Ennis, Rios-Vargas, & Albert, 2011; Fischer, 2010; Torres & Zerquera, 2012; Villalba, Brunelli, Lewis, & Orfanedes, 2007; Young, 2005).

Table 1

2010 Latino Population Composition in Greenville County, South Carolina

Country	Population total	Percentage of total Latino population	Region total	Region (%)
North America			17,869	52.37%
Mexico	17,869	52.37%		
Caribbean			4,797	14.06%
Cuba	1,022	3.00%		
Dominican Republic	625	1.83%		
Puerto Rico	3,150	9.23%		
Central America			5,141	15.07%
Costa Rica	552	1.62%		
El Salvador	794	2.33%		
Guatemala	1,935	5.67%		
Honduras	1,510	4.43%		
Nicaragua	224	0.66%		
Panama	126	0.37%		
South America			6,316	18.51%
Argentina	162	0.47%		
Bolivia	35	0.10%		
Chile	99	0.29%		
Colombia	4,943	14.49%		
Ecuador	255	0.75%		
Paraguay	24	0.07%		
Peru	400	1.17%		
Uruguay	148	0.43%		
Venezuela	250	0.73%		
Total Latino population	34,123			

Note. Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, 2010a. Note: the data presented includes Spanish speaking countries and does not include: Others who may be considered Hispanics or Latinos but who were not born in a Spanish speaking Latin American country such as Spaniards, Spanish Americans (i.e., those whose ancestors are from Spain), Other Central Americans (i.e., Belize, a former British colony), and Other South Americans (i.e., Brazil, Suriname, and the Guyanas)

Facilitating the educational achievements and economic productivity of Latinos could bring much needed positive social change for this segment of the population in South Carolina. Those achievements would not only increase quality of life for Latinos, but would also promote the economic vitality of the state. The economic benefits that the state could accrue may be in the billions of dollars. Carnevale and Fry (n.d.) noted that

the income gains resulting from the equalization of ethnic or racial minority educational opportunities for South Carolina is approximately $4 billion. Castillo-González (2011) recognized that society could experience not only moral gains but also economic gains from an educated population. An educated Latino population can counterbalance the economic liability that the retiring Baby Boomer generation represents by becoming highly educated while advancing socioeconomically.

Background

Since 1998, the federal government recognized and prioritized the improvement of the nation's education without regard to age, background, and community. In achieving that priority, all students in the education pipeline, including Latinos and limited English proficient (LEP) students, must have the opportunity to succeed with the highest academic standards and schools must bank on their talents (including bilingualism) and identify and respond to the challenges they present to schools (U.S. Department of Education, 1998). In 1998, the U.S. Department of Education issued a plan to enhance programs to address the education of Latino and LEP students. The plan included five goals:

1. Maintain and refine programs that boost Latino and LEP student achievement to world-class standards and lower the Latino dropout rate.

2. Ensure a program of ongoing, empirical data collection and research that targets the educational needs of Latino and LEP students.

3. Build the capacity of teaching professionals to meet the educational needs of Latino and LEP students.

4. Support efforts to increase the Latino community's access to higher education and lifelong learning.

5. Create accountability systems to monitor the progress of Latino and LEP students. (U.S. Department of Education, 1998).

Determining the attainment of each of these goals is beyond the scope of this dissertation. However, goal 4 related to this research since I explored the obstacles and opportunities facing Latino students seeking higher education in Greenville County, South Carolina.

Researchers have studied the Latino population and its educational needs in different states. Wainer's (2004) study, conducted in Arkansas, Georgia, and North Carolina, noted that the lack of public resources for the education of Latino students created "negative educational outcomes and de facto educational segregation in the South" (Wainer, 2004, p. 1). Bohon, Macpherson, and Atiles (2005) identified several barriers that greatly decrease the possibility of Latinos in Georgia graduating from high school, and, as a result, attending and completing college. Those obstacles, among others, included lack of school support, lack of understanding of the school system among immigrants, an anti-immigration environment, and lack of incentives to pursue higher education (Bohon et al., 2005). González Sullivan (2007) noted additional factors affecting enrollment and success in college among Latinos throughout the United States, including lack of academic readiness, attending poor schools, lack of parental education, work and family responsibilities, postponing college education, attending college on a part-time basis, and lack of transportation. These findings may or may not be applicable

to South Carolina, a state with a dearth of research on Latino students. Barriers to achieving higher education among Latino students may negatively affect South Carolina's economy and communities because it is an emerging state where Latinos have established and will continue establishing permanent settlements (Young, 2005). Conducting a study in Greenville County, South Carolina, will facilitate the understanding of higher education needs of the Latino students in the county.

Additional research areas include academic achievement and preparedness among college educators to serve the growing Latino population. In a quantitative study of the role of school counselors in Georgia, Rives (2009) documented that "Hispanic [or Latino] students are not performing academically at the same level as White, Asian, or Black students" (p. 65). Rives found that a need exists to develop school counselors' leadership skills that allow them to become leaders in promoting student academic achievement. This finding reaffirmed what other researchers have noted about the school counselor role as "an educational leader who advocates for the academic, career, and personal and social success of every student" (Delgado-Romero et al., 2007, p. 211). Torres and Zerquera (2012) explored the readiness of potential Hispanic-serving institutions (HSIs) in emerging states to receive the growing Latino student population. Torres and Zerquera identified Beaufort County, South Carolina, (D. Zerquera, personal communication, November 17, 2014) as an "enclave county" (p. 266) where the Latino population will continue to grow and the University of South Carolina-Beaufort as a potential HSI in the state (D. Zerquera, personal communication, November 17, 2014). South Carolina, as an emerging state with an increasing Latino population, should be at the early stages of a

game-changing role in secondary and postsecondary education to increase the academic performance of Latino students in the K–12 system as well as their higher education enrollment and success.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau's 5-year estimates (2008–2012), 42.91% of the Latino population aged 25 years and older in Greenville County has less than a high school diploma, compared with 12.76% of Whites and 21.69% of African Americans (U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, 2014). Of the same age group, 24% of Latinos have a high school diploma, general educational development (GED) diploma, or alternative diploma, compared with 25.48% of Whites and 32.95% of African Americans (U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, 2014). In addition, only 19.88% of Latinos in that age group have some college or an associate's degree, compared 27.77% of Whites and 29.83% of African Americans. Last, only 13.21% of the same Latino population group has a bachelor's degree or higher, compared with 33.99% of Whites and 15.53% of African Americans (U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, 2014).

College enrollment among Latinos in South Carolina increased between 2003 and 2013. Data from the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education (SCCHE) (2014) show that enrollment of Latino students steadily increased at the two largest technical colleges, Greenville and Trident, and the two major research public universities, Clemson University and the University of South Carolina/Columbia (USC-Columbia), with the highest enrollment at the latter institution. From 2003 to 2013, enrollment among Latinos more than tripled at these institutions. If enrollment is increasing, higher education

institutions need to increase recruiting efforts and implement retention programs to ensure Latino student college graduation. Figure 1 summarizes the enrollment information for Latino students.
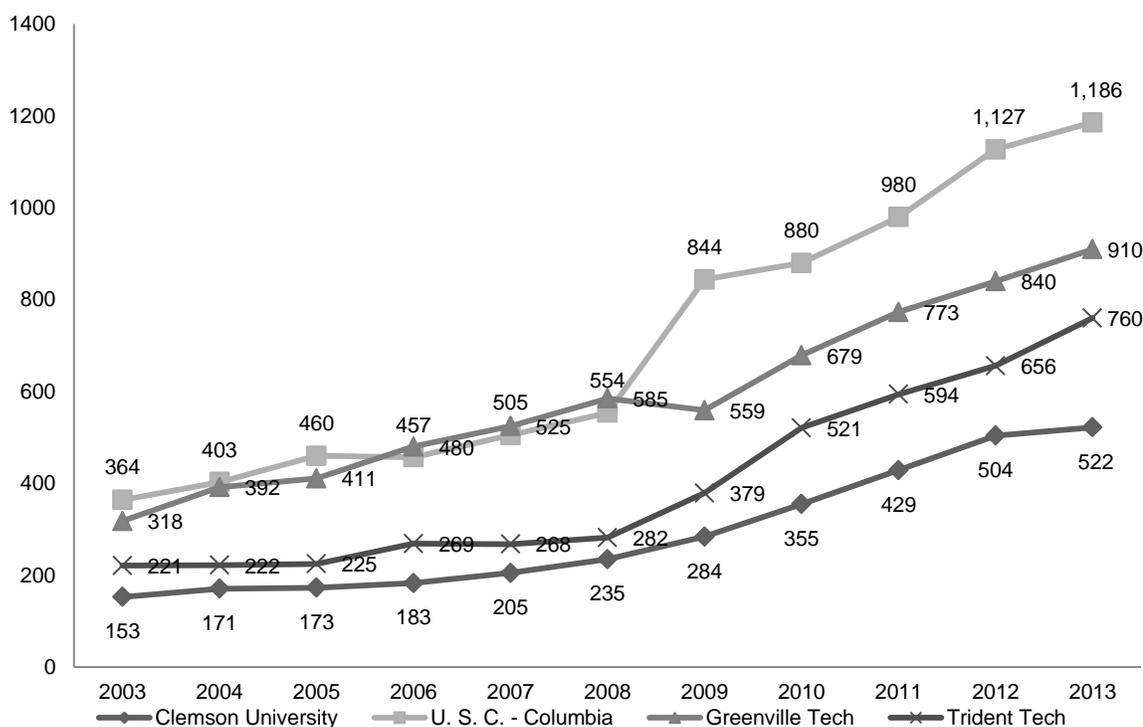
Figure 1. Total Latino student enrollment at two major public research universities and two major technical colleges in South Carolina, Fall Semesters 2003–2013. Source: South Carolina Commission on Higher Education, Enrollment Statistics (2014).

Nationwide, college graduation rates among Latinos are lagging behind graduation rates among Whites. According to Excelencia in Education (2014b), the 2010–2011 graduation rate among Latinos was 35% compared with 46% of White students. Of adults who are 25 years and older, 17% of Latinos obtained an associate degree or higher compared with 33% of all adults. Despite the fact that Latino students'

graduation rates are lagging behind those of Whites, the positive news is that the

graduation rate among Latinos increased between 2002 and 2012 nationwide. According

to The Education Trust (2014), of the Latino students enrolled at Clemson and USC-

Columbia, the 4-year graduation rate in 2002 was 22.2% and 29.2%, respectively. These

rates were low compared with those of White students at 38.5% for Clemson and 36.1%

for USC-Columbia. Compared with rates from 2012, the Latino graduation rate

increased, 46.7% for Clemson and 50.0% for USC-Columbia, closing the graduation gap

between Latino and White students. The graduation rate for White students in 2012 was

59.2% for Clemson and 54.8% for USC-Columbia (The Education Trust, 2014).

As noted previously, the Greenville County Latino population 25-years and older

has a high percentage (42.91%) of adults with less than a high school diploma and only

13.21% obtained at least a bachelor's degree. If college enrollment and graduation rates

have improved for Latino students in South Carolina, increasing the number of Latino

students in the college pipeline would have the potential of positively effecting and

increasing their higher education enrollment and completion.

Paying out-of-state tuition was one of the barriers often cited in the reviewed

literature. Vargas (2011–2012) studied in-state tuition policies for undocumented students

and concluded that the growth in the Latino population increased the possibility that

states pass (i.e., allow undocumented students to pay in-state tuition) or ban (i.e., do not

allow undocumented students to pay in-state tuition and charging them out-of-state

tuition, if they are allowed to enroll at all) in-state tuition policies. Vargas (2011–2012)

also concluded that emerging immigrant settlement states have adopted policies banning

in-state tuition for undocumented students. South Carolina not only banned in-state tuition benefits for undocumented students, but also prohibited them from attending public higher education institutions (Illegal Immigration Reform Act, 2008). This draconian legislation not only penalized these students for being present in the state (a decision that, more likely than not, their parents made) but also closed all possibilities for them to enroll and complete their degrees at a public college or university. Thus, this policy closed the viable avenue to become highly educated and productive members of society and taxpayers with higher incomes. Based on Vargas (2011–2012) analysis and results, it is possible that the South Carolina legislature passed the in-state tuition and enrollment policies ban due to the increase of undocumented immigrants in the state.

Contrary to the critics of laws that allow undocumented students to attend and pay in-state tuition at higher education institutions, Mehlman-Orozco (2011) found that there was little research supporting the arguments critics present. Following a methodical review of the limited research available on the effect of in-state tuition laws, Mehlman-Orozco concluded that in-state tuition for Latino non-citizens in Rhode Island may (a) decrease high school dropout rates, (b) increase college enrollment, and (c) not present financial costs to public higher education institutions, the state, or taxpayers. These conclusions make sense from the socio-economic point of view as a well-educated population presents less of a burden to the welfare state.

The current demographic shift that is taking place will affect the future of the United States socially and economically. In her foreword to the LatCrit XI Symposium, Lazos Vargas (2007) made an extremely important recognition with respect to that

change,

>Children of immigrants (documented or not) are the most important demographic cohort of the future. Because of their numerosity, their incorporation will affect the future economic welfare of the United States. This is the generation that will drive future economic growth. A majority of the second generation are U.S. born, a majority speak English, but many need help in English language proficiency, and a majority have at least one parent who is foreign born and may be an undocumented immigrant. (p. 702)

Education has been the great equalizer and has provided upward socio-economic mobility for low-income minorities by allowing the accumulation of human capital (Castillo-González, 2011; Gándara, 2009; Kanno & Cromley, 2013; Levin, Belfield, Muennig, & Rouse, 2006a). Freire posited, "Education for personal, social, and environmental sustainability should therefore be humanizing, fomenting solidarity and empowering community" (2014b) and "If education alone cannot transform society, without it society cannot change either" (Freire, 2014a). Attaining higher education provides the opportunity of increasing earnings, employability, and requiring less social services (Aud, Fox, & KewalRamani, 2010; Davis Bell & Bautsch, 2011). Students who earn an undergraduate degree earn about $30,000 more annually over their lifetime (Greenstone & Looney, 2013) compared with students who only have a high school diploma (Davis Bell & Bautsch, 2011). Earning a college degree could mean a way out of poverty (Greenstone & Looney, 2013). Using the segmented assimilation framework, obtaining a higher education degree has the potential of avoiding downward assimilation

and securing an upward mobility path in society.

Latino students bring an untapped asset that schools need to be aware of and/or exploit for the students' future and the country's global advantage. Former United States Secretary of Education Richard Riley (2000) acknowledged that Latinos bilingualism or "bi-literacy" should be treated as an asset, not as a deficiency or weakness, not with suspicion, and, definitely, not as an obstacle to success. Gándara (2009) noted that, still in the eyes of American schools, non-English speakers have a barrier to learning because of their language skills and consider that barrier to be a defect that needs correction or something that is not relevant to the school environment. Other nations consider bilingualism or multilingualism an important quality to a well-balanced education that is profitable financially and "many of these nations are now overtaking the United States in average years of education, the United States might consider taking a second look at some of their education policies with respect to language learning" (Gándara, 2009, p. 6). The business community has recognized the potential domestic market that exists with the Latino community and has increased its marketing efforts in Spanish. If schools do not acknowledge the potential that the Latino community has to offer, the United States would miss an opportunity of taking advantage of the cognitive and culturally appropriate skills that bilingual Latinos have to communicate domestically and abroad (Gándara, 2009).

Previous researchers understated or failed to address higher education needs and obstacles among Latino students in South Carolina. Identifying and analyzing the barriers and enablers to higher education attainment for Latino students in Greenville County,

South Carolina, may contribute to the current scholarly body of knowledge and make a positive social change. Such contribution would increase Latino student enrollment and completion of higher education in South Carolina in light of that 42.91% of the Latino population 25 years and over has less than a high school diploma.

In less than four decades, Latinos became the majority of the minority population (Hemphill, Vanneman, & Rahman, 2011). In 2008, the Census Bureau estimated that Latinos would compose 17.8% of the total United States population by the year 2020 and 24.4% by the year 2050 (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2008). According to the U.S. Census Bureau's 2012 estimates, Latinos now compose 17.2% of the country's population and would be 31% of the population by 2060 (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2013). Census estimates of Latino population growth are increasingly changing. It would not be a surprise that Latinos become a third of the population sooner than the year 2060. In the past, logically, this population increase led to increases in public school enrollment (Pabon Lopez, 2005).

Fry (2006) studied school enrollment nationwide from the 1993–1994 to 2002–2003 school year and found that Latinos drove two thirds of the increase in student enrollment during that period. Currently, nationwide, 22% of the K–12 student population is Latino (Santiago & Calderón Galdeano, 2014a). With the projected Latino population growth in the next decades, exploring the challenges of Latino students to attain higher education may contribute to positive social change through their advancement in society. Not paying attention to educational needs of Latinos could lead to future socio-economic and workforce development issues.

Since the early 2000s, scholars and experts in education have warned of a "looming 'education crisis' regarding Hispanic [or Latino] immigrant education in the South" (Wainer, 2004, p. 4). Gibson (2001) also noted that public education was causing a crisis not just for Latinos but also for the future of the country since educational levels determine the quality of the future workforce. Santiago and Calderón Galdeano (2014a) concluded, "For the U.S. to regain the top ranking in the world for college degree attainment, Latinos will need to earn 5.5 million more degrees by 2020." In 2011, the National Public Radio (NPR) reported about the dropout crisis in the United States noting that "Latinos have the highest dropout rate [47%] of any racial or ethnic group [at the national level]" (Sanchez, 2011). NPR also reported:

> A fifth of the nation's public school students attend rural schools, but nearly a third of those kids don't graduate. In fact, many schools that researchers have labeled "dropout factories" are in rural communities. No state has more than South Carolina, which has 50 [dropout factories]. In this state, lots of teenagers just don't think they need a high school diploma. (Sanchez, 2011)

Greenville County has a 42.91% of its Latino population 25-year old and older having less than a high school diploma (U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, 2014). Exploring barriers and opportunities facing Latino students in the county will not only contribute to the current body of knowledge to address them, but also to the potential reversion of the causes leading to the education crisis of this segment of the population in the county.

Nationwide, interest in early childhood education has gained momentum as a

predictor of future school performance. According to the 2005-2006 National Center for Education Statistics, nationally, Latino 4-year old children participated less in day care centers and their letter recognition competences were low (Aud, Fox, & KewalRamani, 2010) compared with other races/ethnic groups. This finding implies that 4-year old Latino children arrive at K-5 less prepared than their peers, which would also affect their educational performance in future years. In 2007, nationwide, the dropout rate among Latino high school students was higher, 21%, compared with African Americans and Caucasians, 8% and 5%, respectively (Aud, Fox, & KewalRamani, 2010). The graduation rate of Latino students who entered high school during the 2003–2004 school year was 62%, while only 62% of the graduates subsequently enrolled directly into college after graduation in 2007 (Aud, Fox, & KewalRamani, 2010). Although high school graduation and college enrollment rates of Latino students have increased, when compared with other racial/ethnic groups, Latinos had the lowest ranking for a bachelor degree: 13% (Aud, Fox, & KewalRamani, 2010; Davis Bell & Bautsch, 2011). The inverted triangle in Figure 2 shows that the education pipeline functions as a funnel noting that for every 100 Hispanic students entering 9th grade, only 55 would graduate from high school, 36 students would enroll in college, and only 13 would obtain a college degree. The education pipeline also compares Hispanic students with their White counterparts. Davis Bell and Bautsch (2011) presented the Latino students education pipeline as follows:

For every 100 students…

77 White students graduate from high school

55 Hispanic students graduate from high school

55 White students immediately enroll in college

36 Hispanic students immediately enroll in college

27 White students graduate from college

13 Hispanic students graduate from college
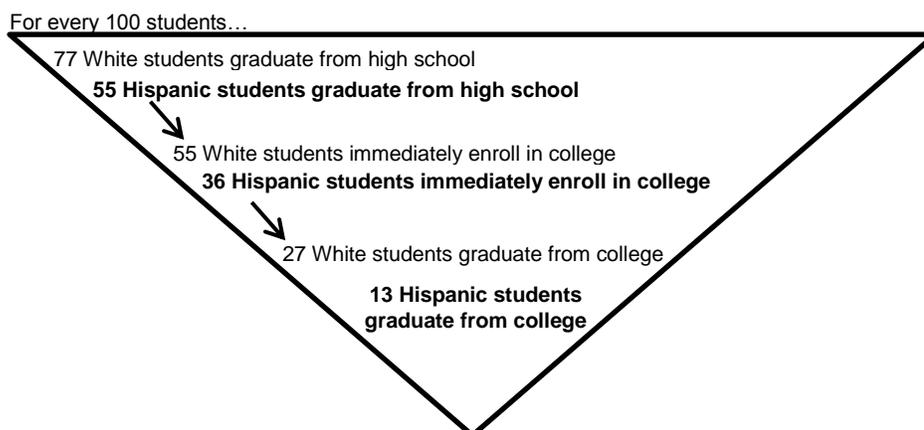
Figure 2. Hispanic student education pipeline. From "Improving Latino College Completion What State Legislators Should Know," by J. Davis Bell and B. Bautsch, 2011, National Conference of State Legislatures. Reprinted with permission.

For Mexicans or Chicanas/Chicanos, as Yosso (2005) refers to them, that scenario is even worse. Out of 100 elementary school children, 44 graduate from high school, 26 go to college (17 enroll in community colleges and nine go to a 4-year college), seven obtain a bachelor's degree, two go on to graduate school, and less than one obtains a doctorate (Yosso, 2005). Mexicans compose the majority of the Latino community (Ennis et al., 2011) and, as noted, this group is the least favored to obtain higher education. Nationwide efforts to increase high school graduation and college attainment should aim to this group of the Latino population.

South Carolina also contributes with its share to the Latino students' education pipeline statistics. In South Carolina, 7% of the K–12 student population is Latino (Santiago & Calderón Galdeano, 2014b). According to the most recent published data from the SC Department of Education, 5,232 (out of 209,283 students enrolled) dropped out of high school during the 2011–2012 school year, a dropout rate of 2.5% (Zais, 2013). Of those students who dropped out, 334 (6.4%) students were Latinos. These 334

students represented a dropout rate of 3.1% out of 10,828 Latino high school students

enrolled (Zais, 2013). The 2012 Annual District Report Card of Greenville County noted

that the dropout rate was 3.4%, representing an increase over the 2011 rate of 2.8% (State

of South Carolina, 2012). The 2012 on-time graduation rate for Latino students was

67.4% (State of South Carolina, 2012). In 2014, the student dropout rate decreased to

2.8% from 3% in 2013 (State of South Carolina, 2014). Efforts should aim at Latino

students to increase retention at the high school level or earlier to increment the number

of Latino students graduating from high school on time.

The Latino education crisis is not limited to the southeastern states. Mehlman-

Orozco (2011) recognized that the State of Rhode Island was "facing an education

crisis…Latino students in Rhode Island rank last in the country on academic

performance" (p. 15). Research shows that Latinos were last in the American College

Testing (ACT) average composite scores for the 2007 and 2011 two-year comparison

with a score of 18.7 each year. Comparing both years, Asians scored 22.6 and 23.4,

followed by Caucasians with scores of 22.1 and 22.4, and African Americans whose

score was 17.0 each year (Harvey, Slate, Moore, Barnes, & Martinez-Garcia, 2013).

Inevitable Latinos will continue increasing future student population. Scholars

recognized the need to increase the educational level of Latinos to improve the economic

advantage and prosperity in the Unites States (Gándara, 2009; Nuñez & Kim, 2012). If

public policy makers and educational leaders do not address the educational achievement

gap, it "will almost certainly act as a drag on overall US educational and economic

performance in the years ahead" (McKinsey & Company, 2009, p. 11). Addressing the

education crisis is an imperative for the United States to continue holding a place among the economic leading countries.

The literature review for this study revealed another type of education crisis that evolved in the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields. S. A. Jackson (as cited in González Sullivan, 2007) recognized that the "quiet crisis involves a steady erosion of American's scientific and engineering base, which has always been the source of American innovation and our rising standard of living" (p. 404). González Sullivan (2007) noted that community colleges might be the gateway for Latino students into the STEM fields. For Latinos, community colleges provide a viable entry avenue to the higher education field because they have local campuses, are less expensive, and allow the transfer of certain college credits to four-year colleges.

Different sources have acknowledged the need to educate the Latino population. A well-educated workforce is not only important at the national level, but also at the state and local levels, for the United States to compete in a global economy and to improve the quality of life of its citizens. Regarding the looming education crisis, researchers at the University of South Carolina (USC) (2007) raised the question about efforts to address it. Former Secretary of Education Richard Riley (Education Counsel, 2011) noted,

> America's continued global leadership depends on producing an educated workforce prepared to compete in the jobs and economy of tomorrow…. The data is compelling that national, state, local, and community leaders in education, public policy, and workforce development must put particular focus on Latino college completion. (para. 2)

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this NPA study was to analyze Title 59 of the South Carolina Code of Laws regarding higher education legislation and explore stories and counter-stories that have served as obstacles or bridges for Latino student access to higher education. Through examining legislation and reports, conducting interviews, and developing a metanarrative that would make higher education more accessible to this segment of the population in South Carolina, I addressed a field and geographic area (i.e., higher education attainment of Latino students in Greenville County, South Carolina) that the literature scarcely touched. The findings will provide essential information about the emerging Latino culture in South Carolina, its needs, and the obstacles and opportunities to become highly educated. This analysis may provide a foundation for policy makers and educational institutions to develop policies and culturally appropriate programs that encourage college enrollment and completion among Latino students in the county. Increasing the number of college and university Latino graduates could bring about social change for this segment of the population in this region of South Carolina, increase their quality of life, and promote the overall economic vitality of the state.

Research Questions

Based on the literature review, the main research question was: What factors constrain or enable the enrollment of South Carolina Latino students in college upon their graduation from high school? The subquestions were: (a) What were the academic barriers that prevented South Carolina Latino students from qualifying to enroll in college upon graduation?; (b) What circumstances prevented South Carolina Latino students

from qualifying for college enrollment?; (c) How have South Carolina Latino students overcome barriers to educational achievement?; (d) What barriers did South Carolina parents of Latino students who wanted higher education for their children encounter?; (e) What were public policy-makers doing to promote academic success for South Carolina Latino students so that they qualify for enrollment in college?

Theoretical Framework

A combination of critical race theory (CRT), LatCrit theory (Latino critical theory), and segmented assimilation theory served as the theoretical frameworks for this study. These frameworks required that I consider (a) discriminatory practices and policies embedded in society, in this case affecting Latino students higher education achievement; (b) how those practices and policies influence how legal immigrants assimilate in the host community; (c) how to challenge discriminatory practices and policies by bringing to light resilient and transformational resistance experiences of Latino students; and (d) positive practices that may be implemented at educational institutions in South Carolina. Chapter 2 will include a detailed review of each of these theories.

Nature of the Study

Lincoln and Guba (1985) referred to qualitative research methods as the "naturalistic paradigm [that] provides a better degree of fit with substantive paradigms in the areas of social/behavioral research" (p. 66). The NPA approach facilitated this study and for the purpose of this study, I used the term narrative policy analysis. Policy narratives or stories support and sustain decision-making assumptions of complex policy issues (Roe, 1994). Similar to Roe, Polkinghorne (1995) defined stories as "sustained

emplotted accounts with a beginning, middle, and end" (p. 12). Two are the objectives of narrative policy analysis or analysis of policy narratives: highlight the importance of the role of narratives in public policy and recognize that the analysis of narratives allows reconstructing complex policy issues in such a way that policy analysts may examine the reconstructed issues using conventional policy analysis methods (Roe, 1994).

Using Roe's (1994) four steps narrative policy analysis, I explored the factors constraining or enabling the enrollment of South Carolina Latino students in college after graduation from high school. Primary data collected through in-depth interviews and secondary data collected through policy narratives (i.e., legislation, reports, etc.) served as the basis for this qualitative research.

Definitions

Black/White binary paradigm: the constant focus on Black/White race relations, which excludes other ethnicities and races from discourse. It is "the conception that race in America consists, either exclusively or primarily, of only two constituent racial groups, the Black and the White" (Perea, 1997, p. 1219).

DREAMers or undocumented students: undocumented immigrant students who do not have legal immigration status such as permanent residency or a Green Card (including refugee or asylee status), official visas such as student's visa, or United States citizenship.

Enclave counties: emerging geographic areas where Latinos are establishing permanent communities.

Epoche: refers to the researchers' abstention or suspension of judgment; the

withholding of prior experiences that could influence or bias the interpretation of the data.

Human capital: educational and occupational skill levels of individuals.

Latin American country: any Spanish speaking country in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Latino(s): for the purpose of this study, this term refers, in general, to females and males of any race from Spanish speaking Latin American countries. This term also refers to Hispanics as noted in the literature review.

Latino students: students who are of Hispanic or Latino origin or descent (i.e., from Spanish speaking Latin American countries) and citizens or legal residents of the United States.

Lived experiences: positive (supportive) or negative (obstacles) experiences that Latino students face in their pursuit of higher education.

New Latino diaspora or Latino dispersion: the immigration or migration of Latinos during the 1990s to new establishments in the southeast region of the United States and other areas where Latinos had not established historical communities.

Nontraditional settlements: states, communities, and/or geographical places where Latinos do not have a history of established roots. Researchers call them also new Latino destinations.

Participants: Latino students facing obstacles and/or opportunities in pursuing higher education, their parents, legislators, public officials, college officials, and advocates of Latino students.

Thick descriptions: rich and detailed descriptions that transfer the reader to the places or allow the reader to get to know the people being described in order to understand and draw interpretations from the phenomenon under study (Patton, 2002).

Traditional Latino settlements: states, communities, and/or places where Latinos have established long term roots including the states of California, Florida, Illinois, New Jersey, New York, and Texas.

To be consistent with the ethnic or racial terms used by different government entities data sets, I will use the terms Latinos or Hispanics, African Americans or Blacks, and Caucasians or Whites when referring to students backgrounds and discussing descriptive statistics.

Assumptions, Scope, Delimitations, and Limitations

Assumptions

According to Moustakas (1994), people tell personal stories or lived experiences providing evidence for qualitative research. Therefore, I assumed that participants were truthful in the recounting of their lived experiences, accounts, and descriptions. I also assumed that the lived experiences of participants were valid as an understanding of their reality.

Delimitations

I explored factors constraining and enabling the pursuit of higher education by Latino students in Greenville County, South Carolina, where the Latino population has increased since the late 1990s. This geographic area has and continues experiencing an increase in the Latino population going from 0.80% in 1980 to 8.5% in 2014 (U.S.

Department of Commerce, 2014).

I selected participants who are of Latino origin or descent and are citizens or legal residents of the United States. I did not include students from other races and/or backgrounds (i.e., Whites or Caucasians, African Americans, Asian Americans, etc.) who are not of Latino descent. Additional participants included parents of the interviewed students and advocates of Latinos higher education attainment. It was unfortunate that legislators, public officials, and college officials declined or were not responsive to the invitation to participate in the study.

Limitations

Limitations recognize potential weaknesses of the research method selected or study conducted. According to Maxwell (2013), qualitative and quantitative research methods are effective in addressing particular questions and each method has its strengths and rationality. Quantitative research methods try to establish the extent to which independent variables X and Y cause variances on Z, a dependent variable. Qualitative research methods explore the role that something plays on causing a consequence (Maxwell, 2013). In this qualitative NPA study, I brought to light the narratives related to the policy issue of higher education attainment among Latino students in Greenville County, South Carolina. Quantitative research methods would not serve the purpose of exploring and bringing to light the experiences that Latino students face in their quest for higher education attainment. For a quantitative study, I would need to know those experiences (independent variables) and test how they correlate with and influence a dependent variable.

The literature review revealed a limitation due to the lack of prior research on this topic and geographic area that is specific to Latino students. Therefore, this research was exploratory in nature rather than explanatory, opening opportunities to initiate conversations and further research on this topic, segment of the population, and geographic area.

Another limitation of qualitative research relates to the recruitment of participants. Qualitative research uses purposeful sampling (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Purposeful sampling includes participants who provide as much useful information as possible relevant to the research question (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The goal of utilizing purposeful sampling is to explore and discover most of the observations or lived experiences of participants relevant to the research topic (Mason, 2010). Qualitative research sampling must be large enough to obtain the essential information for inclusion in the analysis, for example, one piece of data is enough to codify it and include it in the analysis, if it is relevant to the study (Mason, 2010).

I used homogenous and snowball sampling of Latino students who experienced obstacles and/or opportunities in pursuing college education. Homogeneous sampling requires that participants are selected based on the same criterion (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The criterion in this case was Latino students who have faced impediments or opportunities in pursuing higher education in South Carolina. With snowball sampling, Latino students who participated in the study recommended peers in similar situations. I used homogeneous sampling to find the required number of students to participate in the study through the initial invitation. I obtained the authorization of a Latino nonprofit

organization in the upstate South Carolina to assist me with recruiting Latino students

who applied for college scholarships in early 2014 and 2013, independently of whether

applicants received a scholarship or not. This limitation resulted from the local school

district's denial to conduct the research with Latino students at local public high schools.

I used convenience sampling to select and invite legislators, Latino advocates,

college admissions staff, and a former United States Secretary of Education to participate.

As indicated previously, legislators, public officials, and college officials declined or

were not responsive to the invitation to participate. This presented another limitation to

the study as their perceptions and perspectives on the topic are not included.

Because results may be unique to this Latino population and geographic area,

transferability may be limited to other Latino student populations and geographic areas

such as those in close proximity to the study area. In addition, transferability may be

nonexistent to other parts of the state or the country because lived experiences may be

unique to this specific Latino population living in Greenville County.

According to Moustakas (1994), epoche requires "the elimination of suppositions

and the raising of knowledge above every possible doubt" (p. 26). Previous experiences

of researchers shape their "tacit knowledge" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 195). Epoche

assisted with the process of approaching this research with a fresh cognizance that was

free of prejudgments based on tacit knowledge as much as possible (Creswell, 2007;

Moustakas, 1994). I addressed any potential or unconscious bias that I might have

brought to the study by bracketing out my previous experiences in pursuing higher

education and focusing exclusively on the present research and the experiences of

participants facing challenges and/or obstacles (see Appendix A). I abstained from making judgmental observations, comments, interpretations, and conclusions based on my previous experiences.

<div align="center">**Significance**</div>

Scholars and education experts have warned of a potential educational crisis due to the increasing uneducated Latino population in the United States, including the southeast (Delgado-Romero, Matthews, & Paisley, 2007; Gibson, 2001; González Sullivan, 2007; McKinsey & Company, 2009; Rives, 2009; Mehlman-Orozco, 2011; Wainer, 2004). Exploring whether or not the increase of Latinos in South Carolina accompanied by the obstacles Latino students face in their quest of higher education attainment are contributing factors to the crisis has the potential of raising awareness among policy makers and educators about the effect that an increasing uneducated population could have on the state.

The significance of this NPA study includes (a) identify narratives through the analysis of policy documents and reports; (b) identify experiences, opportunities, and obstacles confronting Latino students; (c) further the awareness among school faculty and administrators and policy makers about the needs of the growing Latino student population in the area relevant to higher education; (d) identify strategies for policy-makers and educational administrators who seek to overcome these barriers; and (e) increase economic opportunities and quality of life for Latino students through higher education. By becoming aware of the needs and circumstances of Latino students and acknowledging cultural diversities, educators and administrators would be able to

understand their social realities and, hopefully, construct a learning environment that encourages postsecondary education. In addition, identifying such obstacles and opportunities might encourage a discussion of culturally appropriate programs and policies to facilitate college enrollment and completion of higher education degrees. Accordingly, positive social change might occur due to new programs and policies at the state level, at educational institutions and/or nonprofit organizations that would advance Latinos education and welfare in South Carolina through higher education attainment.

Summary

As the great equalizer, education enables upward mobility for low-income students and provides a way out of poverty. In comparison with a person who only has a high school diploma, earning an undergraduate degree yields about $30,000 more per year over the course of a college graduate's lifetime (Greenstone & Looney, 2013). South Carolina is an emerging Latino settlement with a growing Latino population. To halt the educational crisis, Latino students must not only graduate from high school, but also complete their higher education. Programs and policies facilitating an understanding of the benefits of pursuing and completing higher education among Latino students, especially those at risk of not completing high school, might increase enrollment and completion of postsecondary education. Doing so may increase the quality of life of the Latinos and that of the community where they live. As Gibson (2001) put it "The costs of closing the education gap for Latino students will be high, but the cost of not doing so will be far higher" (p. 248).

Chapter 2 includes the reviewed literature using the "integrative review" format,

which provides "'the state of knowledge'" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 112) on the topic being explored. The literature review contains an overview of the Latino population increase in the United Sates, the southeast, and the State of South Carolina. The chapter also includes a review of research in areas considered new Latino destinations in the southeast United States. Finally, the chapter describes the theoretical frameworks that guided this research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

The rapid increase of the Latino population in South Carolina since the 1990s presents challenges in the social services field and education areas. Less than 4% of the college-student population represents Latino students at the two major research universities and less than 7% at the two largest technical colleges in South Carolina (SCCHE, 2014). The purpose of this NPA study was to explore the experiences and obstacles that Latino students face in pursuing higher education in Greenville County, South Carolina.

Using Moustakas' (1994) integrative review, I described the state of knowledge on the topic in this chapter. First, I examined the increasing Latino population in the United States as a whole and then in Greenville County, South Carolina. This section included discussions on Latino demographic trends, new Latino settlements in emerging nontraditional Latino states, and studies conducted on undocumented students. The literature review also included the theoretical frameworks that guided the research: CRT, LatCrit, and segmented assimilation theories. Last, I incorporated a brief discussion of two major concepts I identified in the literature.

Literature Search Strategy

The literature review included peer-reviewed journal articles, books, dissertations, national and state/community research reports, and reports from the U.S. Census Bureau, the Hamilton Project from the Brookings Institution, the National Center for Education Statistics: Institute of Education Sciences of the U.S. Department of Education, the SC

Commission on Higher Education, and the Pew Hispanic Center. The literature reviewed resulted from searching several databases including Business Search Complete, Business Source Premier/Complete, Academic Search Complete, ProQuest Central, Sage Publications, Walden University's Library, ERIC, Education Research Complete, and Google Scholar. Key words used included combinations of the terms *Hispanics* or *Latinos students in higher education*, *in the southeast*, *in South Carolina*, *higher education barriers and/or obstacles of Hispanics/Latinos*, *Hispanic college enrollment in southeast*, *Riley and Latino education*, *Clemson University's Hispanic students' graduation rate*, *dropout rate*, *segmented assimilation*, *acculturation*, *and assimilation*, *social justice in education*, *social change*, and other key words related to the topic. I also used reference lists of reviewed articles and literature that my committee chair recommended. A local university professor also recommended exploring and using LatCrit as a theoretical framework to guide the research.

Demographic Changes and Trends in New Latino Destinations

The 1990s saw the largest population increase in a 10-year period in the history of the United States with a population growth of 32.7 million people, which equated to a change of 13.2% from the previous decade (Perry et al., 2001). During that period, the Latino population increased 58%, making Latinos the largest minority population group in the United States with a 13% share of the population (Bohon et al., 2005; Ennis et al., 2011; Guzman, 2001). The 2010 census reported another growth in the Latino population increasing its share of the population to 16% (Ennis et al., 2011). Latinos accounted for more than one-half the total population growth between 2000 and 2010 in the United

States (Hemphill, Vanneman, & Rahman, 2011). The U.S. Department of Commerce

(2008) projects that by 2020, approximately 17.8% of the United States population will

be Latino, and by 2050, about 24.4% of the population will be Latino. Figure 3 shows the

increase in the Latino population through 2050 in the Unites States.
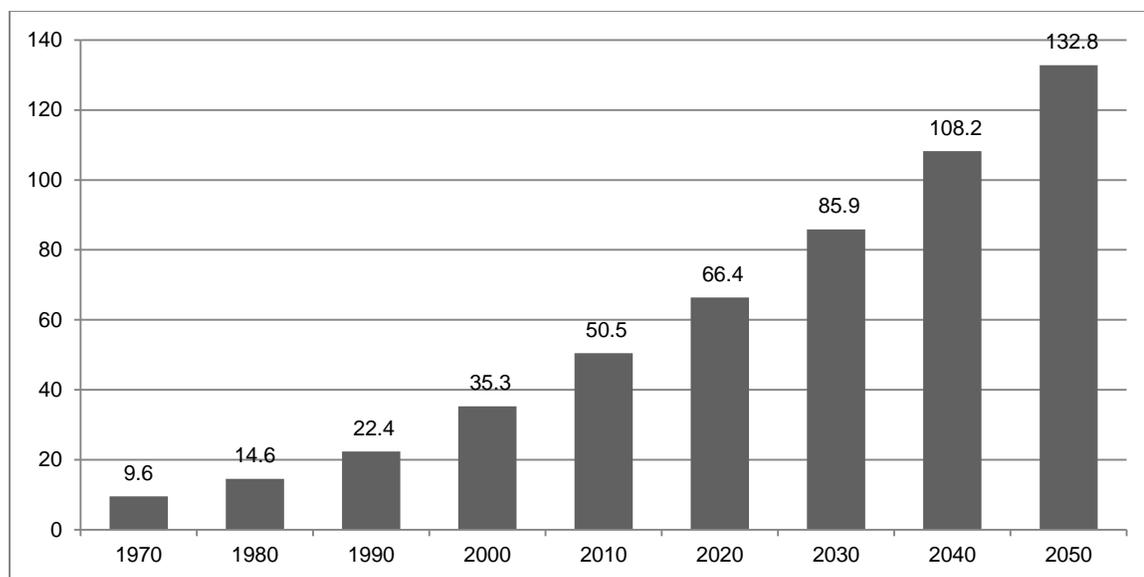
Figure 3. Latino population growth in the United States: 1970–2050 (in millions). Data
from 1970–2010 is based on decennial censuses. Data from 2020–2050 is based on
projections from the U. S. Census Bureau. Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2012)

Traditionally, Latinos have settled in the northeastern, western, and southern

regions of the United States. The traditional settlements included six states: California,

Florida, Illinois, New Jersey, New York, and Texas (Vásquez, Seales, & Marquadt,

2008). However, the 1990s saw a Latino demographic increase in new destinations

(National Council of La Raza, n.d.). This pattern became noticeable in nontraditional or

new arrival Latino communities such as those in the southeast region, including Alabama,

Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee, where the Latino population

increased 57% (Behnke, Gonzalez, & Cox, 2010; Cooper-Lewter, 2013; Ennis et al., 2011; Hamann, Wortham, & Murillo Jr., 2002; Lacy et al., 2007; Vásquez et al., 2008; Villalba et al., 2007). Scholars have called this demographic change or dispersion of Latinos to nontraditional Latino arrival communities the "New Latino Diaspora" (E. Murillo and S. Villenas as cited in Hamann et al., 2002, p. 1) or "Latino spatial deconcentration" (Vásquez et al., 2008, p. 20). More than 50% of immigrants settling in nontraditional Latino states were born outside the United States (mostly Mexico and its indigenous communities, Puerto Rico, and Cuba), are young, are undocumented, and have affected local schools (Vásquez et al., 2008). In those new Latino communities in the United States, native residents have not had much experience with new Latino arrivals (Hamann et al., 2002). The growth of Latinos in new Latino settlements has had socioeconomic implications, including in the education field.

South Carolina is considered an emerging nontraditional Latino permanent settlement (Cooper-Lewter, 2013; Young, 2005). The Latino population grew 211% between 1990 and 2000 in South Carolina (Guzman, 2001; Kochhar, Suro, & Tafoya, 2005). The Latino population in the state was 30,551 in 1990 and grew to 95,076 in 2000 (U.S. Department of Commerce, Economics and Statistics Administration, U.S. Census Bureau, 2002). The state's Latino population more than doubled between 2000 and 2010 (i.e., a 148% increase) to 235,682 (U.S. Census Bureau, n.d.). This demographic change put South Carolina first on the list of the 10 fastest states with a growing Latino population between 2000 and 2010 (National Council of La Raza, n.d.). New immigrants to South Carolina are from Mexico (48.87%), South America (17.63%), Central America

(13.90%), and the Caribbean (13.26%) (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2010a). In 2011, the Pew Research Center estimated that the Latino population had reached 241,000 in South Carolina with 41% of Latinos being 17 years and younger and living in poverty (Pew Research Center, 2014).

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) (n.d.) and using the school year 2003–2004 as the base year (i.e., 33,235 graduates), the actual number of high school graduates from public institutions in South Carolina increased in 2008–2009 (i.e., 39,114 graduates) by 5,879 students or 17.69% from the base year. The NCES also projected that high school graduates in 2012–2013 (i.e., 39,960 graduates) increased by 6,725 or 20.23% over the base year with the highest percentage increase occurring during the 2008–2009 school year, that is, 10.80%. These statistics about population growth and high school graduation rates during the 2000s suggest that a portion of the increase, albeit a small one, in high school graduates followed the increase of the Latino population in South Carolina during the 1990s and the 2000s.

The Latino population in Greenville County was 14,283 or 3.8% of the county's population in 2000 (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2000), growing to 36,495 or 8.1% of the county's population in 2010 (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2010a) and to 41,261 in 2013 (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2014). This increase may not seem to be significant but for a state and county where Latinos had not established a previous visible presence, the sudden increase of the Latino population presented challenges to the social services community, including educational institutions.

Research on Undocumented Students

Scholars recognized that the topic of undocumented students and higher education opportunities has been discussed and that there is little research on it. In 2005, the Pew Hispanic Center estimated that the undocumented population in South Carolina was between 20,000 and 35,000 (Kochhar, Suro, & Tafoya, 2005).

Paying out-of-state tuition presents financial difficulties to undocumented students. García and Tierney, (2011), Gildersleeve and Ranero (2010), Kennedy (2014), Pérez (2012), Rincón (2008), Vargas (2011-2012), and national organizations have conducted quantitative and qualitative research on the topic and provide in-depth accounts of in-state tuition policies, the struggles, civic participation, and resilient behaviors of undocumented students in their quests to fulfill their higher education dreams. Researchers have provided compelling stories of highly and academically prepared salutatorian and valedictorian undocumented high school students. Some students have been admitted to public colleges and universities and have been offered scholarships just to be taken away as soon as institutions learned of their immigration status.

According to the National Conference of State Legislatures (2014), since 2001, 18 states allow undocumented students to pay in-state tuition college rates, with 16 states passing legislation and two authorizing through Board of Regents decisions. General eligibility requirements include: live in the state, graduate from high school or obtain the GED, attend a public college or university during a determined period, that is, 1–4 years. Five states provide state financial aid to undocumented students; three states do not allow

undocumented students to receive in-state tuition rates; and two states prohibit the

enrollment of these students in public higher education institutions, Alabama and South

Carolina. Colorado is only one instance in which a state banned in-state tuition rates for

undocumented students but revoked the prohibition later (National Conference of State

Legislatures, 2014). Table 2 provides a summary of state legislature actions on

undocumented students and postsecondary education.

Table 2

*State Legislature Action Regarding Undocumented Students in Higher Education
Institutions – As of June 2014*

States allowing in-state tuition rates		States prohibiting in-state tuition rates		States prohibiting from enrolling in state colleges or universities	
California	X, $	Arizona	X	Alabama	X
Colorado	X	Georgia	X	South Carolina	X
Connecticut	X	Indiana	X		
Florida	X				
Illinois	X				
Kansas	X				
Maryland	X				
Minnesota	X, $				
Nebraska	X				
New Mexico	X, $				
New Jersey	X				
New York	X				
Oklahoma	X, BR				
Oregon	X				
Rhode Island	X, BR				
Texas	X, $				
Utah	X				
Washington	X, $				

Note. Source: National Conference of State Legislatures (2014). Allow in-state tuition for undocumented students. Retrieved from Undocumented student tuition: State action: http://www.ncsl.org/research/education/undocumented-student-tuition-state-action.aspx#2. Colorado banned in-state tuition rates but, later, the state repealed the prohibition. Legend: X = confirmed states under each category; $ = states providing state financial aid. BR = states providing in-state tuition rates through decisions from the Board of Regents.

López (2007) conducted an ethnography study in North Carolina on

undocumented, college-ready high school students of Mexican descent who were

academically capable of completing a college degree using the CRT and LatCrit framework. One of the findings revealed that North Carolina law prohibits undocumented students from paying in-state tuition, but allows enrollment at the University of North Carolina system. Another finding revealed that teachers who are willing to help these students in their efforts to pursue higher education cannot do so because these policies preclude them "from providing any realistic post-secondary options" (López, 2007, p. 16). Policies such as this one "perpetuate the racial subordination of Mexican-immigrant communities by preventing their educational advancement and by positioning them as less capable and less deserving than other students in the state" (López, 2007, p. 183). López provided evidence that North Carolina was missing an opportunity by wasting the academic potential of undocumented students by not allowing them to pursue higher education and by not letting them to become highly productive and contributing members of society. In her follow up book, López (2010) concluded that (a) policies of charging out-of-state tuition to college ready undocumented students posed a barrier to pursue higher education; (b) there is a need for federal or state policies supporting affordable higher education opportunities for undocumented students; and (c) undocumented students who are prepared to go to college, when given that opportunity, are ready to thrive.

Undocumented students continue facing out-of-state tuition rates in most of the states. Drawing from her active participation in the efforts to institute in-state college tuition law for undocumented students in Texas, Rincón (2008) provided an in-depth recount of the events that led to its passage, facing both: support and opposition. Rincón

(2008) also presented a brief history of similar efforts in California, Illinois, Kansas, Nebraska, New Mexico, New York, Oklahoma, Utah, and Washington and evidence that undocumented working immigrants contribute their fair share of tax payments, including sales and property taxes as well as contributions to the social security system that they may never benefit from. Rincón discussed legal cases challenging the exclusion of undocumented students from paying in-state tuition at public institutions. Rincón also discussed how the Dallas and Houston community college systems changed their policies allowing undocumented students to pay in-state tuition. The administrators of these community colleges took the position that they were not arms of federal immigration agencies and that their main function was to educate their residents and taxpayers. Central to the debate and, ultimately, the passage of in-state tuition law in both college systems was the role that advocacy played in the efforts. Nonprofits coalitions, college chancellors, board of regent members, faculty, high school teachers, higher education commissioners, Latino national organizations, the media, undocumented students themselves got involved in those efforts (Rincón, 2008).

As well intentioned the Texas in-state tuition legislation was, higher education staff interpretation of it harmed some of the same students that the law was supposed to help. Rincón noted that the interpretation of the law was left to admissions staff and higher education commissioners. Such interpretation distorted the intent of the approved legislation affecting the inclusion of certain undocumented students such as those enrolled in early college programs while in high school and those not living with parents or legal guardians. The lesson learned requires that future crafters of such laws include

language that is similar to the intent discussed during legislative debates and clear definitions of certain terms to minimize room for interpretation by higher education institutions administrators.

Rincón (2008) concluded that key arguments presented in favor and against in-state tuition policies relate to three categories: "economics, cultural assimilation, and crime deterrence" (p. 199). The economic arguments are based on the impact that undocumented students have on the economy by remaining undocumented and uneducated (e.g., drain on the economy) or by becoming legal residents and educated (e.g., pay more taxes than they currently pay). The assimilation arguments posit that undocumented students already know the American culture and values since they have lived in the United States much of their lives, speak English without accent, and fully participate in mainstream America. Crime deterrence arguments sustain that it is less expensive to educate undocumented youth than to put and keep them in jail. Rincón (2008), however, also posited that there is an extremely valuable argument missing from the debate. Comparing in-state tuition discourse to the civil rights movement demands, Rincón noted that the matters of fairness, equal access, equity, and/or civil or democratic rights were absent from the discourse. For undocumented students to win the in-state tuition battle, advocates must frame and present the debate and arguments in terms of "equality, stressing the principles of basic fairness and democratic rights" (Rincón, 2008, p. 207). More than 30 years ago, the Supreme Court decision on *Plyler v. Doe* (1982) provided equal opportunity for undocumented students to attend K–12 public schools under the Fourteenth Amendment of the United States Constitution. The Supreme Court's

opinion, discussed later, noted that undocumented students without access to education could become permanently locked into the lowest socioeconomic class. This argument may be used in today's economy to advocate for in-state tuition laws for undocumented students under Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), discussed later. For example, a case may be constructed that a high school diploma is not sufficient to advance in today's society and that, for the United States to remain competitive, the current global and knowledge-based economy requires postsecondary education.

Using the sociocultural theory and college-going literacies framework, Gildersleeve and Ranero (2010) studied the circumstances of Latino undocumented students leading up to their college careers and how social justice advocates such as college students affairs experts may advance undocumented students higher education achievement. Based on his empirical work with undocumented students, Gildersleeve and Ranero (2010) argued that there is inequity in teaching college access opportunities to undocumented students: "normative college-going pedagogies operate to preclude undocumented students from participating in higher education" (Gildersleeve & Ranero, 2010, p. 21). In other words, undocumented students are relegated to less demanding courses, are not prepared to face the more rigorous college courses, and/or are plainly banned from attending colleges. In addition, Gildersleeve and Ranero discussed different contexts influencing the participation of undocumented students in higher education including family, schooling, and educational achievements. Family contexts relate to immigrant families living under the same roof that include the nuclear family and extended relatives. In this context, everyone is expected to contribute in some form, that

is, financially, household chores, childcare, etc. Status of immigrant family members varies: some may be undocumented, some may have permanent residency, and others may be U.S. citizens. Schooling contexts include challenges with the English language, interruption, discontinuance, and/or intermittent school attendance due to high mobility (especially for families working in farms) and students required to work in farms. On educational achievement context, Gildersleeve and Ranero found that undocumented students enroll at two-year colleges more than at four-year colleges. They also found that undocumented students attending the latter is generally by chance or luck, that is, special programs or people personally assisted the students, and not because higher education institutions were proactively conducting efforts to recruit these students.

Gildersleeve and Ranero (2010) issued a call for action to student affairs officers at colleges and universities to not just become familiar with the contexts affecting undocumented students higher education enrollment but also to formulate culturally appropriate outreach programs. Such programs would allow higher education institutions to go to undocumented students communities instead of students going to the institutions. Those programs should also be based on the "concept of funds of knowledge" (Gildersleeve & Ranero, 2010, p. 28), which requires student affairs officers to learn about the knowledge and experiences that undocumented students bring and have helped in developing their competences. Last, Gildersleeve and Ranero noted that student affairs officers should consider the fact that many undocumented students attending college are first-generation students who choose to stay close to home due to their financial situations and the ability to work while attending college to support their families.

Using social capital as framework, García and Tierney (2011) conducted a qualitative research on the barriers confronting undocumented students in their pursuit of higher education in California. The research focused on financial barriers, academics, and feelings of belonging. Compared with students who are documented or U.S. citizens, undocumented students do not enjoy the financial benefits of the former groups in their quest for a college degree. Undocumented students are not eligible for federal financial aid and college work-study programs. Therefore, paying for college is a financial burden to them even if working and earning low-paying wages (García and Tierney, 2011). Similar to the findings of Gildersleeve and Ranero (2010), academic preparation is another barrier undocumented students face since, more often than not, these students attend schools with low performance levels and are ethnically segregated (García & Tierney, 2011). Preparing students for college at those schools is less of a priority than focusing of increasing graduation rates, preparing for standardized tests, and dealing with daily issues such as student absenteeism (García & Tierney, 2011). In addition, students learning about their immigration status during high school years discourage them from continuing postsecondary education, which negatively affects their potential to enroll in college (García & Tierney, 2011).

Feelings of inclusion in society changes as undocumented students transition from being teenage high schoolers into young adulthood. Their immigration status is a frequent reminder of their vulnerability, isolation, distinctiveness, and sense of being regarded as suspects (García & Tierney, 2011). The researchers discussed how undocumented students lack the social, economic, and human capitals due to their immigration status

compared with students who are wealthy. Not having the knowledge needed to figure out how to navigate the transition from high school to college makes the journey more difficult for undocumented students compared with similar low-income students who are permanent residents or U.S. citizens (García & Tierney, 2011). Given the opportunity, undocumented students can acquire that knowledge if there are networks that assist them with developing the social capital they need. García and Tierney also discussed exceptional cases in which high school and college counselors helped undocumented students by preparing them academically throughout their high school years to enter college as well as emotionally and financially during their college years despite their immigration status. García and Tierney conducted this study prior to DACA. As discussed later, the situation has improved a *little* (emphasis added) for undocumented students after DACA.

Vargas (2011-2012) conducted a quantitative study to explain the factors influencing states to pass, to ban, or to not act on in-state tuition policies for undocumented students. Factors included states fiscal health and poverty, ideology, religion, demographics, education expenditures, and advocacy. Vargas tested different combinations of those variables to understand their contributions to states decisions of adopting in-state tuition policies. The author concluded that there is evidence that states acting on in-state tuition policies did it because "*it is in their best economic interest*" (emphasis added) (Vargas, 2011-2012, p. 56). The relevant observations and conclusions from Vargas study to this research relate to the demographic factors influencing states decisions on in-state tuition policies. Vargas concluded that the growth in the Latino

population increased the possibility that states pass or ban in-state tuition policies. Vargas also noted that, in general, states that have not been traditional immigrant settlements have adopted banning in-state tuition policies. On these demographic factor conclusions, Vargas posed the question of what influenced states to pass such policy: was it the increased Latino population or the increased undocumented immigrant population? The answer, Vargas noted, was that the increase in undocumented immigrants propelled states to ban in-state tuition policies.

South Carolina not just banned in-state tuition benefits to undocumented students, but also prohibited their enrollment at public higher education institutions (S.C. Illegal Immigration and Reform Act, 2008). The Latino community in South Carolina should join efforts to discuss and promote with the state legislature the approval of S.C. House Bill 4735 (2014) which would reverse the statute banning in-state tuition benefits to undocumented students included in the 2008 S.C. Illegal Immigration and Reform Act, codified as Section 59-101-430 of the South Carolina Code of Laws. As discussed later, introduced on February 20, 2014, House Bill 4735 amends Article 1, Chapter 101, Title 59 of the 1976 Code by adding Section 59-101-440. If approved, this section would have exempted students who do not have lawful immigration status from paying out-of-state tuition at public higher education institutions. The bill reads,

> A bill to amend the Code of Laws of South Carolina, 1976, by adding section 59-101-440 so to provide a student must be exempt from paying out-of-state tuition at a public institution of higher education in South Carolina and must be eligible for certain state-sponsored scholarships and tuition assistance if he attended a

high school in this state for three or more years, graduated from a high school in

the state or received the equivalent of a high school diploma in this state, registers

as an entering student or is currently enrolled in a public institution of higher

education not earlier than the fall semester of the 2014-2015 academic year, and,

if lacking lawful immigration status, files an affidavit with the institution stating

he has filed an application to legalize his immigration or will file an application

when eligible; to provide a student who is eligible for a state-sponsored

scholarship or tuition assistance under this act also must meet other qualifications

of the state-sponsored scholarship or tuition assistance to receive the scholarship

or tuition assistance; to provide student information obtained in the

implementation of this section must be confidential; and to provide the

commission on higher education shall adopt rules and regulations necessary to

effectuate the provisions of this section. (South Carolina House Bill 4735, 2014)

As discussed later, the approval of the federal DACA regulation by the U.S.

Department of Homeland Security (DHS) opened higher education opportunities for

undocumented students throughout the United States. In South Carolina, universities and

community colleges are still trying to determine how DACA students may qualify for

enrollment and financial assistance. For example, Clemson University's Chief Diversity

Office coordinated meetings with Latino leaders "to explore how we can work with

undocumented students" (L. Wiles, personal communication, April 7, 2014). At the

community college level, Greenville Technical College has a website explaining

enrollment steps for DACA students (Greenville Technical College, 2014) but Trident

Technical College does not have such information on its website (Trident Technical

College, n.d.). Instead, Trident Tech provides information on the SC Illegal Immigration

Reform Act of 2008 noting that "Students who are not United States citizens must

provide appropriate documentation and will be verified through the Department of

Homeland Security's Student Exchange Visitors Information System (SEVIS) or

Systematic Alien Verification for Benefits (SAVE) database" (Trident Technical College,

n.d.).

As discussed later, in March 2014, the South Carolina Attorney General issued an

opinion regarding extending professional and occupational licenses to undocumented

immigrants under DACA. The opinion noted that the SC Department of Labor, Licensing

and Regulation cannot issue licenses to immigrants under DACA. The implication of this

opinion is that DACA students with college degrees cannot obtain licenses if their field of

work requires one to work or practice in South Carolina. Hence, those students may opt

to move out of the state or the United States and take with them their accumulated human

capital.

Undocumented students do not have easy access to financial aid to attend college,

are not eligible for federal assistance, and many states and private organizations limit

financial aid to students who have permanent residency or are U.S. citizens (Gildersleeve

& Hernandez, 2012). Drawing from the critical and policy discourse analysis methods,

Gildersleeve and Hernandez delved into the discourse of 12 states policies that provide

in-state resident tuition (ISRT) to undocumented students attending college. Gildersleeve

and Hernandez thematically divided the analysis as follows:

- Qualifying the subject: it defined who the beneficiaries of the policy are, i.e., "aliens, individuals, minors, persons, and students" (p. 9).

- Describing the subject: in addition to the terms already used in the immigration context, for example, undocumented students, this theme identified two new terms that ISRT policies use to refer to these students, i.e., "'the alien student'" and "'the student alien'" (p. 10).

- Deconstruction of the "the alien student" subject: ISRT policies do both: humanize and dehumanize their beneficiaries by using the term "alien." These policies also legitimize who has the authority to implement them, i.e., states (not the federal government), yet the policies include language from federal laws to make the point that they are not under the jurisdiction of the federal government. Legitimizing the discourse over who is responsible for creating opportunities for undocumented students has become a political battle between states and the federal government. The political battle created windows of opportunity for undocumented students and their advocates empowering them to create grassroots movements to effect social change.

Gildersleeve and Hernandez (2012) concluded that, although well intended, policies extending benefits to undocumented students also encourage ant immigrant sentiments. The rhetoric used (i.e., alien students) in such policies objectifies undocumented students rather than making them the subject of the policies producing a jurisdictional power struggle between states and the federal government over who is

responsible over the students postsecondary opportunities. This struggle provided fertile grounds to empower undocumented students to positively effect change in their pursuit of higher education.

Tying the South Carolina Illegal Immigration Reform Act of 2008 to Gildersleeve and Hernandez policy analysis, it is noticeable that this legislation uses the term "unlawful aliens" to refer to unlawful individuals, which is the term that §1373(c) of the United States Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 uses. Accordingly, the use of the term "unlawful aliens" has dehumanized and turned the undocumented person into an object (Gildersleeve & Hernandez, 2012). Even using the term "alien" frames undocumented "immigrants as nonhuman" (Pérez Huber, 2009).

Pérez (2012) conducted an ethnography study of undocumented Latino students from high school, college, and college graduates mostly from California and a few other states including Texas, Virginia, Georgia, Missouri, New York, Washington, and Washington, DC. The goal was to understand deeply the circumstances that allowed undocumented students to attend college. Pérez noted several characteristics and circumstances such as that students were academically prepared, highly competitive, stellar, and "model citizens" (p. 134); were financially strapped; many suffered negative experiences with teachers and counselors (i.e., low teacher expectations, questioning the academic potential of students, discouraging to pursue higher education); some had positive experiences with caring teachers and counselors (i.e., words of encouragement, going above and beyond to assist students, and helping financially); received family support; had to work throughout high school and college to pay for tuition; lost

opportunities to attend highly recognized colleges and universities because they could not pay tuition; and participated in school and extracurricular activities as well as volunteered within and outside their communities.

Due to their early experiences in negotiating their immigration status and their willingness to become productive adults, Pérez (2012) recounts how the students developed resilient behaviors and a deep optimism that assisted them to be successful in high school and college despite their immigration status. Facing negative feedback from teachers and school staff, students became persistent and determined to demonstrate that their immigration status had no influence in their desire to succeed academically. Pérez also noted that undocumented students engaged in academic and civic activities including school clubs, honors societies, Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps, sports, mentoring at elementary schools, and student councils in higher numbers than US-born Latino students. Examples of extracurricular activities included volunteering at local hospitals and senior citizens centers; becoming activists and marching to and in Washington, DC, in support of the DREAM (Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors) Act; campaigning against legislations that negatively affect undocumented immigrants; and helping in the aftermath of hurricane Katrina. Undocumented students motivation to volunteer did not come just from feeling psychologically rewarded but also from feeling empowered to work on social issues that affected them directly. Students that participated in Pérez' study dreamed of becoming doctors to serve the immigrant and poor communities; lawyers, federal, state, and local law enforcement agents; international nonprofits staff members; bilingual teachers; or social workers. Pérez highlighted the

important role of community colleges in undocumented students higher education

attainment as the gateway to 4-year colleges and universities due to affordability and

convenient locations compared with other options. Pérez also noted that community

colleges play the role of gatekeepers of low-income and minority students, including

Latino students in general, when it comes to 4-year college enrollment. Echoing the

gatekeepers' role of community colleges, Nuñez and Kim (2012) pointed that one of the

reasons for Latino students to have lower higher education attainment is because

academically prepared students enroll in less selective institutions. According to Nuñez

and Kim, graduation rates from community colleges are low compared with institutions

that are more selective. Some of the impediments that Latino students confront in

transferring to 4-year colleges and universities include lack of knowledge of academic

prerequisites and procedures, prioritizing work over school due to family financial needs,

academic tracking, and institutional barriers such as lack of faculty role models, and

caring counselors and staff (Pérez, 2012). For some students, it is a stop and go situation

when it comes to paying tuition and enrolling in college as some public colleges awarded

scholarships to undocumented students just to take them back later due to their

immigration status. Undocumented students stop going to college for a period of time to

work and save money to pay tuition for the following semester (Pérez, 2012).

According to Pérez, studies demonstrated that, given the opportunity to become

legal residents—as it happened in 1986 with the Immigration Reform and Control Act

(IRCA)—undocumented immigrants have the opportunity to increase their earnings and

move upward in society through increasing human capital (i.e., education). Rivera-Batiz

(1999) and Kossoudji and Cobb-Clark (2002) analyzed quantitatively the effect of IRCA on undocumented workers wages prior to and post IRCA. Both studies reached similar conclusions: "legalization has a direct positive effect on the earnings of illegal immigrants… The greater educational attainment and English proficiency of workers after legalization may have not been achieved if the workers had remained illegally…" (Rivera-Batiz, 1999, p. 111) and increased wages "appear to result primarily from changes in returns to human capital" (Kossoudji and Cobb-Clark, 2002, p. 622). According to Pérez (2012) and aligning with segmented assimilation theory, this conclusions mean that, providing them a path to become legal residents, current undocumented students have the opportunity to invest in their education, improve their human capital, become productive members, and move upward in society. Denying them that path, could send those students in a downward assimilation path.

Currently, there is a state/federal "policy disconnect" (Pérez, 2012, p. 123) between allowing undocumented students to obtain college degrees (in just a few states) and not being able to work after graduation (federal legislation). This disconnection precludes students and society to benefit from the return on the educational investment that both public schools and undocumented students made during their K–12 and college education years, respectively. For these students to become fully integrated in the United States and make substantial economic contributions, it is necessary not only that they achieve a college degree but also that they be able to work, especially in today's knowledge based economy (Pérez, 2012).

Research on Latino Students in General

Focusing on the myth that low-income Mexican American parents do not value education, Valencia and Black (2002) set out to demystify the long held belief. The authors examined scholarly literature (as far as the late 1920s) on deficit thinking and stereotypes, on how the myth came to be, and on how to disprove it. Valencia and Black sustained that scholars who held the belief that Mexican Americans do not value education did it because they,

> failed to acknowledge the forces and conditions that likely created obstacles for Mexican American parents to fully express their appreciation for and value of education—for example, not being welcome at schools because of racial animus, language barriers, and the need for their children to contribute economically to the household due to exploitative arrangements the parents faced in the world of work. (p. 84)

Counter arguments to the deficit thinking of the 1920s–1930s revealed that parents provided valid reasons related to their economic conditions for children not attending schools. Such reasons included not having shoes and/or clothes to wear, illnesses, had to work in the fields, protecting girls from boys (Valencia & Black, 2002).

The review of the discourse on how the myth arose began with studying scholarly literature from the 1960s through the 1990s and media taking notice of high-ranking officials discussions on the topic. Valencia and Black reviewed literature that included terms such as "'culturally deprived' … 'culturally disadvantaged' … 'intellectually deprived' and 'socially disadvantaged'" children (p. 85). In one instance, Valencia and

Black noted that, in 1966, without providing substantiation to the comment, a researcher

wrote that,

> *Parental indifference to the value of education is transmitted to the children*
>
> [italics added], where school careers are naturally characterized by poor attention,
>
> low achievement, and early leaving. Thus, the cycle of hopelessness and despair
>
> is repeated from generation to generation. (p. 86)

The new term "at risk" took root to describe students who could fail school. This

time, however, the literature include schools and society's conditions that exert negative

influence on students putting them at risk of failure in addition to the emphasis on family

and personal attributes as causes (Valencia & Black, 2002). Valencia and Black also

presented arguments that demystified the myth that Mexican American parents do not

value education. Such arguments included (a) court cases on segregation, school funding,

special education; (b) organization of advocacy groups to improve education; (c) activists

and grassroots movements; (d) manifestations and school walkouts; and (e) successfully

passing legislation to improve Mexican Americans education. In addition, summaries of

quantitative and qualitative research support the argument that Mexican American

parents support and value the education of their children (Valencia & Black, 2002).

González Sullivan (2007) noted additional factors negatively affecting the success

of Latino students in college including:

> poor academic preparation, attendance at underfunded urban schools, low income,
>
> lack of financial aid grants rather than loans, lack of social capital on the part of
>
> parents and students, delayed college entry, family and job responsibilities, single

parent status, unwillingness or inability to travel to distant colleges, and part-time

attendance. (p. 402)

González Sullivan also noted that there is a convergence of two forces in the labor

market affecting Americans: the change in face of the workforce and the kinds of jobs

that are available. To remain competitive, the workforce must be flexible enough to

acquire new and higher skill levels due to technological changes in a new knowledge

based economy. González Sullivan pointed that attaining higher education will be

essential to effectively join the new workforce echoing Ruppert's (2003) earlier message:

> The fact is that if current trends persist and students in the United States continue
>
> to enroll in college at the rate they do now, America is likely to slip further behind
>
> the growing number of developed nations that have stepped up their efforts over
>
> the last decade to increase educational attainment among their citizens. While the
>
> United States has been mostly in a holding pattern, other countries have surged
>
> ahead…How the United States stacks up against other industrialized nations
>
> matters because in today's highly competitive global marketplace, human capital
>
> is the coin of the realm. Educational attainment, measured in terms of the *highest*
>
> *degree or level of schooling attained by the adult population*, is the international
>
> currency used to assess the strength of a country's economy and its standard of
>
> living. (p. 1)

At the international level, according to the Organization for Economic Co-

operation and Development (OECD), the United States not only lagged behind other

developed nations in high school graduation but also had the lowest postsecondary

education completion rate at 57%, behind Mexico with 58%. Japan had the highest completion rate at 93% (Harvey et al., 2013; Levin et al., 2006a). In 2012, the United States ranked fifth in the percentage of tertiary-educated adults between 25-64 years of age at 43.05% behind the Russian Federation (53.49%), Canada (52.59%), Japan (46.62%), and Israel (46.44%) (OECD, 2014). Tertiary education includes the equivalent to technical/occupational, bachelors, masters, and doctoral and advanced degrees in the United States (OECD, 2014). Scholars concur in that to maintain or increase the United States global economic advantage, higher education attainment must increase, especially for Latinos because expectations are that Latinos will be more than half of the college-age population increase in the next decade (Nuñez & Kim, 2012).

Ruppert's (2003) prediction held true since, currently, there is an urgency to increase the levels of educational attainment in the United States and, for this study, in South Carolina. The National Conference of State Legislators recognized the importance of state legislatures to increase Latino students' higher education attainment in order to ensure states economic vitality since "the future of state economic strength depends upon successfully educating these [Latino and African American] students" (Davis Bell & Bautsch, 2011). Increasing the human capital of Latino students through higher education attainment is an imperative to increase their quality of life and the standard of living of the entire country since the Latino population will be one third of the United States population by 2060, according to projections (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2013). Closing the minority/ethnic educational gap not only provides opportunities to advance individually but also to improve the nation's prosperity (Carnevale & Fry, 2001). Not

meeting that mandate could lead to the country failing "to meet the social and economic challenges of the years ahead" (Ruppert, 2003, p. 7). McKinsey and Company (2009) reported, "the underutilization of human potential in the United States is extremely costly" (p. 5) at the individual and national economic levels. Researchers at McKinsey and Company's also noted,

> If the gap between black and Latino student performance and white student performance had been similarly narrowed, GDP in 2008 would have been between $310 billion and $525 billion higher, or 2 to 4 percent of GDP. The magnitude of this impact will rise in the years ahead as demographic shifts result in blacks and Latinos becoming a larger proportion of the population and workforce. (p. 5)

South Carolina has attracted foreign investment and international businesses (Cole, 2013). Since the mid-1990s, South Carolina has strengthened its automotive and ground transportation cluster-developed economy. According to Porter (2011), "a cluster is a geographically concentrated group of interconnected companies and institutions and supportive business in the same field, automotive is an example." South Carolina has developed 15 regional clusters ranging from automotive to life sciences to recycling and tourism (New Carolina: South Carolina's council on competitiveness, 2014). Stakeholders who participated in developing this cluster economy included public, private, and higher education institutions. In 2011, the University of South Carolina's Darla Moore School of Business recognized the automotive cluster as "a 'major engine of economic growth in the state'" (Cole, 2013, p. 3). There is an opportunity in South

Carolina for Latino students to become a part of this growing cluster-developed economy if higher education attainment increases for this segment of the population.

As previously noted, South Carolina is emerging as a nontraditional Latino community. Applying Ruppert's (2003) prediction to South Carolina, it is imperative to abandon the underutilization of human potential behavior, increase the educational attainment levels of the emerging Latino segment of the population, and capitalize on its bilingualism and diverse multinational experiences. Providing higher education opportunities to Latino students will contribute to create the interstate and international human capital currency necessary for South Carolina to compete, domestic and internationally.

Research Conducted on Latinos in the Southeast

The growth of Latino school aged children has affected public schools nationwide. Schools in traditional and emerging Latino communities are called to respond to that demographic change and many educators in the southeastern United States school systems find themselves unprepared to address the needs of the newly arrived Latino students (Gibson, 2001). The Pew Hispanic Center reported that the Latino children population in South Carolina grew from 28,000 in 2000 to 82,000 in 2010, ranking number one nationwide with a 192% growth in this segment of the state's population (Passel, Cohn, & Lopez, 2011). In New Latino Diaspora communities, school administrators and teachers are unable or not willing to capitalize on the knowledge of the Spanish language and experiences of new Latino students (Gibson, 2001). They ought to evaluate those students to establish if they need and are eligible to receive special

educational services (Aud, Fox, & KewalRamani, 2010). In addition, teachers in emergent Latino communities are unprepared to deal with the culture shock of the new students who speak little or no English. Teachers lack the skills and knowledge to communicate effectively with these students and the exposure to the Latino culture to understand fully the circumstances facing their new Latino students. To have an open mind, teachers should continually increase their cognizance of other cultures and their values and needs and should not impose the predominant culture (i.e., White) on culturally diverse students (Freire, 2014b). School administrators should make a priority the professional development of teachers on cultural diversity in addition to hiring faculty who are bilingual and understand and value the Latino culture. In doing so, teachers would understand Latinos educational values, perspectives, and experiences.

Often, Latino students and their families are perceived as being the problem, when in fact, the unpreparedness of school faculty, counselors, and administrators is also a contributing factor and main obstacle (Gibson, 2001). Former Secretary of Education Riley (2000) acknowledged that Latinos bilingualism or "bi-literacy" (p. 6) should be treated as an asset, not as a deficiency or weakness, not with suspicion, and, definitely, not as an obstacle to success. In a global economy, "knowledge—and knowledge of language—is power" (Riley, 2000, p. 7). Riley also recognized the need for teachers who have high expectations of Latino students, who are bilingual, and who have the capacity and skills to maximize the potential of students from different backgrounds.

Researchers have conducted a few studies on the Latino population in South Carolina. In 2001, researchers at the University of South Carolina conducted a needs

assessment study with Latino adults in the central part of the state known as the Midlands. On education needs, the researchers concluded that participants had difficulties with obtaining education due to lack of transportation and long working days and that schools needed cultural awareness training and bilingual teachers (Aguinago et al., 2001). In 2003, members of the South Carolina Commission for Minority Affairs (the Commission) issued the *Findings from the Hispanic/Latino Ad Hoc Committee* report and identified general barriers and recommended solutions for the state's service delivery system to the growing Latino population (Davis, 2003). Apparently, these were the first studies conducted in South Carolina focusing mostly on the Latino adult population issues, in general. Such issues included education, health, public safety, human rights, immigration, fraud, and transportation (Davis, 2003). On education, the Commission's study included 18 issues, ranging from the lack of funding for English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program to the lack of parents understanding of the legal requirements regarding school attendance (Davis, 2003). The study classified the issues in three major priority areas: language barriers, service barriers, and poor communication within the education system. The 2003 report was a compilation of perceptions of Latino adults about the community's educational needs in general. Neither study included the perceptions and experiences of Latino high school students.

Wainer (2004) conducted a qualitative study of three Latino emerging communities from the top 10 Latino fastest growing areas: Arkansas (Washington and Benton counties), Georgia (Hall and Gwinnett counties), and North Carolina (Wake and Durham counties). In emerging Latino communities, Wainer noted that the "lack of

initiative by policymakers and educators could lead to a less desirable future where the growing ethnic diversity in the South is stratified by race, with Latinos at the bottom" (p. 35). The purpose of that study was to identify educational barriers of immigrants and innovative programs and practices that successfully increase their educational attainment levels, promote assimilation into the community, and programs and/or services to decrease those barriers (Wainer, 2004). Four issues affecting immigrant and educators in those three regions include parental involvement, teacher training, immigration status, and discrimination (Wainer, 2004). Echoing Wainer, Morote, and Roman Maqueira (2012) also found parental involvement to be an obstacle for Latino students to complete high school and continue on to college. On discrimination, Wainer (2004) recounted a principal's comment that racism exists at a Georgia school, which manifests through educators placing Latino students in remedial courses due to lack of understanding of students educational needs. Wainer also identified several solutions to those barriers such as having school liaisons with the immigrant communities; cultural sensitivity and awareness programs for teachers; role playing sessions reversing roles at schools involving students, teachers, counselors, and social workers; implementing English/Spanish immersion programs at schools; and other successful innovative programs that may be replicated in communities with similar issues. In a follow up article, Wainer (2006) noted that the governors of the states where he conducted the research tried to make the education system more accessible to immigrants. However, Wainer also raised the issue that because immigrant labor has a low cost to business, hence higher profits, the political will to stop immigration is minimal and there is no

incentive to provide higher education opportunities to immigrant labor families.

Using segmented assimilation as framework, Bohon et al. (2005) conducted a

qualitative study with Latino adults between the ages of 19 and 65 in Georgia to explore

their experiences in education in this Latino Diaspora state. In addition, Bohon et al.

(2005) documented curriculum adaptation in schools as a response to changes in the

student body. The general finding was that Georgia lacked the necessary systems to

handle the increased number of immigrants, which created major obstacles for upward

mobility. Specific findings affecting educational attainment included barriers such as lack

of parental involvement and understanding of the school system, high mobility, lack of

school support, little incentives to continue education, and legislation banning immigrants

from attending institutions of higher education. Some of the underlying causes of those

barriers included lack of understanding of school expectations by Latino families; parents

assuming that they need to pay tuition and books to attend schools; school perceptions

that parents are not interested in their children's education; students dropping out of

school to work; lack of an expanded ESOL programs beyond that offered to migrant

workers. Additional causes included lack of resources and qualified school personnel to

manage the Latino student population and their needs (including going to college);

parents and students' beliefs that a job without a high school education would be enough

to support a family; and the cultural expectation about the role of females which is to take

care of the house and family. Another important finding is "the Big Lie" (Bohon et al.,

2005, p. 55), which refers to the encouragement of teachers for students, especially

undocumented, to perform well in school knowing that they cannot or it is too difficult

for them to attend college. Bohon et al. (2005) recommended that schools provide

additional resources to hire personnel that is bilingual and skilled on dealing with

different cultures, expand ESOL programs, increase adult education to learn English, and

increase Latino students access to publicly funded scholarships.

Lacy (2007) conducted a qualitative research on Mexican immigrants in South

Carolina with the purpose of providing a baseline profile of this group regarding

immigration patterns, reasons for moving, demographics, social and cultural behaviors,

and other characteristics. According to Lacy, in 2005, Mexicans composed 63% of the

Latino population in the state, with a median educational level of nine years. The

University of South Carolina (2007) published a study to raise awareness of policy

makers regarding issues affecting Latinos in South Carolina such as education, housing,

health care, economic development, and social services, and the role that Latinos play in

the state. On education, USC researchers recommended to explore the causes for low

graduation rates and increase teacher quality and professional development to develop

knowledge on multicultural environments.

The Latino community is on the raise to become one third of the country's

population by 2060, if not sooner, and schools should capitalize on this demographic

change promptly and get the next workforce generations ready. Delgado-Romero et al.

(2007) noted that the sudden arrival of Latino students can change schools from a

majority White student population to a majority Latino student body in a matter of years.

The researchers expressed concern about the education level of the Latino population in

Georgia since 61% of the population was not English proficient, had a higher poverty

rates, and, compared with other groups, graduation rates were lower. Delgado-Romero et al. viewed the New Latino Diaspora through a positive lens though and noted that opportunities exist for professional advancement of school personnel through higher education sponsored conferences. The article was a summary of a conference held in Georgia that focused on the roles of school counselors in leading efforts to address issues with the emerging Latino student population and practitioners sharing their experiences, challenges, and rewards in dealing with the emerging Latino population in the state (Delgado-Romero et al., 2007). The conference included the following sessions:

- Building background on Latinos Education: because the majority of the Latino population in Georgia is from Mexico, this session focused on the education system of that country, discussions related to parental involvement, differences in urban and rural education, and transcripts evaluation.

- Counseling skills: this session focused on two-way counseling skills, that is, from counselors to students and for students to approach counselors, counselors' stories on trials and rewards, specific programs that schools implement and their results, and the role of counselors to create a culture that promotes college education attainment.

- Parental engagement: this session focused on avoiding stereotyping parents for their lack of involvement and instead reaching out to them to be involved, the expectations from families regarding higher education, and the acculturation of parents to the new environment.

- College admissions: college admissions officials provided information on

what their institutions were doing to recruit and retain Latino students, including discussions on scholarship programs, and higher education institutions targeting Latino students.

- Community collaboration: this session focused on learning about community-wide programs that churches implemented to provide support services to the Latino community and raising awareness of gang related activities to avoid anxiety if confronted with such situations.

- Research: the session focused on establishing collaborative efforts between school counselors and academia to research and use data in schools to increase performance of Latino students.

There is a gap in academic performance between Latinos and other race/ethnic groups and school counselors should play an active role in narrowing that gap through research, data collection, and recommendations at the school level. Rives (2009) noted that studies have documented "that Hispanic students are not performing academically at the same level as White, Asian, or Black students" (p. 65). Rives conducted a quantitative study on school counselors use of data as it relates to their awareness of data on Latino students' demographics and school achievement. While the results of Rives' study are not germane to my research, I found her extensive review of the literature on the roles of school counselors to be relevant to my research. Rives found that, historically and more often than not, school principals have assigned school counselors tasks not associated with their role as counselors but administrative tasks such as developing schedules, testing, substituting teachers, maintaining records, or disciplining students. Such

assignments preclude school counselors from effectively performing their counseling responsibilities such as mining student data and conducting research to develop appropriate programs to decrease the educational achievement gap between Latino students and their peers. Another finding was the need to develop leadership skills of school counselors and possibilities that allow them to be leaders in promoting student academic achievement. The last finding reaffirms what Delgado-Romero et al. (2007) noted in their study on envisioning school counselors' role of being "an educational leader who advocates for the academic, career, and personal and social success of every student" (p. 211). In 2003, the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) developed a national program with the goal of "Collecting, analyzing, and evaluating data to develop programs to meet the needs of students and to close the achievement gap" (Rives, 2009, p. 28) for school counselors to act as leaders and positively affecting underachieving students. Rives questioned about "How are school counselors transitioning Hispanic [(or Latino)] students?" (p. 95) and recommended that a qualitative research study would be appropriate. The present qualitative doctoral research attempted to address this question by interviewing students on their experiences with school counselors.

Villalba et al. (2007) conducted a qualitative research with parents of elementary school children in rural growing Latino communities in Georgia. The authors categorized the interview responses into four main ideas: (a) schools and teachers as resources and obstacles, (b) school policies negatively influencing the academic success of Latino children, (c) family and cultural characteristics of Latino children living in burgeoning

Latino communities, and (d) social factors affecting the development of Latino children living in rural communities. Like Rives (2009), Villalba et al. noted that the ASCA's national model calls for the role of school counselors to be that of a leader in facilitating the "academic, career, and personal/social development of all children" (p. 509). More specifically, in rapidly increasing rural Latino communities such program ought to be based on the willingness and determination to address the worries and strengths of Latino students in schools (Villalba et al., 2007).

Behnke et al. (2010) conducted a qualitative study with Latino students in North Carolina to understand the causes for dropping out from school and how to prevent them. Behnke et al. noted five reasons for dropping out including personal problems, struggling with schoolwork, desire to work, help family financially, and peer pressure. Behnke et al. suggested that parent involvement, programs to bridge cultural and language barriers, and academic and personal support were among preventive measures that schools could implement.

Recognizing the lack of research on Latino students in new Latino diaspora settlements, Castillo-González (2011) conducted a phenomenological research with Mexican students in South Carolina. This study seems to be the first in-depth study in the state with 30 newly arrived Mexican students in the ESOL program who were at risk of dropping out of school or who have performed well in school. Most of these students were from modest backgrounds, children of farmworkers, service industry workers, or farmer market laborers. Castillo-González explored factors influencing academic achievement and high school performance of students. Castillo-González found that

students moving to the United States meant to reunite with their parents whom they have not seen for a long time and to leave the family that raised them in Mexico, for example, grandparents. The reasons for migrating included poverty, safety, and job relocation. The author also found that students hoped for a legislation that would allow them to further their education after graduation and that some would like to remain in the United States, primarily because of fear from violence in Mexico. Others would like to return after college to reform the education system in Mexico so that people would not have to emigrate. Additional findings include that parents of lower achieving students do not expect them to perform well and complete high school (Castillo-González, 2011). In Mexico, children in this group begin to work hard at such a young age; therefore, they value success in terms of hard, physical work and not in terms of educational attainment (Castillo-González, 2011). Students participating in Castillo-González' study who were in English Language Learners (ELL) classes felt isolated from their native-born schoolmates. ELL students are looked as deficient students instead of being valued for their eventual bilingualism as a benefit and asset (Castillo-González, 2011). Interesting enough, Castillo-González posited the comment regarding whether or not students from other nationalities, for example, from Europe or Asia, in ELL classes "would be considered deficient as they learn English in the schools" (p. 143). Castillo-González also found that some undocumented students were performing well academically; therefore, they would be considered college material, while some U.S. citizen or legal resident students had grades that would not allow them to enter college. Students who had high achievements were often frustrated due to "their perceived lack of ability in their studies.

Their lack of fluency in the [English] language is perceived as lack of ability in academic subjects" (Castillo-González, 2011, p. 159). How well students had performed in schools depended on different factors including (a) engaging parents making sure that their children know the value of education and the opportunities they have in the United States; (b) students' willingness to learn English and return to complete higher education in Mexico; (c) parents expectations; and (d) reunification with parents and observe the sacrifices their parents have made for them (Castillo-González, 2011).

Under the circumstances that some of the students and their families were living, that is, some students working almost full time, raising a child at age 16, Castillo-González (2011) concluded that the "families are resilient, and despite great barriers, they are trying to succeed and incorporate into this society" (p. 106). Castillo-González also concluded that students "seem to be getting the message that they should work hard and succeed; however, the students who are performing the best are told that the vehicle with which to succeed is through education" (p. 131). The author also recognized that more research is needed in this field and geographic area.

Recognizing the growing Latino population in South Carolina, Clemson University's Latino Task Force has sponsored two Advancing Latino Achievement in Society (ALAS) conferences in 2010 and 2013 (Clemson University, 2013). The conferences aimed to initiate discussions in the community about the growing Latino community and its educational needs, its effect on organizations providing health and social services, and its influence on the local economy.

Dondero and Muller (2012) conducted a quantitative study comparing schools in

new and established Latino communities in four aspects: "school composition, quality of

education, instructional resources, and access to learning opportunities for Latino

students" (p. 479). They recognized the ramifications of the new Latino diaspora, two of

which are the rapid population growth (i.e., birth rate) and its effect on education due to

the low educational level of Latinos in new settlements. Dondero and Muller developed

and tested three hypotheses based on the segmented assimilation and residential and

school segregation theories. The hypotheses were: (a) schools in new settlements are less

prepared to meet the various needs of new Latinos; (b) new destinations may have

stronger schools serving Latino students; and (c) Latino students in emerging settlements

"may be more stratified relative to white students" (p. 481). Dondero and Muller

concluded that schools in new Latino communities are less prepared to meet the needs of

Latino students, have favorable overall educational conditions compared with schools in

established Latino settlements, and Latino students in new communities are more

stratified than Whites in their schools. The latter conclusion follows the finding that a gap

exists between Latino and White students when it comes to college preparatory courses.

This finding supports Wainer's (2004, 2006) previous observation that educators in new

Latino settlements place Latino students in "lower level courses" (Dondero & Muller,

2012, p. 497). In relation to the favorable educational conditions finding, Dondero and

Muller noted that schools in new Latino communities "have higher levels of SES [socio-

economic status], higher graduation and college-going rates and lower perceived

problems than schools in established destinations is promising for Latino students in new

destinations" (p. 497). However, what Dondero and Muller failed to recognized was the

accessibility that Latino students in new destinations would have to schools with higher levels of SES based on the same residential and school segregation theoretical framework that they used to develop their tested propositions.

Cooper-Lewter (2013) conducted research on Latino families to increase the understanding of the effect that Latino population growth had across South Carolina. The researchers provided a brief of the demographic changes throughout the state and summarized the findings into eight categories. Major demographic changes occurred in the northwestern region known as upstate South Carolina, the center region of the state known as the midlands, and the southeastern coastal region known as the low country. The findings of the study regarding Latinos educational challenges, in general, included: (a) the students in the state trailed behind White students; (b) students had the highest dropout rate of all ethnic groups in the 2010–2011 school year; (c) lacked the understanding of the public school system; (d) had language barriers; (e) had high mobility; (f) were in poverty; and (g) lacked parental knowledge about how to help children achieve educational goals (Cooper-Lewter, 2013). The research was conducted to increase the knowledge of a statewide grant making foundation personnel. This study confirms the findings of previous studies conducted in South Carolina with respect to the general needs of the state's Latino population.

On April 15, 2014, the nonprofit organization *Excelencia* in Education released its report on Latino College Completion: United States. The researchers noted that,

> For the U.S. to regain the top ranking in the world for college degree attainment,
>
> Latinos will need to earn 5.5 million more degrees by 2020. To reach the degree

attainment goal by 2020, the U.S. can: 1) close the equity gap in college completion; 2) increase the number of degrees conferred; and, 3) scale up programs and initiatives that work for Latino and other students. (Santiago & Calderón Galdeano, 2014a, para. 1)

In South Carolina, 7% of the K–12 student population is Latino and 17% of Latinos, 25 and older, have obtained a college degree (i.e., associate degree or higher) in comparison to 33% of all adults. For the 2011–2012 school year, the top three, 4-year public higher education institutions enrolling Latino students in the state were the University of South Carolina-Columbia (4%), Clemson University (2%), and College of Charleston (3%) (Santiago & Calderón Galdeano, 2014b; New American Foundation, n.d.).

There is consensus in the literature about Latinos trailing behind other races/ethnic groups in college education attainment. There is also consensus that Latinos will continue to be the largest ethnic/racial minority group of the population with U.S. Census estimates for this group to be one third of the population by 2060. Addressing the educational needs and increasing higher education attainment of Latinos will not happen overnight. Efforts must focus now on addressing those educational needs at the K–12 levels to increase college enrollment and attainment for the United States to exceed other countries higher education graduation rates.

Review of Relevant Legislation Literature

United States Supreme Court Decision: *Plyler v. Doe* (1982)

In June 1982, the United States Supreme Court decided with 5 to 4 vote on a

landmark class action lawsuit filed on behalf of 16 undocumented Mexican students

against a local school district originally and the State of Texas later as a joint defendant

(*Plyler v. Doe, 1982).* The complaint indicated that the Tyler Independent School District

excluded undocumented students from receiving education at its schools. The lawsuit

followed its path starting at the District Court all the way to the United States Supreme

Court. At the core of the case was the Texas legislation aiming at withholding state funds

from local school districts to educate undocumented students and authorizing school

districts to reject their enrollment. The Supreme Court held that the Texas statute was

unconstitutional because it violated the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth

Amendment; therefore, treating primary and secondary education as an entitlement of

undocumented children (Pabon Lopez, 2005). The Supreme Court did not recognize

education as a fundamental Constitutional right in its decision; however, as Pabon Lopez

noted, education is an essential part of belonging in society.

What is relevant to the proposed research is the language included in the Supreme

Court's opinion:

An alien is surely a "person" in any ordinary sense of that term. Aliens, even

aliens whose presence in this country is unlawful, have long been recognized as

"persons" guaranteed due process of law by the Fifth and Fourteenth

Amendments…. The Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution is not confined

to the protection of citizens. (p. 457 U.S. 210)

Referring to the analysis of the District Court regarding that generation of

undocumented students, the Supreme Court noted in its opinion that:

The [District] court further observed that the impact of § 21.031 was borne

primarily by a very small subclass of illegal aliens, "entire families who have

migrated illegally and -- for all practical purposes -- permanently to the United

States." … Finally, the [District] court noted that, under current laws and

practices, "the illegal alien of today may well be the legal alien of

tomorrow," … and that, without an education, these undocumented children,

[a]lready disadvantaged as a result of poverty, lack of English-speaking ability,

and undeniable racial prejudices, . . . will become permanently locked into the

lowest socio-economic class. (p. 207-208)

The Supreme Court's opinion further noted that:

In any event, the record is clear that many of the undocumented children disabled

by this classification will remain in this country indefinitely, and that some will

become lawful residents or citizens of the United States. (p. 230)

The Supreme Court's prediction became a reality. All 16 students became legal

residents through the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 enacted during the

Reagan administration, 10 completed their high school education in Tyler's district, the

majority is working in blue-collar jobs, and have families of their own (Feldman, 1994).

Plyler v. Doe allows undocumented students to receive free public education from

kindergarten to 12th grade. As previously mentioned, the Supreme Court's opinion that

undocumented students could become permanently locked into the lowest socio-

economic class in today's society may be used to advocate for in-state tuition college

laws. For example, a case may be constructed that a high school diploma is not sufficient

to advance in today's society and that, for the United States to remain competitive, today's global and knowledge based economy requires postsecondary education.

Recent Immigration Efforts: Presidential Directive and Senate Bill 744

The Executive and Legislative branches of the United States government took action with respect to the immigration issues. In June 2012, the Executive Branch, through the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), issued a memorandum setting out policies to temporary defer deportation of qualifying undocumented young immigrants.

In June 2013, the U.S. Senate passed Senate Bill 744 (2013), a bipartisan bill entitled Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act with a 68-32 vote. The U.S. House of Representatives did not voted on House of Representatives Bill 15 (2013), which Democrat representatives introduced on October 2, 2013. The House bill was based on the Senate bill that passed in June 2013 (National Immigration Law Center, 2013). The House never passed the bill.

Presidential Directive: Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals

On June 15, 2012, then Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano issued a memorandum to the U.S. Customs and Border Patrol, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, and the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. This memorandum established how the DHS "should enforce the Nation's immigration laws against certain young people who were brought to this country as children and know only this country as home" (Napolitano, 2012). It also established eligibility criteria that people must meet prior to their qualification under this directive. DHS titled this policy as the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals or DACA and became effective on August

15, 2012. DACA granted temporary relief from deportation, provided authorization to

work, and the ability to obtain a driver's license to qualifying undocumented young

immigrants for two years. Immigrants under DACA status may renew it for two

additional years. According to the Pew Research Center, of the 4.4 million undocumented

immigrants age 30 and under (the required age to qualify for DACA status), up to 1.7

million may qualify for deferred action of which approximately 85% or 1.4 million are

Hispanics (Passel & Lopez, 2012).

According to DHS, DACA "does not confer lawful [immigration] status upon an

individual" (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, n.d.a, para. 4). Because

undocumented individuals do not have legal immigration status when DHS grants them

DACA status, they "remain subject to all legal restrictions and prohibitions on

individuals in unlawful status" (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, n.d.a, para. 10).

Deferred action refers "to the exercise of prosecutorial discretion by DHS as to aliens

who are subject to removal from the United States" (Fair, 2014, p. 8). In other words,

DACA (a) halts the deportation process only for two years (subject to renewal); (b)

neither grants legal immigration status nor provides a way to obtain citizenship; and (c)

does not grant certain public benefits.

A year after its implementation, the Migration Policy Institute issued a briefing in

August 2013 on the status of DACA. An important and relevant conclusion of this

briefing to this study is that:

> DACA's overall impact on the postsecondary choices of unauthorized youth
>
> remains to be seen. The program expands opportunities to work in the formal

sector, where jobs are better-paying and where education is more highly rewarded

than in the informal jobs which many unauthorized workers hold…DACA is

likely to substantially increase the economic mobility of a sizeable number of

immigrant youth: more than 400,000 on the program's first anniversary.

(Batalova, Hooker, Capps, Bachmeier, & Cox, 2013, p. 11)

On the issue of whether or not undocumented students can enroll at public higher

education institutions in South Carolina, according to the American Civil Liberties Union

of South Carolina (2013), the federal government, through DHS, determines the lawful

presence of individuals and this determination is "binding upon South Carolina" (para. 3).

Therefore, during the deferral period students participating under DACA "are to be

considered lawfully present" (para. 3) according to DHS. In 2013, the SCCHE informed

public higher education institutions that they "must accept the Federal determination of

lawful presence" (American Civil Liberties Union of South Carolina , 2013, para. 4).

This SCCHE directive allows undocumented students under DACA to enroll and attend

public postsecondary institutions in South Carolina but does not allow them to pay in-

state tuition rates according to current state law.

Undocumented students under DACA status are still facing another obstacle in

South Carolina. In March 2014, the South Carolina Office of the Attorney General

(SCOAG) issued an opinion with the respect to whether or not the SC Department of

Labor, Licensing and Regulation may issue DACA students professional or occupational

licenses. After an exhaustive analysis of courts decisions, DACA policy, South Carolina

laws, other state's and federal agencies laws and determinations, and clarifications from

DHS regarding the purpose of DACA, the SCOAG opined that "a court will find that such a [professional or occupational] license should be denied to an individual in DACA status" (Fair, 2014, p. 11). The opinion also noted that states have the prerogative of enacting legislation that would allow undocumented students the opportunity to be "eligible for any State or local public benefit" (Fair, 2014, p. 6), including professional and occupational licenses. For undocumented students under DACA in South Carolina, this opinion means that under current laws, even with a college degree, they will not be able to obtain the required licenses to work or practice in their chosen fields of study in the state. For those who graduate with a college degree, the future is uncertain and less attractive as they face reality after graduation. For example, according to Pérez (2012), a Latino undocumented student graduated with a bachelor's degree in mathematics and had a teaching credential but cannot work as a teacher. Another student earned a bachelor's and a master's degree but ended working as a babysitter, at a fast food restaurant, and cleaning houses. The only way they would be able to obtain professional or occupational licenses would be if the South Carolina legislature would pass laws to that effect. For example, California passed legislation to allow its DREAMers to practice law if the California Bar certifies them. California is also trying to pass similar laws for other professions requiring licenses to practice (McGreevy, 2014).

Two years after DACA's announcement, Gonzales and Bautista-Chavez (2014) reported the findings of the National UnDACAmented Research Project (NURP). A total of 673,417 people submitted DACA applications and DHS approved 553,197 as of March 2014 (Gonzales & Bautista-Chavez, 2014). Findings related to this research

provided an insight of how DACA positively affected eligible undocumented students,

benefiting the most students with college degrees. Their undocumented status did not

allow them to find jobs in their fields of study and earn higher salaries. For this segment

of the population, DACA changed that situation allowing them to begin earning work

experience and higher salaries. For the younger undocumented group, DACA opened the

doors to higher education opportunities at public institutions but, as discussed before, not

to public financial assistance (Gonzales & Bautista-Chavez, 2014).

As well intentioned the DACA executive policy may be, it created opportunities

and hope as well as confusion and frustration among undocumented students, states,

colleges, universities, and the public in general. For example, as noted earlier, South

Carolina universities are trying to decipher the intent of DACA and having meetings with

local Latino leaders to explore opportunities for undocumented students. Some

institutions have DACA information on their websites but others do not have that

information and, instead, they provide information on the state's Illegal Immigration

Reform Act of 2008. The SCOAG's opinion raises deep concerns in the educational field

as well as the Latino community because colleges and universities will need to determine

whether students under DACA status would be able to work in South Carolina upon

college graduation if their chosen fields require licenses.

Senate Bill 744: Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration

Modernization Act

Introduced in 2013 during the 1st Session of the 113th Congress, the Senate

bipartisan bill S. 744 entitled Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration

Modernization Act passed with a 68-32 vote. The bill sought to secure the United

States/Mexico border; make the E-Verify system mandatory; increase the number of U.S.

Border Patrol agents; grant a provisional immigrant status based on certain eligibility

criteria eventually leading to citizenship; approve the DREAM Act; delayed eligibility

for federal public benefit programs; and other immigration related provisions (National

Immigration Law Center, 2013).

The DREAM Act would have given the opportunity for undocumented

immigrants who meet the Act's eligibility requirements for conditional legal residency

(Pérez, 2012). Expectations were that the DREAM Act would have increased high school

and college graduation rates, increased tax revenues at all levels of governments, and

reduced government expenditures (Pérez, 2012). In addition, it would have allowed

immigrants to fill the crucial workforce needs that businesses and industries have in the

knowledge based economy, for example, shortage of professionals in the health care

field, teachers, engineers, etc. (Pérez, 2012). Following economics supply and demand

forces in the job market, the increase of salaries of college graduates compared with low

earnings of high school graduates demonstrate the shortage of the former and oversupply

of the latter group (Carnevale & Fry, 2001). According to Pérez (2012), by 2020, the job

market would require a college-educated workforce to fill about 15 million new jobs but

the market would face a shortage of 12 million qualified people to fill those new

positions. In addition, projections indicate that by 2021 there will be no net population

increase of 25-54 year-old workers born in the United States. Therefore, the supply of

workers would have to come from immigrants or the elderly (Pérez, 2012).

President Obama announced on June 30, 2014, that the House of Representatives refused to vote on any immigration reform legislation (The White House, 2014). More likely than not, the 2012–2014 humanitarian crises of unaccompanied minors from Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras crossing the southern border derailed any effort to resurrect any immigration reform in the short term.

South Carolina State Legislature: House Bill 4735

On February 20, 2014, Minority Leader J. Todd Rutherford introduced House Bill 4735. This bill would have amended the South Carolina Code of Laws to exempt students lacking lawful immigration status from paying out-of-state tuition at public higher education institutions. The bill would have undocumented students eligible for financial state assistance provided students attend a South Carolina high school three or more years, graduate or receive the equivalent of a high school diploma in the state, and enroll in the fall of 2014-2015 school years or later. The bill included language to address the unlawful immigration status of students requiring that these students to submit an affidavit with the college or university indicating that they have filed or will file an application to legalize their immigration status when eligible. The bill also provided for the confidentiality of the information of students (South Carolina, 2013-2014).

House Bill 4735 bill was referred to the committee of ways and means of the South Carolina legislature but "the bill did not make it out of committee" (T. Clark, personal communication, July 28, 2015). If approved, the bill would have removed the state's residency requirement to obtain in-state tuition payment status benefiting undocumented students.

Literature Review Summary

In the wake of the influx of Latinos in South Carolina, several studies conducted since the early 2000s assessed the needs of the Latino community in general. The literature review revealed that the majority of the research conducted in South Carolina focused on Mexican adults and their needs due to the fact that it is the largest Latino immigrant population group in the state and that this segment of the population brought a low human capital (Castillo-González, 2011; Lacy, 2007; Young, 2005). In addition, researchers noted that there was little research completed in new Latino diaspora communities on educational experiences of the new residents, including South Carolina (Castillo-González, 2011; Hamann et al., 2002). The few studies conducted in the southeast noted parental involvement as barrier for Latino students to complete high school and postsecondary education (Bohon, 2005; Delgado-Romero et al., 2007; Wainer, 2004). Researchers tried to demystify the belief that Latino parents do not value education (Valencia & Black (2002). Academic preparation plays an important role as a barrier for Latino students to enroll in college because schools are segregated and have low performance (García & Tierney, 2011; Gildersleeve & Ranero, 2010; González Sullivan, 2007). Wainer (2004) called for further research at the local level to identify successful practices that increase educational attainment levels in nontraditional Latino settlements to build a wealth of research-based knowledge on the new Latino diaspora.

Research on in-state college tuition for undocumented students revealed that the implementation of such policies by colleges and university staff led to an interpretation that hurt some undocumented students instead of helping them (Rincón, 2008). Hence,

there is a need to draft future legislation carefully and as close as possible to the intent discussed during in-state college tuition debates. An important argument, based on civil rights of equal access and fairness, that is currently absent from the debate may be used to advocate for in-state tuition.

My review of the literature found studies focusing on undocumented high school students of Mexican origins in North Carolina and South Carolina noting that scholarly educational research paid almost no attention to this segment of the population in the southeast United States (López, 2010). Castillo-González (2011) research was the only in-depth study conducted in South Carolina with students from Mexico who had recently arrived that explored their experiences at home, in their communities, at schools, and with their peers.

In 2012, DACA granted temporary relief from deportation to qualifying young undocumented immigrants. Two additional pieces of legislation were in the hands of the U.S. Congress in the last two years. Senate Bill 744 passed but the House of Representatives did not vote on the immigration bill. Introduced during the 120th Session (2013–2014) of the South Carolina legislature, H 4735 would have removed the state's residency requirements to obtain in-state tuition payment status, greatly benefiting undocumented students. Unfortunately, "the bill did not make it out of committee" (T. Clark, personal communication, July 28, 2015).

Researchers and organizations have issued calls to action for state legislatures to facilitate and provide higher education opportunities to Latino students (Carnevale & Fry, 2001; Davis Bell & Bautsch, 2011; McKinsey and Company, 2009; Ruppert, 2003) since

projections indicate that Latinos would be 24.4% of the country's population by 2050 (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2008).

The literature review research did not find a specific study focusing on the opportunities and obstacles Latino students in Greenville County, South Carolina, face in their pursuit of higher education. Most of the studies completed in South Carolina have addressed the needs of Latino adults in general. Therefore, there is a need to fill the gap in the literature on perceptions and experiences of Latino students facing obstacles and opportunities in pursuing higher education in South Carolina. This study seeks to fill that gap.

Theoretical Frameworks

The critical race theory (CRT), the segmented assimilation theory, and the LatCrit Theory (Latino critical theory) served as theoretical frameworks to explore the opportunities and obstacles facing Latino students in Greenville County in their pursuit of higher education. These frameworks required consideration of discriminatory practices and policies embedded in society, laws, and regulations affecting higher education achievement among Latino students. In addition, the frameworks required consideration of how to challenge those practices and policies by bringing to light resilient and transformational resistance experiences of Latino students.

Critical Race Theory

The origins of the critical race theory (CRT) are attributed to legal scholars Derrick Bell, Alan Freeman, and Richard Delgado as their frustration grew due to the slow racial reform advances of the 1970s and the work that critical legal studies (CLS)

was doing with challenging "traditional legal scholarship" (Ladson-Billings, 2006, p. 300). CLS scholars challenged the view that 'the civil rights struggle represents a long, steady, march toward social transformation" (Crenshaw, 1988, p. 1334). In doing so, CLS critically analyzed public policies providing the basis "for explaining how legal reforms help mask and legitimate continuing racial inequity… [presenting] law as a series of ideological constructs that operate to support existing social arrangements by convincing people that things are both inevitable and basically fair" (Crenshaw, 1988, p. 1350) without including the concept of racism in the critique (Crenshaw, 1988; Ladson-Billings, 2006). That was the extent of the contribution of CLS to legal discourse (Ladson-Billings, 2006).

In the mid-1970s, the CRT began analyzing, questioning, and altering race, racism, and power relationships resulting from the realization that the 1960s civil rights activism had slowed down or began to decrease (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). Mari Matsuda (as cited in Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001) defined *critical race theory* as the following:

> The work of progressive legal scholars of color who are attempting to develop a jurisprudence that accounts for the role of racism in American law and that work toward the elimination of racism as part of a larger goal of eliminating all forms of subordination. (p. 311)

Critical race theorists did not only attempt to examine the same issues that the traditional civil rights movement and other ethnic studies had studied but also, through activism, to comprehend the social milieu in which people of color exists and transform

that environment so people of color may live in a better society (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). The five tenets of the CRT framework are: (a) race and racism are prevalent and deeply rooted in the American society and have shaped the "U.S. legal system and the ways people think about law, racial categories and privilege" (L. Parker & M. Lynn as cited in López, 2010, p. 36); (b) the prevailing ideology ought to be challenged; (c) social justice commitment; (d) storytelling as a validation method of the lived experiences of people of color; and (e) the use of interdisciplinary methods to examine race and racism under the current and historical environment (López, 2010; Solórzano, Villalpando, & Oseguera, 2005; Yosso, Villalpando, Delgado Bernal, & Solórzano, 2001). CRT storytelling is a powerful tool to communicate the stories of lived experiences from those whose voices have not been heard (López, 2010; Yosso et al., 2001). Once told, stories provide the potential of changing people's stances, build support, and allow "mental selfpreservation" of discriminated communities (López, 2010, p. 41).

Researchers have documented that Latinos, in general, still face racism. For example, placing Latino students in remedial courses prior to assessing their real educational needs (Wainer, 2004); schools designating "the most marginal spaces on school campus" for Latino students (Gibson, 2001, p. 244), which results in these students being isolated and lacking the opportunity of interacting and practicing English with native speakers; "students are often placed in less-preferred spaces—sometimes literally in closets" (Hamann et al., 2002, p. 2); "Latinos often have been relegated to separate, unequal, and inferior public schools" (López, 2010, p. 19); attend overcrowded, dilapidated, racially segregated schools (Santa Ana, 2002; Yosso, 2005); Latino students

are not considered to be "college material" (López, 2010, p. 27) and are placed in lower

academic level and/or vocational courses (Bettez, López, & Machado-Casas, 2009;

Nuñez & Crips, 2012) leading Latino students to be "under-motivated and rarely

encouraged to consider college as a future opportunity" (López J. K., 2007, p. 26);

students are segregated from common daily experiences resulting in the acquisition of

less knowledge and important social capital that they could use (Gándara, 2009); Latino

students being "often ignored by teachers and given coloring assignments instead of

actual school-work" (Bettez et al., 2009, p. 26), action that assumes a "deficit thinking

because they come to school lacking the middle class cultural capital needed for success

in the public school system" (López J. K., 2007, p. 31); and "stereotyping, poor facilities,

and inadequate teacher training to be the hallmarks of immigrant education in the South"

(Tarasawa, 2013).

In her research in South Carolina, Castillo-González (2011) noted that "These

[recent immigrant] students experience discrimination at the hands of the white majority,

but even more so at the hands of African American peers" (p. 146). Even worse, placing

Latino students who are U.S. citizens in ESOL classes in high schools just because they

are of Latino descent is telling these students that they neither belong here nor belong to

the country of their ancestors (Castillo-González, 2011). In addition, "microaggressions"

such as name calling, bullying, and teachers telling Latino students to "go back" cause

them to "retreat and cease interacting with those around them as a form of 'silent

resistance'" (Castillo-González, 2011, p. 147).

Through the CRT in higher education lens, the current and dominant ideology is

being challenged (Solórzano et al., 2005). Solórzano et al. (2005) noted several issues

regarding the Latino educational pipeline including lack of Latino students placement in

high school advanced or college preparatory courses; need of remedial education at

college level; the placement of ESL students back to 9th grade despite higher levels of

achievements in their home countries; poor academic advising due to low expectations

from high school faculty and counselors based on "deficit-based expectations" (p. 282);

academic tracking, that is, advising Latino students to attend vocational schools or job

training programs instead of attending higher education institutions; transfer policies

from two to four-year colleges; use of standardized tests scores for admissions even

though they lack "predictive value" (p. 287) and warnings regarding their limited use.

In their quantitative study of English language learners using the National

Education Longitudinal Study of 1988, Kanno and Cromley (2013) found that ELLs are

academically underprepared to attend college because schools focus on graduating them

by putting ELLs in less rigorous subjects. In doing so, the education system has widen

the "academic parity" (p. 114) gap between ELLs and English proficient students because

ELLs are divested from academically challenging courses. Secretary Riley (2000)

acknowledged that it was time to move beyond stereotyping Latino students who do not

speak English as students who are not smart or cannot learn.

Latino Critical Race Theory

Both CRT and LatCrit find their roots on the critical theory literature (Solórzano

& Delgado Bernal, 2001). Tierney defined critical theory as "an attempt to understand the

oppressive aspects of society in order to generate societal and individual transformation"

(William Tierney as cited in Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001, p. 311). Yosso et al. (2001) developed a CRT's family tree depicting its ancestors including, among others, ethnic studies, cultural nationalism, and critical legal studies. The tree also recognized CRT's offsprings including LatCrit, FemCrit (Feminist Critical Theory), Asian Crit (Asian Critical Theory), TribalCrit (Tribal Critical Theory), and WhiteCrit (White Critical Theory) (Daniels, 2011; Yosso et al., 2001). As an offspring, LatCrit uses CRT's tenets as starting point but furthers the dialogue focusing on the experiences of Latinos resulting from not just racism and injustice but also from language discrimination, ethnicity, immigration, culture, characteristics, and sexuality (Daniels, 2011). These are types of issues that CRT has not included in its critiques due to its focus on the Black/White binary paradigm of race relations (Daniels, 2011; Perea, 1997; Yosso, 2005) but are issues that Latinos also face, especially in the southeast United States where the Black/White binary mindset on race relations is prevalent (McLaughlin González & Raymond Ting, 2008). Perea (1997) proposed that "race scholarship both inside and outside the law is dominated by a binary paradigm of race" (p. 1219). LatCrit expands on CRT by focusing beyond that binary focus.

The five principles of LatCrit are similar to those of CRT but with an application to the issues facing Latinos (González & Portillos, 2007; Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001). First, race and racism are "endemic, permanent" in the U.S. society (Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001, p. 312) and oppression manifests from different angles including race, gender, language, and immigration status. Second, objecting to the prevailing ideology that has been customarily used to rationalize "Latina/o educational inequality

and cultural inferiority" (González & Portillos, 2007, p. 249) and the use of deficit

frameworks that try to explain those inequalities (Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001).

Third, social justice commitment encompasses the responses to the different angles of

oppression. Solórzano and Delgado Bernal (2001) posited that this commitment is met

through "transformational resistance" (p. 314), which Latino students reveal when they

have an awareness and critique the system of oppression and act motivated by their desire

for social justice. Fourth, LatCrit takes into account the knowledge to validate the lived

experiences, which are important to understand through telling stories and advance

Latinos in society. Fifth, the use of a multidisciplinary approach to explore and

understand the conditions and situations that Latinos live in society (Solórzano &

Delgado Bernal, 2001).

The LatCrit lens examines Latinos discrimination and marginalization in society

bringing to light the use of discriminatory practices in educational environments such as

the deficit framework and stereotypes of cultural inferiority that help materialize

discrimination and marginalization. In doing that, LatCrit challenges the central discourse

on race and racism as it relates to education (Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001) through

LatCrit theory in education (Lazos Vargas, 2007). Through this framework and increased

awareness, understanding, and critique of standard educational practices, teachers must

question whether the practices that other well-intentioned educators have put in place and

used for so long are "racially and culturally biased" or not (Lazos Vargas, 2007, p. 703).

Pabon Lopez (2005) analysis of both *Plyler v. Doe* and *Brown v. Board of

Education*, made me realize that the LatCrit framework, although not explicitly

acknowledged, came into play by doing the analysis of these cases under the lens of the

convergence theory. The convergence theory "demonstrates that the nation's interest in

the maintenance of an underclass of undocumented [and possibly Latinos in general],

low-wage earners who fuel the nation's economy by performing work that is undesirable

to many United States natives" (Pabon Lopez, 2005, p. 1377). Therefore, I consider

LatCrit an appropriate framework to use in this study.

Solórzano and Delgado Bernal (2001) posited that transformational resistance,

when based on LatCrit principles, has "the greatest possibility for social change" (p. 319).

The desire to "prove others wrong" (Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001, p. 319) is what

drives Latinos who have transformational resistance characteristics. The LatCrit

framework was a lens through which race, racism, and discrimination practices were

considered throughout the entire research process to bring to light the experiences of

Latino students when facing barriers to attend higher education institutions as well as

those resilient and transformational resistance experiences leading them to attain a

college education (Creswell, 2007; Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001).

Segmented Assimilation Theory

Researchers have studied the acculturation and assimilation of immigrants in the

United States, noting differences between European and contemporary immigration.

Researchers such as Milton Gordon have argued that assimilation of European

immigrants into society occurred straight forward through a series of stages that once

reached, assimilation was permanent (Haller, Portes, & Lynch, 2011). Others have

maintained that the assimilation of contemporary immigrants (i.e., Latinos) did not occur

as it happened during times of European immigration but one that is segmented (Haller et al., 2011; Portes, Fernandez-Kelly, & Haller, 2009). In comparing the European and Latino immigrants, Santa Ana (2002) noted that Europeans purposely crossed the Atlantic uprooting and severing their ties with the homeland. On the other hand, Latinos is an ethnic group formed during the Spanish colonial times with deep roots in the American continent where "the so-called deserts of the great Southwest have been a Latino grassland for hundreds of years" (p. 272).

The segmented assimilation theory emphasizes that human capital differences, modes of incorporating into the host society, and family structure determine the various patterns of assimilation or adaptation exerted by the second-generation immigrants (Haller et al., 2011). This theory posits three important elements that affect the acculturation process of immigrants: (a) the role of external factors; (b) the barriers challenging immigrant children, and (c) the projection of paths resulting from the interaction of external factors and barriers (Portes et al., 2009). External factors include the human capital of immigrant parents (e.g., educational levels), the behavior of the host community receiving them, and the immigrant family structure. Barriers, among others, include the labor market conditions, racism, and different behavioral lifestyle alternatives. The interaction of these factors may not lead to a straightforward assimilation into society but to different paths of assimilation. Portes et al. identified three paths of acculturation: consonant, selective, and dissonant. Consonant acculturation occurs when immigrant parents bring high human capital and learn to accommodate themselves along with their children into society. Selective acculturation takes place

when both parents and children learn the language and costumes of the host society but maintain their cultural traditions and language. In this path, children become bilingual. Dissonant acculturation occurs when immigrant families do not have the support needed, parents do not speak English, children learn English but refuse to speak the native language of their parents and regard their parents as inferior. The breakdown of communication between parents and children may lead to dissonant acculturation (Portes et al., 2009).

Haller et al. (2011) posited the different adaptation paths that second generation immigrants take within the United States society. They noted that second generation immigrants follow patterns of segmented assimilation based on the various origins and structures of the first generation immigrants such as those bringing high human capital (e.g., Asians) and those who may not (e.g., Latinos). Obstacles to successfully assimilate including racial bias, labor market demands for either highly skilled/paid professionals or low skilled/paid workers, and alternative lifestyles that include dropping out of schools and not finishing education (Haller et al., 2011). Figure 4 provides a conceptual visualization of the Segmented Assimilation Theory.
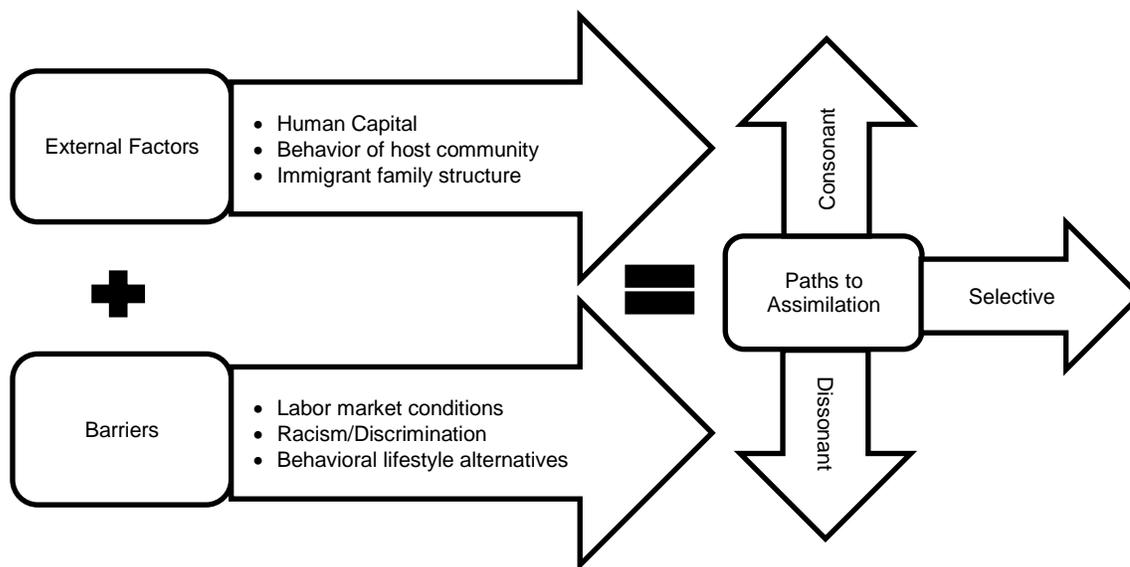
Figure 4. Conceptual visualization of the segmented assimilation theory. Adapted from "The Adaptation of the Immigrant Second Generation in America: A Theoretical Review and Recent Evidence," by A. Portes, P. Fernández-Kelly, and W. Haller, 2009, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, 35*, p. 1077. Copyright 2009 by Taylor and Francis.

Assimilation of Latinos into mainstream America did not occur as it happened with previous waves of Europeans because Latinos have continuously making their path into the United States in great numbers, with or without legal documents, and keeping the Spanish language and culture (Santa Ana, 2002). There is a great need to look beyond race-defined destinies in the 21st century since projections indicate that Latinos would be almost one third of the population in the United States in 2050, if current trends continue (Passel & Cohn, 2008). Throughout the country, schools and teachers are demonstrating that "race and poverty are not destiny" (McKinsey & Company, 2009, p. 6).

In their research of 275 middle and high school students attending a Latino Education Summit in North Carolina, Valencia and Johnson (2006) found that "there were significant relationships between acculturation level and discrimination and

language problems as students' barriers to school involvement" (p. 357). They also elucidated that the level of student acculturation influences their understanding of what to do after graduating from high school (e.g., going to college versus working) and their sense of perceived community belonging (i.e., high acculturation: high sense of belonging) and discrimination (i.e., high acculturation: less discrimination) (Valencia & Johnson, 2006). By combining the CRT/LatCrit and segmented assimilation theories, I sought to identify and challenge some thoughts and practices that people may hold in Greenville County regarding Latino students in their attempts to attend institutions of higher education and successfully complete their postsecondary education.

A potential to increase educational levels of the growing Latino population in Greenville County and the State of South Carolina exists due to their economic and labor market paradigm shift from a textile industry to an automotive, science, health and medical, technological, knowledge base and cluster-developed economy. This may happen by exploring and bringing to light how the CRT/LatCrit theories interplay with segmented assimilation theory's factors influencing the experiences of Latino students in their pursuit of higher education. By becoming aware of their lived experiences, coupled with factors affecting those experiences and examined through these lenses, students would have the potential of developing "transformational resistance" (Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001, p. 319) behaviors. Through this type of behavior, students critique a system of oppression and develop a yearning to effect social change (Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001).

Literature Review Related to Concepts

I identified two major concepts for this study. The first one included the

theoretical frameworks that guided the study, which is the critical race theory, the LatCrit

theory, and the segmented assimilation theory. The second major concept related to the

educational crisis in the Latino community. These two major concepts are briefly related

to the reviewed literature in the following section.

Theoretical Framework

As previously stated, CRT tried not only to examine the same issues that the

traditional civil rights movement and other ethnic studies had studied but also, through

activism, to comprehend the social milieu in which people of color exists and transforms

that environment so they may live in a better society (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012).

LatCrit uses CRT's tenets as starting point but furthers the dialogue focusing on the

experiences of Latinos resulting from not just racism and injustice but also from language

discrimination, ethnicity, immigration, culture, characteristics, and sexuality (Daniels,

2011).

The literature review points to the concept of racism as still prevalent in society

and existing in educational systems (Daniels, 2011; González & Portillos, 2007).

Research conducted in emerging Latino communities has confirmed the

institutionalization of racism in educational systems in the new Latino diaspora as Latino

students "are often placed in less–preferred places—sometimes literally in closets… And

they are often taught by less credentialed teachers, who are themselves stigmatized by

peers through an academic 'caste system' that looks down on bilingual/ESL education"

(Hamann, Wortham, & Murillo Jr., 2002, p. 2). In another instance, middle-class white parents withdrew their children from schools in a North Carolina school district with more than 60% Latino students in kindergarten and enrolled them in private schools (Vásquez, Seales, & Marquadt, 2008).

In Georgia, Wainer (2004) found that racism is "'immense'… [and] is manifested in schools by 'unfair placement, placing kids in remedial classes because they [teachers and administrators] don't understand their educational need, unfair discipline and grading policies that teachers and principals engage in'" (p. 32). Wainer also found that school administrators in North Carolina denied access to computers and extracurricular school activities to Latino students and placed ESL students in temporary buildings instead of classrooms in main buildings.

With respect to the segmented assimilation framework, Portes et al. (2009) posited that the human capital immigrants bring into a host society determines their competitiveness in it and the potential to achieve status and financial well-being. Realizing this potential is contingent on how immigrants are incorporated based on the reception from governmental authorities, the native community, and the social network that exists. In a receptive or neutral community, immigrants have the possibility of using the skills and education they bring to realize that potential. However, hostile communities diminish the realization potential by not allowing immigrants (or the majority of immigrants with low human capital) to obtain or further their education and/or acquiring the necessary skills to become a part of a highly productive workforce. Portes et al. (2009) also noted that one of the barriers facing immigrants was racism and the fact that

the physical appearance of Latinos and stereotypes "are assigned major importance [in hostile communities]" (p. 1080). In the latter instance, the LatCrit and segmented assimilation frameworks will come together in this study.

Educational Crisis

Latinos are the fastest growing ethnic/racial minority population segment and, if ignored, their academic performance will get worse and jeopardize the United States economic and competitive status (Gándara, 2009). As a group, Latinos have the lowest educational levels. Researchers have expressed concerns over the increase in the Latino population and its level of academic achievement and the future of Latino students. Portes et al., (2009) recognized the added risk of failing to give opportunities, both educational and occupational, to the second generation of Latinos. The looming Latino population educational crisis in the southeast United States is not a matter of local concerns but one that has regional and national implications (Gándara, 2009; González Sullivan, 2007; Rives, 2009; Wainer, 2004).

In new Latino diaspora settlements, the majority of teachers have not had experience with the Latino culture and focus on what Latino students bring as background in the English language rather than building upon what they have learned in their countries of origin and bring as knowledge (Gibson, 2001). Children of Mexican immigrants are at great disadvantage: they are "the least likely to finish high school and the least likely to complete four years of college" (Gibson, 2001, p. 243).

As former United States Secretary of Education Riley (2000) acknowledged:

It is our duty then as a nation to ensure that the Latino community has every

opportunity to achieve a quality education and the success that can follow that just as we have done for generations of Americans before them. Now, I am confident that we can address this challenge with innovation, we can shed the misconceptions and stereotypes, eliminate the low expectations, and embrace the unique strengths that Latinos bring to education and into our national communities. (Riley, 2000)

I explored the barriers and opportunities that Latino students are facing in Greenville County in their pursuit of higher education. The findings may assist with developing programs and services that could help increase academic achievement among Latino students.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

As noted in Chapter 1, the main research question for this study was: What factors constrain or enable the enrollment of South Carolina Latino students in college upon their graduation from high school? The subquestions were as follows: (a) What are the academic barriers that prevent South Carolina Latino students from qualifying to enroll in college upon graduation?; (b) What circumstances prevent South Carolina Latino students from qualifying for college enrollment?; (c) How have South Carolina Latino students overcome barriers to educational achievement?; (d) What barriers do South Carolina parents of Latino students who want higher education for their children encounter?; and (e) What are public policy-makers doing to promote academic success for South Carolina Latino students so that they qualify for enrollment in college?

As an emerging Latino community, South Carolina educators and administrators should pay attention to educating Latino youth and capitalize on their diverse experiences, bilingualism, biculturalism, and in some instances multiculturalism. Although high school graduation and college enrollment rates have increased among Latinos, when compared with other racial/ethnic groups, were the least group holding a bachelor degree at 13% (Aud, Fox, & KewalRamani, 2010; Davis Bell & Bautsch, 2011).

Using the LatCrit and segmented assimilation theories as theoretical frameworks, I incorporated Roe's approach to narrative policy analysis in this study. The purpose of the study was to analyze Title 59 of the South Carolina Code of Laws regarding higher education legislation, explore stories and counterstories that have served as obstacles or

enablers for Latino student access to higher education, and develop a metanarrative that would make higher education more accessible to this segment of the population in South Carolina. The main goal of this study was to explore and increase awareness of Latino student hindrances and opportunities to attain higher education. The social implications examined included the recognition of Latino student higher education attainment obstacles by school teachers and college administrators, faculty, and recruiters; the influence that CRT-based programs may have on public policy to increase Latino students' college enrollment and completion; and the effect that an educated or uneducated Latino population could have in South Carolina's communities and economy.

Narrative policy analysis is a qualitative research approach that incorporates primary data collected through open ended in-depth interviews (e.g., individual or group stories) and/or secondary data collected in the form of legislative texts, reports, or other types of textual narratives (Roe, 1994). NPA identifies dominant and hidden stories and nonstories describing policy issues (Fischer, 2003; Hampton, 2009). Through a logically connected interpretation of an array of events, happenings, actions, and stories, narratives cling together contrasting information to construct a plot that forms social meaning (Fischer, 2003). Metaphors, analogies, symbols such as numbers in statistics, descriptions, and other elements found in verbal narratives of social actors allow policy analysts to connect "language to action" (Fischer, 2003, p. 163).

Narratives or stories follow a pattern of having a beginning, middle, and end (Fischer, 2003; Roe, 1994). In policy analysis, the narrative begins with telling the origins of an issue, state of affairs, or situation that policy makers need to address and

solve; the middle narrates the action taken or policy intervention; and the end conveys the

consequences or outcomes of the policy or action taken (Fischer, 2003; Roe, 1994). I

used the narrative policy analysis approach to (a) explore initial stories that defined

obstacles and opportunities that Latino students faced in pursuing higher education in

South Carolina, (b) analyze policies or actions that the state legislature and other actors

took to either facilitate or hinder higher education opportunities, (c) examine outcomes of

such legislation and/or actions, and (d) develop a metanarrative to move forward the

matter of increasing Latino students higher education attainment.

Research Design and Rationale

Narrative policy analysis is appropriate in situations that are highly uncertain,

complex, and contentious (Roe, 1994). Narratives are a constant reality for policy

analysts who should study them using a rigorous approach (Fischer, 2003). NPA offers

that methodology that may be used along with traditional analytical methods such as

"microeconomics, statistics, organizational theory, law, and public management practice"

(Roe, 1994, p. 4).

Narratives center on policy actors' goals and intentions and how changes in these

effect social change (Fischer, 2003). By researching, identifying, and analyzing dominant

stories and counterstories in policy issues, analysts must pay attention to stories that are

buried or discounted from mainstream policy issues discourse. By uncovering stories,

analysts bring to life the different voices into a metanarrative story that allows for a

process that is "compatible with a strong, participatory democracy" (Fischer, 2003, p.

173). Metanarratives signal a consensus between competing stories about a policy issue

(i.e., dominant story) with a solution that is not optimum for and is opposed by those affected by it (i.e., counter story) (Hampton, 2009). For example, the dominant story would be the need for a water treatment plant and the counter story would be that the water treatment plant should not be located near but farther away from residential neighborhoods (Hampton, 2009). Metanarratives allow the voices of those affected (i.e., counterstories) to be heard and break the link between policy actors and their original positions (Hampton, 2009) allowing the search for a solution.

The quantitative research method looks for cause and effect relationships between variables but it does not allow for a complete assessment of the context surrounding the policy issue (Fischer, 2003; Rodier, 2010); therefore, the potential that narrative analysis offers "is too great for researchers to ignore" (Glover, 2004, p. 48). NPA uses narratives and their contexts stressing policy actors social purposes and inspirations (Fischer, 2003) in the analysis. Therefore, narrative policy analysis was an appropriate research method to understand how policy actors goals and intentions effect social change, especially in the context of Latinos access to higher education in South Carolina.

Using Roe's (1994) four steps methodology to NPA, as a general guidance, I began with identifying prevailing stories endorsing any controversy, uncertainty, and complexity of the policy situation. The next step was to unearth other stories that were contrary to the dominant narratives. The third step included developing a metanarrative based on the stories and their opposing stories. The metanarrative made the case for the issue at hand and allowed the process to move forward toward a solution. Last, I established if the metanarrative reorganized the policy issue in such a way that is

manageable using conventional analytical methods to move the policy issue forward (Fischer, 2003; Roe, 1994). I described a more specific procedure in the data collection section.

Role of the Researcher

Access to resources, including political and influential power, is embedded in narratives that have no structural symmetry and compete with each other when addressing a policy issue or controversy (Hampton, 2009). Those asymmetrical narratives include the stories (that have a beginning, middle, and an end) and the critiques (nonstories) (Roe, 1994). Narrative policy analysis entails listening to marginalized voices (Hampton, 2009).

My role as a researcher was to analyze policies and reports and identify parties affected by the policy issue and competing and asymmetrical stories to the issue of Latinos access to higher education. Analyzing those stories and their buried assumptions uncovered the gap in access to resources, in this case Latino students access to higher education, which "itself must become the focus of intervention and rectification" (Fischer, 2003; Roe, 1994, p. 73).

Policy narratives included legislative pieces approved or being considered by the State of South Carolina Legislature (that is, Title 59 of the South Carolina Code of Laws regarding higher education legislation); reports from organizations that were related to the research topic; newspaper articles; and other narratives uncovered during the research process having an effect (positive or negative) on higher education access among Latino students. I reviewed these narratives using the LatCrit and segmented assimilation

theories as theoretical frameworks.

I sent 67 letters along with the consent forms and interview instrument to students, parents, legislators, public officials, college officials, and advocates of Latino students higher education attainment inviting them to participate in my study. After several attempts to contact participants, only seven students agreed to participate. Student participants in this research included 2013 and 2014 Latino high school graduates from the local school district (one of them was not in college and the remaining were college freshmen) who faced obstacles or opportunities in their quest for higher education. Only three mothers of the student participants agreed to participate. Last, five advocates of Latino students' higher education attainment agreed to participate. To recruit participants, I used a combination of homogeneous, convenience, and snowball sampling.

My proposal included interviewing high ranking higher education state officials, South Carolina legislators who had sponsored higher education policies advancing or hindering access of Latino students to higher education, and policy implementers (for example, public colleges or universities admissions and financial aid staff) from the two major research universities and the two major technical community colleges. However, these participants either declined the invitations or were nonresponsive. Those who declined indicated that they were too busy and did not have time or that they were not familiar with the "specifics of Latino students in Greenville County." Other school officials were interested and indicated they wanted to participate; however, I was unable to set up appointments with them after several attempts.

I am a volunteer member of the Hispanic American Women's Association

(AHAM for its name in Spanish) whose mission is to increase higher education opportunities for Hispanic students in upstate South Carolina. AHAM grants scholarships to Latino students attending college immediately after graduating from high school. I obtained the authorization of this organization as a community partner to recruit Latino students who applied for scholarships in early 2014 and 2013, independently of whether they received a scholarship or not. Participating in this study did not affect scholarships eligibility of participants because applicants received scholarships already in 2014 and 2013. I did not have a professional or personal relationship with any of the student participants. AHAM was concerned about the confidentiality of students. I informed members of the executive committee that, as the researcher, Walden University required that I maintain the identity of all participants confidential and that I will use pseudonyms to refer to them. Confidentiality means that I will not violate the trust established between the participants and me (Rudestam & Newton, 2007). I used pseudonyms in the study to refer to all participants and will not disclose the information that participants provided in any way other than the way agreed upon, that is, through the dissemination of results as required by the dissertation process or other publications.

Methodology

Participant Selection and Sample Strategy

Qualitative research requires doing purposeful sampling (Creswell, 2007; Maxwell, 2013) "to maximize information, not facilitate generalization" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 202). By purposeful sampling, researchers understand and assume that participants included in the research will provide as much useful data as possible related

to the research question (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The purpose is to explore and discover

most of the observations or lived experiences of participants related to the research topic

(Mason, 2010).

Qualitative research sampling needs to be large enough to obtain the information

needed for inclusion in the analysis, that is, one piece of information that is relevant to

the topic under investigation is enough to codify it and include it in the analysis (Mason,

2010). Roe's narrative policy analysis method does not prescribe a sample size but the

reviewed literature on NPA indicates that it should be comprehensive enough between

participants and textual records or documents (Bridgman & Barry, 2002). For example, in

his narrative policy analysis, Harbour (2006) used three levels to organize reviewed texts

chronologically (i.e., secondary data). The first level included three major pieces of

legislation. The second level included 41 texts labeled "other legislative texts" (p. 4) such

as bills and committee reports. The third level included 52 governmental agencies

documents. In her NPA study, Rodier (2010) conducted nine interviews (i.e., primary

data) and reviewed several policy documents. To collect primary data, I interviewed 15

participants and, to collect secondary data, I reviewed several policy documents, reports,

websites, newspaper articles resulting from online searching methods on higher education

institutions and organizations.

I used criterion or homogeneous and snowball sampling (Creswell, 2007; Patton,

2002) to select participants. Homogenous sampling requires that all participants have

experienced the phenomenon. In this case, the criterion was Latino students (and their

parents) in Greenville County facing barriers or opportunities to attend college. I also

used convenience sampling to select legislators, Latino community advocates, college admissions staff, and high-ranking officials in the K–12 and higher education systems.

Upon approval from Walden University's Institutional Review Board, I submitted a letter to the community partner requesting assistance to identify participants. AHAM's executive committee approved my request and provided the information. With Walden University's approvals and once participants signed consent forms, I conducted personal interviews between February 20, 2015 and May 18, 2015.

Instrumentation

Data collection requires the use of instruments that have credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I obtained permission from Dr. Janet K. López to use and adapt the interview protocol she used in her dissertation, which was an ethnographic study titled *"We asked for workers and they sent us people": A critical race theory and Latino critical theory ethnography exploring college-ready undocumented high school immigrants in North Carolina.* (J. López, personal communication, October 25, 2013). Dr. López established trustworthiness of her research by engaging in the data collection phase for one year, conducting constant observations, and continued reflection of her research work (López, 2007). Dr. López' dissertation focused on undocumented high school students of Mexican origins in North Carolina. Therefore, I adapted Dr. López' interview protocol to meet the needs of my research in Greenville County, South Carolina. The interview protocol instrument for each group of participants is included in Appendix B. I included the instrument in English and Spanish for students and parents. I personally translated the instrument to Spanish to accommodate participants requesting

interviews in Spanish. I did not have cultural related issues since I am bilingual and was born and raised in El Salvador. I requested permission from all participants to record the interviews using an audio recording device.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, Data Collection

I collected primary data through personal open-ended, in-depth interviews at a convenient place for participants and secondary data through research of policy documents, reports, and information on websites related to the research topic. I sent a total of 45 invitations to students, seven to parents, six to advocates, six to legislators and public officials, and three to college officials. Seven students agreed to participate in the study. Another student, who I call Student A, also agreed but declined the day we had the interview appointment. Thirty-five students did not respond to the invitation to participate. Only three mothers agreed to participate. I also invited six advocates but only five actually agreed to the interview. I sent invitations to six legislators and public officials; however, they either declined or were nonresponsive. Last, I invited three college officials but two were nonresponsive and one agreed but did not respond to follow ups to set up the interview. Table 3 includes a summative interview data and a summary of participants. I also incorporated detailed field notes in the study.

Table 3

Summative Interview Data Table

Interviewee (pseudonyms)	Interview Date	Saturation	Format	Length (minutes)
Students		Yes		
Angelica	February 22, 2015		Semi-structured	39
Einstein	March 28, 2015		Semi-structured	38
Flor	April 1, 2015		Semi-structured	62
Gloria	April 15, 2015		Semi-structured	30
Jose	April 14, 2015		Semi-structured	67
Sofia	March 11, 2015		Semi-structured	39
Tati	May 17, 2015		Semi-structured	31
Student A	Declined after agreeing to be interviewed on March 20, 2015			
Two students invitations	Returned as "Not Deliverable" or "Not Known"			
35 students invited	Nonresponsive			
Parents				
Dulce	April 29, 2015		Semi-structured	38
Ines	March 6, 2015		Semi-structured	40
Patricia	April 26, 2015		Semi-structured	34
Four parents	Nonresponsive			
Advocates		Yes		
George	May 15, 2015		Semi-structured	89
Lizzie	February 20, 2015		Semi-structured	67
Olivia	May 18, 2015		Semi-structured	64
Renee	April 10, 2015		Semi-structured	67
Ruth	March 18, 2015		Semi-structured	66
Advocate A	Nonresponsive after agreeing to participate			
Legislators/Public Officials		No		
Six invitations	Declined/ Nonresponsive			
College officials		No		
College Official A	Nonresponsive after agreeing to participate			
Two college officials	Nonresponsive			

Note. I conducted all interviews in person. I also audio recorded and transcribed the interviews verbatim personally.

To research secondary data, I followed the NPA methodology that Harbour

(2006) used in his study of *The Incremental Marketization and Centralization of State*

Control of Public Higher Education: A Hermeneutic Interpretation of Legislative and Administrative Texts. I created an electronic archive using Atlas.ti, which is a qualitative research data analysis software to organize and facilitate data analysis. For this study, I began examining and coding secondary data policy documents including legislations and reports. I coded and inductively examined Title 59, entitled Education, of the South Carolina Code of Laws. This provided the first set of narratives. I discarded 20 chapters of Title 59 that did not have codes, hence, were not relevant to the research topic on higher education. Secondary data also included listening to 10 sessions of the South Carolina Senate Education and the House of Representative Ways and Means committees during 2014 looking for discussion on House Bill 4735, which, Minority Leader J. Todd Rutherford introduced on February 20, 2014. This bill would have amended the South Carolina Code of Laws to exempt certain students from paying out-of-state tuition as noted in the literature review. Unfortunately, "the bill did not make it out of committee (T. Clark, personal communication, July 28, 2015). These were the first level of legislative texts and recordings. The second level files included texts related to Title 59 such as regulations and reports from the SCCHE and other government issued reports and additional literature.

The third level file included several reports on K–12 and higher education in general and South Carolina specific, universities websites and reports on diversity, retention, access, affordability, college going culture in high schools, financial aid, workforce in the 21st century, economic benefits and implications of Latinos in South Carolina, and additional topics related to higher education and Latinos.

Last, the fourth level file included primary data collected through audio-recorded personal interviews. Participants included seven high school graduates (six of them are attending college), five advocates of Latino students, and three parents of the interviewed students. I conducted three interviews in Spanish because the mothers do not speak English fluently. This did not present any issues, as I am bilingual and fluent in both languages. Using Atlas.ti, files examination concluded with more than 700 codes, which I grouped later forming "super codes" to condense the codes that were similar in nature and proceeded to inductively analyzed the primary and secondary data.

I, then, divided the four level files into two groups. In the first group of narratives, I included the first, second, and third level files from secondary data and discussed Title 59 in relation to public institutions of higher education governance, accessibility, affordability, and equity. In addition, I discussed higher education economic impact, benefits, and changes. Topics discussed in this group of narratives included higher education accessibility, affordability, diversity, needs, future, relation to and with public social issues and programs, current and future workforce, return on investment, economic impact, value and benefits, and alignment with industries and business workforce needs. In the second group of narratives, I included the fourth level files (primary data), which were the narratives from the 15 participants perceptions, perspectives, and experiences. Appendix C shows a graphic representation of this narrative policy analysis.

Data Analysis Plan

Lincoln and Guba (1985) defined inductive data analyses "as a process for 'making sense' of field data" (p. 202) collected by conducting interviews and

observations, reviewing documents, surveys, etc. Researchers analyze data collected in the field inductively by reading, organizing, and dissecting raw pieces of information, looking for patterns that are classified into themes or topics and these into even broader categories (Creswell, 2007; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Maxwell, 2013; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 2002). The process of dissecting the data is known as coding and its goal is "to 'fracture'…the data and rearrange them into categories that facilitate comparison between things in the same category and that aid in the development of theoretical concepts" (Maxwell, 2013, p. 107). Coding integrates a series of steps including reading several times policy narratives and verbatim interview transcripts; writing memos; identifying patterns; establishing common topics or themes; creating categories or codes and classifying them; interpreting those codes; and developing conceptual schemes (Creswell, 2007). Codes are labels assigned to words, sentences, phrases, or paragraphs that give meaning to the information collected during a study (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

By assigning codes to different pieces of data, I linked the information and devised similarities and patterns among experiences of participants, records, reports, descriptive statistics, policy documents, and other documents. I coded data collected through primary and secondary sources using Atlas.ti to develop themes that became the basis of the analysis and metanarrative.

The reviewed literature provided the socio-political context of the research topic at the national level. This context will assist readers to understand the circumstances of both policy documents reviewed and narratives of participants experiences related to Latino students access to higher education in South Carolina. Having set the stage of the

context, I used the following steps to conduct the analysis using the Roe's NPA approach. First, I conducted an analysis of secondary data, that is, policies and policy discourse regarding higher education access included in Title 59 of the South Carolina Code of Laws to establish common themes that became the dominant stories. According to Glover (2004), dominant stories are those narratives reflecting influential views and preserving the status quo. They permeate the discourse by "mislabeling, disempowering, and repressing individuals" (Glover, 2004, p. 63) and "affect the values, beliefs and identities of people" (Rodier, 2010, p. 50). Second, I collected primary data, that is, conducted interviews with Latino students who had recently graduated from high school and who are not attending college and who are freshmen college students, their parents, and advocates of Latino students to discover counterstories. Counterstories embody different realities and significant viewpoints and give voice to participants by allowing them to tell their stories (Glover, 2004). Third, I constructed a metanarrative out of the dominant stories and their opposing stories with the intent of reorganizing the policy issue (that is, Latinos access to higher education) in such a way that both the dominant stories and the counterstories are reflected concurrently in the case. After constructing the metanarrative, in the fourth step, I sought to make the research topic workable with traditional policy analysis methods to move the issue forward, that is, to increase access of Latino students to higher education institutions in South Carolina.

Issues of Trustworthiness

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), issues of trustworthiness relate to how researchers present the inquiry in a way that causes readers to believe that the findings

are worth considering and taking action on. There are several strategies to establish

trustworthiness about the qualitative methodology used in a study, including prolonged

engagement, maintaining field journals of daily activities, reflexive notes, triangulation,

audit trails, observations, etc. (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Trustworthiness is important to

readers of qualitative studies because they are the ones using the information to act on it,

develop programs or policies, etc. Therefore, meeting those requirements will develop

confidence in the studies (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I will describe my approach to

trustworthiness issues further in this section.

Credibility

This criterion refers to the degree of certainty in the accuracy of the findings

(Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). Establishing credibility in qualitative research requires the use

of different strategies such as researchers engaging in field work for extended periods of

time, observations, interviews, conducting member checking, using triangulation, peer

debriefing, negative case analysis, (Creswell, 2007; Lincoln & Guba, 1985, Maxwell,

2013; Patton, 2002). Shenton (2004) noted that researchers achieve credibility by using

methods or data collection instruments that "have been successfully utilized in previous

comparable projects" (p. 64). Conducting the research using these strategies improves the

likelihood for the findings to be credible.

I used the adapted interview protocol that Dr. Janet K. López used in her

dissertation to collect primary data through personal interviews. During the interviews, I

sought information or clarification about specific events instead of just asking about

situations in general from participants. This strategy allowed participants to reach into

their "episodic memory" (Maxwell, 2013, p. 103). Episodic memory organizes information "by sequencing in time and connection in space, rather than abstractly in terms of semantic relationships… [making it] possible mental 'time travel,' uniquely enabling someone to retrieve their previous experiences" (Maxwell, 2013, p. 103). To reach episodic memory, Maxwell (2013) suggested using interview questions in past tense. The use of probing questions is another strategy to increase credibility (Shenton, 2004). There were instances in which I asked participants to expand on their responses to reach into their episodic memories and provide example of specific situations. By rephrasing or restating questions, I was able to find out if participant's recounts were not contradicting their previous responses. I used the rephrasing or restating technique several times. As interviews progressed, many of the responses included answers referring back to what participants said previously. This allowed me to make sure that participants did not contradict themselves. To obtain accurate research data, I personally transcribed the interviews verbatim and did not rely solely on field notes.

Denzin (as cited in Patton, 2002) defined triangulation as "the principle that multiple methods should be used in every investigation" (p. 247). Triangulation includes collecting information from different sources such as individuals; methods including observations, focus groups, and interviews; locations; theories; and co-researchers or evaluators (Creswell, 2007; Maxwell, 2013; Patton, 2002; Shenton, 2004). This tactic decreases the risk of having associations by chance and bias by using just one method (Maxwell, 2013). Triangulation allows to judge "the accuracy of specific data items" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 316) by confirming the same data with different sources

providing corroboration (Johnson, 1997). In narrative policy analysis, the diversity of

information sources provides triangulation of each narrative's data source (Hampton,

2009).

In this NPA study, I used what Patton (2002) refers to as "triangulation of

qualitative data sources" (p. 559). This triangulation assesses the consistency of data

collected at different times and by different means (Patton, 2002). Although, I had the

limitation of interviewing just three mothers after I meet with student participants.

Nonetheless, I was able to corroborate some of the answers that the students provided in

their respective interviews. For example, all three mothers confirmed their children's

responses that these did not have the parental support at home because their parents lack

the knowledge of the English language and the college and financial aid application

processes. On secondary data, I noticed that the information on the need to provide higher

education opportunities to Latino students was consistent not only at the national but also

at the state level. The triangulation of different sources for both primary and secondary

data gave me confidence that the information I present in this dissertation is accurate.

Transferability

Lincoln and Guba (1985) defined transferability or "fittingness… as the degree of

congruence between sending and receiving contexts" (p. 124). Transferability refers to

the ability of applying the findings to other situations that are under similar circumstances

(Cohen & Crabtree, 2006; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In other words, transferability

depends on the level of similarities between the setting where the research is carried out

and a potential setting where the reader would like to apply the findings. Transferability

or external generalizability requires qualitative researchers to use detailed and thick descriptions of participants, characteristics, and settings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Qualitative researchers must provide sufficient background and contextual information on the field sites for readers to make a decision on whether or not the findings are transferable to their environments (Shenton, 2004). Readers of qualitative studies would judge and decide whether findings and conclusions may be applicable to their particular settings based on the thick descriptions included in the studies or not (Creswell, 2007; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Maxwell, 2013). In such cases, the readers would have to assess and establish transferability based on information that should be similar in both settings. Doing this could provide enough information to the readers of this study to judge whether its findings and conclusions may be transferred to their environments or not. Readers, then, would bear the burden of proof if they want to transfer the findings by gathering "*empirical* evidence about contextual similarity [in both settings]" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 298). I provide thick descriptions of participants in Chapter 4.

In this chapter, I provide a brief recount of the places where I conducted my research. I conducted interviews at locations that were convenient to all participants. I interviewed students at the colleges or universities libraries or classrooms they were attending or at the main library in Greenville, SC. While meeting student participants in their own academic environments, I perceived a sense of pride for being in such environments as Latino students. I met the participant that was not attending college at the main library in the county after her working hours. I interviewed two parent participants at their homes and one at the main library. One of the neighborhoods I went

to conduct an interview was in a medium income family area while the other one was a low-income neighborhood. I interviewed advocate participants in their offices, in a study room at a library branch, and at a conference room in an office building in Greenville, SC. My perception of advocates was that they were thoughtful in their responses and honest in their willingness to see Latino students succeed. Towards the end of the interview process, I felt comfortable when I began seeing patterns between the answers students and parents had provided in early interviews and those of the advocates. At last, I was able to visualize how the information was coming together.

Dependability

Dependability refers to the consistency of the findings (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). To establish dependability or accountability in qualitative studies, researchers develop audit trails (Creswell, 2007; Patton, 2002) and thoroughly recount the research process followed (Shenton, 2004). Audit trails sketch the process that researchers follow and assist with verifying "the rigor of your fieldwork and confirmability of the data collected… to minimize bias, maximize accuracy, and report impartially believing" (Patton, 2002, p. 93). Lincoln and Guba (1985) compared the audit trail process in qualitative research with those conducted in financial audits. Similar to financial audits, qualitative research audit trails are exhaustive and intensive involving tasks for both researchers and auditors such as establishing the need for an audit; preparing the audit trail; becoming familiar with the filing, record system, and the research method; revising raw data; looking for evidence to establish linkages between the raw data; and writing the final report (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

In my journal and research files, I established a chronological audit trail of the activities I conducted during my research. I also established an audit trail of my analysis of the primary and secondary data in Atlas.ti. This strategy will allow anyone wishing to review the audit trail to do so; however, I will take utmost care with respect to the confidentiality of participants.

Confirmability

In qualitative research, a potential threat to validity is the bias that researchers may bring to the study and the reactivity or influence that researchers may have on participants (Maxwell, 2013). Confirmability refers to the level of impartiality researchers exert on the findings. In other words, how participants, not researchers, shape the study's findings (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006); how the findings reflect the experiences of participants instead of those of researchers (Shenton, 2004); and how researchers represent the experiences of participants (Hein, 2004). Researchers are reflexive when they constantly think about what they know (i.e., knowledge related to the topic being researched) and how they learned that knowledge (Patton, 2002). Through a reflexive process, researchers develop journals describing the decisions made during the research processes and the reasons for making those decisions (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

To achieve trustworthiness in his narrative policy analysis study, Harbour (2006) used "positional reflexivity,…consistent practices in acquiring, indexing, and coding core texts,…[and] theoretical validity" (p. 4). Positional reflexivity (Macbeth, 2001) allowed me to establish my position and standing on the research topic with attentiveness to any

"privileged, or, worse, exploitative relationships" (p. 38). Those relationships could include hierarchical powers such as "gender, ethnicity, race, culture, class, age, personal background, institutional affiliation, theoretical commitments, methodological commitments, epistemological orientation, political stance, professional stance, goals, and biases" (Hein, 2004, p. 59). I do not have any hierarchical position over any of my participants and their participation was voluntary.

I developed a reflexive journal and included decisions made in the field as well as prior personal knowledge and experience acquired related to the topic. I used Harbour's positional reflexivity to become more self-aware of any bias to establish trustworthiness. In this research, I focused exclusively on the topic and current experiences of participants facing opportunities, challenges, and/or obstacles. I abstained from making judgmental observations, comments, interpretations, and conclusions based on my previous experiences. However, towards the end of the interview process, I commented with the last two advocates that I began visualizing patterns and cross-referenced comments that previous participants said in their responses. I addressed any bias that I may have brought to the study by bracketing out and exposing my previous experiences in pursuing higher education. Appendix A provides a summary of my positional reflexivity, background, and how I became interested in this topic. I believe I succeeded in monitoring and keeping my bias in check through constant positional reflexivity and self-awareness of any bias I may have brought to the study (Johnson, 1997).

Ethical Procedures

I submitted the Research Ethics Review Application to the Institutional Review

Board of Walden University for review and approval after successfully conducting my

proposal oral conference. The Office of Student Research Support officially approved the

proposal. I neither contacted nor recruited potential participants before receiving

approvals from the university. However, I contacted the community partner mentioned

previously to discuss the proposed research and request a letter of cooperation. I

completed the National Institutes of Health's Human Research Protections training and

obtained the certificate of completion on October 7, 2013. I received IRB approval on

January 23, 2015. The approval number is 01-23-2015-0100276.

 Prior to the beginning of each interview, I read the consent form with participants.

I also informed them that their involvement was voluntary and that if they wanted to

withdraw from the study at any time, they were free to do so without providing reasons

and without penalties. I obtained the written consent of participants to conduct audio-

recorded interviews and use quotes. I used pseudonyms to refer to participants in my

study.

 To maintain communication with participants during the study, I obtained one or

more identifiers including name, electronic mail address, and/or telephone number. To

ensure confidentiality, I have stored identifiers with password-protected electronic files

and maintain paper copies containing identifiers in a locked cabinet. Throughout the

study, I have not violated confidentiality between participants and me by using

pseudonyms in the written report. Only I have access to the data collected and transcribed

interviews.

 I will hold a seminar to present the findings and results. I will disseminate the

findings and results to community stakeholders, including the school district board of trustees and its superintendent, charter schools board of directors and administrators, participants and parents or legal guardians, churches with Latino congregations, colleges and universities in South Carolina, and local nonprofit organizations working with the Latino community. I will invite presidents, recruiting, admissions, financial aid, and diversity officers from higher education institutions in the area. I will seek the assistance from local higher education institutions to sponsor the seminar. I will destroy the data files seven years after receiving my doctorate degree. I will personally dispose of the collected data from electronic files and will shred paper copies.

<div align="center">**Summary**</div>

The educational crisis of Latinos in the southeast revealed that there are not enough Latino students within the higher education pipeline. Despite the rapid increase of Latinos students in South Carolina since the 1990s, enrollment of Latino students at the two major technical colleges and research universities in South Carolina has consistently remained under 7% over the last decade. Latino student graduation rates have increased at those institutions but more needs to be done to increase their enrollment and completion of postsecondary education. As an emerging Latino community, the State of South Carolina will be in a better position by educating its Latino youth and capitalizing on its diverse experiences, biculturalism, bilingualism, and, in some instances, multilingualism.

In this NPA study, I explored the experiences facing Latino students in Greenville County, South Carolina, in pursuing higher education attainment and analyzed policies,

reports, and legislations. Developing a metanarrative allowed me to bring to light the understanding required to increase college enrollment and degree attainment among Latino students in South Carolina. Understanding the experiences of participants and policy narratives could allow educational institutions to develop culturally sensitive programs and/or policies that have the potential to alleviate or eliminate the obstacles that Latino students are facing in pursuing higher education and increase their opportunities. My research and analysis expands on the reviewed literature by focusing on Latino students in Greenville County, South Carolina, a field and geographic area that the literature review understated.

The social implications and main goal of this study explored and discovered barriers affecting and opportunities enabling higher education attainment, hence, the social capital and quality of life of Latino students. The main research question focused on factors constraining or enabling the enrollment of Greenville County, South Carolina, Latino students in college after graduating from high school. I will hold a community seminar to present the findings and results as well as publish the findings to contribute to the field of knowledge and practice.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this NPA study was to explore barriers and opportunities that Latino students face in pursuing higher education in Greenville County, SC. The primary research question addressed factors constraining or enabling college enrollment after high school graduation. The subquestions explored the academic barriers of Latino students, circumstances preventing their college enrollment, how they overcame barriers, what were the obstacles that parents faced in helping their children to go to college, and what were policy makers doing to promote education success.

For this NPA study, I began examining and coding secondary data policy documents including legislation and reports, which I downloaded from various websites including the South Carolina Legislature, the SCCHE, colleges and universities, Greenville County School District, federal government, and other Internet sites. I examined and coded Title 59 of the South Carolina Code of Laws entitled *Education*. This provided the first group of narratives. I discarded 20 chapters of Title 59 that did not have codes, hence, were not relevant to the research topic of higher education. Secondary data also included listening to 10 sessions of the South Carolina Senate Education and the House of Representative Ways and Means committees during 2014 looking for discussion on House Bill 4735, which, Minority Leader J. Todd Rutherford introduced on February 20, 2014. This bill would have amended the South Carolina Code of Laws to exempt certain students from paying out-of-state tuition as noted in the Literature Review chapter. Unfortunately, "the bill did not make it out of committee (T. Clark, personal communication, July 28, 2015). These were the first level of legislative texts and

recordings. The second level files included texts related to Title 59 such as regulations and reports from the SCCHE and other business and government issued reports.

The third level file included several reports on K–12 and higher education in general and South Carolina specific, websites and reports from universities on diversity, retention, access, affordability, college going culture in high schools, financial aid, workforce in the 21st century, economic benefits and effect, and additional topics related to higher education and Latinos.

Last, the fourth level file included primary data collected through audio-recorded personal interviews and analysis of scholarship essays of student participants. Participants included seven high school graduates (six of them are attending college and one is not), three parents of the interviewed students, and five advocates of Latino students' higher education attainment. Using Atlas.ti, I examined the fourth level file and concluded with more than 700 codes, which I grouped later forming "super codes" to condense the codes that were similar in nature.

I divided the four level files in two groups. In the first group of narratives, I included the first, second, and third level files from secondary data and discussed Title 59 in relation to public institutions of higher education governance, accessibility, affordability, and equity. In addition, I discussed higher education economic impact, benefits, and changes. Topics discussed in this group of narratives included higher education accessibility, affordability, diversity, needs, future, relation to and with public social issues and programs, current and future workforce, return on investment, economic impact, value and benefits, and alignment with the workforce needs of industries and

business.

In the second group of narratives, I included the fourth level files (primary data) which were the narratives on perceptions and perspectives of participants. Appendix C shows a graphic representation of this narrative policy analysis.

To protect the privacy and maintain confidentially of the study participants, I did not include the real names of participants or high schools they attended in the narratives from primary data. All of the names of participants and high school that student participants attended are pseudonyms. When I include the real names of high schools, I do that in the research context and/or descriptive statistics included in secondary data obtained from government reports. This is in line with the Walden Center for Research Quality's policy of avoiding using pseudonyms in dissertations (S. Matthey, personal communication, July 31, 2015).

Policy narratives or stories support and sustain decision-making assumptions of complex policy issues (Roe, 1994). The narratives I present in this study provide insights on the research topic of exploring hindrances and opportunities for Latino students to further their higher education in Greenville County, SC. From the two narrative groups, I developed a metanarrative, which I present in Chapter 5, to move forward with the elimination of factors constraining and the improvement of factors enabling higher education for Latino students in the county.

First Group of Narratives: Title 59 of the South Carolina Code of Laws, Rules and Regulations Texts, and Reports on Higher Education

In this section, I discuss Title 59 of the South Carolina Code of Laws, meetings of

the South Carolina Senate Education and the House of Representative Ways and Means committees, other legislation related to higher education, and regulations and reports from the SCCHE. These were the first and second levels of secondary data files.

Narratives on Governance and Diversity in the South Carolina Higher Education System

Technical and Comprehensive Education System

The South Carolina Legislature created the State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education (Board) to have authority over "all post-secondary vocational, technical, and occupational diploma and associate degree programs financed in whole or in part by the State that lead directly to employment" (Education Act, 2014a). One of the Board's responsibilities is to emphasize that technical colleges provide training programs based on needs of new or local expanding industries and to coordinate efforts in tandem with the state's economic development efforts (Education Act, 2014a). As of August 2015, the Board consisted of 13 members, including two ex-officio members, the SC Secretary of Commerce, and the SC Superintendent of Education. The Board had only two African American members and 11 Caucasians.

The South Carolina Technical System has 16 colleges throughout the state: Aiken, Central Carolina, Denmark, Florence Darlington, Greenville, Horry Georgetown, Midlands, Northeastern, Piedmont, Orangeburg-Calhoun, Spartanburg, Lowcountry, TriCounty, Trident, Williamsburg, and York (South Carolina Technical College System, n.d.b). The technical college system is "dedicated to making a quality higher education both accessible and affordable, the System plays a key role in educating and training

South Carolina's workforce for the in-demand, high-skilled jobs of today and tomorrow"
(South Carolina Technical College System, n.d.a). Three values of the system are related
to this study:

- Opportunity: The right of every citizen to reach his or her full potential
  through education.

- Access: Equal and affordable access to lifelong learning opportunities.

- Diversity: The educational richness of a culturally diverse faculty staff and
  student population (South Carolina Technical College System, n.d.a).

The legislature authorized area commissions to oversee local technical colleges.
These commissions have the power and duty to "Establish, promulgate and enforce
reasonable rules and regulations for the operation of their facilities" (Education Act,
2014a). Technical colleges are charged with maintaining:

Open admissions policies unless determined to be economically unfeasible by the
Budget and Control Board and establish and maintain low tuition and fees in
order to provide access to post-secondary education and insure that such
educational opportunities shall not be denied to anyone. (Education Act, 2014a)

The Greenville Technical College Area Commission governs the Greenville
Technical College and consists of 12 members, three of whom were African American
and the remainder were Caucasians as of August 2015. Greenville Technical College has
eight locations throughout the county: Barton, Brashier, Benson, Northwest, University
Center, McKinney Automotive Center, SC Technology and Aviation Center, and the
Buck Mickel Center for Corporate and Career Development. The mission of Greenville

Technical College is to drive "personal and economic growth through learning" and its vision is "to be the best community and technical college for students seeking career and educational opportunities" (Greenville Technical College, 2015, para. 1). The Greenville Technical College's value that is relevant to this study is diversity. The college is committed to diversity: "We recognize and celebrate diversity, so we value and support considerate, meaningful communication and inclusiveness in collaborative decision-making processes" (Greenville Technical College, 2015, para. 11).

As of August 2015, collectively, in the technical college system, minorities (including African American, Hispanic, and Asian) composed 31.65% of area commission members from a total of 158 members. However, individually, only six technical college area commissions (i.e., Denmark, Florence, Midlands, Orangeburg-Calhoun, and Williamsburg) had at least a 30% minority membership (i.e., African Americans). The exception was Denmark Technical College where all commissioners were African Americans. The SC General Assembly mandated Denmark Technical College "to educate black citizens in various trades" (Denmark Technical College, 2015) upon its creation. The area commissions with at least 75% Caucasian members include Greenville, Horry, Northeastern, Piedmont, Spartanburg, TriCounty, Trident, and York. Only Aiken Technical College had one Latino commissioner. Table 4 provides details of the racial and ethnic composition of area commissions in South Carolina.

Table 4

Composition of Technical and Comprehensive Education System Area Commissions by Race and Ethnicity as of August 2015

College/University	Number of female board members						Number of male board members						Total
	African American		Caucasians		Other*		African American		Caucasians		Other*		
Aiken Technical College	1	(9%)	1	(9%)	0	(0%)	1	(9%)	7	(64%)	1	(9%)	11
Central Carolina Technical College**	2	(20%)	1	(10%)	0	(0%)	1	(10%)	6	(60%)	0	(0%)	10
Denmark Technical College	2	(29%)	0	(0%)	0	(0%)	5	(71%)	0	(0%)	0	(0%)	7
Florence Darlington Technical College	2	(20%)	1	(10%)	0	(0%)	2	(20%)	5	(50%)	0	(0%)	10
Greenville Technical College	0	(0%)	1	(8%)	0	(0%)	3	(25%)	8	(67%)	0	(0%)	12
Horry Georgetown Technical College	1	(11%)	0	(0%)	0	(0%)	1	(11%)	7	(78%)	0	(0%)	9
Midlands Technical College	4	(31%)	1	(8%)	0	(0%)	1	(8%)	7	(54%)	0	(0%)	13
Northeastern Technical College	1	(10%)	2	(20%)	0	(0%)	1	(10%)	6	(60%)	0	(0%)	10
Piedmont Technical College	2	(17%)	1	(8%)	0	(0%)	0	(0%)	8	(67%)	1	(8%)	12
Orangeburg-Calhoun Technical College	2	(29%)	0	(0%)	0	(0%)	1	(14%)	4	(57%)	0	(0%)	7
Spartanburg Technical College	1	(8%)	0	(0%)	0	(0%)	1	(8%)	10	(83%)	0	(0%)	12
Technical College of the Lowcountry	1	(14%)	2	(29%)	0	(0%)	1	(14%)	3	(43%)	0	(0%)	7
TriCounty Technical College	2	(22%)	0	(0%)	0	(0%)	0	(0%)	7	(78%)	0	(0%)	9
Trident Technical College	1	(11%)	1	(11%)	0	(0%)	1	(11%)	6	(67%)	0	(0%)	9
Williamsburg Technical College	2	(20%)	0	(0%)	0	(0%)	3	(30%)	5	(50%)	0	(0%)	10
York Technical College**	1	(10%)	1	(10%)	0	(0%)	1	(10%)	7	(70%)	0	(0%)	10
Totals	25	(16%)	12	(8%)	0	(0%)	23	(15%)	96	(61%)	2	(1%)	158

Note. *Other includes: Hispanic/. ** One vacant seat. Source: Own research. Aiken (www.atc.edu/Catalog/current/c8.aspx and www.atc.edu/ downloads/ Annual%20Report%202011.pdf); Central Carolina (www.cctech.edu/about/governance-leadership and A. Cooper, personal communication, August 4, 2015); Denmark (www.denmarktech.edu/?page_id=3950); Florence Darlington (www.fdtc.edu/about/our-people/); Greenville (www.gvltec.edu/ Area_Commission); Horry Georgetown (www.hgtc.edu/about_hgtc/presidents_message/area_ commission.html); Midlands (www.midlandstech.edu/ about/commission); Northeastern (www.netc.edu/about.php?About-Us-Administration-12); Piedmont (www.ptc.edu/about/ governance- leadership); Orangeburg-Calhoun (www.octech.edu/about/governance_leadership.aspx); Spartanburg (H. Giles, personal communication, July 17, 2015 and www.sccsc.edu/commission); Lowcountry (www.tcl.edu/community/tcl-commission and A. Cullen, personal communication, August 5, 2015); TriCounty (www.tctc.edu/About_TCTC/Governance/TCTC_ Commission.xml); Trident (www.tridenttech.edu/about/ttc/ttc_areacomm.htm); Williamsburg (www.wiltech.edu/get-to-know-wtc.html); York (www.yorktech.edu/commission.php and J. Gammon, personal communication, August 4, 2015)

Four-Year Colleges and Universities

In South Carolina, there are a total of 10 public four-year colleges and universities. They are distinct institutions and each has a separate board of trustees or visitors (Education Act, 2014b). The USC system has its main campus in Columbia and several campuses around the state. In addition to its main campus, Clemson University has graduate programs in Greenville and other parts of the state. The other higher education institutions have one main campus in different parts of the state. All of the institutions are within a four-hour drive from Greenville, SC. South Carolina public higher education institutions must give admissions preference to applicants who reside in the state over out-of-state applicants (Education Act, 2014c).

The General Assembly and the governor have the authority to elect and/or appoint the members of the board of trustees or visitors. The election and/or appointment of board members must be made "based on merit regardless of race, color, creed, or gender and *shall strive to assure that the membership of the board is representative of all citizens of this State* [emphasis added]" (Education Act, 2014d; Education Act, 2014e; Education Act, 2014f; Education Act, 2014g; Education Act, 2014h; Education Act, 2014i; Education Act, 2014j; Education Act, 2014k; Education Act, 2014l; Education Act, 2014m).

Out of 164 board members in public colleges and universities in South Carolina, only 20 (12%) belonged to two minority groups: 19 African Americans and one Indian American (although Governor Nikki Haley served in several boards of trustees in her capacity as head of the state, she was counted as one in the total) and 144 (88%) were

Caucasians. South Carolina State University had six minority trustees (five African Americans and one Indian American) and four Caucasians. South Carolina State University is a "historically Black public 1890 land-grant senior comprehensive institution" (South Carolina State University, 2015) located in Orangeburg, SC. The remaining universities had a board composition of Caucasians being at least 82% with Clemson (92%), Lander (94%), and the Medical University of South Carolina (94%) having the highest percentages. Table 5, on next page, provides a summary of the racial and ethnic composition of boards of trustees or visitors of public colleges and universities in South Carolina.

Table 5

Composition of Board of Trustees or Board of Visitors at South Carolina Public Colleges and Universities by Race and Ethnicity as of August 2015

College/University	Number of female board members						Number of male board members						Totals
	African American		Caucasians		Other*		African American		Caucasians		Other*		
Clemson University	0	(0%)	2	(15%)	0	(0%)	1	(8%)	10	(77%)	0	(0%)	13
Coastal Carolina University	0	(0%)	1	(6%)	1	(6%)	2	(11%)	14	(78%)	0	(0%)	18
College of Charleston	2	(10%)	7	(35%)	0	(0%)	0	(0%)	11	(55%)	0	(0%)	20
Francis Marion University	0	(0%)	3	(18%)	0	(0%)	2	(12%)	12	(71%)	0	(0%)	17
Lander University	0	(0%)	6	(38%)	0	(0%)	1	(6%)	9	(56%)	0	(0%)	16
Medical University of South Carolina	1	(6%)	2	(13%)	0	(0%)	0	(0%)	13	(81%)	0	(0%)	16
South Carolina State University	1	(10%)	1	(10%)	1	(10%)	4	(40%)	3	(30%)	0	(0%)	10
The Citadel	0	(0%)	2	(11%)	1	(6%)	1	(6%)	14	(78%)	0	(0%)	18
University of South Carolina	1	(5%)	3	(14%)	1	(5%)	0	(0%)	17	(77%)	0	(0%)	22
Winthrop University	1	(6%)	6	(35%)	0	(0%)	2	(12%)	8	(47%)	0	(0%)	17
Totals	6	(4%)	33	(20%)	1*	(1%)	13	(8%)	111	(68%)	0	(0%)	164

Note: * The "Other" category includes Governor Nikki Haley, who is Indian-American, in her capacity as governor of South Carolina, and she is counted as one in the total column. There was no other racial or ethnic group represented in any board of trustees or visitors.

Source: Own research. Clemson University Board of Trustees (http://www.clemson.edu/administration/bot/board.html); Clemson University Board of Visitors (http://www.clemson.edu/administration/bov/members.html); Coastal Carolina University: Meet the Trustees (http://www.coastal.edu/board/meetthetrustees/); College of Charleston: Board of Trustees (http://trustees.cofc.edu/members/index.php); Francis Marion University: Board of Trustees (http://www.fmarion.edu/about/boardoftrustees); Medical University of South Carolina: Board Biographies (http://academicdepartments.musc.edu/administration/board/bios.html); South Carolina State University Board of Trustees (http://www.scsu.edu/boardoftrustees/trusteebios.aspx); The Citadel: Board of Visitors (http://www.citadel.edu/root/bov-membership); University of South Carolina: Board of Trustees (http://trustees.sc.edu/biographies.html) ; Winthrop University Board of Trustees (http://www.winthrop.edu/trustees/default.aspx?id=1628)

South Carolina Commission on Higher Education

Section 59-103-10 of the SC Code of Laws requires that the governor must make sure that the appointment of members to the SC Commission on Higher Education fairly represent the "various economic interests and minority groups, especially women and blacks" (Education Act, 2014n). The SCCHE consists of 15 members (as of June 2015, there was one vacant seat) appointed from the different Congressional districts, at large, research universities, four-year colleges and universities, public technical colleges, and independent colleges and universities (SCCHE, 2015). The SCCHE had one African American member and 13 Caucasians. Table 6 provides the SCCHE's composition by race and ethnicity.

Table 6

Composition of the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education by Race and Ethnicity as of June 2015

	Number of female board members			Number of male board members			
SCCHE	African American	Caucasians	Other	African American	Caucasians	Other	Total
Commission members	0 (0%)	5 (36%)	0 (0%)	1 (7%)	8 (57%)	0 (0%)	14*

Note. *There was one vacancy as of June 4, 2015. Source:
http://www.che.sc.gov/CHE_Docs/ExecutiveDirector/COMBIOS.pdf

Diversity in the Higher Education Board Room in South Carolina

The Census Bureau 2014 population estimates indicated that there were 4.8 million people in South Carolina (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2015). The Census Bureau population estimates also indicated that 27.9% were Blacks, 68.3% were Whites, and 9.1% were Other (American Indians and Alaska Natives, Asians, Hawaiians, Latinos

or Hispanics, Two or More races). In 2014, at the national level, Latinos were the majority of the minority groups, 17.1% Latinos compared with 13.2% African Americans. However, in South Carolina, Latinos were still a minority, 5.3%, compared with African Americans at 27.9%. In 2014, the estimated total minority population was 37% in South Carolina (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2015).

As previously indicated, the Education Act requires that elections or appointments must provide assurance that board membership represents all citizens of the state. In terms of race and ethnicity, from the information on Table 4, Table 5, and Table 6, it became clear that there was, and still there is, a lack of diversity in higher education technical education area commissions, in board of trustees/visitors of colleges and universities, and in the SC Commission on Higher Education. Efforts should aim at increasing diversity in the boardrooms of higher education institutions in order to have inside advocates of ethnic/racial minorities, including Latinos advocates.

Narratives on Accessibility, Equity, Equality, and Affordability

Since its inception, Americans have considered the higher education system in the United States as a democratic institution playing the essential role of equalizing liberties and opportunities. In discussing the benefits of higher education, President Thomas Jefferson argued that "generally available education would have an equalizing role on American society…[and] such education would influence the nation's democratic values, while simultaneously preserving individual liberties" (The Institute for Higher Education Policy, 1998). The Truman Commission advised,

The American people should set as their ultimate goal an educational system in

which at no level—high school, college, graduate school, or professional

school—will a qualified individual in any part of the country encounter an

insuperable economic barrier to the attainment of the kind of education suited to

his or her aptitudes and interests. (Ostar, 1991, p. 39)

In South Carolina, higher education legislation, several policies, and reports from

various entities established affordability, accessibility, equity, and equality as goals and

objectives with respect to higher education attainment among ethnic/racial minorities and

low-income students. The South Carolina State Legislature determined that the mission

of the higher education system in South Carolina is "to be a global leader in providing a

coordinated, comprehensive system of excellence in education by providing instruction,

research, and life-long learning opportunities which are focused on economic

development and benefit the State of South Carolina" (Education Act, 2014o).

The South Carolina Legislature established the SCCHE whose mission is "to

promote quality and efficiency in the state system of higher education with the goal of

fostering economic growth and human development in South Carolina" (Sutton, 2014).

Several goals from the SCCHE are relevant to this study including access, affordability,

coordination and cooperation with public schools, and economic growth (Education Act,

2014o). One of the many duties of the SCCHE is to "ensure access and equity

opportunities at each institution of higher learning for all citizens of this State regardless

of race, gender, color, creed, or national origin within the parameters provided by law"

(Education Act, 2014p). Equity in educational opportunities, however, should be

measured in terms of results (that is college completion and graduation), not just college

accessibility (Prince, 2006). Indirectly, participants discussed the roles and functions of

the SCCHE during their interviews as they related to their experiences, realities,

reflections, and observations. SCCHE's relevant roles and functions to this research are:

- To provide pertinent information about higher education to parents and
  students and to promote access to higher education.

- To monitor the implementation and evaluate the effectiveness of
  programs designed to provide minority groups with access to and equality
  of higher education opportunities.

- To assure access to and equality of educational opportunity among
  underrepresented populations in South Carolina higher education. (Sutton,
  2014, p. 4)

In 2007, the South Carolina State Legislature created the Higher Education Study

Committee (HESC). Committee members recognized that the United States economy

transformed from being labor dependent to one based on knowledge. A knowledge-based

economy depends on a highly educated and skilled workforce. South Carolinians needed

to become aware of the significance of obtaining a college degree to not only improve the

economy but also improve their quality of life (HESC, 2009).

Members of the HESC issued two reports, one in 2008 entitled *Leveraging

Higher Education for a Stronger South Carolina: The Action Plan Framework* and the

other in 2009, *Leveraging Higher Education for a Stronger South Carolina.* The 2008

report included an analysis of the goals and benefits of higher education, focused on areas

for improvement, and potential implementation plans for the higher education system to

increase the state's competitiveness and improve the economic vitality and quality of life

for the 2009–2015 period (HESC, 2009). In the 2009 report, members of the HESC set

the ambitious goal of "becoming one of the more educated states in the nation by 2030"

(HESC, 2009, p. 1). USC researchers analyzed the effects of the 2030 goal and concluded

that to achieve it, "29 percent of the working age population (ages 25-65) … [will need]

at least a bachelor's degree" (USC, 2009, p. 3). In addition, according to USC

researchers, to get to that goal, the state will have to implement the HESC plan and stay

on course to increase the current K–12 pipeline and increase adult college degree

attainment. The 2009 HESC report included an action plan to achieve four main goals.

Goal 1 related directly to the research topic, "Making South Carolina One of the Most

Educated States (HESC, 2009, p. 4).

Several recommendations from the HESC to achieve the goal of making South

Carolina one of the most educated states aligned with legislation, the SCCHE policy, and

the needs of student participants, as discussed later. One of the recommendations aimed

at targeting,

> First-generation and low-income students who need information about college,
>
> assistance in understanding how and when to begin preparing for college, and
>
> help completing college applications. Overall, more opportunities need to be
>
> provided for all students—not just higher-performing students—to learn about
>
> college. (HESC, 2009, p. 13).

As discussed later, one of the obstacles that Latino student participants faced was

the fact that they had to learn and do everything without guidance from their parents and

school counselors. Parental lack of knowledge regarding the application and financial aid processes and English language limitations left students to do everything alone at home. In addition, guidance counselors lack of time or, perhaps, unwillingness to help also left the students alone at school in this process. Another recommendation targeting this issue was the implementation of programs aimed at increasing the knowledge of the college and financial aid application processes in ninth grade among students and parents (HESC, 2009).

The Strong American Schools published the *Diploma to Nowhere* report and researchers concluded that high schools in the United States "profoundly fail" (p. 3) to prepare graduates for college work, in some instances, even those who take advanced classes (Strong American Schools, 2008). Taking remedial courses at the college level adds financial burden to students, especially those from low-income families. For the 2004–2005 school year, researchers concluded that students paid for remedial courses "between $1,607 and $2,008 for public two-year and between $2,025 and $2,531 for public four-year institutions" (p. 3). In addition, in 2004, 43% and 29% of students enrolled in remedial courses at two and four-year colleges, respectively (Strong American Schools, 2008). More recently, at least 50% of students in college still require remedial courses (Miller, Valle, Engle, & Cooper, 2014).

The HESC members (2009) recommended increasing high school academic performance of all students by providing "access to a rigorous, advanced curriculum such as AP, IB, and other courses, and, more importantly, be encouraged to enroll in advanced courses, including dual/concurrent enrollment courses" (p. 14). Advocate participants

recognized that academic performance and participation in academically rigorous courses was an issue with Latino students in Greenville County. One of the advocate participants indicated that Latino students may speak English very well but they lack the academic English to be successful in a college or university. In addition, one of the student participants indicated that he was the only Latino student in his International Baccalaureate (IB) program. He also noted that he did not know he could apply until one of his peers informed him about the IB program and recommended him to submit an application.

For Latino students, or low-income students for that matter, taking remedial courses at the college level is an added financial burden since a vast majority comes from low-income families. Taking remedial courses, without earning college credits, takes public and private financial aid away from the students that, otherwise, they could use to pay for courses granting college credits towards their degrees (Knepler, Klasik, & Sunderman, 2013). It has been six years since the HESC made its recommendation about increasing high school academic performance and the issue persists, as discussed later. Aligning the high school curriculum with college entrance and academic requirements, working with students who need remediation at the high school level, and implementing successful remediation practices based on evidence have the potential of addressing this issue (Miller, Valle, Engle, & Cooper, 2014).

In South Carolina, the state's financial support to higher education fell drastically beginning fiscal year 2008–2009 through fiscal year 2011–2012. Funding began increasing in 2012–2013 but, through the fiscal year 2014–2015 appropriation of $605.5

million, the state has not restored funding to levels prior to fiscal year 2007–2008 of

$917.9 million. Figure 5 shows higher education appropriations from fiscal year 2005–

2006 through 2014–2015. The totals include appropriations for research institutions,

comprehensive teaching institutions, USC regional campuses, technical colleges, SC

Commission on Higher Education (including scholarships and grants), technical college

system office, and tuition grants commission.
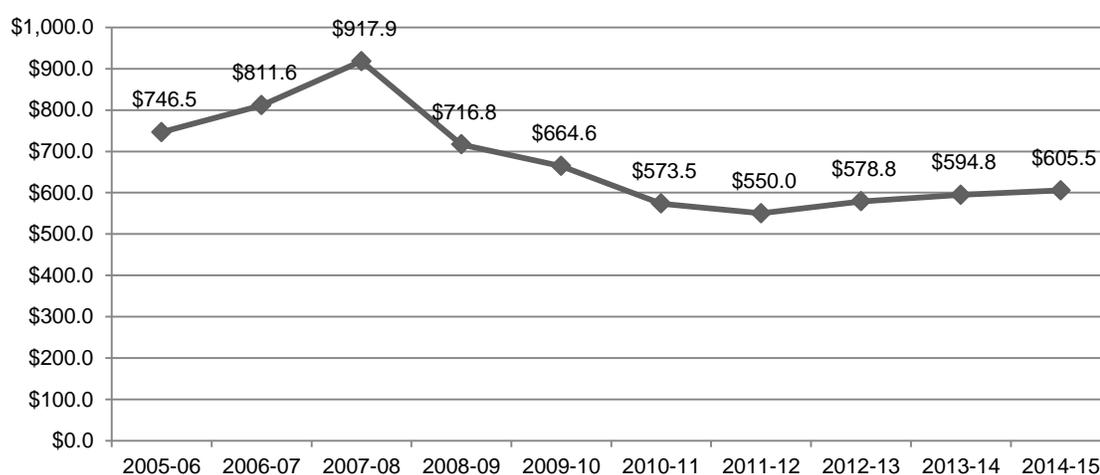
Figure 5. Ten-year comparison of state education recurring appropriations (in millions).
Adapted from South Carolina Commission on Higher Education
http://www.che.sc.gov/InstitutionsEducators/Funding/FundingInformationandMRR.aspx

Declining financial support from the state has made higher education too

expensive, especially for low-income families. Exacerbating the situation of low-income

families is the fact that the "state's financial aid portfolio is not balanced between need

and merit, with the result that many students from poor families cannot afford to attend

college. *Yet much of South Carolina's increased participation must come precisely from

such families* [emphasis added]." (HESC, 2009, p. 9). All student participants in my study

indicated that financial aid was an issue for them and that it must be a priority to assist low-income students to obtain a college degree in South Carolina.

To reach the HESC's 2030 ambitious goal, South Carolina colleges and universities must increase their graduation rates, especially those of low-income and minority groups. Kantrowitz (2007) argued "replacing federal loans with grants would pay for itself if it yielded at least a 32% increase in the number of low-income students graduating with bachelor's degrees, assuming a 5% increase in low-income student matriculation rates" (p. 25).

Researchers have shown the benefits of making college affordability a priority for low-income students (Institute for Higher Education Policy, 2014). The National Bureau of Economic Research (2006) evaluated Harvard's financial aid initiative, which aimed at making higher education more accessible by recruiting students from low-to-moderate income families and increasing their financial aid packet. Families whose income is below $40,000 do not pay anything for their student's education and those with income between $40,000 and $60,000 pay, on average, $1,250 less than before. Researchers concluded that the enrollment of students who met the initiative's requirements increased by 11% from 2004 to 2005 and that the enrollment of students with family income less than $40,000 "increased by nearly 20%" (National Bureau of Economic Research, 2006, p. 23). In addition, Harvard adjusted their admissions requirements and expectations for low-income applicants "in light of the fact that such students often have limited opportunities to take advanced placement classes, engage in extracurricular activities, and obtain counseling and help with their applications" (National Bureau of Economic

Research, 2006, p. 4).

José, a student participant, stated that he knew about the Ivy League institutions increased efforts to attract and recruit low-income minority students, especially those from the southeast. However, he acknowledged that those institutions were having difficulty recruiting low-income minority students because the southern and Latino cultures are family oriented and students want to stay close to family. Perhaps, South Carolina's colleges and universities should take advantage of the cultural attitudes and imitate what Ivy League institutions are doing but adjusting those policies to their financial realities and constraints to increase low-income students' college enrollment and completion. An example of such financial aid is the USC-Columbia Gamecock Guarantee program. This program completely covers tuition and technology fee for eligible low income, first generation, and first in the family students pursuing a bachelor's degree. The program provides financial aid assistance for four years, provided students meet the program's requirements. USC-Columbia must admit eligible students in this program within five years of graduating from high school. Students in this program have access to additional academic services that help them succeed (University of South Carolina, n.d.). As I researched the Gamecock Guarantee program, I noticed that its website includes pictures of African American students only. From 2008 to 2012, 564 students enrolled at USC-Columbia under this program. Latino students participation in the program increased from 2.2% in 2008 to 10% in 2011 and dropped to 7.1% in 2012. It is noticeable that African American and White students participated in much higher numbers than Latinos. In 2008, African American and White student enrollment was

almost at par (44.9% and 41.6%, respectively) but notice, in Figure 6, that White students

increased drastically in 2009 making 61% of the students, while African American

dropped to 29.7%. That participation (that is, higher White than Black students) remained

through 2012. The question relevant to my dissertation topic is: Are academically

prepared Latino students getting the information in high schools about the Gamecock

Guarantee program?
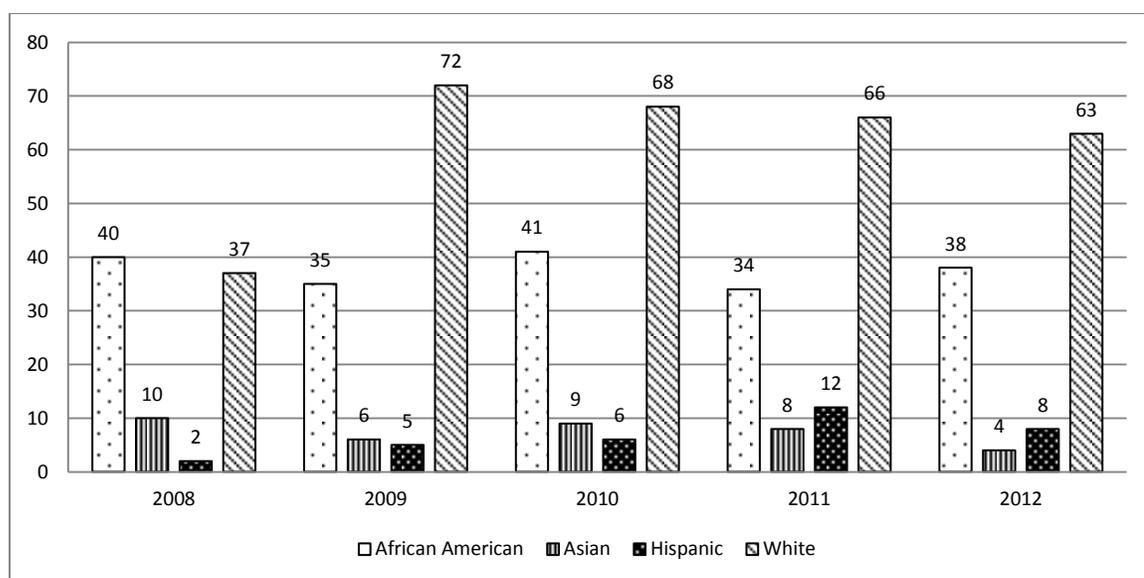
Figure 6. University of South Carolina – Columbia campus: Gamecock Guarantee
program student enrollment. Adapted from University of South Carolina Gamecock
Guarantee Program Profile,
https://www.sc.edu/trio/documents/2012%20Gamecock%20Guarantee%20Program%20P
rofile%20-%20Copy.pdf

As noted in the literature review, in the south, researchers have recognized that

"factors that perpetuate inequality for minorities in the [*sic*] most of the South are specific

to African Americans, not Latinos" (Bohon, Macpherson, & Atiles, 2005, p. 45). This has

preserved the Black/White binary way of thinking with regard to race relations. Schools

and higher education institutions must relinquish the entrenched binary Black/White

focus that has prevailed in the south for too long when it comes to opening doors and

opportunities to low-income students. As advocate participant Lizzie put it,

> Greenville County School District personnel [and, I will add, higher education
>
> institutions] need to embrace the Latino students and recognize that they are here,
>
> they are here to stay, and they have a lot of, they don't have a lot, they have many,
>
> many positive things that they can contribute to the community, to the economic
>
> state."

On June 4, 2008, Act No. 280, known as the South Carolina Illegal Immigration

Reform Act (Act), became effective. This Act prohibited undocumented persons from

attending public higher education institutions and receiving public benefits such as any

type of financial aid and in-state resident tuition. The Act also required institutions to

verify immigration status of all their students with the federal government (Education

Act, 2014q). In addition, the Education Act (2014r) required the SCCHE to promulgate

regulations related to the determination of tuition rates and fees, according to Section 59-

112-100 of the SC Code of Regulations. In Section 62-602-K of the SC Code of

Regulations, the SCCHE defined the term "non-resident alien" as "a person who is not a

citizen or permanent resident of the United States" and determined that "'non-resident

aliens' generally do not have the capacity to establish domicile in South Carolina"

(Education Act, 2014s).

Counter to the goals of the HESC, the College of Charleston and Trident

Technical College, located in the southeastern region of South Carolina known as the

Lowcountry, declined in-state tuition and state financial aid to Latino students who were

citizens of the United States and born to undocumented parents. On June 9, 2015,

journalist D. Pan reported that the Southern Poverty Law Center and the South Carolina

Appleseed Legal Justice Center filed a class-action lawsuit "alleging that South Carolina

discriminates against its college-bound students who are U.S. citizens but unable to prove

their parents' legal immigration status" (Pan, 2015, para. 5). The defendants are members

of the SCCHE and the presidents of the College of Charleston and Trident Technical

College. The plaintiffs are academically talented Latino students born and raised in the

United States (one of them is a SC Air National Guard serviceman). These students have

lived in South Carolina at least 10 years, graduated from a South Carolina high school,

and qualify for in-state tuition and public financial aid but have been denied these

benefits "solely because their parents lack requisite proof of citizenship or immigration

status" (*Rojas et al. v. Finan et al.*, 2015) and because these students financially depend

from their parents. According to the SCCHE regulations, the undocumented parents of

these students cannot establish domicile in South Carolina, even though, they have

physically resided in the state at least 10 years. By virtue of being dependent students of

undocumented parents, the resident status of these students:

> Is based on the resident status of the person who provides more than half of the
>
> dependent person's support… Thus, the residence [that is, the continuous and
>
> permanent physical presence within South Carolina] and domicile [that is, the
>
> true, fixed, principal residence and place of habitations] of a dependent person
>
> shall be presumed to be that of their parent, spouse, or guardian. (SCCHE, SC

Code of Regulations, §§62-602-603)

The plaintiffs also stated in the complaint that "many talented American students are forced either to delay or entirely forego a college education" (*Rojas et al. v. Finan et al.*, 2015) and that the SCCHE and college policies implemented under the statute determining tuition rates and fees included in Chapter 112 of Title 59 of the SC Code of Laws violated their rights under the Fourteenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. The plaintiffs in this class action lawsuit are seeking "relief pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 1983 to redress the deprivation, under color of state law, of rights secured by the United States Constitution" (*Rojas et al. v. Finan et al.*, 2015). This case was a perfect example of policies that made it difficult, if not impossible, for Latino students, especially those from low-income families, to pursue and obtain a college degree in South Carolina because it made higher education unaffordable to this segment of the population.

Policies such as out-of-state tuition waivers that are applicable to certain situations may be an avenue that helps Latino students to obtain the higher education public benefits they deserve in South Carolina. Section 59-112-70 of the South Carolina Code of Laws authorizes the governing bodies of public higher education institutions to "adopt policies for the abatement of any part or all of the out-of-state rates for students who are recipient of scholarship aid" (Education Act, 2014t). As an advocate participant recounted, USC-Upstate adopted such policy, which states,

Students who are not residents of South Carolina and who receive USC Upstate

Athletic or Foundation Scholarships, or USC Upstate Undergraduate

Assistantships valued at $250 or more each semester may qualify for a waiver of

out-of-state fees. The following conditions must be met to qualify for the fee

waiver.

The award must be made in writing to the student before the end of late

registration for each semester and prior to the student paying his tuition.

Notification of the award must be forwarded to the Financial Aid Office prior to

the end of the late registration for each semester. Scholarships or undergraduate

assistantships that are awarded after the end of late registration for each semester

will not result in a refund of out-of-state fees. (University of South Carolina

Upstate, n.d.)

Congressional representatives introduced legislation that would facilitate financial

aid access and equal opportunity to higher education. On February 11, 2015, U.S. House

of Representative Elijah E. Cummings introduced H.R. 860 (the FAFSA Fairness Act of

2015) to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965. The FAFSA Fairness Act of 2015

would adjust the dependency status of students under special circumstances, which may

result in "a determination of independence" (H.R. 860, 2015). One of those special

circumstances includes meeting "other conditions determined by the institution to which

they are applying that prevent them from accessing parental financial information"

(Cummings, 2015, p. 1). Currently, students must go through a difficult process to

override their dependent status with all higher education institutions to which they have

applied prior to the institutions preparing their financial aid packages. The override

process varies depending on the institution and students often abandon it because of its

intricacy (Cummings, 2015). Under the FAFSA Fairness Act of 2015, they would

complete the FAFSA as "provisional independent" students (Cummings, 2015, p. 1) and would go through the override process only at the institution where they intend to enroll. Prior to initiating the dependency override process, colleges and universities would provide nonbinding "provisional financial aid packages" (Cummings, 2015, p. 1), which would assist students in making informed decisions as to which college they would enroll. Students who are provisional independent would still go through the override process at the institution they decide to attend. Financial aid administrators would still exercise their judgement. Higher education institutions administrators would determine the other special conditions for which students may qualify as independent. Presumably, administrators could consider students who are U.S. citizens born to undocumented parents under those special circumstances under the FAFSA Fairness Act of 2015. Such policy would take down the barrier current U.S. citizen students born to undocumented parents face in pursuing higher education. The House of Representatives referred the bill to the House Committee on Education and the Workforce and this committee referred it to the Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Training on April 29, 2015, for consideration. As of the completion of this dissertation, the bill still is in subcommittee (United States Congress, 2015a).

Members of Congress have recognized the difficult situation and cumbersome paperwork process that students who are U.S. citizens but whose parents are undocumented confront in their desire to pursue higher education. Currently, FAFSA policies do not prohibit students who are U.S. citizens or have legal immigration status whose parents are undocumented from receiving federal financial aid (Veasey, 2015).

However, because the current electronic system does not allow processing the FAFSA without valid social security numbers of parents, students must mail the form making the FAFSA process lengthier than filing it electronically. To eliminate the extra steps, on April 16, 2015, U.S. House of Representative Marc Veasey introduced H. R. 1833 (FAFSA for All Act) "to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to include guidance on how dependent students with parents without SSNs may obtain Federal student assistance" (H. R. 1833, 2015). The FAFSA for All Act would require that the U.S. Department of Education (DoE) include in the electronic form two questions to determine eligibility for financial assistance. The first question asks if dependent students are U. S. citizens, nationals, permanent residents, or if they can provide proof from the federal immigration services that they are in the country on a permanent basis and intend to become citizens or permanent residents. The second question asks if the parents have a valid social security number (H. R. 1833, 2015). Furthermore, if dependent students are U.S. citizens or meet the legal immigration status but their parents do not have a valid social security number, the FAFSA for All Act would require that the DoE provide electronically a "detailed guidance on how the student may obtain the Federal financial assistance…including an online tool that allows the student to upload documents required to receive such assistance" (H. R. 1833, 2015). The House of Representatives referred the bill to the House Committee on Education and the Workforce. As of the completion of this dissertation, the bill still is in that committee (United States Congress, 2015b).

Narratives on Economic Impact, Changing Economy, and Economic Benefits of

Higher Education

The SC General Assembly determined that the higher education system's mission is to provide postsecondary educational opportunities focusing on economic development and benefiting the state (Education Act, 2014o). The HESC (2009) recognized that "a highly skilled workforce is the key to economic prosperity for any city, state, region or nation. South Carolina's competitive advantage largely rests on the state's ability to maximize the educational potential of its citizens" (p. 39).

Levin et al. (2006a) conducted a quantitative study of the economic consequences of improving the education of over 700,000 high school dropouts, many of whom are from underrepresented and low-income families. They concluded that there is a considerable cost (i.e., health, crime, and public assistance) to the United States for not making sure that students graduate from high school. They also concluded that the "net economic benefit to the public purse is … $127,000 per [each new high school graduate] student and the benefits are 2.5 times greater than the costs" (p. 1). The researchers also conducted a benefit/cost ratio analysis of five successful evidence-based intervention programs that have increased high school graduation rates. Those programs include Perry pre-school program, Chicago Child-Parent Center Program, class size reduction, teacher salary increase, and First Things First (FTF). Evaluation studies on those programs have demonstrated greater effects on ethnic/racial minorities and low-income groups at risk of not completing high school, targeting mainly African Americans (Levin et al. 2006b). The highest benefit/cost ratio was 3.54 for the FTF program, which is a "comprehensive

school reform with three components: small learning communities (350 students) with dedicated teachers; family advocate system; and instructional improvement efforts" (Levin et al. 2006b, p. 12).

In 2009, USC researchers conducted an analysis to establish the impact of the state's investment in higher education after reaching the 2030 goal and concluded that for "each dollar spent by the state boosts South Carolina's annual gross state product by $25.20" (University of South Carolina, 2009, p. 5) and it would remain as long as the state continues investing in higher education. USC researchers also determined that achieving the 2030 goal, South Carolina would gain annually (in 2007 dollars) "$6.9 billion in total personal income; $7.8 billion in gross state product; [and] an additional 44,514 permanent jobs" (p. 5). In addition, while the goal is being reached, that is during 2010–2030,

> The cumulative gain (in 2007 dollars) over the period is: $67.8 billion in total personal income; $77.0 billion dollars in gross state product … [and] for each dollar that the state spends between 2010 and 2030, $11.20 on average is added to the economy annually (measured by gross state product). (University of South Carolina, 2009, p. 6)

Achieving the 2030 goal would bring increased revenue to the state and local governments as college graduates earn higher salaries. The researchers estimated that for each $1 that the state spends in higher education, in 2030, the revenue would be $2.70 and, between 2010 and 2030, tax revenue would bring $1.20 (USC, 2009). At the local level, USC researchers studied the economic impact of achieving the HESC 2030 goal

using 2005–2007 data from the American Community Survey for each of the state's

Census regions or Public Use Microdata Areas (PUMAs). They determined that for

Greenville County's urban and suburban areas, the total 2010–2030 income benefits

would be $8.766 billion with a net income of $6.467 billion after deducting educational

costs (USC, 2009). It is in the best interest of South Carolina and Greenville County, in

particular, to increase high school graduation rates and college enrollment and

completion, especially of low income, minority students, and Latinos.

In 2013, professors Woodward and Von Nessen (2013) from the USC, Darla

Moore School of Business, examined South Carolina's present and future labor market

requirements and compared them with the present and future workforce skills through

2030. This analysis helped to determine educational gaps between the current supply of

workforce and its educational skills and the future demand of the same. The researchers

concluded that (a) about 553,884 jobs would be created through growth and economic

development (52% of them would require higher education); (b) there would be a

shortage of about 44,000 workers with post-secondary education, with most of them

requiring a bachelor's degree; (c) the highest shortages would be in health care,

management, education, business and financial operations, computers, and mathematics;

and (d) there would be an increase of about 5.2% of jobs requiring higher education

between 2013 and 2030 (Woodward & Von Nessen, 2013). It is a matter of supply and

demand. With continued advances in technology and knowledge based requirements, 21st

century jobs created by 2030 would demand a highly skilled workforce and

postsecondary graduates would be required to have the skills that the local market would

demand (Woodward & Von Nessen, 2013).

Researchers have provided evidence that higher levels of postsecondary education lead to "greater prosperity and competitiveness in the knowledge economy [and less unemployment]" (HESC, 2009, p. 5). In a few words, "knowledge is the principal currency" (HESC, 2009, p. 36). Community leaders in Greenville County have also recognized the correlation between educational levels and income and the need to increase minorities (including Latinos) educational levels (Prince, 2006). Schools and higher education institutions have the responsibility to supply the workforce that the local market demands. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, in 2014 (see Figure 7), people with higher educational attainment had higher earnings and lower unemployment rate. Conversely, people with lower educational attainment had lower earnings and higher unemployment rate.

Unemployment rate in 2014 (%)	Educational attainment	Median weekly earnings in 2014 ($)
2.1	Doctoral degree	1,591
1.9	Professional degree	1,639
2.8	Master's degree	1,326
3.5	Bachelor's degree	1,101
4.5	Associate's degree	792
6.0	Some college, no degree	741
6.0	High school diploma	668
9.0	Less than a high school diploma	488
All workers: 5%		All workers: $839

Note: Data are for persons age 25 and over. Earnings are for full-time wage and salary workers.
Source: Current Population Survey, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor

Figure 7. Earning and unemployment rates by educational attainment. Adapted from U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor. Source: Current Population Survey, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor (http://www.bls.gov/emp/ep_chart_001.htm)

Businesses and industries have jobs available in South Carolina but they realized

that its high school graduates are unprepared to hold those jobs as they lack the skills to

be successful after graduation and that 23% of students in the state are not graduating

from high school (South Carolina Legislature, 2014a). The business community analyzed

the state of the education system in South Carolina and concluded that the current

education system is obsolete, outdated, and works for the economy that existed 150 years

ago, which was manufacturing, industrial, and agricultural based (South Carolina

Legislature, 2014a). According to South Carolina business leaders, by 2020 over 65% of

the jobs that will be available will require advanced skills in math and science but today's

graduates lack those skills,

> Today's economy needs every one of those workers performing at a high
>
> level…[and] of those students who do graduate and go on to higher education of
>
> some kind, at least the statistics we have from technical college systems, is that
>
> about 41% of the students who enter the technical college system require
>
> remediation in English or in math and, so, they are spending about $21 million on
>
> remediation every year." (South Carolina Legislature, 2014a)

In light of the findings, South Carolina business leaders gathered and founded

TransformSC. TransformSC is an initiative of the South Carolina Council on

Competitiveness in an effort to provide "a common framework for change, a statewide

network to share ideas and best practices, and advocacy with policy makers and state

leaders" (South Carolina Council on Competitiveness, 2014). The framework for change

provides a profile of a SC graduate and the characteristics of an education system that

would produce that graduate. The networking aspect facilitates the sharing of ideas

among innovators to provide new solutions to problems of old learning systems. The

advocacy element provides a venue to promote change with legislators, administrators,

and the community along with encouraging the adoption of new learning models as they

are successfully implemented across the state (South Carolina Council on

Competitiveness, 2014).

The ramifications of a less educated workforce go beyond affecting businesses

and industries. Another but no less important issue that people seldom discussed is how

national security connects with education achievement. During the SC Senate Education

Committee, Education K–12 Subcommittee, hearing on March 26, 2014, Brigadier

General Marvin Mitchiner, US Army (Ret.), indicated that,

> Seventy-five percent of the American population, age 17–24, does not qualify for
>
> military service, 75%, that's staggering, when you think about it is for three
>
> reasons: *education under achievement* [emphasis added], for criminal
>
> involvement, and for health issues predominantly obesity and overweight and lack
>
> of physical strength. (South Carolina Legislature, 2014b)

As I discussed in Chapter 1, economic developers consider Greenville County the

economic engine of the upstate SC with a well-established health care and automotive

industry research clusters and an array of global companies and suppliers requiring a

highly skilled workforce. Members of the HESC (2009) recommended increasing or

establishing programs targeting ethnic/racial minorities and women to the STEM field as

early as middle school and emphasizing underserved groups that postsecondary education

is "transformational" (p. 42). They also recommended creating inexpensive online programs to develop proficiency "in at least four important foreign languages (e.g., Mandarin, Spanish, French, German, etc.) to promote economic development, cultural knowledge, and tolerance" (p. 25). As previously noted, the untapped bilingualism of Latino students needs to be considered as an asset not a deficiency and, definitely, not as an obstacle to success (Riley, 2000). Advocate participants recognized that Latino students are bilingual and, in some cases, multilingual as some of the student participants indicated. Advocates also recognized that in order for South Carolina to continue growing, schools and higher education institutions need to embrace "populations that are different than standard and, then, look at some of the very specific economic impacts" with the hope to "increase the number of Latino Americans going to school in Greenville and in South Carolina. [After all,] it benefits us all."

Similar to a HESC's (2009) recommendation, advocates indicated and advised that schools need to target parents of Latino students because they may not know or see the future benefits of higher education for their children. Earning a college degree opens opportunities for Latino students to not only increase their personal quality of life but also the quality of life of their parents and siblings since, as discuss later, some Latino students want to earn a college degree to help their families.

On the economic benefits, Kantrowitz (2007) concluded that not only college graduates had a return on investment (ROI) "greater than 27%" (p. 26) with a payback period of about four years but also the federal government had a ROI of 14% from increased taxes and a payback period of six years. Commissioned by the HESC, USC

published *The Economic Return on Investment in South Carolina's Higher Education*

report in 2009. Researchers analyzed the economic benefits of reaching the HESC goal

that South Carolina becomes one of the more educated states in the nation by 2030.

Recall that this goal will require that 29% of the state's population between 25-65 years

old have at least a bachelor's degree by 2030. The researchers found that, after deducting

higher education costs, the individual income of college graduates over their professional

career is about $2.5 million, earning $1.2 million more than people with just a high

school diploma (University of South Carolina, 2009). To reach the HESC's education

goal by 2030, an increase in the college going population must be attained from both

groups, the K–12 pipeline and adults (USC, 2009).

Narratives on Latino Students

At the national level, more Latinos between 18–24 years old have earned a high

school diploma compared with Blacks but less compared with Whites. At the beginning

of the 2009–2013 period, Latino high school graduates enrolled in higher education

institutions at a lesser number compared with Blacks and Whites. The highest year of

Latino enrollment was 2012 with a 70.3% of graduates going to college. The number of

Latinos enrolling in college during the 2009–2013 period increased for the first four years

but declined in the last year. Despite the decline, in 2013, more Latino high school

graduates enrolled in college than African Americans. Figure 8 compares the number of

people 18–24 year olds with a high school diploma in 2014 and the percentage of recent

high school graduates enrolled in 2- and 4-year colleges for the 2009–2013 period by

race/ethnicity. It is possible that the increase of Latino enrollment in 2012 was due to the

implementation of DACA, which became effective on August 15, 2012.
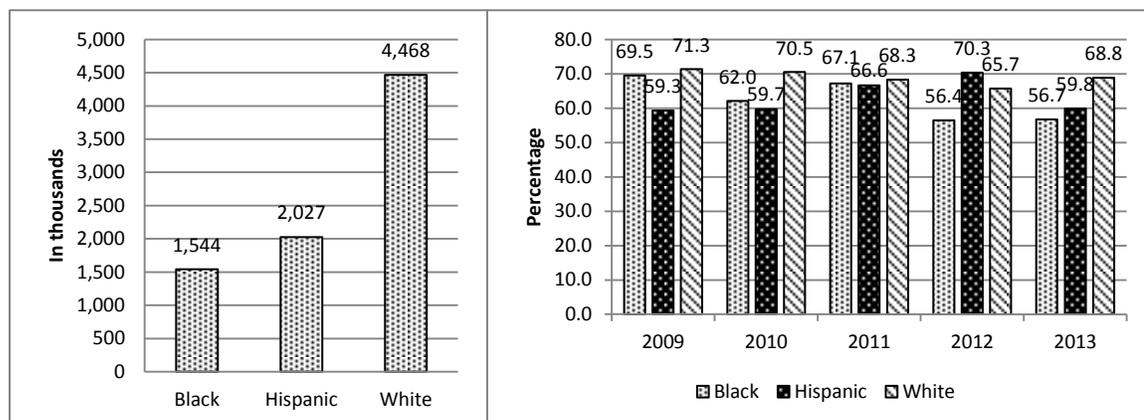
Figure 8. Number of persons age 18–24 with high school educational attainment: 2014 and percentage of recent high school completers enrolled in 2- and 4-year colleges (2009–2013). Adapted from Digest of Education Statistics. Source: https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d14/tables/dt14_104.30.asp?current=yes

Over the 2012–2013, 2013–2014, and 2014–2015 school years, the 135–day student headcount statistics revealed an increase in the Latino student population in Greenville County schools (SC Department of Education, 2015). Although the Latino student population is still small, its cumulative increase was 15.04% between 2012 and 2015, while African American students increased at a much smaller rate (2.55%) and the White student population decreased by 0.35% during the same time period. Table 7, on next page, provides a summary of the student population increase and decrease in Greenville County schools.

Table 7

Active Enrollment in Greenville County Schools by Race/Ethnicity: 135-Day Headcount for School Years 2012–2013, 2013–2014, and 2014–2015

Race/ Ethnicity	School year active enrollment (135-day headcount)			Change and percentage change	Change and percentage change	Cumulative change and cumulative percentage change
	2012–2013	2013–2014	2014–2015	2012–2013 to 2013–2014	2013–2014 to 2014–2015	2012–2015
Black	19,003	19,284	19,488	281 1.46%	204 1.05%	485 2.55%
Hispanic	9,259	9,804	10,652	545 5.89%	848 7.96%	1,393 15.04%
White	42,486	42,369	42,337	(117) (0.28%)	(32) (0.08%)	(149) (0.35%)

Note. Source: SC Department of Education (https://ed.sc.gov/data/student-counts/Student_Headcounts/ActiveStudentHeadcounts.cfm)

At the Greenville County School District level, a fact worth noting is that Latino (the school district uses the term 'Hispanic') graduation rate increased between 2008–2014. Using the median as measure, in 2008, Latino students had the lowest graduation rate (56.2%) compared with African Americans (65.3%) and Whites (74.9%). In 2011, Latino students surpassed African Americans with a graduation rate of 65.6% and 63.4%, respectively. In 2014, Latino students graduation median (74.5%) trailed a little behind African Americans (74.7%) but well behind Whites (85.0%) but, nonetheless, it closed the graduation rate gap between Latino and White students.

Using the average as measure, in 2008, Latino students had also the lowest graduation rate (53.5%) compared with African Americans (62.8%) and Whites (75.8%). However, in 2011, Latinos graduation rate (65.7%) was higher than African Americans (60.3%). In 2014, Latino students rate (76.6%) continued exceeding African Americans

(73.8%) and closed the gap with Whites (83.4%). Figure 9 shows the median and average

graduation rates by race/ethnicity.
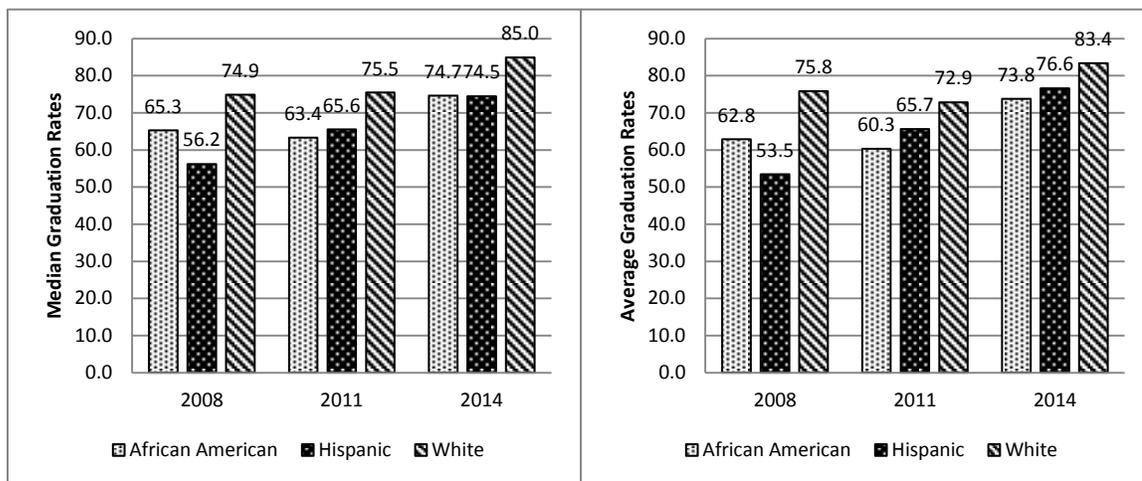
Figure 9. Greenville County high schools' median and average graduation rates: 2008–2014. Adapted from South Carolina Department of Education: South Carolina District/School Report Cards. Source: https://ed.sc.gov/data/report-cards/

Table 8 includes the detailed graduation rates for Greenville County high schools

by race and ethnicity between 2008 and 2014. The 2014 graduation rates for Latinos were

at least equal or higher than African Americans at 10 high schools: Berea, Blue Ridge

(equal rate), Greenville, Greer, J. L. Mann, Mauldin, Riverside, Southside, Travelers

Rest, and Wade Hampton. Compared with White students, the 2014 graduation rate of

Latinos were higher at two schools: Berea and Carolina.

Table 8

Greenville County School District High Schools: 2008–2014 Graduation Rates by Race/Ethnicity

High School	2008 Graduation rates			2011 Graduation rates			2014 Graduation rates		
	Black	Hispanic	White	Black	Hispanic	White	Black	Hispanic	White
Berea	66.7	77.3	73.7	62.9	61.2	65.8	71.4	75.0	74.7
Blue Ridge	47.6	0.0	71.3	40.0	54.4	74.8	75.0	75.0	85.1
Carolina	52.1	53.3	48.6	55.8	58.8	30.6	74.7	67.9	63.9
Eastside	67.4	42.9	85.1	48.9	63.6	82.7	84.6	68.2	91.2
Greenville	57.0	42.9	85.6	65.6	53.6	78.4	76.8	86.2	88.6
Greer	63.8	65.9	76.1	64.5	74.5	72.8	62.9	66.7	79.4
Hillcrest	74.6	73.2	83.0	64.2	81.1	76.1	79.2	70.6	84.8
J. L. Mann	71.4	59.1	85.8	58.0	69.2	83.7	74.6	83.3	92.2
Mauldin	69.1	81.4	72.9	76.0	81.4	85.0	83.7	86.8	95.5
Riverside	69.0	83.3	88.6	63.8	67.5	87.5	68.4	91.9	93.9
Southside	59.9	0.0	71.8	64.4	50.0	63.3	70.4	73.9	74.4
Travelers Rest	47.7	40.0	65.3	55.0	50.0	63.7	60.0	71.4	79.9
Wade Hampton	72.1	82.4	89.6	65.5	80.0	94.4	87.3	93.5	95.4
Woodmont	61.4	46.7	64.0	59.2	73.9	61.2	64.1	62.5	68.0

Note. Data excludes charter high schools because Greer Middle College Charter High Schools reported its first data set in 2014 for White students only; Brashier Middle College Charter High School began reporting in 2011 for African Americans and White students only; and Greenville Technical Charter High School reported data for African American and White students only. Source: SC Department of Education: South Carolina District/School Report Cards (https://ed.sc.gov/data/report-cards/)

At the state level, another fact worth noting is how Latino students in South Carolina scored in the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) between 2003 and 2013. The NAEP uses the term Hispanic instead of Latino. Figure 10 shows that, consistently, the NAEP fourth and eighth-grade mathematics and reading scores for Latino students were a little higher than those of African Americans but lower than those of White students during that period.

SC NAEP 4th Grade Mathematics

Black: 222 (2003), 223 (2005), 221 (2007), 220 (2009), 220 (2011), 222 (2013)
Hispanic: 232 (2003), 236 (2005), 227 (2007), 232 (2009), 234 (2011), 229 (2013)
White: 246 (2003), 250 (2005), 248 (2007), 245 (2009), 248 (2011), 247 (2013)

SC NAEP 4th Grade Reading

White: 226 (2003), 225 (2005), 224 (2007), 226 (2009), 226 (2011), 224 (2013)
Hispanic: 205 (2003), 215 (2005), 205 (2007), 205 (2009), 208 (2011), 211 (2013)
Black: 199 (2003), 197 (2005), 199 (2007), 200 (2009), 199 (2011), 197 (2013)

SC NAEP 8th Grade Mathematics

White: 291 (2003), 294 (2005), 293 (2007), 293 (2009), 293 (2011), 292 (2013)
Hispanic: 269 (2005), 272 (2007), 269 (2009), 273 (2011), 272 (2013)
Black: 258 (2003), 263 (2005), 265 (2007), 263 (2009), 263 (2011), 261 (2013)

SC NAEP 8th Grade Reading

White: 269 (2003), 267 (2005), 268 (2007), 267 (2009), 269 (2011), 271 (2013)
Hispanic: 244 (2007), 259 (2009), 257 (2011), 257 (2013)
Black: 244 (2003), 242 (2005), 242 (2007), 243 (2009), 246 (2011), 247 (2013)

Figure 10. 2003–2013 South Carolina national assessment of educational progress results for fourth and eighth grades: Reading and mathematics. Adapted from the South Carolina NAEP Results: Reading and Mathematics, 2003–2013. Source: http://ed.sc.gov/data/national-assessments/documents/NAEP-TrendReport.pdf

For the South Carolina Class of 2014, the College Board reported that 26% of Hispanic/Hispanic American students who took the NAEP test achieved the scholastic aptitude test (SAT) college and career readiness benchmark, compared with 9% of Black/African American and 44% of Whites (College Board, 2014). The SAT benchmark is defined as "a score of 1550 (critical reading, mathematics and writing sections

combined), which indicated a 65% likelihood of achieving a B-minus grade point average

or higher during the first year of college" (p. 1). The SAT benchmark is a tool that

teachers can use to "identify and monitor achievement gaps, which is the first step in the

endeavor to ensure that all students have equal access to the academic preparation

necessary to succeed in college and the workforce" (College Board, 2014, p. 5).

As shown in Figure 11, the nationwide 2014 SAT mean for public schools was

1471 and the statewide mean was 1429. There were nine high schools in Greenville

County that had a mean above the national SAT mean score: Eastside, Wade Hampton, J.

L. Mann, Mauldin, Riverside, Southside, Greenville Technical Charter High, Brashier

Middle College Charter, and Greer Middle College Charter. There were 10 high schools

in the county above the statewide SAT mean score and they include the high schools

mentioned above and Greenville Senior High Academy. Only Riverside High School

surpassed the SAT benchmark of 1550. Riverside High School has an overwhelming

majority of White students compared with Latinos and African Americans students (see

Figure 12).
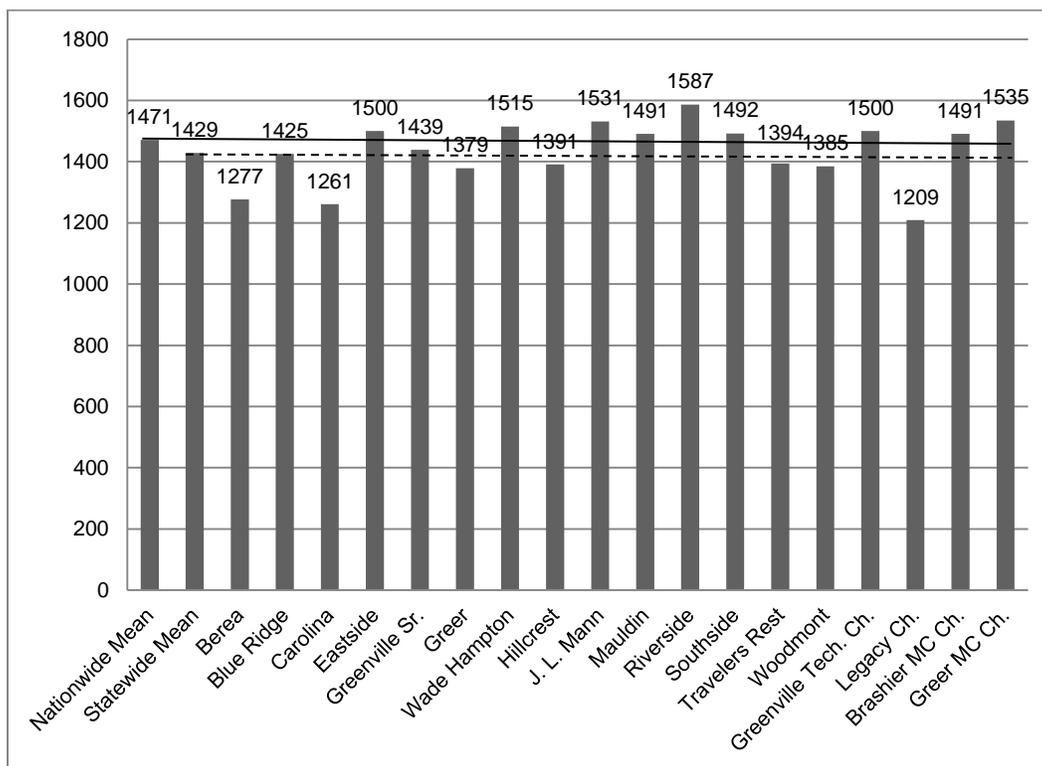
Figure 11. Greenville County public high schools: 2014 SAT mean composite score. Adapted from SC Department of Education: National Assessments SAT. Source: https://ed.sc.gov/data/national-assessments/documents/SAT2014_Schools.xlsx. Nation and statewide means are for public high schools only. "Ch." Signifies "Charter" and "MC" signifies "Middle College."

The middle college charter high schools are located at three different Greenville Technical College campuses: Greenville, Brashier, and Greer. These charter high schools scored higher than the state and national SAT mean levels. Students attending these charter high schools have the opportunity of taking college courses and earning college credits at Greenville Technical College at no charge. Many of the students have earned an associate's degree concurrent with earning their high school diplomas, for example, since 2011, 13 students from Greer Middle College Charter received associated degrees and

three obtained two associate degrees while in high school (Greer Middle College Charter High School, 2015a).

From Figure 12, note that all middle college charter high schools located at Greenville Technical College campuses had a higher number of White students than Latinos (the SC Department of Education uses the term *Hispanic*) and African Americans combined. The charter schools have two different admission policies: Greenville Technical and Brashier Middle College Charter high schools have a lottery acceptance policy while the Greer charter school requires an interview to be accepted and uses the lottery system when there is a waiting list (Brashier Middle College Charter School, 2015; Greenville Technical Charter High School, n.d.; Greer Middle College Charter High School, 2015b). Legacy Early College Charter High School has a larger African American student body than Latinos. Legacy Charter School has a lottery admission policy and eligible students must reside in Greenville County or the Greenville County School District attendance area (Legacy Charter School, 2015). Efforts to target the recruitment of Latino students and encourage them to apply should be a focus of these charter schools. Such efforts would increase the possibilities that Latino students benefit from earning college credits and degrees that are transferable to four-year college or enter the workforce better prepared with an associate degree. However, with the exception of Legacy Charter School, transportation may be an issue for Latino students to attend these charter high schools because there is no public school transportation to those schools. Therefore, there is a need to solve this transportation issue.
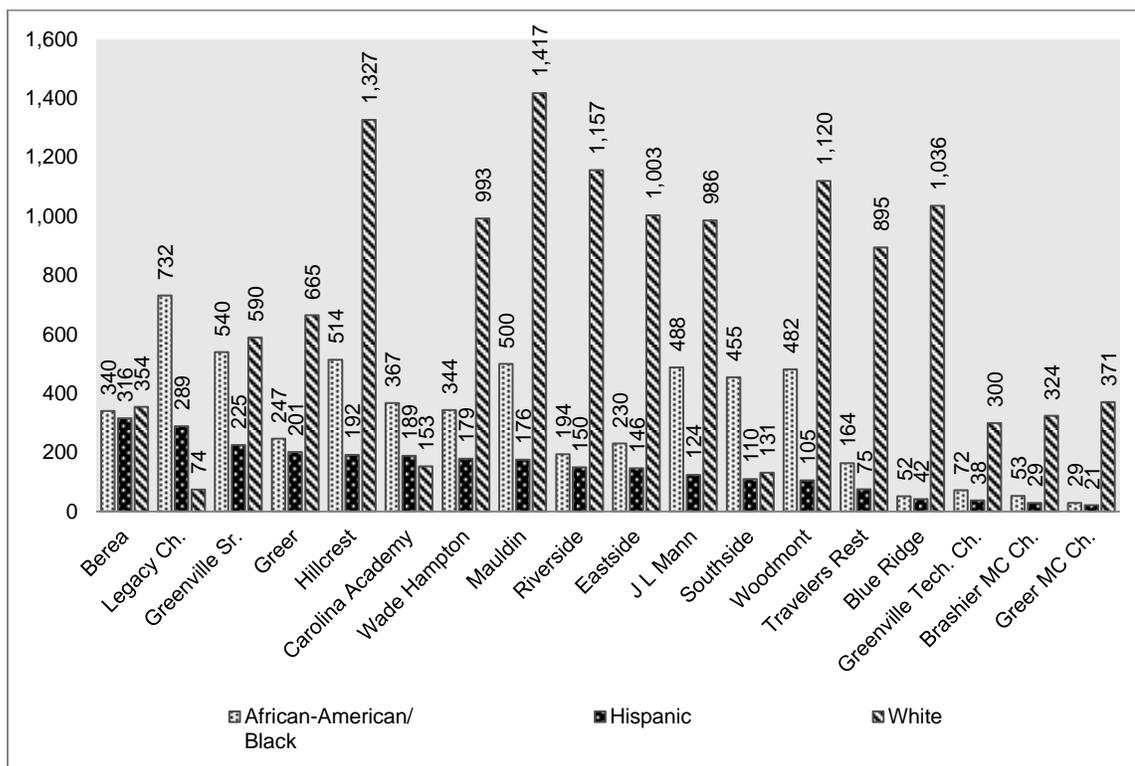
Figure 12. Active enrollment in Greenville County high schools by race or ethnic origin: 2014–15 135-day headcount. Adapted from: https://ed.sc.gov/data/student-counts/Student_Headcounts/documents/SchoolbyGenderRace_d135_2014-15.xlsx. "Ch." Signifies "Charter" and "MC" signifies "Middle College."

From Figure 12, note that Berea High School and Legacy Charter had the highest

number of Latino (or Hispanic) and African American students. These schools had the

lowest SAT mean scores, below the statewide level. Berea High School is located in a

highly concentrated Latino community. Founded in 2010, Legacy Charter is a K5–12

inner city school located in a low-income community in the Greenville West End area.

Legacy's Early College High School focusses on academic rigor with the goal that 100%

of its graduating classes go to college. Eligible students can take college courses at

Greenville Technical College and North Greenville University (Legacy Charter School,

2015). It will be a matter of time to see how Legacy Charter School graduates perform academically. From experience, I have seen the positive messages about being college bound posted throughout the school.

In 2014, according to information from the SC Department of Education, Greenville County Schools offered the IB program at Greer, Southside, Travelers Rest, and Woodmont high schools (Gamishev, 2014). The IB program challenges students academically and prepares them to be successful in postsecondary education and life by developing the whole person intellectually, socially, emotionally, and physically (Gamishev, 2014). According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) data (see Figure 13), at the national level, in 2005, Latino (the NCES uses the term *Hispanic*) students were the lowest group taking IB courses: African Americans with 12.8%, Hispanics with 10.3%, and White with 76.9%. In 2009, African Americans and Latinos composed 16.3% each of the total number of students taking IB courses, while Whites included 67.4% of students.
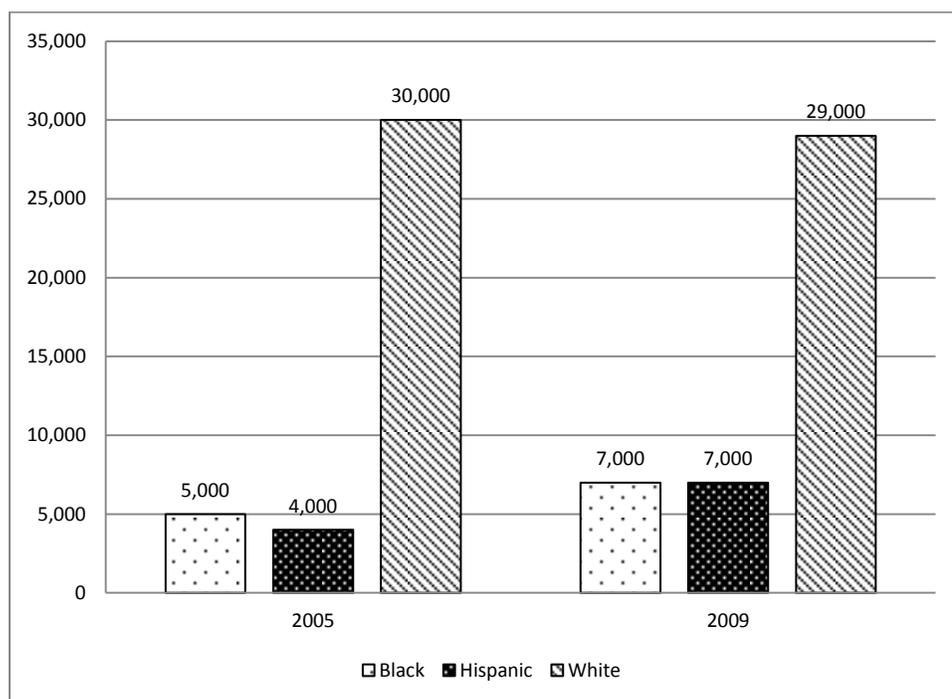
Figure 13. Number of public high school graduates taking international baccalaureate courses by race/ethnicity (United States). Adapted from U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2000, 2005, and 2009 High School Transcript Study (HSTS). (The data/table source was prepared November 2012.)

At the local level, of the total number of students in Greenville County who took the 2014 IB exam, that is 185 students (including Asians and Other), only 19 (10.27%) were Hispanics. This number was lower than African Americans (14.59%) but much lower compared with Whites (63.78%). According to data prepared by the SC Department of Education, for the Class of 2014 IB students, that is students receiving IB diplomas, only nine out of 16 Asian students received diplomas from Southside High School. Unfortunately, schools neither report diploma candidates if there are less than five candidates nor report diplomas awarded if the number of diploma candidates is less than 10 (C. Hearn, personal communication, August 10, 2015). The lack of availability of

segregated data on the IB program at the Greenville County Schools was a limitation of

this study (J. McCreary, personal communication, August 11, 2015). Therefore, it was

not possible to establish if any of the Latino students taking the exam were diploma

candidates and/or if they received IB diplomas. Figure 14 provides a summary of the

number of students taking IB exams in 2014. It is noticeable the low amount of Latino

students taking the exam at all the schools offering the IB program.
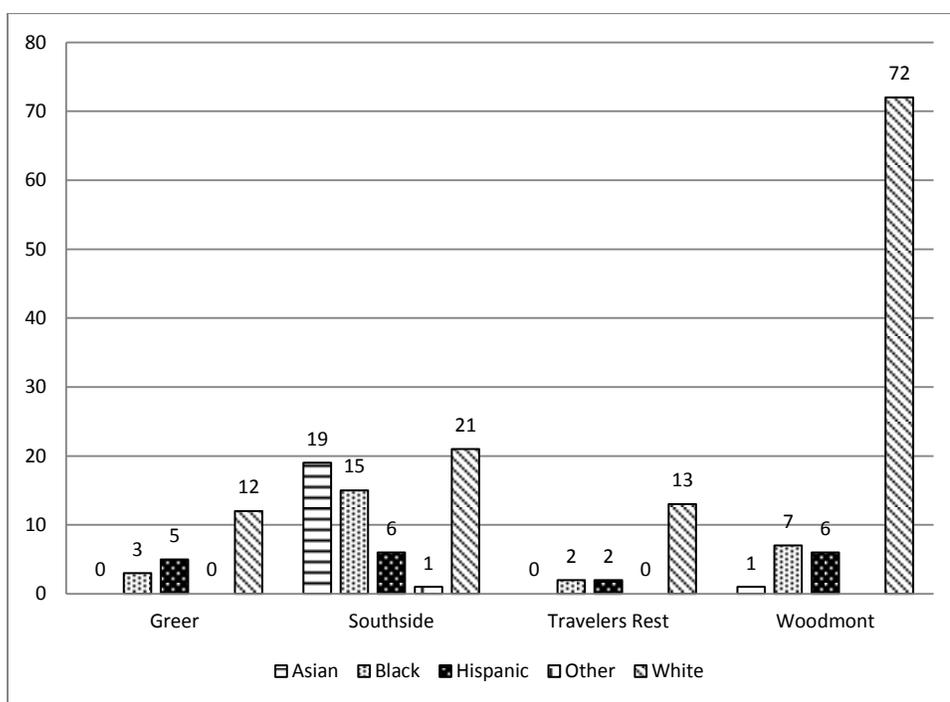
Figure 14. Number of students taking international baccalaureate exams in Greenville County high schools in 2014. Source: International Baccalaureate Organization. Prepared by Office of Research and Data Analysis, SC Department of Education (C. Hearn, personal communication, August 10, 2015).

Table 9 and Table 10 provide the detailed 2014 IB program for Greenville County

high schools. From the data provided by the SC Department of Education, it is not

possible to determine if or how many Latino students received IB diplomas in Greenville

County schools.

Table 9

Number of Students Taking International Baccalaureate Exams in Greenville County Schools in 2014

School	Race	Number of students taking exams
Greer High School	Black/Non-Hispanic	3
Greer High School	Hispanic	5
Greer High School	White/Non-Hispanic	12
Southside High School	Asian/Pacific Islander	19
Southside High School	Black/Non-Hispanic	15
Southside High School	Hispanic	6
Southside High School	Other	1
Southside High School	White/Non-Hispanic	21
Travelers Rest High School	Black/Non-Hispanic	2
Travelers Rest High School	Hispanic	2
Travelers Rest High School	White/Non-Hispanic	13
Woodmont High School	Asian/Pacific Islander	1
Woodmont High School	Black/Non-Hispanic	7
Woodmont High School	Hispanic	6
Woodmont High School	White/Non-Hispanic	72
Total		185

Note. Source: International Baccalaureate Organization, Prepared by Office of Research and Data Analysis, SC Department of Education (C. Hearn, personal communication, August 10, 2015).

Table 10

International Baccalaureate Students: Class of 2014

School	Race	Number of Diploma Candidates	Number of Diplomas Awarded
Greer High School	Black/Non-Hispanic	N/R	N/R
Greer High School	Hispanic	N/R	N/R
Greer High School	White/Non-Hispanic	N/R	N/R
Southside High School	Asian/Pacific Islander	16	9
Southside High School	Black/Non-Hispanic	N/R	N/R
Southside High School	Hispanic	N/R	N/R
Southside High School	White/Non-Hispanic	9	N/R
Woodmont High School	Black/Non-Hispanic	N/R	N/R
Woodmont High School	White/Non-Hispanic	6	N/R

Note. Diploma Candidates are not reported (N/R) if less than 5. Diplomas Awarded are not reported (N/R) if the number of Diploma Candidates is less than 10. Source: International Baccalaureate Organization. Prepared by Office of Research and Data Analysis, SC Department of Education (C. Hearn, personal communication, August 10, 2015).

At the national level, Latino students composed 11.3% of students taking dual credits in 2005, higher than African Americans (7.8%) but much lower than Whites (80.9%). Similarly, in 2009, Latino students composed 19.9% of students taking dual credits, higher than African Americans (10.8%) but lower than Whites (69.3%). In both years, more Latino students took dual credit courses than African Americans (see Figure 15).
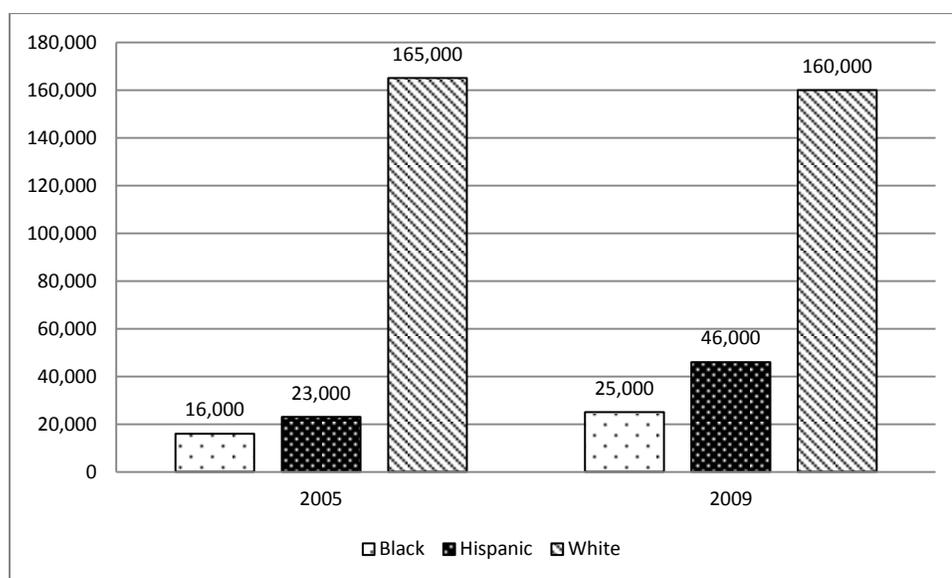
Figure 15. Number of public high school graduates taking dual credit courses by race/ethnicity. Adapted from U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2000, 2005, and 2009 High School Transcript Study (HSTS). (The data/table source was prepared November 2012.)

Many of the HESC's recommendations emphasized the need to focus on minorities, low-income students, and attract and retain talented students to achieve the 2030 goal as a result of two major demographics shifts in South Carolina. The first shift started in the 1990s with the increase in the Latino population. The second shift is expected to occur by 2030 as the population over 60 years old would increase by 123%

(HESC, 2009). To reach the HESC's goal by 2030, the committee recommended that "all students—not just higher-performing students" (p. 13) receive more information on higher education opportunities. The HESC committee also recommended providing access to demanding curriculum such as AP and IB courses to all high school students and to encourage them to take dual enrollment (college) courses, especially minorities and low-income students. Providing such access to these students will help them earned high scores on the ACT (American college testing) and SAT and "perform better in gatekeeping courses when they enter college" (p. 15). This will require a change in any low expectations and deficit teaching and binary race relations models at the school level.

Comparing South Carolina's eighth-grade 2013 NAEP mathematics score with neighboring states, the data revealed that all students subject to this comparison (that is, African Americans, Latinos or Hispanic, and Whites) scored higher in North Carolina than in Georgia, South Carolina, Tennessee, and the national level. The data also revealed a big gap in the scores between White students and Latinos and even wider compared with Blacks. In all four states and at the national level, Latino students scored higher than Blacks. Figure 16 presents a summary of the eighth-grade 2013 NAEP mathematics scores.
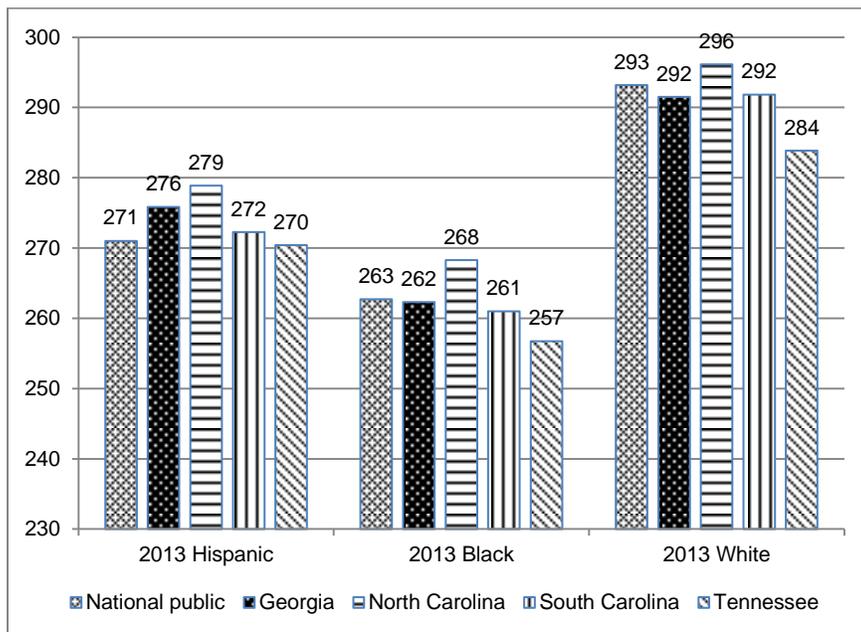
Figure 16. National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP): Eighth-grade average mathematics scale score sorted by race/ethnicity. Adapted from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), Institute of Education Sciences (IES). Source: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2013 Mathematics Assessment.

Last, comparing South Carolina's eighth-grade 2011 science scores with its neighboring states, the data revealed that Latino students scored higher than Blacks but lower than Whites in all four states and at the national level. Georgia's scores were the highest for all students followed by South Carolina. Figure 17 provides a summary of the eighth-grade 2011 NAEP science scores.
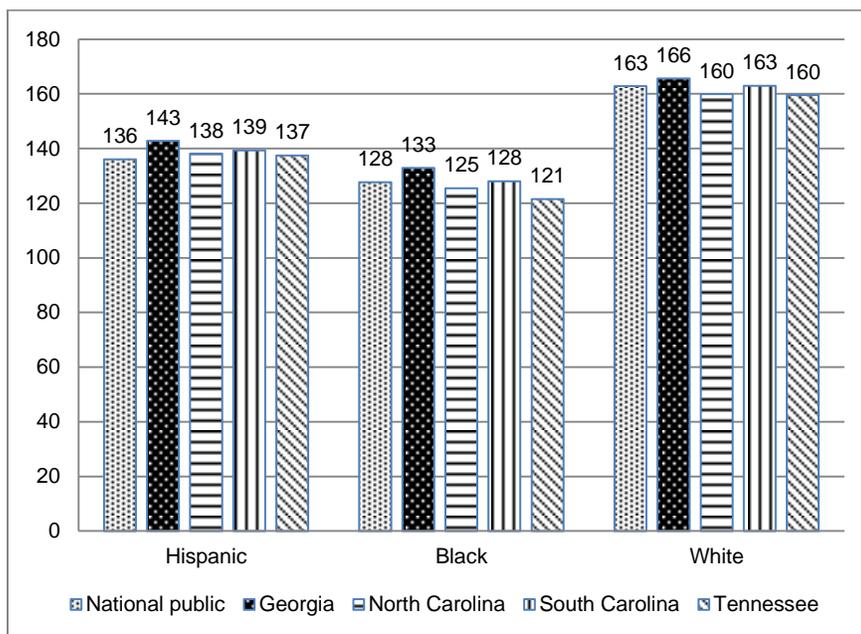
Figure 17. Eighth-grade 2011 average science scale score sorted by race/ethnicity. Adapted from National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), Institute of Education Sciences (IES): National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). Source: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2011 Science Assessment.

Second Group of Narratives: Participants Perceptions and Perspectives on Higher Education

My proposal included interviewing education state officials, South Carolina legislators, and policy implementers from universities and community colleges. However, these participants either declined the invitations or were nonresponsive. Other officials were interested and indicated they wanted to participate; however, I was not able to set up appointments with them for the interviews.

I conducted 15 personal open-ended, in-depth interviews at a convenient place for participants (that is their homes, Greenville County Library System's branches, offices,

or college libraries) between February 20 and May 18, 2015. Participants included seven students (Angélica, Einstein, Flor, Gloria, José, Sofía, and Tati), three mothers (Dulce, Inés, and Patricia), and five advocates (George, Lizzie, Olivia, Renee, and Ruth). All these names are pseudonyms. Prior to each interview, participants and I read the consent form together, either in English or Spanish. After reading it, I collected the signed consent form from each participant. I also requested permission from participants to audio record the entire interview.

Students Backgrounds

All student participants were born outside the United States and brought to this country by their parents at an early age ranging from five months to seven years old. Most of them do not recall details of their lives in their country of origin. Those with memories recalled that their families lived in poverty; lived in big houses with their grandparents and extended family; their parents had good jobs but lost them; and had nannies to take care of them. They also recalled that their parents worked in the farm fields and took care of cattle; older siblings took care of the younger ones while parents worked; went to private school for kindergarten and first grade; and lived in constant fear of the violence around them, therefore, the family did not do much outside the home. Except for one, the rest of them have gone back to their country of origin to visit and they have seen firsthand the poverty in which their relatives there live. Gloria said,

> Basically my sister who taught me everything and took care of me because my
>
> brothers and parents … well my mom they had to work in like the farm and…they
>
> had to take care of the animals and since I'm the youngest, I was the only one that

was home, and since my sister was the other lady in the house, other than my

mom, she was the responsible one to take care of me … there was a lot of

violence so we really wouldn't go out, we really didn't do much.

Students Early Childhood and School Experiences Abroad and in South Carolina

About school experiences in their country of origin, participants recalled having

fun in kindergarten, wearing school uniforms, and going to afterschool programs and

taking swimming lessons. José, who has ancestors from Asian and a South American

country, recalled his schooling experience in his father's Asian country and noted,

They [(the Asian country school system)] emphasized science at an early age

because I was already studying plants and … just talking about like

photosynthesis and stuff like that when I was in elementary school and when I

came here [the United States] that wasn't stressed as much and I kind of like went

back to when I was older and I thought that was interesting that looking back … I

had already touched the subject that in the United States is touched on later …

thought that was interesting…. I think I was actually doing stuff that I was doing

in like second grade in [Asian country] and I thought that was interesting.

On the reasons for migrating to the United States, students recalled that they came

because their fathers were already here and brought the rest of the family, their parents

wanted to give them a better education, their parents wanted to escape poverty and

provide better opportunities for them, relatives were here, or parents divorced and one

migrated to this country. Sofía said, "I'm sure is like everyone says, we want your family

to have a better education, to succeed." Their parents came through different channels,

for example, obtaining permanent residency, overstaying tourist visas, or through the southern border.

About their schooling experiences in South Carolina, participants indicated that, in general, they had good experiences with the exception of one. Tati noted, "there were some bad moments throughout elementary, when you're growing up, people with racism, and everything and I was a little affected throughout my elementary." Despite of her childhood experience, Tati stated that during her high school years her experience "was amazing." Two students attended a magnet middle school and the IB program. Another student took advanced placement and/or honors courses. José stated,

[Atlantis Middle School] was really good … I think they have really nice teachers…. They really encouraged me at least in sciences … [my] chemistry teacher there … really made it interesting … and I think that's kind of her … influence is where my love for chemistry stems off of. So Atlantis definitely had really good science teachers for me personally and [Quantum High School] is for engineering so I really liked it, I really enjoyed … [my] engineering teacher there and the only problem was like… it was only one engineering class and there weren't really any accelerated programs like AP or IB. So … it was a really … not very challenging. It was a good engineering class and the rest would be honors and…I didn't think it was challenging enough so afterwards I went to [Global High School] in the International Baccalaureate program and that was definitely a very good program. They have very high quality teachers and they really … that chemistry teacher there is really what put the love for science into

me.… He is still a great teacher. I still talk to him. He still guides me and advices me on things … I still go back to him. That high school is definitely a great high school.

School counselors are in a unique position to make a remarkable influence on the lives of students. Making sure that their role as counselors includes "standing up for what is right" (South Carolina CAN Go to College, 2015, p. 23) and to discuss situations precluding students from pursuing their goals after graduation with school administrators. Student participants had different perceptions on the role of school counselors and noted that these not only counsel students but also perform other administrative schoolwork. In some instances, counselors were supportive and motivated students to go to college, while in others, they just provided college information to the students leaving them to figure out the college process on their own. It was difficult to ask for assistance for some of the students because, according to them, it showed weakness, lack of self-confidence, or the thought that being Latino they will not get much attention from counselors. For Gloria, finding a counselor at the career center meant that someone believed in her because she did not know what to do or what she wanted to be beyond high school. In her words, "he was always there for me and I guess he's the one that really always pushed me in to looking for a higher education." Finding that counselor or person that is open to listen to their stories and understand their unique needs is like finding that bridge that will help students crossover the muddy waters of the college application and financial aid processes because most of the students did not have that support at home. For the students who knew what they wanted to do and be in the future, having the support of

school counselors at the capacity level was important for them and "definitely helped in the [college] application process which made it easier to get a college degree or go to a college to get a college degree," as José indicated.

Students perceptions that school counselors perform other administrative work align with the literature review. Rives (2009) found that school principals delegate responsibilities to counselors that are not related to their main role. The SCCHE sponsors the South Carolina CAN Go to College (SC CAN) program, which promotes a college going culture in the state (South Carolina CAN Go to College, 2015). SC CAN published the *College Resource Manual* for school counselors. The manual includes information on how school counselors can promote and communicate their role with different audiences including students, parents, and school administrators. For example, one strategy is for counselors to develop specific plans of what they will do, will not do, and what is expected of students (as well as what is expected of parents and school administrators) on the different areas of counseling such as graduating from high school or applying for college (South Carolina CAN Go to College, 2015). Another strategy is for counselors and teachers to jointly develop lessons plans that include college applications and financial aid tasks such as writing college or scholarships essays in English classes and accessing FAFSA, SAT, and ACT websites in computer classes (South Carolina CAN Go to College, 2015).

For first generation, low-income Latino students, the environment that they confront at college or universities and at home put stresses on their lives as they struggle between deeply rooted traditions and norms in the Latino culture and the traditions and

norms of the American culture. When the college environment embraces the diversity of

Latino students, it also helps them to develop and define their identity as Latinos. Talking

about that struggle, Gloria referred to the way she conducts herself as a college work-

study student,

> In school [(at university)] is more like you live an American type of life but then
>
> when you go home it's more like you have to live how your parents are… You
>
> have to follow your [country of origin's] tradition.… It's just like living in two
>
> different worlds and not really knowing where you belong or who you are.

On the other hand, at a university where Latino students are beginning to establish

their cultural traditions, that environment is helping them to develop and define their

Latino identities by expressing themselves. José is part of that movement but such

opportunity was not available at his IB program in high school because there were no

other Latino students in the program. José indicated,

> In high school it used to be like I would only speak in English … I really didn't
>
> have any high school friends, Hispanic friends, because none of them were part of
>
> the [IB] program so I kind of, you know, felt isolated in my Hispanic culture in
>
> [Global High School] and I kind of made up … and I kind of made up for it just at
>
> home.

Having a welcoming university environment that embraces Latino students

culture has helped José to loosen up his Latino side outside home as he stated, "So

yeah… definitely it's kind of … gotten similar now how I act at my house and how I act

at [my university] because of the broader population that [my university] has compared to

my high school."

Researchers found that "Even when advanced classes are available, school staff may discourage low-income students from enrolling in them" (Ramsey, 2008, p. 1). Programs that develop a college-going mentality in the middle school or early high school years provide tools for Latino students to take down perceived college access barriers due to the lack of knowledge and understanding of the college-going process at home (Ramsey, 2008). To create that mentality, the question presented to students should be "Which college are you going to?" instead of "Are you going to college?" as early as kindergarten (South Carolina CAN Go to College, 2015). Flor was fortunate to be a part of a local comprehensive college access and success program for underserved students whose "overall goal is to get students from low income, so with lower resources, into…higher education." Flor indicated that the program began putting the idea of going to college during her freshmen high school year and that it was in her junior year that she realized that she had to make a decision. Flor said, "I didn't really know I actually wanted to go to college, that I could actually pursue that goal, so I think that my junior year was … I think the deciding year: this is where I want to go in the life." For students who do not have the opportunity to attend such programs, school counselors can create that atmosphere by implementing strategies included in the SC CAN manual. For example, schools collaborating with higher education institutions to conduct food, cloth, coat, or food drives at K–12 schools, identify colleges on a map and post it at strategic locations in schools, among other strategies (South Carolina CAN Go to College, 2015).

Other first generation, low-income Latino students, like Angélica, who attended a

magnet school, are fortunate to have the college going mentality at home even with parents who did not go to college. Angélica said,

> I always took all the steps to get to college … like when I started taking the SAT and the ACT … I really started to think about it but ... It was never like 'Oh! I'm not going' because at home there was always a push for going. So there was never like an option not to go.

Early exposure to what is available after high school may create the desire about going to college and about careers that interest to students. Familiarizing students in kindergarten and elementary school with the idea that education not only increases knowledge but also prepares students for life after high school is a strategy that counselors should promote (South Carolina CAN Go to College, 2015). Exposing Latino students to the college mentality at school at an early age can stimulate their minds because they may not have that exposure or conversations at home.

Early assessment tests and public recognition of Latino students in middle school may be powerful tools that teachers and counselor can used to promote college-going mentality early. Such strategies may assist students to realize that higher education is possible for them "because in middle school is when you start getting recognized for your abilities…like you get the A/B honor role," according to Sofía. Sofía "enjoyed" being in the honor roll and in her words,

> I was…, I guess higher education is possible for me because I like it … high school is nice so after high school, I need to go to college…I have to… so I wanted since I was in middle school for sure.

José's experience with assessment tests in middle school made him realized the
potential he had and noted that,

> Some middle school assessment test that you have to take, I realized that I scored
> really high on them so they bumped me up to a higher … like a high school
> mathematics course and I was like 'That's awesome! I'm in an advanced class."
> In seventh grade, I took high school algebra and in eighth grade, I took high
> school geometry so I could tell that I was smart or they thought that I was smart.

Other students were not sure what they wanted to be in their early high school
years and were not thinking about which college they wanted to attend. More likely than
not, those students would not take high school courses that would help them with their
declared majors, if they go to college. For Tati, it was in her junior year in high school
that she realized she wanted to go to college but, unfortunately, she did not go to college
although her mother insisted. For Einstein, a self-driven young man, it was not until he
transitioned from 10th to 11th grade that he realized he wanted to study engineering and
he "started taking engineering classes in high school and that's when I started looking
into different colleges that their majors were more beneficial towards engineers." Seeing
the struggles that their parents, older siblings, and relatives have experienced in the
United States, some student participants develop a going-to-college mentality on their
own at an early age. They became resilient to their parents (i.e., fathers) way of thinking
about or lack of understanding of the higher education process and systems (i.e., two-year
and four-year colleges) in the United States. Gloria, for example, developed that
mentality since she was a child,

I guess ever since I was little just seeing how much my parents and hearing what everybody went through, even my brothers and sisters, that's what really made me want to go to college and ever since I was little, I just wanted a better life so I've always, I've always wanted to go to college.

Perspectives and perceptions of students on factors constraining higher education for Latino students did not vary that much. The most often cited constraint was lack of financial resources. Though the majority of students obtained scholarships, prior to knowing they were selected to receive them, uncertainty involving meeting the financial obligations of school attendance was a deciding factor as to whether or not they would go to college as well as where they would attend. Flor did not want to apply due to the high cost of attending a private college but her counselor encouraged her and became her advocate because of Flor's high academic performance. For Angélica it was like,

Since I do come from … a single parent house is hard to put me through school and still take care of everything at home and so that would be … the main obstacle … when you have to start figuring out the money, how you're going to pay for school, I realized that well, for most … the other students in high school, most of them have the opportunity of … the two parents and so there's more income and that was … the first time that I saw … maybe I won't be able to go school just for right now. I'm trying to think, probably the summer before I started school when … I actually had to pay something for school, it was … really hard coming up with the money so I realized … I was … really struggling to pay for my first semester of college.

Einstein, a self-driven young man, also noted that the financial aspect of attending college was a big problem for him, as this issue affected his ability to perform in his college studies,

Financial reasons are always the hardest thing because I guess, in my situation, it's more … I am perfectly okay with like hard classes. I can find a way to manage them. The problem is I'm more concerned on how I'm going to pay that off and that's always there and that's an obstacle that's preventing me from being as optimal in college cause when you're worried about something you're not as focused in what you're doing.

School counselors need to embrace the different forms of communications that students use or prefer to disseminate college application and financial aid information including instant messaging, email, social media, shared calendars, face-to-face sessions (South Carolina CAN Go to College, 2015). For Einstein, finding information on financial aid on his own was cumbersome. The school provided him the information in general terms, "they basically just said 'Oh … go to fastweb.'"

Tati, who had played soccer and tennis in high school with the expectation of qualifying for a sports scholarship, suffered an injury and did not go to college because financial was her main obstacle,

Financial was kind of hard for us at that moment a lot, especially, my mom, my mom is a single mom so it was kind of hard on the financial part. That was the main obstacle about college because college it's a lot of expense, especially the one I was going to even though I got a scholarship. I mean a percentage of what

they would give me but is still a lot [to pay].

Fortunately, Sofía received scholarships to pay her entire college career and housing. However, the financial part that she worries about is to pay for living expenses because her parents do not want her to work even though she wants to work. Some Latino parents feel that it is their obligation to support and provide for their children, especially their daughters, even if they are able and want to work.

As noted earlier, researchers have found that school personnel may discourage low-income students from enrolling in advanced classes. Latino students and parents need to understand the high school course options that are available in order to prepare students for college. Therefore, counselors should explain the differences between honors, college preparatory, advanced courses, and middle college opportunities and make sure they understand which ones will prepare students better for college (South Carolina CAN Go to College, 2015). Another obstacle is the mindset of students. Flor indicated that, "As a Hispanic you would typically see other people going to college." This means that many Latino students, if it is not reinforced at home, do not develop the mindset of going to college after graduating from high school because they do not prepare by taking the appropriate courses. For Flor, taking different levels of courses in high school—that is, college preparatory (CP), honors, and advanced placement—was a defining factor that encouraged her to take AP courses,

> I was in my CP course and the class itself was not as serious as my honors course, and I saw that difference and in my decision to say 'I don't want to be in that lower end, I want to be in the upper end' and, at the end of high school, I ended

up being in the AP courses which now I compare it and it's, it's a whole, there's a

big gap between the CP course and those AP courses … you get that discipline …

teachers take you more serious and that's what you want in life. You want

somebody to take you serious and take your goals and your goals in life more

serious. The more serious people take you, the more they are going to help you.

So I think the mindset is one of the big obstacles.

As discussed in the literature review, the college enrollment rate for Latinos is

improving but as Flor mentioned, in the Latino culture "sometimes you don't get as much

encouragement as other cultures do." For the American culture, she said, "college is your

next step. It's not an option, is not a matter of fact of whether I want to go or if I can go.

It is 'You are going to college because you have no other way out." For Flor, changing

the mindset of Latino parents—"because [parents] were taught that way, they were raised

that way"—about their daughters' future and that college is a possibility, is a game

changer for young Latinas.

Student participants mentioned cultural expectations as another obstacle. Many

parents' expectations of Latina girls are that these must do their household chores such as

taking care of their younger siblings, cleaning, etc., while parents are at work. For some

parents, this is more important than preparing for college. Facing with an amount of

school homework, completing college and financial aid applications, Flor had to choose

between her parents' expectations and her dreams of going to college. In her words,

I had to do my chores but I also had to do work and I also had to do my

application for colleges so I think that was one of the little obstacles that I had

with my parents and we butted headed, butted headed constantly because they

would be like 'You haven't done this, you haven't done that' but I was like at the

moment I didn't really care about how much chores I had to do because I knew I

had to get those applications done before I can do my chores.

Getting good grades is just one part that helps students to qualify to go to college

and get financial assistance. A 3.0 grade point average or higher "automatically entitles

students to money for college in South Carolina. As one school counselor tells his

students, 'Getting good grades is deferred compensation for college. Going to school is

your job right now'" (South Carolina CAN Go to College, 2015, p. 40). But also,

counselors need to discuss with students the additional requirements that admissions

professionals look for in college applications beyond academic performance and

standardized test scores (South Carolina CAN Go to College, 2015). Lack of knowledge

of additional considerations that colleges take into account beyond academic performance

was another problem for student participants. José noted that his mother emphasized

having good grades, which is not a bad thing to do as a parent. José had "a really good

GPA [grade point average] coming out of high school" but, besides that, he had not been

involved in many extracurricular activities or community organizations. José suggested

that, "extra curriculum involvement and community service, giving back, so that's kind

of the factors that you need to look out when you are doing things. Don't always do

things just to look nice but, you know, having a nice GPA." Counselors should encourage

Latino students to align their academic interests with school and extracurricular activities

and volunteer in the community to begin building resumes that stand out for college

admission staff and scholarship purposes.

Another constraint was the lack of understanding and knowledge from students and parents on what to do to go to college. Students did not know what to do about all the paperwork they had to fill out during the application and financial aid processes and they could not ask for help at home. Gloria indicated,

I couldn't really ask my parents because they didn't know so I guess that was my biggest obstacle just kind of being confused or thinking that colleges were going to come to me when I wasn't really looking for them.

Flor also confronted similar issues when she was completing scholarship applications. Her parents did not understand the financial aid process. In addition, they did not understand why Flor pressured them to complete their tax forms in order to meet scholarship deadlines. School counselors should use plain English language (or Spanish language) to communicate the information to students and parents (South Carolina CAN Go to College, 2015).

When it came to think about the opportunities the students had in pursuing higher education, garnering the help of teachers, receiving scholarships (with hard work), being part of a college-going environment at school, study abroad, and opening up new horizons were mentioned. For Angélica, first generation and first in her family to attend college, going to college opened the door to "a whole new world, kind of like, it opens your eyes up to opportunities and different people, different experiences." My personal observations of students thinking about how to answer during the interview was that they had a difficulty realizing that there were opportunities also during that process.

Students realized that going to college might have been more difficult for them. Examples that students commented include: when José did not know he had to prepare for the SAT and ACT tests and had to get up at 5:30 a.m. to ride the school bus from 6:30 a.m. to 8:45 a.m. just to get to school; when Gloria did not get the family support she wanted; when Flor and Angélica understood that the money was not there to pay for college; when Einstein realized that his "English wasn't developed as … as good as other students" but he set himself to "be prepared to spend time doing homework than any other college students … [because] fear of failure." Sofía did not think about difficulties in achieving her higher education dream. Becoming a U.S. citizen in her senior year made her even more determined in reaching that dream, "Difficult? Would be maybe the transition but I knew it was possible, anything was possible. If I wanted it, I was going to go and get it. I knew it so," Sofía said.

Several were the reasons that students provided for wanting to go to college. Parents low or lack of education ignited students a desire to not only graduate from high school but also continue on to college, complete their education, and to make them proud or to close a circle for their parents. Sofía saw how hard life in the United States has been for her parents and how hard they have worked to sustain the family that she was so excited to go to college to help her parents out when she is older and working. For Flor, hearing stories directly from her parents about their love for education and about leaving school and going to work to help with the financial situation of their parents was the reason to go to college and make her parents proud. Gloria wanted to give her future kids a better opportunity in life than she had and to make her parents proud for the all the

sacrifices they made in coming to the United States. "If they were willing to bring us here for a better future, well then, I'm willing to go to school to keep that going," Gloria said.

Relating to people who have succeeded and share similar background and constraints allows young adults to benefit from their experiences (Balfanz et al., 2014). Coming from a poor family, having a role model to look up to also played an important part in Flor's decision as she saw a relative become an engineer in her country of origin, "I have an uncle who's a graduate. He went to school in [my country of origin]. He's an engineer and I think that just that idea … My uncle, he is an engineer, WOW! I think that he was a role model to me." Flor has also set herself to become a role model in her close knit community from which only four are college graduates, "I'm being one of those that are changing the trajectory of where the Hispanic community and where the Hispanic culture is going."

Being a first generation college graduate was a motivation for student participants. Angélica is from a single parent home and is a first generation college student who struggled to pay her first semester but she wanted to "see the brightest side of life … so [she] wanted to go to learn and to have more opportunities in the future." Sofía wanted to "experience what it's like to earn a higher education [degree]."

In addition to their love for learning, passion for helping others and their families was another reason to go to college. Sofía—a psychology major and whose parents did not finish middle school—wants to work in public health to help others after she graduates and to "let them know that anything is possible." José has also a deep love for learning and that was one of the reasons he is in college,

That's why I wanted to go to college. I wanted to learn more. I wanted to know more about math and science and see how much, how hard I can push myself and how much I can excel. If you go to college you are so much more expected to make money and I want to take care of my family, my little brother and my mom, you know, when I grow up. So in order to be more qualified to make money, you have to go to college nowadays so that really motivated me to college too.

School counselors should establish individual relationships with college admission counselors and invite them to their high schools to have general or individual sessions with students (South Carolina CAN Go to College, 2015). Flor contacted college admission officers to establish a personal relationship with them because, in her words, "I knew I was going to need a lot of help so I had to get to know those people that were going to be advocates for my education at those schools."

Self-determination, being self-driven, and focus minded influenced student participants in their desires to go to college. Reflexing on his experience, Einstein is one of those students who are "more in charge of their lives than their parents … I already knew where I wanted to go. My parents had not say because I knew … I was on top of my own … career … path." José recognized his disciplined habits and self-motivation to do what he needs to do to obtain his higher education. Reflecting on comments from peers about the need to slow down, José indicated,

I'm a little bit more disciplined and self-motivated than other people … I'm a lot more motivated to be in the leadership positions, do my best at school than other people … I'm thinking like I only have four years, four years to make the most

out of this experience and so I don't want to waste a single breath and regret of

having not done something that I wanted to do. I want to look back and say 'Yes,

I did everything. There was nothing else I could.' I'm doing a lot of extra things

that I enjoy doing because I don't want to waste that time. So yes, I am really self-

motivated to do things.

The behavior that student participants exhibited correlates with the findings in the

literature about Latino students facing obstacles at an early age and recognizing that their

status, whether socioeconomic or immigration, is an obstacle to becoming productive

adults. As previously indicated, Pérez (2012) recounts how the students developed

resilient behaviors and a deep optimism that assisted them to be successful in high school

and college despite their immigration status and, I must add, socioeconomic status as

well.

 Einstein had a different perspective for his reason to go to college. For him

studying engineering is "a fun hobby" and he went to college not for the "college

experience" but to become the best engineer possible to enjoy himself afterwards.

Programs that are available for low-income students opened opportunities to think

about going to college where that thought had not been cultivated at home. Flor

participated in the Bridges to a Brighter Future at Furman University. According to Flor,

College was word of the day and every summer … I would spend every summer

away and I was at college. I was at Furman University and, you know, just getting

that feeling, you know, I can be here, this can be my school or I can be in some

environment similar to this one. I think that helped get that idea, that picture

helped me get into that picture of me being at a classroom at a college setting so I think that was also one of the reasons.

When it came to family support, students either faced it as a challenge or as an opportunity. Those who faced it as a challenge struggled with their parents' lack understanding of the college-going process, lack of financial resources, or cultural barriers, especially those imposed on Latinas. For some parents, it was more important for their daughters to fill in the 'mother role' of taking care of their siblings and doing household chores while they worked instead of doing the schoolwork or preparing college and financial aid applications. Flor noted,

> There's that discrepancy where my mother would be like girls wash all the dishes, you know, and my brothers they would be able to go watch TV at the time and I would be like, 'No, that's not right' and I think that's something that happened very much very often in the Hispanic home, because boys are able to get away with it because that's how they [mothers] were taught … our mothers were taught that you have to do this, and this, and this and they want to impose that on us.

Flor struggled between her parents' mindset and her desire "to stay on top of the game for school" and the deadlines she had to meet. In her words,

> I think that my parents were supporting, they were understanding but at the same time, once again that mindset, you know, my parents they would be like, I was up at two in the morning and my parents would be like, 'What are you doing?' They were not so understanding about the time but in my mind I was, 'I have to get this done.' That was in my mentality. So I think my parents were encouraging, they

were supportive but at the same time due to them, their lack of understanding of how much I had to put into it, you know, they didn't, I want to say that they didn't support me hundred percent but I can say they supported me to their fullest potential at their state of understanding.

Einstein realized the financial limitations that his parents had and the only support that he was able to obtain was moral and spiritual. Gloria expected more support from her parents in the sense of words of encouragement instead of them "worrying more about how much" as she needed that push from her parents in the same way she "saw other people get." José received the support in the sense that his mother pushed him to do what he needed to do. He knew that he would have to do everything on his own without his mother giving directions or financially supporting him. In José's words,

> She was like 'I can't really help you pay a lot. Whatever you decide, whatever you do, you can go wherever you want but you're going have to pay for it. You're going to have to pay for it out of your own pocket'

Sofía's parents provided support but their understanding of the college-going process in the United States was different from the one in their country of origin Sofía stated,

> They didn't quite understand, like how big of a deal it is. They didn't really realize this is my career, like, this is what I want to do for the rest of my life. So, they did definitely encourage me but they didn't quite understand until I left the house [and they said] 'So wait, why are you leaving? Go to school 8 to 4 and come back.'

Of all the student participants, Angélica received the most support from her mother. According to Angélica, "My mom, she always, always, like there was never an option not to go. She always did say like, 'No matter what' I was going to school." Angélica's mother supported her not just by encouraging her to go to college but also by providing financial support even if that meant working night shift and constantly working overtime.

Students compared their experiences and that of their friends in regular high school courses with their experiences in AP courses and IB program about school messages regarding going to college. All student participants heard positive message about going to college in the AP and IB courses. However, comparing messages in regular courses, José indicated, "Being part of the international baccalaureate program, I heard a lot of positive things. Like I said earlier, [it is] a different atmosphere than a regular high school. They are encouraging to go to college… It's expected." Flor also noted,

> Teachers in the CP courses, they would not say the word 'college' that often or if they did, they would be like, you know, 'If you don't do well now, … How well do you think you're going to do in college?' So I think that has a … similar message but you can take it different ways.

As mentioned previously, counselors ought to make sure Latino students understand which courses will prepare them better for college and should "never discourage a student from applying to a particular school [let alone applying for college]" (South Carolina CAN Go to College, 2015, p. 45). Such discouragement will damage

their self-confidence. On this regard, Sofía made a point about a friend in her school,

> Without wanting, they [(counselors)] would put students down because I had a
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> friend that she wanted to go to college but she didn't take the courses in high
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> school that would get her into college and she was like "Yeah, my advisor said
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> that 'I'm not going go and that's that.'

As indicated earlier, exposing Latino students to the college-going mentality in

the early school years has the potential of developing those resilient behaviors that make

them want to succeed. In addition, it has the potential of improving their knowledge of

college requirements and which courses they will need to take in high school to succeed

in college.

Student participants expressed solidarity and a unison message to U.S. Congress

and South Carolina legislators regarding undocumented students in their pursuit of higher

education. Student participants encouraged legislators to approve the DREAM Act and

in-state tuition for undocumented students in addition to streamlining the FAFSA form.

José summarized individual messages of participants to legislators by recounting the

essence of the *Underwater Dreams* documentary about the dreams and hopes of

undocumented students. The documentary is an "epic story of how the sons of

undocumented Mexican immigrants learned how to build an underwater robot from

Home Depot parts. And defeat engineering powerhouse MIT in the process" (Underwater

Dreams, n.d.). José's take on the film was:

> When you sit down and look at the movie is actually kind of tragic because…they
>
> won the competition, which shows how great of engineers they are, but they

ended up working as caters, they never ended up doing anything robotics related because of their lack of documents.

José also reflected on a part of the film where then Soviet Union's leaders noticed there was a "brain drain losing technical people because they didn't like the area," closed the borders, and did not let people emigrate. José posited,

What the United States is doing is the complete opposite. People want to work here, people want to make the United States better and the United States is like, 'No, bye, we don't want you.' What we're doing is even worse. At least the Soviet Union realized what they're doing wrong so they wanted to keep them in. They wanted to trap them and we are like pushing them away and it just feels like, it's such a mistake on the United States' part to push away these undocumented students just for a piece of paper even though they love this country.

Students had to navigate the college and financial aid application process on their own or with the help of friends who were attending college already. There was no help at home because their parents did not understand the process. In some cases, there was very little help at school because counselors assumed that Latino students knew what to do and that the little information they provided was "self-explanatory" as Sofía's counselor told her. For her, "the whole process to apply to college … it was actually very complicated…you're insecure about how to respond to things" but Sofía was lucky to have a friend who was in college and determined to walk her through the process. In Angélica's case, her counselor just sent the transcripts and "the actual, like writing essays and all the paperwork, I just did that by myself."

In other cases, school counselors helped a lot such were the cases of Einstein and José. José recommended for Latino students to establish good relationships with their teachers noting that they are people too, with families and problems, and "that's where your letters of recommendations are going to come out of." Gloria had the assistance from her TRIO program counselor. TRIO is a federally funded program that provides college engagement and completion outreach and services to low-income people, first generation college students, and people with disabilities (U.S. Department of Education, 2015).

Immigrants are likely to enroll in two-year community colleges in higher numbers than the general population of high school graduates (Erisman & Looney, 2007). In discussing the option of going to community college without any financial aid, four of the students indicated that their families would not be able to afford paying tuition at the community college even if it is less expensive and the other three indicated that it could be a possibility.

Talking about their friends, students noted that they have friends who are an inspiration to them because they are going to college despite "all the odds stacked against you [and] still go," such as José's friend who is attending a local public university. Others talked about the reasons their friends did not go to college or dropped out of college, including not doing academically well and getting pregnant.

Student participants' scholarship essays not only revealed their hardships as immigrants but also the resilient behaviors they developed to be successful in high school in preparation for college. Einstein, for example, thought that an existing gap between

Americans and people like him "would cause problems" for his education; however, he learned that "this gap is only there if you let it be there." In Angélica's words, "being an immigrant in this country is not the easiest thing to be, I could not be more proud to call myself American." Their essays also revealed their love for education; the sense of pride for being Latinos or Hispanics; for being bilingual and cultural bi-literate; for helping both communities: The American and the Latino/Hispanic; and for helping their families and keeping their values. They also recognized how fortunate they are for having the opportunity to go to college as Sofía indicated, "I know there are many Latinos in this wonderful country that may not have the opportunity to go to school, but the last thing they should loose is hope."

Despite the hardships they had to overcome, these students are on their way to become scientists, engineers, teachers, business leaders, social workers, lawyers, and doctors. These jobs will provide them with the opportunity to earn higher incomes and help their communities. On this, José noted,

> Our community has been entrusted with the special opportunity to help our loved ones back home. However, we can't do that by working low-income jobs. The future of our families and our community relies on children…Through education our community will be able to lift itself higher up the social economic ladder, but in order to do that, we must give them these opportunities.

Parents Backgrounds

I had difficulty with parents agreeing to participate as only three mothers agreed to be interviewed. I conducted these interviews in Spanish. All mothers are from poor

families in their country of origin and just one of them is a single mother. Dulce

completed third grade as a child, however, as a grownup, she pursued adult secondary

education and continued studying courses to become a seamstress and later on to become

a teacher. To her disappointment, she cannot work as a teacher in the United States

because she does not speak English and, to help sustain her family, she cleans houses.

Inés left her country fleeing violence and economic uncertainty because "[in her

country of origin] once one is 30 years old, one is worthless." Inés could not finish

college in her country of origin but still wanted a better future for her daughters, one that

she could only provide in the United States. Patricia came to this country after her

husband filed a petition so she could become a legal immigrant. Like a new immigrant,

her opportunities were limited because she could not speak English but eventually she

learned the language just enough to work.

Parents Perspectives and Perceptions

All mothers wanted to provide their children a better future than the one they had.

In a few words, the hopes and dreams of these women are that their children keep on

furthering their education and succeed in life because, as Dulce said, "there's nothing else

like to study." It is important for Dulce that her youngest daughter, the first one in the

family to go to college, earns a higher education degree. Dulce does not want her

daughter to do hard labor like her parents and brothers and that she ends up having "a

decent work." Dulce values education and has tried to learn English but she recognized

the limitations that adults have to learn a new language at an older age. She regretted that

her other children did not pursue higher education and that they preferred to do hard

manual work to earn a living. Like Dulce, Inés also values education and although she was not able to complete her college degree, Inés wants her daughters to further their education to help others. Patricia also wanted her son to further his education after high school so that he would not have to go through the obstacles she and her husband went through in life.

González Sullivan (2007) noted lack of parental education is a factor affecting Latinos enrollment and success in college throughout the United States. This generalization may and may not be applicable to the cases in this study because not only the mothers value education but also they encouraged their children to further their postsecondary education. They also supported their children's decision to go to college by providing financial assistance such is the case of Inés who works 12-hour shifts at night to help her daughter and told her daughter to focus on graduating from college. Dulce provides financial support to pay for her daughter's needs (for example, living expenses while in college) and provides words of encouragement. Patricia provided little support and commended her son for what he has achieved thus far on his own. Patricia regretted her inability to provide advice to her son because she does not speak English well and lacks knowledge about the college going process.

Currently, Greenville County prides itself on its diversity and inclusion in terms of race and ethnicity. In January 2003, influential community leaders launched Vision 2025 to dream "what Greenville could be in the year 2025" (Greenville Forward, n.d.a). Regarding diversity, the goal is that "in 2025, Greenville County public and private sector leaders and residents welcome and integrate all its residents into a unified

community whose diverse members and populations have full equality" (Greenville Forward, n.d.b).

Regarding parents' perceptions of the county schools' environment with respect to Latino students, all three mothers agreed in that their children were in good school environments, they had good teachers, and felt that the high schools were a welcoming place for Latino students. Dulce made the comment, though, that her daughter was afraid to go to school during her elementary school years because the other kids in the classroom did not look like her and she did not speak English at the time. Relationships between parents and teachers or counselors were good, especially during the elementary school years when all three mothers were more engaged in their children's lives. With respect to their perceptions of how their children's high schools worked with Latino students in their pursuit of higher education, two of the mothers agreed on that the school helped their children in that regard. Inés noted that the schools encouraged her daughter to go to college. Patricia indicated that the school counselor helped her son in terms of career counseling so that he could determine what he wanted to study in college. Dulce just limited to say that her daughter was happy at the school.

For these women, family background did not influence the desires of students to go to college. However, from their children's perspectives, in a sense, it did because the students saw how hard their parents worked to sustain their families and they took it upon themselves to excel not only in high school but also in college. Dulce, Inés, and Patricia's comments on why Latinos drop out of high school coincided in that the Latino culture emphasizes the belief that children need to work to help parents sustain the family

financially. "We come from a closed culture," said Dulce, which meant for her that

parents rather have their children working than going to school to have the children closer

to them all the time. To change that mentality, Inés indicated that parents would need to

change the mindset and advice their children to not get too attached to the money and that

education is more important than working at a low paying job for the rest of their lives.

To improve higher education access, Dulce and Patricia concurred in that there

should be more financial aid opportunities, that is, grants and scholarships, for Latinos

that are hardworking students and deserve those opportunities because "the people that

want to study is because they are people that have the ideal to succeed and be someone in

life and they are not vagrants," said Dulce. Patricia also noted that financial aid

information should be more accessible because not all students know where to find the

information or the aid itself.

Inés went further and asked the question about why is it that public higher

education is not free as the K–12 education in the United States? She noted that as an

immigrant she learned quickly that children must be enrolled in the "free" K–12 system

so "why higher education cannot have the same requirement or status as the K–12 when

it comes to paying tuition?" she asked. This brings to light a report from Acción Educar,

an organization from Chile that studied whether or not higher education is free in member

countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The

Sistemas de Financiamiento de la Educación Superior en la OCDE (*Financing Systems

of Higher Education in the OECD*) report noted that higher education costs as well as the

levels and types of financial aid profoundly influence higher education access and equity

(Acción Educar, 2014). OECD's countries fall under three categories: universal free

tuition, free tuition just as public universities, and no free tuition. Only three European

countries were under the universal free tuition: Denmark, Sweden, and Finland. The

United States fell in the "No Free Tuition" category with less than 85% of enrollment in

public higher education institutions (Acción Educar, 2014). Table 11 provides a summary

of OECD countries categorized by free/no free tuition.

Table 11

Classification of OECD Countries According to Whether or Not the Country Provides Free Higher Education Tuition, Postsecondary University Careers

Type of Tuition	Countries with Higher Concentration of Enrollment at Public Institutions*	Countries with Less Than 85% Enrollment at Public Institutions*
Universal Free Tuition	Denmark and Sweden	Finland
Free Tuition Just at Public Institutions	Germany[1], Slovenia, Greece, Luxembourg, Norway[3], Poland[3], Czech Republic[3 4], and Slovak Republic[2]	Austria[2], Estonia[2], Iceland[3], and Mexico
No Free Tuition	Australia, Spain, France, Netherlands, Hungary[5], Ireland, Italy, New Zealand, Switzerland, and Turkey	Belgium, Canada, Chile, Korea, United States, Israel, Japan, Portugal, and United Kingdom

Note. Source: Acción Educar (2014). Sistemas de Financiamiento de la Educación Superior en la OCDE. Retrieved from http://accioneducar.cl/wp-content/files_mf/1418844949EstudioAcci%C3%B3nEducar_FinanciamientoEducaci%C3%B3nSuperiorOCDE.pdf. Reproduced and translated from Spanish to English with permission (A. Cristi, personal communication, June 22, 2015).
* When available, full-time status was used, if not, part- and full-time.
[1] There are certain federal states where students attending public institutions have to pay tuition. Those states are: Bavaria and Lower Saxony.
[2] Students who exceed the minimum career/study duration time or those that have dual degrees must pay tuition.
[3] Despite that tuition at public universities is free, students must pay small administrative costs.
[4] Students in majors that are taught in a language other than Czech must pay tuition in public universities, as well as when they exceed the minimum career/study duration time.
[5] There is a percentage of highly regarded students that year after year are selected by the state to study free of charge (students financed by the state) and they do no pay tuition.

It is worth mentioning that, if the South Carolina Legislature would never consider free tuition at public universities, why not consider graduated tuition rates by which tuition would be set at different levels and students would pay tuition on a monthly basis depending on their economic status (i.e., low, medium, or higher income households). Such case exists in El Salvador, for example, where a private university, Universidad Centroamericana "José Simeón Cañas," has set monthly tuition rates at different levels because the university considers that higher education is a public benefit (Universidad Centroamericana "José Simeón Cañas", 2015). The 2015 monthly tuition rates are as follows:

- Minimum: $93.00

- Intermediate: $119.25, $144.50, $171.00, $197.00, $223.25, $248.50 and $275.00

- Maximum: $301.00

- Optional: $325.50

Tuition rates increase by 3% automatically and annually for students who continue attending based on the rate paid in December of the previous year. In addition, since the 2004 academic year, the university began granting discounted tuition rates to siblings of enrolled students (Universidad Centroamericana "José Simeón Cañas," 2015).

The lack of knowledge regarding college opportunities precluded parents to elaborate on their answers. Dulce limited her answer to the availability of scholarships and the need for students to earn good grades to obtain scholarships. Inés noted that there

are opportunities in general but not all Latino students can take advantage because of their immigration status. Patricia recognized that she did not know about opportunities and just encouraged her son to look for them.

In discussing who has the best opportunities of going to college, Dulce indicated that students who have good grades have better possibilities of going but also recognized that not everyone has the intelligence to go to college. Patricia indicated that American students have more chances of going to college because they know the language and the system. For Inés, students who have legal status have more opportunities to go to college and also those that want to close the educational circle from kindergarten to college. The answers provided did not consider the economic situation of students, that is, being from low or high-income families, as a factor constraining or enabling the ability to go to college.

Erisman (2007) and González Sullivan (2007) identified factors affecting enrollment and success among Latino students in college throughout the United States including lack of parental education, academic preparation, and knowledge of the higher education system. Dulce indicated that mostly the cultural mindset of parents was an obstacle that her daughter dealt with during high school, especially during school field trips because her parents would not let her go. According to Dulce, Latino parents (i.e., fathers) are "machistas" and want to have their children close to them all the time. This, perhaps, may be attributed to the education level of parents in general. Still in college, Dulce's daughter has to deal with the cultural mindset of her father because he requires that she must go home on weekends, although Dulce recognized that her daughter should

be able to "breathe a little bit."

Patricia recognized that her son faced multiple obstacles during his elementary and high school years due to their lack of knowledge of the English language and of the higher education system. During elementary school, she was unable to help him with homework because she did not understand English. She recalled her son telling her several times, "Mom, if I had someone that would have explained to me more, someone that would have advised me better, I would have been more advanced in my studies." Patricia recognized and credited all that her son has done on his own to be where he is now. For her, the lack of the English language was the major hindrance as parent to help her son. Inés indicated that her daughter did not face that many obstacles and talked about the opportunities that she had at the magnet school and, then, in high school. From the very beginning her daughter focused on her studies and that gave her many opportunities and opened many doors and programs in which she participated, recalled Inés.

Advocates Backgrounds

Five American advocates agreed to participate in the study: Lizzie, Renee, Ruth, George, and Olivia. All five are working professionals in the nonprofit, high school, or higher education fields. They learned to embrace diversity from their parents' teachings to respect other cultures or from direct experiences with other cultures either at work or during their college years.

All five have worked with and advocated for low-income students going to college and earning higher education degrees. They have provided opportunities, opened doors, and served as mentors and cheerleaders of low-income students in general. Except

for one, advocates have directly worked with or provided higher education opportunities for Latino students in Greenville County. The narratives portrayed in this section come from their experiences and observations from working with Latino students directly or from observations at different events held at schools.

Advocates Perspectives and Perceptions

Advocates perceptions of the Latino culture include valuing and having a strong sense of family (for example, keeping children close to parents); being hard workers at anything they set to do; families supporting their children and their educational goals; commitment to ideals; dealing with substance abuse and other challenges but not talk about them; and having a strong sense of cultural pride and traditions. Ruth indicated that she was aware of stereotypes of Latino culture and noted, "a lot of the information is permeated with those stereotypes that I think they are not valid and are more an impediment than anything."

Talking about Latino students, Renee noted how hard they work and how they appreciate the opportunity of having an education. In her words,

> I have never seen a population of students work harder than Latino students do and be so excited about it. I mean, I think there's something to be said for coming from an environment where education isn't offered for free and then coming into a place where education is free K–12 education, not higher education, so there is this real appreciation for the opportunity for education that I haven't seen in other cultures so or ethnic groups or racial groups.

Advocates talked about their interest in Latino students attaining higher education

and how they identified with some of the students they have helped to go to college. For example, Ruth talked about how she shares a similar background with a Latina student, "her father [(the student's father)] is a manual laborer. She does not have resources. Mine went to the sixth grade. So I really share a lot [(of the same background)] with some students who want to go to college."

Lizzie recognized the potential that Latino students have by the fact that they are bi-literate, that is, speak English and Spanish, "what happens for bilingual children as they take on another language and realize that, in many respects, the way they use their brains makes them smarter." For Renee, it was her experience with a fellow Latina graduate student's story of hard work to earn her higher education that sparked her interest and the many barriers that Latino students have, especially low-income students, in going to college. It has been a passion for Olivia to be an advocate for all students to go to university and her passion for helping Latino students began when she "started seeing a lot of very worthwhile students, you know, worthy students of going into university. The ones that have lived here their whole life and really consider themselves Americans and the doors are shot [because of their immigration status]."

It is commendable the work that advocates have done to assist Latino students to go to college. For example, they have taken personal time to drive Latino students to university and college tours for students to have that experience; to complete the FAFSA form and find funds to pay for college; to create a vision that college was a reality for them because students did not believe that they could go to college; to facilitate partnerships with local Latino organizations to provide matching scholarships and

coordinate sessions with Latino professionals in which they provided information and encouraged students to go to college. Lizzie developed plans with students to demystify assumptions and change the mentality of teachers that because "English was not their [(Latino students)] first language, they would not have what it needs, what they needed to have to go to university." George has helped with college admission and financial aid workshops targeting underserved populations. From the work that advocates have done, I can conclude that demystifying the assumptions that Latino students make about lack of opportunities is an important tool that counselors need to use.

Reflecting on the perceptions of advocates on how the school or the community in general perceive and treat Latino students, opinions ranged from Latinos do not belong in South Carolina because "policies suggest that" to being mindful of how schools treat people in general to Latinos belong in South Carolina because "if it wasn't for Latino students, [North City High School would] be so far down the list." The fact that the Illegal Immigration Reform Act of 2008 banned undocumented students from attending public colleges and universities and from paying in-state tuition, even though they are in this country at no fault of their own, reflect the sentiment of some South Carolinians towards the Latino community. DACA, however, opened the opportunity for undocumented students to attend public colleges and universities but they must pay out-of-state tuition if they go to a public institution in South Carolina. George indicated that, in general, the Greenville community has led the way with embracing diversity and that the school community can do more to do the same, after all, schools "always want to do better." Ruth summarized her perception as "it just depends on where you are… [some

people] understand that if you don't educate Latino America students, we may end up taking care of them in the form of subsidies of all kinds, if they don't get an education."

Making students feel connected to their schools develops a positive attitude in them to continue attending and graduate from high school. Teachers and school administrators should take the lead to create a welcoming environment for all students (South Carolina CAN Go to College, 2015) and, I will add, more specifically for Latino students. In discussing if Greenville County schools are a welcoming place for Latino students, advocates had different opinions ranging from schools not welcoming Latino students (especially some elementary schools) to schools providing a welcoming environment depending on where they are located. If the school is in an area with a concentrated Latino population, the school is "supportive and, you know, trying, trying to do everything possible for these students to experience success," according to Ruth. However, Renee noted that schools that "don't have very high population of Latino students, they're in smaller ratios, I don't think are as welcoming as other places and, so, special needs of Latino students aren't really supported in the way that they should be supported." Olivia noted that feeling welcomed and belonging to the school is a barrier when Latino students haven't "found teachers or guidance counselors that they can really talked with and bond with…they may think 'Why bother?' because it's tough, I mean, it's really tough." These are needs that schools must become aware of, if they have not done it already, to help Latino students.

From his observations, George mentioned that Latino students might not feel welcome due to "trust issues…or ['does] somebody really understand me' type of

perceptions." In these cases, he indicated that "more work needs to be done" to make Latino students feel more welcomed. Olivia suggested increasing the number of bilingual (Spanish/English) staff in school as a resource not only for students but also for parents to feel welcome and see a familiar face that can talk to them in Spanish as noted in the Greenville County ELL Handbook (Greenville County Schools, 2015).

From my own experience as a member of the School Improvement Council in 2011–2012 at Berea Elementary School, I was glad to see that the school hired a Hispanic school aide to assist the growing Hispanic population at the school and the Berea area. Through the Hispanic American Women's Association (Asociación Hispano-Americana de Mujeres or AHAM), I also learned that a member works at Berea High School, which has a large number of Latino students.

Perhaps, another type of work that needs to improve upon is to provide staff development and/or cultural sensitivity training on the needs of Latino students as identified in one of the objectives and responsibilities of the coordinator of the English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program of the Greenville County School District (Greenville County Schools, 2015). Another strategy would be to challenge teachers and counselors in schools with low ratios of Latino students to begin thinking about Latino students having high aspirations in life and change teachers' low expectations towards them. The school district guarantees that "every effort will be made to ensure no English Language Learner is placed in special education because of language difficulties, rather than due to disability. ELLs who receive Special Education services may also continue to receive ESOL services" (Greenville County Schools,

2015). This commitment is an attempt to eliminate the deficit-based expectations that

schools, in general, have towards Latinos students as discussed in the literature review.

Therefore, it is important to challenge teachers and counselors in schools with low Latino

students ratios "to match the high expectations they had typically reserved for the

students earning the highest grades, including encouraging [Latino] students to enroll in

advanced placement (AP) or international baccalaureate (IB) classes" (Ramsey, 2008).

As noted in the Greenville County Schools ELL Handbook (2015), it is important that the

school district administrators and faculty commit to: (a) continually conduct an

evaluation of the ESOL program to ensure that the district meets its goal of providing

"equal educational opportunities to students who have a primary or home language other

than English and are Limited English Proficient, Non-English Proficient, or Fluent

English Proficient" (p. 14); and (b) place Latino students in gifted and talented programs

and "not discriminate against students on the basis of race, religion, color, disability, sex,

age, national origin, immigrant status or English-speaking status or marital status. All

students have equal access to programs for which they qualify" (p. 12).

When discussing the hopes and dreams of Latino students, the perceptions of

advocates were that students want to give back to the community, have a good education

to support their parents, have their own families, and, in sum, want to be successful in

life. Ruth emphasized the essence of some Latino students in obtaining higher education:

> I have met so many students whose very fiber was to get an education so they can
>
> even give back to other Latino American students…for some, they are so
>
> passionate about education because their family came here looking for a better life

so they want to be well educated and they see that as the key to the, the American dream.

Lizzie linked the commitment of Latino students to education with making their families proud for the sacrifice families make in supporting them through the higher education journey:

Latino students want a good education; they want to be able to live a successful life… They want to be successful because it's a measure of respect and thanks to families who have supported them … they are very, very committed. I feel the Latino kids are dedicated to this goal and that in many respects, they would just jump through many more hoops and go and break down many obstacles and barriers in order to do [it].

Renee presented her perceptions from two different Latino students groups: one that has hopes and dreams of graduating from high school and college. The other group's hopes and dreams do not include graduating from high school and are shattered due to life circumstances. For the latter group, Renee made the following observation:

Because our country has not quickly responded to providing higher education access for Latino students, I see more and more Latino students not care about education because they know is not possible, so why would you try to graduate from high school if you know you can't go to college because you're either not going to be allowed to be admitted, because you're undocumented, or because you know you're not going to be able to afford it. So I've seen a lot who have just given up for that reason or because of their life circumstances.

Olivia also provided a few perspectives according to different groups. One group's hopes and dreams are to have families. For the group that has been in the United States for many years, their hopes are to achieve the "American dream" as they define it. The hopes and dreams of some recent arrivals is to learn English first and stay here or just to go back to their home countries because they came in their mid-teens and do not feel they belong in the United States.

When discussing how well schools in Greenville County prepare students for life after high school, Renee made the point that school counselors are in key positions to prepare students for life after high school. In a broad sense, she noted, schools are not structured to deal with the needs of so many students let alone with those of Latino students because counselors are serving too many students. Because of her knowledge as an advocate of Latino students, guidance counselors called Renee to assist them in several occasions because "they didn't know how to support those [(Latino)] kids."

Governor Nikki Haley's vision is "that every child and adult in South Carolina, *regardless of his/her county of birth, economic circumstances, race*, [emphasis added] etc. will have, and will be able to take advantage of, high quality educational opportunities" (State of South Carolina, 2013). Realizing that the skilled workforce pipeline was shrinking in Greenville County, the business and industry communities joined efforts with school systems, colleges, and universities in the Upstate South Carolina to develop solutions for their workforce needs (Young, 2014). As noted previously, the SC business community is advocating for a change in the education system in the state. During a hearing before the SC Senate Committee on Education,

Senator Nikki Setzler recognized the work the business community is doing through

TransformSC as a great benefit to South Carolina. Senator Setzler also recognized

business' commitment to public education in the state is tremendous, "for the business

community to step up and say 'We are going to work on behalf of public education in the

state" (South Carolina Legislature, 2014). In this regard, George indicated that school

administrators have listened to what colleges and local employers are asking from high

school graduates in terms of skills and knowledge; therefore, they are doing better in

preparing students. Academically, Renee thought that students were better prepared for

life after high school.

Advocates perceptions is that opportunities are growing for Latino students to go

to college because the desire of higher education institutions to increase diversity.

Nonetheless, Olivia summarized college administrators concerns as follows, "every

college administrator I've ever spoken to say… 'Hispanics make such a huge percentage

of our population and it's growing but there's only 2% in my college.'" In fact, for the

high school graduating class of 2013, Latino students' college enrollment was 59.9%

compared to Asians at 79.1%, Whites at 67.1%, and African Americans at 59.3% (Sutton,

2014). Olivia and Renee's perception was that more opportunities exist for Latino

students who are first generation and citizens or legal residents "as long as you do what

everybody else is required to do, you know, getting good grades and doing well in high

school to prepare you for going to college," said Renee. Ruth perspective is that colleges

want Latino students and administrators "will do anything [that they] can to help get them

and I think that's true of many colleges." Lizzie's perception on college opportunities for

Latino students was that they have increased in the last five years but she also posited:

Even though the student might be accepted, are the universities really ready to

accept them or they just giving them an opportunity to come and, then, in the

process, that opportunity doesn't seem as welcoming as it did when it was just on

paper so the paper opportunity was there but some students are making the choice

of not accepting it.

Advocates agreed on how family backgrounds influence significantly on Latino

students' decisions to go to college. Renee put it very clear,

Parents have a huge influence on whether or not you think college is a reality for

you … and the other thing I would say about that is that how parents talk to their

children and how they build their confidence impacts whether or not they will

attend college.

Lizzie and Ruth discussed examples of "families for whom [their children's

earning a college degree] is a threat" because the parents did not complete high school.

Olivia's perception was that most parents want a better life for their children but if they

do not know how the school and college systems work and what is available, parents

cannot advise their children. George posited that if school message to students, in

general, is to value higher education but, at home, Latino students are confronted with an

opposite message, "there's a major conflict and the [Latino] children are feeling like 'I'm

choosing between my family or them or American culture.'" In this regard, Olivia's

recommendation is that schools, more specifically counselors, drive the college-going

message to Latino students and, at the same time, make an effort to discuss the benefits of

obtaining higher education with their parents for the future of the children and their families. Counselors can demonstrate facts and figures on the long-term benefits of earning a college degree to Latino students and their parents to create the college-going mentality. Counselors should not concede to the parental attitude that Latino students should go to work immediately after high school, drop out from it, or give in to the desire of becoming financial independent while in high school (South Carolina CAN Go to College, 2015).

George noted that although college opportunities are growing, there might be cultural barriers that preclude Latino students from going to college such as lack of knowledge of the system or attitudes among parents and telling their children "That's really not what we want you to do." In this regard, some immigrant parents may be predisposed for their children to work and help with the family's current needs than recognizing that they would be better off in the long term with a college degree (Erisman & Looney, 2007). Renee indicated, "the high school community has the opportunity to counteract, counteract the family so if a student's family doesn't support their college aspirations the high school community has the opportunity to positively influence that." Renee also mentioned that special programs targeting underserved students who are not anticipating going to college "can have a tremendous impact. If you are in a high school where that is promoted and talked about, it makes a tremendous difference."

At the high school level, opportunities to assist Latino students are growing. Olivia emphasized that there are plenty of opportunities for students who are first or second generation Latino students who "are bilingual and academically worthy of going

to college" but, as noted throughout this study, these students will need tremendous help with understanding the college and financial aid application processes. Olivia and George indicated that colleges and universities, college Latino student organizations, and local Hispanic non-profit organizations are collaborating with schools to hold college fairs and financial aid sessions targeting Latino students. Lizzie's observation is that Latino students,

> Are being invited to participate in academics and social events that give them opportunities for leadership and, for them, to demonstrate a leadership style that is outside the accepted mainstream … [and] in some ways wakes up some faculty to [say,] 'We've never done it this way but we've always done kind of the White American way.'
>
> This is good news for the future of the Latino community in the county. At the

elementary school level, Lizzie's understanding is that,

> Teachers have learned to see a new side of Latino students and they will look at three or four of them, or five of them that are moving into middle school and they will advance some of the positive conversations, which used to not happen in the past.

Lizzie's understanding validates George's point that teachers need to connect with Latino students. George noted,

> When [teachers are] trying to have more, more of a connection to cultures at school, more of the celebration, we embrace this, this is part of who we are, you're not a guest here. This is your school. We want you to feel that way.

The SC CAN manual includes several barriers that students, in general, face with their college aspirations. Similar to those barriers, advocates noted several obstacles that Latino students confront in their pursuit of higher education: family's vision, lack of support, and culture; immigration status; lack of understanding (in both ways: from students to teacher and from teacher to students); lack of English language; lack of knowledge or understanding of college opportunities and processes; deficit models perspectives from both students and teachers; low self-esteem; negative perceptions of the Latino culture; students not feeling welcome and negative perceptions of self; family's financial needs; cultural and parental attitudes towards education; and low teacher expectations.

Lizzie made two important comments that school officials should be aware of to assist Latino students. First was the negative perception of self-related to the way of thinking that because English is not the first language, Latino students "are not going to be as academically successful as other students." The second comment referred to using a deficit model of thinking that "you really don't have enough money to go [to college] so let's work on it. You do have the brainpower to go but, but the barrier is your money. So let's see what we can do about it."

Lack of confidence or the fear to fail might lead to low self-esteem, which, in turn, prevents students from realizing the potential they have. These attitudes can be changed by discovering, paying attention to the needs of Latino students, and providing appropriate resources at schools to counteract the negative reinforcement of these attitudes that the students may face at home and using positive messages to increase their

self-esteem (South Carolina CAN Go to College, 2015).

It is also important to clarify Lizzie's point that low teacher expectations and teaching practices using deficit models refer to the assumptions that some teachers make about low-income students:

> Because these kids are poor, they just are not going to do very well and, I think, they want to give them the best that they can but their expectations are not equal and high enough to the level of their other students who tend to be from the dominant population.

Some teachers may teach using deficit models based on those assumptions but "if the students do, do well, the teachers tend to be surprised and they will still measure them against the dominant population," noted Lizzie. Based on these perceptions, the question would be whether schools in Greenville County currently apply what the ELL Handbook requires to counteract such assumptions, which is:

> Great care must be taken when an ELL is referred to special education for testing to ensure all the academic/behavioral difficulties are not due to limited English proficiency…. Every effort will be made to ensure no English Language Learner is placed in special education because of language difficulties, rather than due to disability. ELLs who receive Special Education services may also continue to receive ESOL services. (Greenville County Schools, 2015, p. 13)

An important observation regarding the language as a barrier that Olivia noted was that it may not be the spoken English language that Latino students have difficulty with but the academic language that is needed to succeed in the SAT and ACT tests,

"they just really are so weak in terms of reading comprehension." In this regard, teachers

need to pay attention and increase efforts to improve the academic English language of

Latino students, especially those in ESOL programs, since these students are already bi-

literate and bilingual.

The school district has immersion language programs for native and other

students that could be offered at schools with high concentrations of Latino students. The

goals of the language immersion program at the Greenville County School District are:

1. Bilingualism and Bi-Literacy: Students develop a high level of oral and

    written proficiency in the target language and English.

2. Academic Excellence: Students achieve academic excellence in all subjects.

3. Interculturality: Students demonstrate the ability to behave in culturally

    appropriate ways when interacting with people and within the cultures of the

    languages studied. (Hughes Academy of Science and Technology, 2015)

Blythe Academy of Languages and Hughes Academy of Science and Technology

are elementary and middle schools, respectively, of the Greenville County School District

and both schools have Spanish immersion programs. Blyth Academy's program requires

that students K4–5 grades receive instruction in Spanish for half of the day (Blythe

Academy of Languages, 2009a). Blythe is also the only International Spanish Academy

(ISA) school in South Carolina. The Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport of Spain

sponsors the program through the Education Office of the Embassy of Spain in

Washington, DC. ISAs "are part of an international cooperative educational project in

English and Spanish between public schools in the United States and Canada and the

Ministry of Education and Science of Spain" (Blythe Academy of Languages, 2009b).

The cooperative educational project provides resources to affiliated schools such as

support with hiring international teachers. The project's goals are:

- To develop a quality Spanish-English bilingual education program, which will promote high academic standards for all students.

- To provide students with the values of multicultural education.

- To foster international relations and the understanding between cultures.

- To prepare students to achieve high academic oral and written competence in both languages. (Blythe Academy of Languages, 2009b)

Blythe Academy is the feeder elementary school of Hughes Academy. Hughes

Academy's partial immersion program in Spanish uses the "50/50 model in which

students spend 50% of the school day learning math, science, and skills in the second

language. The target language is used 50% of the school day" (Hughes Academy of

Science and Technology, 2015).

Another program that the school district could implement is one similar to the

Georgia Project implemented in Dalton, GA, in the 1990s. In response to the sudden

influx of Latinos in Dalton, former U.S. Congressman Erwin Mitchell led efforts to

improve the education needs of Latino students in the schools. Those efforts resulted in

the creation of the Georgia Project, which established an exchange program for teachers

between Dalton, GA, and Monterrey, Mexico (Davis, 2015). Between 1997 and 2007,

teachers from Monterrey taught at Dalton's schools and teachers from Dalton's school

went to Monterrey to learn about the Mexican culture. Teacher from Dalton and

Whitfield County, GA, participated in the "Summer Institute" exchange program. This program "was designed to help Dalton's teachers improve communication skills in Spanish as well as develop teaching strategies for the bilingual classroom. Teachers also learned about Mexican history and culture as well as the structure of Mexico's educational system" (Davis, 2015). The results of the Georgia Project were extremely positive as,

> Dalton school official immediately observed positive changes in both the academic progress and behavior of the Latino children, especially those with weak English skills. Communication between teachers and parents also improved with the help of the Monterrey instructors, many of whom took the time to work personally with parents… Many participants were deeply moved by their experiences in Mexico, and nearly all said that the opportunity gave them a better understanding of their students. Most attendees also improved their language skills at the institute, making them more effective as bilingual teachers. (Davis, 2015).

Renee and Olivia agreed on another obstacle that Latino students face and that is that they are left to themselves to figure out the college application and financial aid processes. Students do not have the support at home because parents do not understand the processes and some school counselors do not take the time to explain. Olivia also noted that many of the students require assistance with writing college essays because, as indicated previously, they may know the spoken English but they lack the academic English language that is required to write useful college essays. Ruth's perception is that

Latino students are afraid to ask because "of fear of being too aggressive for something" or because it shows weakness, as student participants José and Flor indicated. By not asking, Latino students do not get the assistance they need to complete the processes. Renee made reference to another barrier that low-income Latino students have, which is to pay college fees. For these students, it is difficult to pay out of pocket all fees in addition to the required tuition and books. She also pointed that students need to ask if colleges may waive any or all fees for low-income students or set up payment plans. In this regard, because some Latino students and their parents lack the knowledge of the higher education system and are afraid to ask, counselors at school and colleges need to be proactive and provide that possibility up front to the students. George also mentioned the complexity that college applications and financial aid forms present to some students and, because of embarrassment, students do not ask how to complete the forms. George and Olivia indicated that schools should assist students that are in those situations during workshops throughout the county.

An advocate discussed a college fair that a high school held with international graduate students attending a local university. The graduate students completed their undergraduate studies in Latin American countries. At the fair, Latino students who are unable to go to college in the United States because of financial reasons or immigration status learned about higher education opportunities in Latin America.

Advocates discussed reasons for Latino students to complete or to drop out of high school. Lizzie indicated that students want to finish high school because "they need to support their parents or families and it's not for their future if not for them" while

working two or three jobs and they want to go to college to "stay in power." Another

reason to complete high school is that students want to be a role model not only for their

younger siblings but for their parents too. Renee commented that she was aware of Latino

students who have helped their parents to enroll at Greenville Technical College.

As previously noted, student participants mentioned that they heard about their

parents struggles due to lack of education. In this regard, Renee reaffirmed that Latino

students desire to complete high school "to have a better financial standing than [their]

parents." According to Lizzie, resilient behavior is another reason that Latino students

stay in school. When the school is not a friendly environment, Latino students want to

demonstrate that it is possible to complete high school despite challenges.

Renee, Ruth, and George agreed on that Latino students need advocates or

someone that believes in them to make them feel that someone cares about them. Ruth

noted, "If there's someone at the school level that cares about what they are doing and

how they're doing and where they want to be someday, that makes all the difference in

the world." George emphasized that the connection between a caring adult and a student

has to be long term and not just for a few weeks. Renee summarized that need,

> I've seen so many examples of people achieving despite all of those systems
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> [(systems in place to provide support)] and it's because of one or two things and
>
> one is that they had one and only took one, one person who believed in them, one
>
> person that they wanted to make happy, you know, wanted to please, wanted to
>
> make proud, one person that was, you know, continuing, continually exposing
>
> them to opportunities.

Counselors should engage all students in the college-going mentality, including those at-risk of dropping out and students who are parents, especially Latinas, and explain the options they have (South Carolina CAN Go to College, 2015). Advocates provided reasons for Latino students to drop out of high school. The most often cited reasons were financial needs and lack of academic progress. Lack of academic progress may be the result of frustration and not seeing that education is relevant to their situation at home. George noted of students at risk of dropping out, "if I'm going there to talk about things or just sit in class that don't relate to anything at all that's real to me, that's embraced at home." Frustration may come from realizing that Latino students "want what [schools] have to offer and there's no one at home that is saying 'You've got to stay in school' [and it] is very easy to just drop out and work," noted Olivia. Advocates also mentioned that pregnancy was a reason for Latinas to complete or drop out of high school. The students that go back to complete high school, after having their babies, are heroes to Olivia. Life after high school will be more difficult for teen parents but with hard work, as Flor said, anything is possible.

Advocates were enthusiastic and passionate about working with Latino students. Ruth recognized that they "are going to make a difference in our future…[and are making] significant contributions as leaders on [college] campuses." She mentioned an example of a Latina college student who was also the student government president at a local university and how "she made tremendous contributions to the campus." It gives Olivia "a great joy to do that [(work with Latino students)] and to know that I can help students if that's what they want. I've helped quite a few and it's wonderful, it's

wonderful," she said. Olivia also recalled an example of a DACA high school student who graduated third or fourth place in his graduating class and had to go to a private college in North Carolina because he could not attend a public school in South Carolina. She recalled him being "a very bright young man with a 4.0 average and he 'Aced' a bunch of AP exams." He received a "very healthy scholarship but at the same time his parents, I think, he told me that his parents had to come up with may be $15,000 or something like that and both of his parents are custodians," Olivia said. That student majored in computer sciences and minored in mathematics and now he is working in Washington, DC, according to Olivia. She also mentioned that some undocumented Latino students went back to Mexico after learning about college possibilities there at the international college fair. Those students have completed their college degrees and are contributing to their communities and starting their businesses in Mexico.

Lizzie's reaction to working and helping Latino students to pursue higher education was, "Oh! If it's what they want to do and they want me to do something with it? It's the best thing I could possibly do with my time!" Renee also showed passion for helping Latino students, "I think it's awesome. I love it because they are just so excited about the opportunities." Renee has encouraged, motivated, cheered, and helped Latino students. In many cases, Renee has been the pillar that these students needed to continue when they "get down on their luck and see the barrier that's so insurmountable." George also felt excited about working with Latino students. His approach was that schools and families love the students and want the best for them but the means to reach that "best situation" may be different for both. George indicated, "The only thing that I get out of

your child going to college is satisfaction that I helped the person and, if it's not helpful, I don't feel very good about it at all."

As discussed in the literature review, the Latino population has increased drastically in South Carolina, especially in Greenville County. This sudden demographic change created anxiety in the native population who was not accustomed to see new and different faces. George agreed that teachers might be afraid or nervous to see changes in the student body. Teachers may feel that they are not connecting with Latino students due to cultural differences. Teachers want to help but "they just don't know how in some cases," George said. Olivia recognized that teachers' feelings about working with Latino students depend on where the school is located but overall, she said, "most teachers are perfectly fine" with the exception of those who "just feel some students shouldn't be here or they need to know English." This inferred that teachers working at schools with a high percent of Latino students might feel comfortable working with them compared with teachers working at schools where Latino students are part of the minority group.

Renee's observation was that teachers "feel positively about working with Latino American students." In her words, "I've seen nothing but teachers who, who love it. I've seen a lot of teachers who really want to see their Latino students succeed ... because they are so delightful to work with and so hard-working." Ruth recognized that now there are some Latino teachers in the schools and that was a positive strategy from the school district to help Latino students.

Lizzie's perception is that some educators—especially those who are White, middle class teachers and have been teaching for years—may pursue graduate studies out

of fear of the demographic changes in the student body. According to Lizzie, teachers may choose to complete graduate studies because "they truly want their Latino students to be more successful" and because they "don't know what to do with these children and so [teachers have] to find out what to do." Lizzie also had the perception that,

> Teachers feel like it's an opportunity for them to work with students from other cultures but sad to say the Latino students are the last ones that they choose [to talk about]. They will [rather] talk about their experiences with European children, given the area bringing in so many families from Germany and from France, from China.

In discussing teachers' deficit model practices, Lizzie mentioned that teachers may teach Latino students just because the students are in their classrooms because "they don't have a choice…it's really disheartening to see where these children are placed: physically, academically, emotionally within a classroom" because they don't know English. Lizzie recommended working with teachers who teach using deficit models, assumptions, and stereotypes so that they can "change that fear of the unknown by having students in [their] classes who don't look like the students 10 years ago or more."

In discussing what is life after high school for Latino students, advocates coincided in that the majority of them do not go to college due to circumstances previously discussed. Advocates also noted that Latino students stay in the Greenville community because the Latino culture is family oriented and the types of jobs they go into include landscaping and construction of roads and buildings. Others go into the military with the goal of going to college afterwards. As far as Latina high school

graduates who do not go to college, Lizzie mentioned that, without stereotyping, they might get married because that is deeply rooted in the Latino culture. Ruth indicated that,

[I] would love to see many of them going on for higher education because during these days a high school diploma gets you nowhere. There are very, very, very few jobs, they're minimum wage if there are [any] and they're dead end. They've got to do something in terms of postsecondary education.

With respect to what the community and high schools are doing to help Latino students in their pursuit of higher education, advocates mentioned two prominent Latino organizations that have supported Latino students in their pursuit of higher education: AHAM and Hispanic Alliance. Ruth noted,

I certainly know that the Association of Hispanic Women has for years been doing something that no one else has been doing and that's providing scholarships. I think the work that they do is absolutely monumental and I know for a fact that started many students on a pathway to getting a degree, whereas, if they hadn't gotten a scholarship in their freshman year they might not have pursuit it. I know that high schools supported the recent Hispanic event by the Hispanic Alliance and they suggested students go to that event. It was a very successful event. So in that way they are supporting students in getting resources and information wherever possible.

Lizzie also noted the following about what the Hispanic community is doing to increase opportunities for Latino students,

[AHAM is] doing tremendous job and I think over the last 15-16 years, if you

were to look at the work they had done, they've probably been one of most

influential, influential groups in the community to bring the understanding of

what a college education can do for students but also how they can get their

higher education.

Olivia noted that churches have also played an important part and have worked

with the Latino community. In addition, businesses, like those that are part of Hispanic

Alliance, have recognized "the need to help our [Latino] students," said Olivia.

The SC CAN *College Resource Manual* (2015) for counselors includes

information on how to reach out to students from different backgrounds and needs not

just in term of cultural ethnicities but socioeconomic, physical, and mental. Renee and

George noted that schools have done some things such as providing documents translated

to Spanish to parents. Renee indicated that schools have "done a real good job…in

particularly in the areas of the community that are higher, where there are higher

populations of Hispanic students, they do a good job of having materials translated."

However, they also indicated that schools could certainly do more to support Latino

students like reaching out to the wider Latino community to learn more about their

education dreams. Establishing personal relationships between counselors and students

and showing a genuine interest in their situations are effective strategies when working

with students from different backgrounds, especially with Latino students who may not

have advocates outside the school (SC CAN Go to College, 2015). Counselors should

also work with ESL teachers to make sure that all students are being served, consult with

colleagues when facing a challenging or new situation, and participating in sensitivity

training to learn how to cope with different populations needs (SC CAN Go to College, 2015).

Having mentors that serve as role models and encourage students was another way in which schools can provide support by collaborating with non-profit and business organizations. Olivia mentioned that AHAM volunteers have helped with mentoring and tutoring. From the work that AHAM and Hispanic Alliance are doing, George's perception is that the Latino community is taking more responsibilities "in terms of not waiting for somebody else to do it or relying in that 'that is the school's job.' It's really everybody's job." These collaborative efforts reinforce SC CAN's recommendation that counselors should work also with the community outside the school environment (SC CAN Go to College, 2015).

Lizzie brought up the frustration that some school principals have with respect to undocumented Latino students and their dreams of obtaining a college degree,

> [They] are doing everything they can or are totally frustrated with the fact that they have students who need to be in university but because of their immigration status they're being denied access to universities and they're frustrated and I understand their frustration because I'm frustrated too so we continue to have dialogue, ask questions, and doing things that we can support… I feel, from the conversations I've had with these principals, that they do not really have the understanding. They don't have the support of the district as a whole. They are out there by themselves. Sometimes, I feel like, what I do, I'm out there by myself doing it. I think some of these principals, one in particular, is out there doing it,

he's making a great impact, great inroads with this.

Advocates recognized that increasing higher education access and completion opportunities for Latinos students is essential because "they are here to stay and…they have many, many positive things that they can contribute to the community," said Lizzie. Some of the strategies they provided include: improve access to information; let students know that resources are available; guidance counselors need to become aware of Latino student challenges; invite families to college tours; offer college application and financial aid sessions in Spanish; make intentional opportunities available; change in school system culture (avoid deficit model teaching); and solve the financial aid issue.

Improving access to college information and making intentional opportunities available such as early college courses and special programs to Latino students has the potential of increasing their enrollment rates in AP, IB, and honors courses and programs hence increasing their college attendance opportunities (Ramsey, 2008). Renee discussed the need for school counselors to "become more educated and aware of the challenges that Latino students face. They can become more aware of the cultural barriers, the family barriers that language access [creates]." She also recommended that counselors become knowledgeable of how to provide advice and support to undocumented students in general as their future immigration status may change just like it had happened with past immigration waves. Ruth emphasized the need to solve the financial aid issue "because many of the students that are Latino Americans are coming from lower income backgrounds."

Many were the success stories of Latino students that advocates related during

their individual interviews. Lizzie told the story of two students, one is conducting cancer research at the National Institute of Health in Maryland and another one is majoring in bioengineering and is working with the Congressional Hispanic Caucus for STEM. Ruth told the stories of students who have received AHAM scholarships and have taken leadership positions in their campuses, graduated from college, and continued on to graduate and law schools. At the high school level, Olivia mentioned that recently "of the top 10 students [who graduated from North City High School], nine of them were Hispanic and so, of them, quite a few of them were DACA students too." Renee talked about stories of success in general and summarized as follows,

> I think overwhelmingly the ones that have been enrolled and completed college had a very, very strong desire, belief, intent, and work ethic to do it all of them because all of them faced significant barriers that at any point could have derailed them, all of them had challenges academically, all of them had financial barriers with their families and financial barriers with themselves, you know, like tuition costs going up and not having enough financial aid to pay for that, all of them had family challenges where the family had a hard time adapting to them being in college and all of the dynamics that go around that. … They all experienced those types of barriers but what got them through those was of course the support unit but, even more than that, was just an internal desire to make it through and to keep working even in spite of times, a day, would be disappointed or have a hard time, they kept working through it to get through those challenges and barriers. I see that as being really one of the keys to success.

Trustworthiness

Under the assumption that the stories participants told during the interviews reflect their realities, perspectives, and perceptions, I am confident that the results of this research are precise. Triangulation between the stories among participants (primary data) and those of policy narratives (secondary data) provide credibility to the results. In addition, the use of the adapted interview protocol that Dr. Janet K. López used in her dissertation allowed me conduct the interviews and obtain the information necessary to answer the research question and subquestions. I also used probing questions by restating or rephrasing them to determine any contradictions during the interviews noticing that later responses where similar to previous ones during individual interview processes. Transcribing the interviews personally allowed me to listen many times to what participants said and reflect on the data collected to interpret the results. Cross-referencing responses among participants also provided triangulation check points confirming data collected. The responses that the three mothers provided allowed me to confirm what their respective children had indicated previously and separately. Last, triangulation of primary and secondary data provided additional confidence that the information I present in this dissertation is accurate.

I provide thick descriptions of participants and my perception of participants is that they were thoughtful and truthful in their responses. However, as a researcher, I cannot argue that these results are transferable to other geographic areas or similar populations as the experiences related are unique to the participants in this research. I found that the results are consistent with those of the reviewed literature, the narratives

included in this chapter, and amongst participants' stories; therefore, they are dependable.

Throughout the research, I focused mainly on participants' stories without making any judgments based on my previous experiences in pursuing higher education. I have been impartial in presenting the results allowing participants' stories to take shape. I had no preconceived notion on how the metanarrative was going to evolve. At the end, it became clear how connecting policy narratives with the stories of my participants and inductively analyzing the data shaped the metanarrative.

Summary of Findings and Research Questions

In Chapter Four, I presented the different narratives related to Title 59 of the South Carolina Code of Laws, entitled Education, and higher education in context to accessibility and affordability. I also presented the lack of diversity in board of trustees/visitors and commissions at two and four-year colleges. In addition, I included narratives on higher education and its economic impact, benefits, and changes in the South Carolina economy. I presented educational statistics comparing African Americans, Latinos, and Caucasian students in South Carolina. Unfortunately, I was unable to find disaggregated NAEP data for Greenville County students that would have allowed me to make comparisons at the local level. Last, I included the narratives of students, parents, and advocate participants.

Where pertinent, I briefly related the literature review to the narratives to ensure that what I discovered through the different texts review and interviews were answering the research questions and subquestions. This also allowed me to cross-reference the primary data against the secondary data for trustworthiness. By using Dr. Janet López'

instrument, I was able to establish credibility and dependability (that is consistency of findings) not only between primary and secondary data but also within the primary data collected from participants. Primary data results may not be transferable to other settings in South Carolina because the experiences and perceptions of participants are unique to them; however, the secondary data I collected is significant to the state. I have archived the data collected and established an audit trail. By bracketing out any bias that I may have brought as the researcher, I focused on the participants' experiences and related them candidly without making any judgements.

With the caution that the student participants are probably the exception and not the norm, I can answer the research question of factors constraining or enabling the enrollment of Latino students in college upon graduation from high school in Greenville County. Main factors constraining enrollment include the lack of knowledge on the college and financial aid application processes from both students and parents; cultural/parental expectations of students; self-perceptions of students; families' financial capacity; mindset of both students and parents; lack of family support; parental lack of English language; cultural barriers; pregnancies; and lack of guidance from schools. Factors enabling their enrollment include education institutions increasing willingness to assist; students attitudes (resilient behavior) based on their observations of how their families struggle; positive messages that students hear at schools about being college bound; special programs for underserved students such as Bridges to a Brighter Future; changing higher education institutions attitudes towards increasing diversity; community support, especially the support of the Latino community; bilingualism and bi-literacy;

family support; and financial assistance availability (in some cases).

In answering the first subquestion of academic barriers preventing Latino students from qualifying to enroll in college upon graduation, factors included the poor or lack of the academic English language; poor participation in rigorous courses such the IB and AP programs; and weakness in reading comprehension. In addressing the second subquestion of the circumstances preventing Latino students from qualifying for college enrollment, I can relate back to the lack of additional requirements that college admission officials look at in college applications such as extracurricular activities and community involvement. On the subquestion of how have Latino students overcome barriers to educational achievement, I can say that it is the mindset of students and their resilient behaviors that they developed based on experiences at home, school, and home countries.

The subquestion about the barriers that parents of Latino students who want higher education for their children have encountered brings to light the lack of the English language proficiency and of the higher education enrollment and financial aid processes that precludes them from assisting their children. From Dulce's perspective, it was also the chauvinism ingrained in the Latino male culture that presented some obstacles to her daughter's dream of going to college. Finally, as it pertains to what are public policy-makers doing to promote academic success for Latino students so that they qualify for enrollment in college, at the state level, Rep. Rutherford introduced a bill to provide in-state tuition to undocumented students (unfortunately, the bill did not make it out of committee). In addition, school officials and policy makers have recognized the needs of South Carolina businesses and industries regarding the workforce needs;

therefore, there are educational programs currently in place such as the highly regarded

charter schools and specialized elementary, middle, and high schools in the county that

are preparing the future workforce. What is important is that Latino parents and students

obtain the information on how to apply and what are the commitment requirements that

these schools have not only of the students but also of the parents.

    In Chapter 5, I further analyze the narratives to develop a metanarrative that

encompass legislative and reports, perspectives, and perceptions to advance the

elimination of barriers and the increase of opportunities that Latino students face in

Greenville County, SC, in their pursuit of higher education.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to examine factors enabling or constraining the pursuit of higher education by Latino students in Greenville County, SC. The primary research question addressed barriers and opportunities related to college enrollment upon graduating from high school. The subquestions explored academic hindrances, conditions preventing college enrollment, how students overcame barriers, what are the difficulties that parents faced in helping their children to go to college, and what are policy makers doing to promote Latinos education success. There is a dearth of research on this topic, this demographic segment of the population, and county within the State of South Carolina. The literature review included research in South Carolina on the needs of Latinos in general and mostly on the adult Mexican population.

This study attempted to provide initial research on the constraints and opportunities that Latino high school graduates have faced in their pursuit of higher education in Greenville County. Factors constraining the students include the following: lack of knowledge about the college and financial aid application processes from both students and parents; academic performance or proficiency in the English language; lack of financial capacity; the mindset of both students and parents; cultural/parental expectations; students self-perceptions; family support; parental lack of English language; and cultural barriers. Factor enabling college enrollment include: education institutions willingness to assist; bilingualism and bi-literacy; improving academic performance; seeing struggles as opportunities and positive attitudes (resilient behaviors); family support; financial assistance availability; special programs for underserved

students; increasing diversity; and community support.

These findings confirm and expand upon those included in the literature review. Researchers conducted studies on the topic in other areas of the United States and noted the following constraints (a) parental involvement was a barrier in their children's education; (b) parents do not value education; (c) low academic performance; (d) changes within the labor market to include the type of jobs available; (e) the urgency to increase educational levels; (f) teachers lack knowledge of and exposure to Latino culture; (g) lack of policy makers initiatives leave Latinos at the bottom of their priorities; (h) discrimination; (i) immigration status affects academically prepared Latino students; (j) lack of preparedness of schools to successfully work with the sudden influx of Latino students; (k) placement of Latino students in remedial courses without verified justification (i.e., stereotyping); and (l) lack of financial capacity. In addition, researchers noted opportunities to eliminate those constraints such as (a) having bilingual school personnel; (b) conducting sensitivity training aiming to increase knowledge about the Latino culture; (c) implementing English/Spanish immersion programs; (d) governors making education system more accessible to immigrants; (e) expanding ESOL programs and providing English classes to parents; and (f) increasing accessibility to scholarships and funding from states.

Theoretical Framework Discussion

The theoretical framework that guided this research included the critical race, LatCrit, and segmented assimilation theories. LatCrit bases its tenets in the CRT as the beginning of conversations about racism and injustice. In addition, LatCrit considers

additional issues based on language discrimination, ethnicity, immigration, culture,

characteristics, and sexuality (Daniels, 2011). To these additional issues, I will include

injustices based on deficit models of teaching that may be used at schools with Latino

students. As previously noted, those are racial issues that Latinos face, especially in the

southeast United States where the Black/White binary race relations are prevalent

(McLaughlin González & Raymond Ting, 2008). Perea (1997) proposed that "race

scholarship both inside and outside the law is dominated by a binary paradigm of race"

(p. 1219). LatCrit expands the critical race theory beyond the binary focus.

Proponents of the segmented assimilation theory posit that external factors and

barriers facing immigrant children determine three different patterns of assimilation or

adaptation into the host society (Haller et al., 2011). External factors include education,

host society behavior, and family structure. Barriers include labor market conditions,

racism/discrimination, and behavioral alternatives. The patterns of assimilation are

consonant, dissonant, and selective.

Applying the segmented assimilation theory to the student participants, it is clear

that they assimilated through the selective path. Through this path, parents and children

learn the language and costumes of the host society but maintain their cultural traditions

and language. Although parents of student participants did not bring a high human capital

and did not learn the English language proficiently, the behavior of the host society (in

this case the school system) played an important role and provided foundations for the

student participants to follow the selective assimilation path. At home, families kept the

Latino cultural traditions.

Although, student participants did not express having been the target of discriminatory practices, in José's case, the school did not provide information directly to him on the availability of the rigorous IB program even though he had a good GPA, as he indicated. It was José's friend who was in the IB program that recommended him to look into the program, to which he applied and was accepted. The question that will need an answer is whether teachers or counselors inadvertently practiced some kind of racial bias by not recognizing José as a potential candidate for more rigorous course work based on his grades and GPA.

Analyzing the *Rojas et al. v. Finan et al.* case through the segmented assimilation theory lens, on one hand, I can see how such policies and regulations (as an external factor) may influence an academically talented U.S. citizen student of Latino descent to develop a behavior that could lead to a dissonant assimilation or to develop a resilient behavior to fight for what is right and just leading to consonant assimilation. However, a change in policy that seeks to assist students in such situations may also help them develop resilient behaviors. It could also empower them to overcome additional tribulations in achieving their goal of becoming educated and productive people leading to consonant assimilation.

Analyzing the case through the LatCrit lens, I can see how such policies and regulations have racism and discrimination embedded in them. U.S. citizen Latino students have been punished by the actions of their undocumented parents as if the students were completely at fault. It will take a court case to decide whether the Constitutional rights of these U.S. citizen Latino students born to undocumented parents

have been violated to pave the way for these students and those that will follow to pursue an affordable higher education, something that they have righteously earned. Anticipating different scenarios, higher education institutions could have used a more common sense approach to develop and implement policies considering the status of the students without regard of the immigration status of their parents or implementing a similar out-of-state tuition waiver policy such as the one USC-Upstate implemented.

Discussion of Results

Policy narratives or stories support and sustain decision-making assumptions of complex policy issues (Roe, 1994). Presumably, education should not be a controversial policy issue. It should be a straightforward public policy matter that legislators and administrators should consider in its own right for the benefit, welfare, safety, and security of the local community, the state, and the nation. That is, the greater public investment in education is, the better the outputs and outcomes of educational systems at all levels are, the safer and more secure communities are, and less dependent on public assistance citizens are. However, the facts and evidence I presented in Chapter 4 denote that education has become a polarized issue in South Carolina, where minorities, especially Latino students, have not received enough attention, even with the high influx of Latino students in the state since the 1990s. Perhaps, minorities were simply ignored or forgotten in years past to the point that state legislators, businesses, and industries leaders had to intervene in recent years causing a wakeup call before it is too late in the continued public disinvestment in education at all levels.

The descriptive statistics and narratives I presented in Chapter 4 provide evidence

on the research topic of exploring hindrances and opportunities for Latino students in

Greenville County, SC to further their higher education. Based on the results, I present a

metanarrative to move forward with the elimination of constraints and with the

improvement of factors that enable higher education for Latino students in the county.

In Chapter 4, I briefly addressed the research question and subquestions with key

findings. The main factors constraining college enrollment among Latino students

include the lack of knowledge on the college and financial aid application processes from

both students and parents. The low human capital that parents bring is a hindrance not

only for them but also for their children. Parents are unable to (a) learn a new language,

(b) become acquainted with the college application and financial aid processes, and (c)

explain to their children what they need to do to prepare for college. Latino parents

primarily think about how they are going to provide the critical needs of shelter, clothing,

and food for their immediate families and, in some cases, the extended families they left

in their home countries. Another obstacle is the cultural and parental expectations of

students and mindset of both parents and students. The Latino culture expects different

roles from their sons and daughters. Sons are expected to assists parents with fulfilling

the immediate needs of the family and take on adult responsibilities at a young age. This

is especially true in such cases where the family is large and parents earnings are not

enough to provide for the family. In those cases, parents expect sons to work and bring

money to complement the family's income. Parents expect daughters to help around the

house, especially in the absence of mothers, and do chores like cleaning, cooking,

laundry, ironing, and taking care of younger siblings. In addition to those expectations,

older siblings are also expected to help with the homework of the younger ones as parents do not have the knowledge to help them academically, perhaps, neither in English nor in Spanish. Family expectations confront students dreams of going to college by leaving little time to pursue academic work and, at the high school level, to learn the requirements and intricacies of the college going process thoroughly. In many occasions, by the time students become aware of what is required of them to go to college, it is too late for them to prepare for college.

From experience, it is deeply rooted in the Latino culture that children do not leave the home until they get married. In some occasions, however, sons and/or daughters live with their spouses and own children at their parents' house. It is also deeply rooted that Latino families help each other constantly in good and bad times. As advocates noted, in some instances, parents see their children's academic advancement as threats to the nucleus family and values of togetherness and being there for one another, especially if children leave home to go to college far away. Therefore, it is important for parents to understand the college-going process at an early stage in the education journey. This understanding would allow parents to begin assimilating and embracing the idea that their children may leave home upon graduating from high school or to discuss options about staying close to home while going to college.

Another barrier is students self-perceptions. Because of experiences in their home countries, Latino students may not ask for help because of fear or may not question authority and accept what they are told by teachers, counselors, or school officials. They may be afraid to ask for help because of fear to be perceived as weak or because English

is not their native language. As previously noted, lack of financial capacity is a big obstacle to college enrollment. Realizing the lack of family support and/or the family's financial limitations may work both ways for students, they may just give up their college going dreams because they are afraid to ask for help or they may turn that into an opportunity and search for financial aid and scholarships themselves. Having those conversations early, perhaps as early as middle school, could help students to bring those concerns to school counselors and for counselors to develop goals and plans along with the students. Parental lack of speaking or comprehending the English language reflects on the students inability to discuss with their parents what their goals are beyond high school. This problem is compounded if the students are unable to articulate and translate college entrance requirements and benefits from attending college to Spanish to their parents. Therefore, it is important that schools hire bilingual school counselors to communicate the message directly to both parents and students.

Cultural stereotypes that the community has toward Latinos and the binary way of thinking as far as race relations are obstacles that students face. The sudden influx of Latinos in schools presented a threat to teachers because they were, or still are, unprepared to deal with those cultural changes and to communicate with parents who do not speak English. Faculty now has another population segment to deal with in addition to African Americans but because their lack of knowledge of the Latino culture stereotyping becomes a way of ignoring or setting aside the needs of Latino students. Stereotyping Latinos erects a barrier between school officials and students making the latter feeling unwelcome in a place where the whole person is supposed to feel safe and

be nurtured and developed. Taking down cultural barriers through increasing knowledge

of the Latino culture and its needs is a way to make Latino students welcome and succeed

in schools. Another obstacle, lack of guidance from schools leaves Latino students alone

in their quest of higher education because they do not have the support at home either.

This has gradually changed; however, as advocate participants noted in light that the

school district administrators have implemented college applications and financial aid

workshops.

Factors enabling enrollment include willingness of educational institutions to

assist and increase diversity in the student body, which has improved in recent years.

However, it has been recognized that more needs to be done to increase the number of

Latino students enrolling and completing college degrees. Another factor that students are

capitalizing on is the struggles that many face on a daily basis at home. Their attitudes

lead them to realize that they want to become more educated not only for themselves but

also to help their parents, siblings, and future families. Schools should also capitalize on

students attitudes and communicate to parents that it is worth the sacrifice of four more

years of higher education for the whole family because their children should be able to

earn higher salaries afterwards than with just a high school diploma.

If parents do not reinforce the college attendance message at home, positive

messages that Latino students hear at schools about being college bound will have an

effect on them by starting to think and ask about the requirements. They may be even the

ones that bring the message home that college is accessible and affordable to them as

they hear, read, and see that message constantly at school. Other avenues to get the same

message are special programs for underserved students. Such programs instill in students the goal of going to college upon high school graduation and provide the support necessary to prepare for it and graduate.

For 17 years, through AHAM, the Latino community has supported Latino students in their quest for higher education by providing college scholarships. This support has increased through collaborative efforts with universities by making higher education affordable to students. Three universities in South Carolina, USC-Upstate, Clemson, and USC-Columbia have worked with AHAM and provide scholarships to AHAM's scholarship recipients, provided students meet certain requirements at each university (L. Wiles, personal communication, February 14, 2007; L. Wiles, personal communication, October 31, 2011; M. Wagner, personal communication, November 12, 2013). Other partnerships include conducting college fairs in areas where Latino communities have established in Greenville County.

Being already bilingual and bi-literate present an immediate advantage to employers, as they will not have to expend resources in training future employees to acquire these skills. This is something that higher education administrators should also take advantage of and give the opportunity to Latino students to learn a third language while in college as student participants noted. Family support is another opportunity that certain Latino students have, especially those whose families have already recognized the importance of higher education. This support tends to come from parents who have some college education, who have college degrees already, or who understand that education is important for the future of their children.

Academic barriers preventing Latino students from qualifying to enroll in college upon graduation included the poor or lack of the academic English language; poor participation in IB and AP programs; and weakness in reading comprehension. Students who do not have the support at home from parents because they lack the human capital will need extra support from schools and the higher education community, if necessary. Students lacking the financial wherewithal to pay for college should not be penalized for their high schools' failure to prepare them academically by taking and paying for remedial courses in college themselves. If they have not done it yet, high school administrators, counselors, and teachers should promote and encourage participation among Latino students in rigorous IB and AP courses or similar college courses that charter high schools provide at no cost to the students. In addition, stereotyping Latino students not only affects their self-esteem but also closes the opportunity of being recommended to take AP courses or apply to the IB program.

On the circumstances preventing Latino students from qualifying for college enrollment, again, the lack of knowledge on the additional requirements that college admission officials consider in college applications is a hindrance to college admission. Counselors should emphasize that extracurricular activities and community involvement will enhance Latino students' college applications, thus increasing the likelihood of being accepted and obtain scholarships.

How Latino students overcame barriers to educational achievement? Through the development of a positive mindset and resilient behaviors based on their experiences at home, school, and home countries. Recall that six student participants have visited their

home countries and saw firsthand how their families live in poverty there. This experience allowed them to realize that the opportunities they have in the United States to go to college are unique to them and that, if they were living in their home countries, those opportunities, more likely than not, would not materialize.

Barriers that parents of Latino students who want their children to go to college have encountered bring to light the lack of knowledge of the English language and of the higher education enrollment and financial aid processes. These barriers prevent them from assisting their children at home leaving students to figure out the process alone if they do not have that support at school either. Another obstacle is the male chauvinism that is deeply rooted within the Latino culture. Fathers want their daughters to get married and start having children to keep them close. In some cases, as in Dulce's case, it is the mother that intervenes in order for the daughters to realize their college dreams. This not only presents conflict within the family but also presents an identity struggle for Latino students as they try to live the American way of life while in college but at the same time living the Latino way of life when returning home. In other instances, students bring with them the American way of life into Latino households creating conflict with their parents as these assert that the traditional Latino customs and values must be observed such as asking for permission to go out, having curfews, spending time with family, helping around the house with chores, and taking care of younger siblings.

Last, to promote academic success for Latino students, policy makers tried to help undocumented students by introducing in-state tuition policies. Sadly, this seems to be an issue that the South Carolina Legislature is not willing to address since the bill to impact

the academic success of Latino students did not make it out of committee. On this issue, the legislature authorized higher education institutions to make policies that would provide in-state tuition to undocumented students as the USC-Upstate has done. It is a matter of willingness to do it. Also, if there were Latino representation in higher education boardrooms that would advocate for such policies, those Latinos students would be better off and the state would also capitalize on their future higher earnings following the logic of the Supreme Court's opinion in *Plyler v. Doe*,

> In any event, the record is clear that many of the undocumented children disabled by this classification will remain in this country indefinitely, and that some will become lawful residents or citizens of the United States. (p. 230)

In South Carolina, higher education institutions perpetuate and increase inequalities by closing opportunities to academically talented Latino students whose 'crime' was to be born in the United States to undocumented parents. I question, then, the practice of higher education institutions granting out-of-state tuition waivers by awarding scholarships to highly talented international students whose parents are still living outside the United States. Those institutions need to look at the state's needs and allow the enrollment of and grant in-state tuition to Latino students living in South Carolina and in similar situations as those in the class action suit.

What is at stake here is the financial strain that academically talented undocumented students and U.S. citizen students born to undocumented parents face by paying out-of-state tuition and South Carolina losing future tax revenues from those students. Since students are not allowed to work or practice in South Carolina or because

both groups of students (undocumented and U.S. citizens) have opted or may opt to move

to more friendly states, South Carolina businesses and industries will miss the

opportunity of having a well educate Latino population. The questions are: does the

South Carolina rather have higher short-term revenues in the form of out-of-state tuition

payments from undocumented students who will leave the state upon college graduation

because they cannot work or practice in South Carolina? Or does South Carolina rather

have long term tax revenues from higher salaries earned by current undocumented

students who eventually will become lawful residents or citizens of the United States and

legally work in the state? Also, why is it then that certain colleges and universities are

denying in-state tuition to U.S. citizen students born to Latino undocumented parents?

School officials and policy makers have recognized South Carolina's businesses

and industries needs with regard to the current workforce skills. Programs such as the

highly regarded charter schools and specialized elementary, middle and high schools in

the county are preparing the future workforce. With a growing Latino student population,

it is important that parents and students obtain the information not only to apply to these

schools but also to know the required commitments from both students and parents. This

is highly important because, as discussed in Chapter 4, during the 2012–2015 school

years, the cumulative increase of Latino students in the school district was 15.04% while

African Americans students increased 2.55% and White students decreased by 0.35%.

Whether the latter change in the Greenville County School District's student body is a

trend, it remains to be seen in future years.

In addition to the main findings addressing the research questions, the results of

my research present additional important findings. The most important evidence based finding both, quantitative (descriptive statistics) and qualitative, is the fact that Latino students graduation rates are almost at par (median) or exceeded (average) African Americans. The other fact is that Latino students have outpaced African American students in the mathematics and science NAEP not only in South Carolina but also around its neighboring states and the national level. I said qualitative also because, as noted previously advocate participant Renee indicated that Latino students work harder and are excited about their work.

The second important finding, taken together, includes the Higher Education Study Committee's recommendations and the economic impact of achieving the HESC's 2030 goal. USC researchers determined that Greenville County benefits would be $8.766 billion with a net income of $6.467 billion after deducting educational costs between 2010-2030 (USC, 2009). Therefore, it is in the best interest of Greenville County schools to increase high school graduation rates and for higher education institutions to increase college enrollment and completion, especially of low-income, minority students, including Latinos.

Another finding is the notion that some Latino students and parents have that a high school diploma is sufficient to succeed in college and life. On this, researchers and advocate participants indicated that such way of thinking is an illusion. The country's economic security depends on a highly educated workforce to compete nationwide and globally and "our country cannot afford a high school diploma that shows little and does nothing" (Strong American Schools, 2008, p. 4). As advocate participant Ruth noted,

I know this, they've [(Latino students)] got to have some postsecondary

education. So,…they're going to have to do some kind of career training… One

year at Greenville Tech or another institution in order to get some kind of a job

because during these days a high school diploma gets you nowhere. There are

very, very, very few jobs, they're minimum wage if there are and they're dead

end. They've got to do something in terms of post-secondary education.

In a state where the total minority population is more than one third, higher

education boardrooms are not inclusive of diversity. Out of 16, only six technical college

area commissions had at least a 31% minority membership. Ethnic/racial minorities

represented only 12.20% in colleges and universities boards of trustees/visitors.

Currently, statewide, there is only one Latino member in the Aiken Technical College

area commission. Higher education boards need to have the diversity in the policy-

making bodies so that minorities, especially Latino students, have advocates in the

boardrooms that understand their needs and support policies that will benefit this

population group.

Accessibility, equity, equality, and affordability are the goals of policies and

several efforts that would allow minorities and low-income students earn their higher

education degrees. From the South Carolina Legislature to the SCCHE and the HESC,

those efforts aim at assuring that higher education is available, accessible, and that there

is equality in the opportunity to achieve a college degree for underrepresented groups in

the state. The realization that the economy morphed into one based on knowledge

requiring a highly skilled workforce, made the need to materialize those efforts

expeditiously, should South Carolina is to compete not only domestically but globally. With that in mind, the 2030 goal that South Carolina becomes one of the most educated states will require the increased participation of first-generation and low-income students, including Latinos. As the evidence presented indicates, with Latino students growing in numbers, outpacing African Americans in national assessments tests, and increasing high school graduation rates, they are in a position to contribute to achieve that goal. Efforts should target not only students but also their parents to understand the future implications of dropping out of school, completing high school, going to college, and earning a higher education degree. Such efforts should not only continue embracing the opportunities that community organizations such as AHAM and Hispanic Alliance provide in reaching out to the Latino community but also for the business community to support these volunteer organizations in their individual efforts to make higher education a reality for the Latino youth in Greenville County, SC.

From the information presented in Figure 11 through Figure 17, it is obvious that Greenville County School District officials need to improve their efforts regarding accessibility of rigorous curriculum to minority students, especially Latino students, and on providing information on how to enroll in advanced courses and IB programs, if South Carolina is to reach the HESC's 2030 goal. As discussed before, a student participant learned about the IB program through a peer rather than through his high school counselor or teachers.

As noted previously, Levin et al. (2006b) examined five successful, evidence-based intervention programs that increased high school graduation rates and established

that the First Thing First program had the highest benefit/cost ratio (i.e., 3.54) compared

with the other programs the researchers evaluated. About 39% of students participating in

the FTF program were Latinos (Levin et al. 2006b). If I must compare the FTF to any

high school program in Greenville County that exists with similar characteristics, I will

compare it to the technical/early college charter high schools. Since the majority of

Latino students come from low-income families, encouraging parents and students to

apply to early college high schools, that is charter high schools in the county, will help

them financially by making higher education attainable and affordable. Students, more

likely, will attend only two years at a four-year college since the credits earned at the

early college high school will transfer and students will enroll as juniors in college. To

increase the number of Latino students attending the charter high schools, efforts should

aim at continually and intentionally targeting middle schools in areas where the Latino

population is concentrated in the county and providing the information to students and

parents.

Due to their low income, socioeconomic status, and family oriented culture,

Latino students who participated in this study preferred to stay in South Carolina close to

family and go to colleges or universities that provided the most financial aid packet.

Their size preference varied from a small to a large institution and from a private to a

public one. There is no doubt that making higher education affordable increases

opportunities for low-income students to go to college. Harvard's financial aid initiative

is an example. For Latino students, family is important and some will rather attend a

college in South Carolina than going to a prestigious university just to stay close to their

families. South Carolina colleges and universities should consider providing those types of financial aid packages to Latino students such as the Gamecock Guarantee from USC-Columbia.

Educational institutions (K-16) administrators and faculty must abandon the binary Black/White race relations attitude, if they have not done it yet. Due to the international investment in businesses and industries in the Upstate SC, there has been a community wide effort, in recent years, for Greenville to be a more inclusive community giving the opportunity for all races and cultures to come together and learn from each other at different functions. However, more needs to done to take down barriers for Latino students based on stereotypes. As advocate participant Lizzie noted, some teachers are biased toward international students, other than Latinos, when talking about foreign students. If possible, the school district should implement an exchange program with a Latin American country similar to the one in Dalton, GA, to develop sensitivity in American teachers towards their Latino students and for Latin American teachers to come and teach at Greenville County schools.

In-state tuition policies have affected highly academically talented U.S. citizen students born to undocumented Latino parents. According to state law, undocumented persons cannot establish domicile in South Carolina, even though they are physically living in the state and paying taxes. Therefore, those students cannot provide proof of their parents' domicile to be classified as state residents and receive the corresponding in-state tuition reduction. The class action lawsuit of *Rojas et al. v. Finan et al.* is an example of policies that make it difficult, if not impossible, for those Latino students to

achieve their higher education dreams. Similar to federal policy proposals, the South Carolina Legislature should develop and approve legislation on waiving parental dependence status in certain situations, including examples such as the ones in the class action suit. Another option that colleges and universities have is the adoption of policies that provide in-state tuition classification to students receiving institutional scholarships. An example is the undergraduate assistantship policy that USC-Upstate has implemented.

Student participants discussed how difficult the financial aid application process was for them and, sometimes, they did not know how to answer questions or where to find the information. Since their parents lacked a thorough knowledge of the English language and the college application and enrollment process and because sometimes counselors failed to provide adequate information, the students too often found themselves navigating the process on their own. A revised FAFSA form requiring essential information would assist students and their families to meet FAFSA processing guidelines.

Considering all the variables (i.e., achieving the 2030 goal, Latino students outpacing African Americans in academic performance, increasing number of Latino students in the school district, increasing number of jobs requiring a highly skilled workforce, etc.), if anything, we need to look at the impact that opening the doors for the growing number of Latino students to obtain college degrees has on the economy, as stated by advocate Lizzie. All the elements of the evidence to increase higher education attainment have aligned within the last decade in the state. First, the HESC's plan to achieve the 2030 goal that South Carolina becomes one of the most educated states

provided a path to do just that. Second, the University of South Carolina's report on the impact of achieving the 2030 goal provides an argument to stay on course and continue on that path. Third, through TransformSC, business and industry leaders are committed to transform the educational system in the state and have addressed their concerns to the state legislature of the current statewide PK-12 education system. Fourth, at the local level, the Greenville County School District has made great advances in setting the physical infrastructure at all educational levels and is emphasizing STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) programs at specialized schools. Fifth, local charter schools provide an avenue to reach the 2030 goal and make higher education more accessible and affordable. Now, it is a matter of not only opening the doors to Latino students but also making sure that they remain on course and graduate from high school and college. Bilingualism and cultural bi-literacy are two advantages that Latino students have. Tapping into these abilities provides an advantage to their future employers in a global economy at no additional cost.

The students that participated in this study may be more the exception than the norm among low-income Latino students. For these self-driven, self-motivated, hardworking, and academically prepared Latino students not going to college was not an option. If life circumstances would not have allowed them to go to a university, they would have ended up working to help their parents economically, raise their siblings, or, in Flor's words, "I would've have gone crazy, that's the first one." Although Tati received a partial scholarship, she was not able to obtain the essential supplemental funding to finance her tuition and fees.

The experiences of student participants with school counselors were different. Some counselors greatly influenced the lives of students directly while others just provided basic information, leaving students alone to figure out the nuances involved in achieving a higher level of education. For the latter group, it made it harder since their parents had no knowledge of the financial aid and college application processes. If school administrators have not done it yet, hiring counselors that understand the needs of Latino students is a strategy that they should pursue in order to start the college-bound mentality early and assist students to pursue higher education. Guidance counselors can also start conversations with parents on the long-term benefits of earning a college degree as opposed to the short-term financial gains that the family may have by encouraging their children to work instead of going and graduating from high school and continue on to college. Bilingual and cultural bi-literate counselors can instill and reaffirm what is not talked about and encouraged at home, which is going to college. As Flor indicated, for many American students going to college is a natural path after completing high school since it is reinforced at home and school. As previously noted, that path is not reinforced much in the Latino culture, especially in low-income families. A counselor can also explain other considerations that are necessary during the college admissions process. Having good grades, GPA, and test scores are requirements, as José's parents emphasized, but also having extracurricular activities and volunteer work in the community increase the chances of earning scholarships and college admission.

Recall Governor Haley's vision "that every child and adult in South Carolina, *regardless of his/her county of birth, economic circumstances, race*, [emphasis added]

etc. will have, and will be able to take advantage of, high quality educational opportunities" (State of South Carolina, 2013). I can only hope that Greenville County school teachers are not using deficit model practices in their classrooms with Latino students. To alleviate anxiety of not knowing what to do with the increasing Latino student population among teachers, school administrators should provide cultural sensitivity training if they are not already providing it.

"Where there is a will, there is a way," the saying goes. Business leaders involved in the TransformSC suggested to look at "who are the children sitting in front of us and how do they learn best" (South Carolina Legislature, 2014). With the increasing Latino student population in Greenville County public schools, the school district should make a concerted effort to provide the type of bilingual (inversed) immersion and ISA programs offered at Blythe and Hughes academies and implement the Greenville version of the Georgia Project at schools in areas where the Latino population is highly concentrated. Providing instruction in Spanish with international teachers who understand the Hispanic/Latin American culture while students are concentrating on their English language courses would prepare Latino students to achieve high academic oral and written competence in both languages. Providing an opportunity for American teachers to learn the Hispanic/Latin American culture through an immersion program in Latin American countries would be beneficial by helping to create an understanding of the Latino culture and student needs, which in turn would provide teachers with a better understanding on how to communicate with and teach Latino students.

The student participants were self-driven and self-motivated students. However,

some needed more encouragement from their parents. Also having just one person who believed in them was sufficient for students to develop a resilient attitude that motivated them to do what was necessary for them to go to college. Again, school counselors can be that driving mechanism that Latino students need to believe in themselves. As Gloria indicated, her counselor "was basically the one that believed in me and he was always there for me and I guess he's the one that really always pushed me in to looking for a higher education." In addition, providing information to students about extracurricular activities and college access and leadership programs targeting first generation, low-income students, nominating them, and encouraging them to participate will not only open college opportunities but also provide an environment where students will develop skills necessary to survive the college experience. These were skills that parents were unable to teach and reinforce to the student participants.

A limitation of this study relates to the narrow participation of parents as only three mothers agreed to participate. All three mothers valued education; however, with a limited knowledge of the English language and the financial aid and college application processes, they were unable to assist their children. This left the students to figure out what to do on their own if school counselors did not provide assistance. In addition, it will be difficult, if not impossible, to change the chauvinist attitudes of fathers that is deeply ingrained in the Latino culture. However, I pose that if Latino students are exposed to the college bound mentality early in their school years, they can drive the message home at an early age to develop that mentality at home. Efforts must focus on assisting minority and low-income students to understand the college going process as

early as middle school or even elementary school, including how to academically prepare for college while in high school and complete the necessary applications.

It is evident that the Latino student population is growing in Greenville County schools and that Latinos are academically outperforming African American students at the state level. Therefore, in a state where the binary Black/White state of mind is still prevalent in race relations, efforts of school and higher education institutions officials must focus on Latino students also to achieve the HESC's 2030 goal.

Developing and distributing bilingual reading materials and activity books tailored to each school level will be a start in developing the college-going mentality. Such materials could feature local professionals from different cultures with their stories on how they became professionals in the STEAM field with activities related to those professions for students to complete. For example, the College of Veterinary Medicine at Purdue University has published bilingual activity books for children. The books feature scientists from different parts of the world in addition to STEM activities that students can complete (Purdue University, 2015). The goal will be to develop the college going mentality by presenting real local examples and show how education translates to real professions.

Advocate participants in this study were passionate about working with Latino students. They agreed that Latino students are hardworking students and that they want a good education. However, the slow and low response of the different systems (that is federal, state, and local) to the needs of Latino students has made "more and more Latino students not care about education because they know is not possible," as Renee noted.

The danger exists for Latino students who want to pursue higher education to give up easily when confronted with too many obstacles and not having someone guiding and supporting them. Such a situation could lead to a dissonant assimilation. Advocates also agreed on that the school districts could do more to embrace and assist Latino students by providing welcoming environments where they can flourish, especially at schools where Latino students are not in great numbers. As advocates noted, a welcoming environment exists for Latinos at schools where there is a high concentration of Latinos in the community as opposed to where there is a small number of Latinos. Nonetheless, opportunities are increasing for Latino students as Lizzie indicated, "teachers have learned to see a new side of Latino students."

As business leaders recognized the need for the current school system to be transformed to fulfill the current and future workforce needs of businesses and industries, let us not forget the contribution that Latino students make with their bilingualism and cultural bi-literacy. To reinforce the English language, why not make a concerted effort to support that need with an inversed immersion program at schools with a high concentration of Latino students that need to develop their English academic language? That program would teach some classes in Spanish while other classes will be in English to reinforce the academic language. In the current immersion program, the goal is for students, mostly Caucasians, to learn Spanish, while in the inversed immersion program, the goal would be for Latino students to learn the academic English language as required for successful college completion, while taking certain classes in Spanish and still earn school credits.

Advocates acknowledge that Latino community leaders have responded positively to the educational needs of Latinos students in the upstate South Carolina. Local organizations such as AHAM and Hispanic Alliance are filling the gap of certain needs such as financial and informational, albeit in small portions according to their possibilities. It is extremely important for the community at large to support these organizations because, as advocates Ruth and Lizzie put it, "it benefits us all" and Latinos are here to stay.

The examples of academically successful undocumented and U.S. citizen Latino students previously discussed raised the question of why South Carolina is educating Latino students in the PK–12 school system and then closes the door to them at the higher education level by making it unaffordable. It does not make sense for the state to punish the students whose parents brought them to the United States at no fault of their own, stayed undocumented, wish to go to university, stay close to family, and contribute to their local communities. Similarly, it does not make sense for the state to punish U.S. citizen students born to Latino undocumented parents, wish to stay close to family, and contribute to their local communities. Successful and academically talented undocumented Latino students under DACA that are going to college or are college graduates face the obstacle that State of South Carolina officials will not issue licenses to practice in the student's professional field, according to the South Carolina Office of the Attorney General opinion. The only option those students currently have is to leave South Carolina and move to a state where they can practice upon graduating from college. It is outrageous that South Carolina is allowing this brain drain! Nonetheless, the SCOAG

noted that the state legislature could pass a law to eliminate this obstacle allowing undocumented college graduates under DACA to work in the state. Again, where there is a will, there is a way. If the will is to achieve the 2030 goal and open higher education access to Latino students, the way will be for the legislature to pass such bill as other states have done it or are in the process of doing it.

If the Greenville County community has truly embraced diversity, it should dismiss its binary Black/White approach of addressing social issues. Administrators and faculty in the PK-16 education system should truly pay attention to the needs of Latino students and develop strategies to meet those needs, especially factors constraining their higher education pursuit. With the increasing Latino student population, NAEP scores, and the SAT benchmark findings in mind, Greenville County school administrators and teachers should pay more attention to the increasing Latino student population and its educational progress, as they are part of the current higher education pipeline, if South Carolina is going to achieve the 2030 HESC's goal.

Limitations of the Study

As noted in Chapter 1, this research was exploratory rather than explanatory and an attempt to initiate conversations and conduct further research on this topic, segment of the population, and geographic area of South Carolina. As discussed throughout, several were the limitations to the study. The major limitation was the dearth of research on this topic in Greenville County, SC. Another limitation related to the recruitment of participants. To collect primary data, my proposal included interviewing higher education officials, state legislators, and policy implementers such as admissions and financial aid

staff at public colleges or universities. However, these participants either declined the invitations or did not respond to the invitation to participate. Therefore, their perceptions and perspectives are not included in this study. Another limitation was the low parental participation as only three mothers agreed to have an interview. Collecting data from the Greenville County School District was another limitation due the lack of availability of segregated data on the IB program.

Recasting the Problem: Constructing a Metanarrative and Recommendations

According to Roe (1994), metanarratives "embrace…the major oppositions in a controversy, without in the process slighting any of that opposition….[they are] rather a 'different agenda,' which allows us to move on issues that were dead in the water on their older agendas" (p. 52). Roe posited that, depending on the problem being addressed, contrasting stories and counterstories narratives allow to develop a metanarrative "where one does not exist, or to discover one that is otherwise obscure" (p. 52) or one that arises on its own from the contrasting analysis. Roe also posited that public policy analysis need to include "systematic ways of *analyzing*" (p. 55) narratives, including public policy/reports narratives and people's narratives.

As previously noted, population projections indicate that Latinos are increasing and will be about 31% of the United State population by 2060. In Greenville County, the Latino population increased from 14,283 in 2000 to 41,261 (8.7%) in 2013 (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2000; U.S. Department of Commerce, 2014). Graduation rates among Latino students are increasing and Latinos have outperformed African Americans in national assessment tests.

Based on the primary and secondary data I collected and systematically analyzed, I present a metanarrative that arose on its own. I had no preconceived idea of the metanarrative that I am presenting but as the descriptive statistics, the theoretical framework, the reviewed literature, the research questions and subquestions, and results from the interviews came together at the end of the study, it became obvious to me that, to reach the HESC's 2030 goal, South Carolina will need to educate its Latino students in great numbers. I present the following conjugation of primary and secondary data collected to move the issue of eliminating the constraints and advancing opportunities for Latino students in Greenville County, SC, in their quest of obtaining higher education. The metanarrative I present is as follows:

In theory, Title 59 of the SC Code of Laws (that is, chapters on higher education related to the research topic) requires the fairly representation of minority groups in higher education governance; that higher education be accessible and affordable to all citizens of the State of South Carolina regardless of race and color (among other attributes); and that one of the goals of the higher education system is the achievement of economic growth for the state. However, in practice, minority representation is lacking in higher education governance rooms; higher education has been neither accessible nor affordable to all South Carolinians; and business and industries, hence economic growth, are facing difficulties in finding a highly skilled workforce in the current knowledge based economy. Based on the fact that Latino students have outperformed African Americans in national assessments tests and other educational aspects, the true inclusion of Latinos (and

perhaps other minority groups in addition to African Americans) representation in higher education governance, higher education student bodies, and economic growth efforts will provide an opportunity to increase the chances that the Higher Education Study Committee's goal of becoming one of the more educated states in the nation by 2030 be reached. To achieve this goal, it is necessary that (a) the binary Black/White way of thinking be dismissed completely to be inclusive of all minority groups, including Latinos; (b) higher education institutions be accountable for the equality to access and affordability for low- income and minority students; (c) the South Carolina Legislature establish 'equality of college completion' (not just equality of college access) as a goal and make higher education institutions accountable for achieving it; (d) the South Carolina Legislature consider approving a policy of issuing licenses to college graduates under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program to practice in their professional fields in the state; and (e) that the South Carolina Legislature approves legislation granting in-state tuition to U.S. citizens students born to Latino parents who are undocumented by waiving parental dependence status in those situations. By not giving the opportunity to Latino students of participating in greater numbers in the higher education system and obtaining college degrees, South Carolina runs the risk of paying an even greater price in the future in the form of social program expenditures, incarceration, lower personal and disposable incomes, and lower tax revenues.

This metanarrative includes five main recommendations to move forward with the

issue involving factors constraining and enabling Latino students pursuit of higher education in Greenville County, SC. This metanarrative provides the basis for further research on how traditional policy analysis methods such as economics and quantitative can continue making the case of eliminating factors constraining and advancing factors enabling Latino students higher education attainment for policy makers and administrators who desire hard numbers and disaggregated quantitative data.

I have included additional recommendations throughout this study. The following provides a summary of those recommendations that need to be considered by both schools and higher education institutions. The Greenville County School District and charter schools should: increase retention efforts at the high school level to increase graduation rates among Latino students; implement professional development training on cultural sensitivity and diversity; implement counseling based on data, especially when it comes to counseling Latino students to understand their needs; collaborate and partner with the Latino community to increase the knowledge of the Latino culture, values, and needs among counselors and teachers; increase bilingual personnel and faculty to assist with students and parents and make them feel welcome; treat bilingualism and bi-literacy as an asset, not as a deficiency; aim at increasing Latino students recruitment at charter schools; research and collect data to implement successful programs aiming at decreasing the academic performance gap between Latino and White students; make Latino students aware and emphasize that there are other admissions requirements in addition to having good academic performance to improve their admission and scholarships opportunities; never discourage students to go to college, instead they should work with them early on

to find out their life circumstances, thus, creating a welcoming atmosphere and bond; discuss with Latino parents the future implications for their children if they do not graduate from high school and do not obtain a college degree; increase efforts to partner with local organizations whose mission is to increase college opportunities for Latino students; establish teachers exchange programs with Latin American universities and schools to develop the cultural awareness of teachers while each group (i.e., American and Latin America teachers) is immersed in a different culture; and implement inversed immersion and the International Spanish Academy programs targeting Latino students.

Higher education institutions should: increase diversity in higher education boardrooms so that Latino students have inside advocates for policies aiming at increasing Latino students recruitment, retention, and graduation rates; take advantage of the close knit family values of the Latino culture to recruit as students want to remain close to family; mimic what Ivy League institutions have implemented in terms of adjusting admissions policies to increase recruitment of underserved students; increase efforts to partner with local organizations whose mission is to increase college opportunities for Latino students; scale up the Gamecock Guarantee program to other institutions in the state.

This narrative policy analysis study brought to light the experiences, perspectives, and perceptions of seven hard working, self-driven Latino students, three mothers, and five advocates of Latino students and their experiences with Latino students dreams of pursuing and obtaining a college degree. I weaved these perspectives, perceptions, and experiences with secondary data and descriptive statistics to make a convincing and

compelling case that it is essential that Latino students get not only access to higher education but also the support to graduate from college, should South Carolina be on the path to achieve the HESC's 2030 goal.

Implications and Positive Social Change

The implications of bringing to light the circumstances constraining or enabling Latino students in their pursuit of higher education has the potential of having an effect not only for individuals at the local level but also collectively at the state level. By becoming aware, Latino students and parents can develop a college-going mentality and prepare in advance, academically and otherwise, if they know what the requirements are and that college completion may be accessible and affordable. Resilient attitudes developed along the process also have the potential of positively effecting Latino students and their current and future families in the long term as they examine their experiences, positive or negative, and how they react to them. As student participants told their experiences, I realized that they not only had that resiliency but also the drive to succeed because they had the opportunities to go to college and thrive.

The more knowledge school and higher education institutions personnel have about the needs of Latino students, the more they may be willing to assist them. From personal observations, this has already started, albeit in low numbers, as schools are recruiting bilingual staff and colleges and universities are increasing efforts to recruit Latino students. Scaling up successful college access programs targeting underserved students to assist them academically, mentally, socially, and financially has the potential for them to realize that college is a real possibility, prepare for it, and be successful. Such

programs open up experiences to those students that may not be available otherwise by virtue of their life circumstances.

As noted previously, the State of South Carolina has much to gain with an educated workforce and much to lose with one that has no higher education in terms of tax revenues and competitiveness. Latino students also have much to gain with at least a college degree in terms of higher salaries, improved quality of life, and becoming productive members of society and much to lose with just a high school diploma in terms of future earnings and quality of life.

In practical terms and based on the theoretical frameworks, that is critical race, LatCrit, and segmented assimilation theories, that guided this research, Greenville County, SC, or the State of South Carolina for that matter, has a long way to go as far as dismissing the binary White/Black way of thinking to incorporate Latinos in its social and economic milieu. I say this knowing that efforts to increase diversity in this environment have been in place for many years but there are still forces that are adamant to these demographic and social changes that inevitably will happen.

Conclusion and Final Thoughts

Opening higher education opportunities to Latinos, especially those in low-income groups, has the potential to increase the human and social capital of a growing population that is still new to South Carolina. South Carolinians may be in for a surprise by the economic results that this segment of the population could bring to the state once it reaches higher educational levels. After all, as advocate participant Renee recognized that Latino students work harder, are enthusiastic about their work, and appreciate the

opportunity for education that she has not seen in other ethnic or racial groups.

My interest and goal in conducting this research and answering the research question and subquestions stemmed from my passion for education. My hope was, and still is, that this be the first study of this nature to begin discussions and upon which others can add and improve to make Greenville County, South Carolina, a better and more educated community in which *all students* (emphasis added) have an opportunity to pursue their dreams of earning a higher education degree and become productive members of this community by 2030.

I will close my dissertation with two quotes and relevant statements, "if life chances depend heavily on education, it is important that inequalities in education associated with race, gender, immigrant status, language, and handicap be redressed as a basis for equalizing opportunities in a democratic society" (Levin et al., 2006b, p. 1). Eliminating inequalities in education by making *equality of college completion* (emphasis added) a goal and making higher education institutions accountable for achieving it would stress the meaning of higher education as the great equalizer and democratic institution that allows upward socio-economic mobility for low-income minorities.

The other quote relates to the economic benefits accrued to society by providing equal educational and college completion opportunities,

> A society that provides fairer access to opportunities, that is more productive and with higher employment, and that has better health and less crime is a better society in itself. It is simply an added incentive that the attainment of such a society is also profoundly good economics. (Levin et al., 2006a, p. 22)

As previously noted, achieving the HESC's goal that South Carolina becomes one of the most educated states by 2030 requires that ethnic/racial minorities, including Latinos, become highly educated, hence, more productive members of society. The incentive to provide equal education and college completion opportunities to minorities, including Latinos, would be the economic impact that a highly educated workforce would have on the state's economy in achieving the HESC's 2030 goal. For Greenville County, the net income benefit would be $6.467 billion for the 2010–2030 period (USC, 2009).

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Appendix A: Bracketing Out My Lived Experiences: My Autobiography

I was born and raised in El Salvador into what I consider a middle class family. My father was an accountant at a car dealership by profession but, according to my brothers, he was also an entrepreneur. My mother was an elementary school teacher, who worked with the public school system as well as with the American School in San Salvador. I was seven and 18 years old when my father and mother passed away, respectively. Despite being terminally ill, my mother continued working and studying to further her professional development until she was forced into disability in the mid-1970s. My mother instilled in my brothers and me a passion for education. During school vacations, I saw her constantly working and/or getting some kind of training to improve herself and be a better teacher for her students. I recall seeing her spending long evening hours and weekends grading tests or preparing lesson plans for the following day or week. These memories are very much ingrained in me.

I graduated with honors (i.e., first place in my graduating class) as a secretary from the Colegio Guadalupano in October 1978 at the age of 17. Two days after graduation, I became part of the active workforce. I entered the Universidad Centroamericana José Simeón Cañas (UCA) in early 1979. My mother passed away that year in September. With a secretary diploma, the only degree I was able to pursue at the university was a technical degree in marketing. That degree was my passport to enter the bachelor's in business administration program at the UCA. I was both a full time employee during the day and a full time student at night. I worked as a full time bank officer in the import/export department at the Banco Central de Reserva de El Salvador,

the equivalent to the Federal Reserve Bank in the United States. The bank had a tuition reimbursement program for employees meeting certain requirements such as attendance and having a GPA no less than 7.0 in a scale of 0-10. Because of my situation, I also qualified for a reduced tuition at the UCA. I completed my technical degree but was unable to finish my bachelor's degree because I got married and began raising a family in 1984.

Due to the armed civil conflict in El Salvador during the 1970s and 1980s, thousands of people fled the country in search of better and safer horizons. My husband, son, and I were one of many families that left the country for that reason. We arrived at and lived in New York from the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s. During part of that time, I was a stay-at-home mom taking care of my two children.

When I realized that our life was not going to get any better if I did not do something about it, I began researching ways to improve my English and enrolled in English as a Second Language (ESL) evening classes at LaGuardia Community College in the late 1980s. I also applied to the State University of New York, College at Old Westbury (SUNY/COW) and enrolled in fall 1989. I completed one year of ESL classes at SUNY before I was able to take courses in my declared major, which was Economics. I was also able to transfer credits from the college course work that I did at the UCA in El Salvador. This allowed me to graduate in two years with honors and a bachelor's degree. I was a full time college student at SUNY. At the same time, I was raising my family (my children were one and a half and five years old when I entered college) and working three part-time jobs to help my husband sustain our family. The last thing I wanted to do for

my family and I was to become a part of the welfare system. While at SUNY, I got

involved in the Politics, Economics, and Society student club. This stimulated my interest

even further in public policy and the public sector.

I do not recall being too difficult to navigate the higher education system in New

York despite of not knowing how it worked. Because one of my part time jobs was at

SUNY as a work-study student, I got familiar with a few college staff members and

professors. They became an asset to me because of their willingness to lend a hand and

provided words of encouragement and advice on what I needed to do to complete my

degree. One of the professors asked me if I thought about going to graduate school. I can

only guess that this professor saw a potential in me and for that, I am grateful. I had no

idea what he meant since in El Salvador, at the time I left, women had advanced degrees

very rarely so I did not know what he meant by going to graduate school. After

explaining to me what opportunities my family and I would have if I pursued a graduate

school degree, my interest grew and agreed to look into it. He then introduced me to a

Hispanic professor who provided me with a graduate school and scholarship application

packet in the public policy field. After preparing for and taking the GRE exam, I

completed and submitted the application. I received two acceptance letters for the 1993-

1994 school year: the University of Nevada at Reno and the University of Maryland at

College Park. Both universities offered me full tuition scholarship and graduate stipend to

complete my master's in public policy. I opted to go to Maryland but requested a one-

year delay in entrance for personal reasons.

While in Maryland, I was a full time student and a part time graduate assistant in

the Office of Executive Programs at the School of Public Affairs. I completed my master's degree in public policy with concentration in finance in December 1996.

Education is my passion and after researching both, land-based and online universities, I decided to take advantage of the online setting because it afforded me the convenience and flexibility I needed since I am still working full time. Walden University offered exactly the degree in the field I am working in and passionate about, doctoral degree in public policy and administration, and I enrolled in 2004. As life got in the way, I had to take a leave of absence and many years later after raising my children and watching them walk across the stage to receive their bachelor's degrees from The Citadel and the University of South Carolina, Columbia, I decided that it was time to complete what I started in 2004 at Walden University.

Yes, I faced many challenges in pursuing my education. I learned at such a young age that if no one is looking after you, you must do it by and for yourself without making excuses for not reaching out and seeking assistance. While at SUNY, my challenges included family responsibilities; finances; time (i.e., there were not enough hours in the day to be a mother, wife, student, worker, and friend all-in-one at the same time); the language at the beginning; transportation; work schedules; commuting to work and school; children being sick; lack of babysitters; the climate—Oh, yes! I remember commuting under snowstorms! However, in retrospect, I do not know how I did it but I am glad I did it! My strengths were my family, my persistence and patience, and, above all, my faith in God that gave me the physical and mental endurance to complete that journey.

As the reader might have noticed by now, I have a passion for education. My interest on my dissertation topic arose from my mother's passion to educate the younger generations and my affiliation with a local nonprofit Latino women's organization in Upstate South Carolina. This organization's mission is to share the Latino culture and provide higher education opportunities to Latino students in the Upstate through granting college scholarships. In the last few years, this organization has also sponsored the participation of Latino students in leadership programs for youth in the Greenville community. Through that organization, I learned about the financial needs that academically prepared and ready-for-college Latino students had in my community through general briefings of the scholarships committee members. Comments such as that these exceptional students are doing outstanding in school and deserve a little push from us (i.e., the nonprofit organization) to help them achieve their dreams of going to college make me feel that volunteering with this organization is the right thing to do. It is worthwhile the investment of talent, time, and treasure that we all members put into this cause. Until 2014, I had not been involved with the scholarships committee. During the scholarships review and interview process in April 2014, I read about and heard the stories of these exceptional students first hand: stories of motivation and struggles (but not just financial struggles). The verbal narratives I heard during the interview process motivated me even more to give these unheard and marginalized stories a voice through my dissertation research in a state where race relations and educational improvement discourse is still a binary one, that is in terms of Blacks and Whites. I do not consider my volunteer position as an obstacle to being objective in my research because I do not have

a privileged position over the Latino student who participated in my study. I met some of them for the first time during the 15-minute interview process and at the scholarships award ceremony.

I currently work in a local government organization in the Upstate South Carolina. The organization does not have jurisdiction over any educational system such as public schools or higher education institutions. The organization provides the following public services: administration including internal services such as financial, human resources, procurement, etc.; public safety services such as detention, forensics, records management, and emergency medical services; public works and community development including code enforcement, animal control, engineering, planning, land development, solid waste, etc. Therefore, my professional career did not provide any hierarchical power over participants in this research either.

Appendix B: Interview Protocols

Student Interview Protocol (English)

Interview Protocol Project: Addressing Factors Constraining or Enabling Higher Education for Latino-American Students in Greenville County, South Carolina

Date and time of interview: _____

Place of interview: _____

Interviewer: _____

Interviewee (use a pseudo name): _____ Age: _____

The purpose of this study is to explore and discover the obstacles and opportunities that Latino high school students are facing in pursuing higher education in Greenville County, SC. Your participation is absolutely voluntary and you may withdraw at any time without providing a reason and/or penalty. The information you provide is strictly confidential.

1. Can you tell me about your life in your country of origin?
2. Can you tell me about your schooling experiences in your country of origin?
3. Why did your family decide to come to the United States?
4. How did your family come to the United States?
5. Can you tell me about your schooling experiences in South Carolina?
6. What was the role that your school counselors played in your willingness to obtain a higher education degree?
7. Is your life at home with your family different than your life at school?
8. When did you know that you wanted to go to college?
9. What are the main obstacles or opportunities surrounding going to college?
10. When did you realize that going to college might be more difficult for you than for other students?
11. Why do you want to go to college?
12. What are the steps you are taking to apply to college?
13. What types of courses did you take to prepare you for college?
14. Did your family support and encourage you to pursue a college degree?
15. Where did you get your information about college?
16. Can you tell me what colleges you applied to?
17. What steps did you take in high school to prepare you for college?
18. What types of messages did you heard at your school about going to college?
19. If you had the chance to talk to the U.S. Congress or state legislators, what would you tell them about you and why you should be able to go to college?

20. What courses are you taking currently?
21. Which colleges did you decide to apply to and why did you select those colleges?
22. Who helped you apply to college?
23. Did you understand your options regarding college financial aid?
24. What do you think might have kept you from attending college?
25. Could you and your family afford the cost of attending college without any financial aid?
26. Could you and your family afford the cost of the local community college without any financial aid?
27. Do you know other Latino students who applied to college and if they did or didn't go?
28. Do you have friends who graduated from high school? What did they do after high school?
29. What will you do if you didn't go to college?
30. What would attending college mean to you? What will it mean for your future?

Thank you for your time and cooperation.

Student Interview Protocol (Spanish)

Apéndice H: Protocolo de Entrevista con Estudiantes
Proyecto del Protocolo de Entrevista: Factores que sirven de obstáculos u oportunidades para la educación superior de estudiantes Latinos en el Condado de Greenville, Carolina del Sur.

Fecha y hora de la entrevista: _____
Lugar de la entrevista: _____
Entrevistador: _____
Entrevistado (usar seudónimo): _____ Edad: _____
Escuela: _____

El propósito de este estudio es explorar y descubrir los obstáculos y oportunidades que estudiantes Latinos enfrentan para obtener educación universitaria en el Condado de Greenville, SC. Su participación es completamente voluntaria y usted puede retirarse a cualquier hora o tiempo sin dar ninguna explicación y/o penalidad.

1. ¿Me puede decir cómo era su vida en su país de origen?
2. ¿Me puede decir cómo fueron sus experiencias en la escuela en su país de origen?
3. ¿Por qué su familia decidió venir a los Estados Unidos?
4. ¿Cómo vino su familia a los Estados Unidos?
5. ¿Me puede hablar de sus experiencias en la escuela en Carolina del Sur?
6. ¿Cuál fue el papel que desempeñó su consejero en su deseo de obtener educación universitaria?
7. ¿Es diferente su vida familiar a su vida escolar?
8. ¿Cuándo supo usted que quería ir a la Universidad?
9. ¿Cuáles son los obstáculos u oportunidades principales para ir a la universidad?
10. ¿Cuándo se enteró usted que ir a la Universidad puede ser mas difícil para usted que para otros estudiantes?
11. ¿Por qué quiere ir usted a la Universidad?
12. ¿Cuáles son los pasos que usted tomó para aplicar a una Universidad?
13. ¿Qué tipo de clases tomó que lo prepararon para ir a la Universidad?
14. ¿Tiene el apoyo de su familia para ir a la Universidad?
15. ¿A donde obtuvo usted información acerca de universidades?
16. ¿Puede decirme a cuales universidades usted aplicó?
17. ¿Cuáles fueron los pasos que usted tomó en la escuela superior que lo prepararon para ir a la universidad?
18. ¿Qué tipo de mensajes usted escuchó en su escuela con respecto para ir a la Universidad?
19. ¿Si usted tuviera la oportunidad de hablar con un miembro del Congreso de los Estados Unidos o un legislador estatal, que le diría acerca de usted y por qué usted debería tener la posibilidad de ir a la Universidad?

20. ¿Qué materias esta cursando en estos momentos?
21. ¿A cuáles universidades usted decidió aplicar y por qué seleccionó esas universidades?
22. ¿Quién le ayudó a aplicar a las universidades?
23. ¿Entendió sus opciones con respecto a ayuda financiera?
24. ¿Qué cree usted que hubieran sido algunos obstáculos para que usted no hubiera podido ir a la Universidad?
25. ¿Puede usted y su familia pagar el costo de ir a la Universidad sin ayuda financiera?
26. ¿Puede usted y su familia pagar el costo de ir a un colegio técnico o comunitario sin ayuda financiera?
27. ¿Conoce algún otro estudiante Latino que haya aplicado para ir a la universidad y que haya ido o no?
28. ¿Tiene amigos que ya se graduaron de la escuela superior?¿Qué hicieron ellos después de la escuela superior?
29. ¿Qué haría usted si usted no va a la Universidad?
30. ¿Qué significa para usted poder ir a la Universidad?¿Que significará ir a la Universidad para su futuro?

Gracias por su tiempo y cooperación.

Parent Interview Protocol (English)

Interview Protocol Project: Addressing Factors Constraining or Enabling Higher Education for Latino-American Students in Greenville County, South Carolina

Date and time of interview: _____

Place of interview: _____

Interviewer: _____

Interviewee (use a pseudo name): _____ Age: _____

The purpose of this study is to explore and discover the obstacles and opportunities that Latino-Americans students are facing in pursuing higher education in Greenville County, SC. Your participation is absolutely voluntary and you may withdraw at any time without providing a reason and/or penalty. The information you provide is strictly confidential.

1. Can you tell me about your own background?
2. How important is to you that your child obtain a college degree?
3. Do you provide support for your child to attend college? If so, how?
4. What is your perception about how the high school your children attended felt about Latino students attending college?
5. Did you feel like the high school your child attended was a welcoming place for your child?
6. How was the parent and school counselor/teacher relationship?
7. What are your hopes and dreams for your child?
8. Did you feel like the school helped prepare all students for life after high school?
9. What do you know about Latino students' opportunities to attend college?
10. How much your family background influenced your child's college aspirations?
11. How much the high school community influenced your child's college aspirations?
12. Which students do you feel have the best chance of attending college? Why?
13. What types of barriers or opportunities existed for your child in the high school he or she attended?
14. Did anyone from your child's high school talk to you about college opportunities like how to apply, financial aid, etc.?
15. Why do you think Latino students stay (or not stay) in high school?
16. Did your child have a mentor?
17. Did your child participate in the school's extracurricular activities?
18. How did you feel about the school working with recent immigrant students?
19. How do you think your child's teachers felt about working with Latino students?
20. What did you see your child doing after graduating from high school?

21. What have you done to help your child to go to college?
22. What do you know about what your child's school did to help your child in his/her pursuit of higher education?
23. What do you believe it should be done to improve Latino-Americans students' access to higher education?
24. How did your child's school, in general, treat Latino students?
25. Do you know of any successful Latino student who is enrolled or completed college? Can you tell me more about him or her?

Parent Interview Protocol (Spanish)

Apéndice I: Protocolo de Entrevista con Estudiantes de Bachillerato o Escuela Supperior
Proyecto del Protocolo de Entrevista: Factores que sirven de obstáculos u oportunidades para la educación superior de estudiantes Latinos en el Condado de Greenville, Carolina del Sur.

Fecha y hora de la entrevista: _____

Lugar de la entrevista: _____

Entrevistador: _____

Entrevistado (usar seudónimo): _____ Edad: _____

El propósito de este estudio es explorar y descubrir los obstáculos que estudiantes Latinos enfrentan para obtener educación universitaria en el Condado de Greenville, SC. Su participación es completamente voluntaria y usted puede retirarse a cualquier hora o tiempo sin dar ninguna explicación y/o penalidad.

1. ¿Me puede decir algo acerca de su historia?
2. ¿Qué tan importante es para usted que su hijo o hija obtenga una licenciatura universitaria?
3. ¿Cómo apoya usted a su hijo o hija para ir a la universidad?
4. ¿Cuál es su percepción de la escuela de donde se graduó su hijo o hija con respecto a que los estudiantes Latinos vayan a la universidad?
5. ¿Sintió usted que la escuela fue un lugar donde su hijo o hija se sintió bienvenido(a)?
6. ¿Cómo fue la relación entre los padres y los consejeros y maestros de la escuela?
7. ¿Cuáles son sus sueños y deseos para con sus hijos?
8. ¿Siente usted que la escuela ayudó a preparar a todos los estudiantes para una vida después del bachillerato?
9. ¿Qué sabe usted de las oportunidades que existen para que los estudiantes Latinos vayan a la universidad?
10. ¿Qué tanto influyó su familia en las aspiraciones de su hijo o hija para ir a la universidad?
11. ¿Qué tanto influyó el ambiente de la escuela en las aspiraciones de su hijo o hija para ir a la universidad?
12. A su modo de parecer, ¿Cuáles estudiantes tienen mas oportunidades de ir a la universidad y por qué?
13. ¿Cuáles fueron los obtáculos o las oportunidades que su hijo o hija enfrentó en la escuela?

14. ¿Hubo alguien en la escuela de su hijo o hija que habló con usted acerca de las oportunidades para ir a la universidad, por ejemplo cómo aplicar para ir a la universidad y obtener ayuda financiera?
15. ¿Por qué cree usted que los estudiantes Latinos terminan o no terminan la escuela?
16. ¿Tuvo su hijo o hija un mentor?
17. ¿Participó su hijo o hija en actividades extracurriculares de la escuela?
18. ¿Cómo se siente usted acerca del trabajo que hizo la escuela con estudiantes que han inmigrado recientemente?
19. ¿Qué piensa usted de cómo se sentían los maestros de su hijo o hija al estar trabajando con estudiantes Latinos?
20. ¿Qué pensaba usted que su hijo o hija haría después de graduarse de la escuela?
21. ¿Cómo le ayudó usted a su hijo o hija para ir a la universidad?
22. ¿Qué sabe usted de cómo le ayudó la escuela de su hijo o hija para que él o ella fuera a la universidad?
23. ¿Qué cree usted que se debería de hacer para mejorar el acceso de educación universitaria a estudiantes Latino-Americanos?
24. ¿Cómo trataba la escuela de su hijo o hija a los estudiantes Latinos en general?
25. ¿Conoce usted a algún estudiante Latino que esté en la universidad o haya completado estudios universitarios? ¿Me puede decir algo acerca de él o ella?

Legislators, Advocates, College Staff, and a former U.S. Secretary of Education
Interview Protocol

Interview Protocol Project: Addressing Factors Constraining or Enabling Higher
Education for Latino-American Students in Greenville County, South Carolina

Date and time of interview: _____

Place of interview: _____

Interviewer: _____

Interviewee (use a pseudo name): _____ Age: _____

The purpose of this study is to explore and discover the obstacles and opportunities that
Latino-American students are facing in pursuing higher education in Greenville County,
SC. Your participation is absolutely voluntary and you may withdraw at any time without
providing a reason and/or penalty.

1. Can you tell me about your background?
2. What do you know about the Latino culture?
3. Could you tell me about your interest in Latino-American students attaining higher
   education?
4. How have you provided support for Latino-American students to attend college?
5. Do you think that high schools in Greenville County are a welcoming place for Latino
   students? Why?
6. What do you believe are the hopes and dreams of Latino-American students?
7. Do you feel that schools in the county help prepare all students for life after high
   school? Latino-American students?
8. What do you know about Latino-American students' opportunities to attend college?
9. How much do you believe family background influence students' college aspirations?
10. How much do you believe the high school community influence Latino-American
    students' college aspirations?
11. Which students do you feel have the best chance of attending college? Why?
12. What types of barriers and opportunities do you believe exist for the Latino students
    in high school?
13. What types of barriers and opportunities do you believe exist during the college
    application for Latino students?
14. Why do you think Latino-American students stay (or not stay) in high school?
15. How do you feel about working with Latino-American students in their pursuit of a
    college education?

16. How do you think teachers in the county feel about working with Latino-American students?
17. What do you see Latino-American students doing after graduating from high school doing?
18. What have you done to help Latino-American students achieve their college education dreams?
19. What do you know about what high schools in Greenville County are doing to help Latino-American students in their pursuit of higher education? The community?
20. How did you come to embrace diversity?
21. What cultural sensitivity training do you know that teachers have received in Greenville County schools?
22. What do you believe it should be done to improve Latino-American students' access to higher education in Greenville County?
23. What is your perception of how does the school or community, in general, treat Latino-American students in Greenville County?
24. Do you know of any successful Latino-American student who is enrolled or completed college?

Appendix C: Graphic Representation of Narrative Analysis

First Level
- Legislation
  - Title 59 of the SC Code of Laws: Education
  - Video recorded sessions of the South Carolina Senate Education and the House of Representative Ways and Means committees

Second Level
- Texts related to Title 59 of the SC Code of Laws: Education
  - Regulations and reports from the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education
  - Government and other entities issued reports
  - Additional literature

Third Level
- Reports on higher education in general and South Carolina specific
  - Universities' websites
  - Reports on diversity, retention, access, affordability, college going culture in high schools, financial aid, workforce in the 21st Century, economic benefits and impact, and additional topics related to higher education and Latinos.

Fourth Level
- Audio recorded personal interviews with participants
  - Latino American students
  - Parents of Latino American students
  - Advocates of Latino American students

First group of narratives (Secondary Data)

Second group of narratives (Primary Data)