

BEYOND COLLEGE ENROLLMENT:  
EXPLORING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HISTORICALLY  
UNDERREPRESENTED STUDENTS' PRIOR PARTICIPATION IN COLLEGE  
ACCESS PROGRAMS AND UNDERGRADUATE SUCCESS

by

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## ABSTRACT

### BEYOND COLLEGE ENROLLMENT: EXPLORING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HISTORICALLY UNDERREPRESENTED STUDENTS' PRIOR PARTICIPATION IN COLLEGE ACCESS PROGRAMS AND UNDERGRADUATE SUCCESS

Leslie Allen Williams

College access programs (CAPs) have proliferated throughout the United States to address disparities in college enrollment between White, higher-income students, and racial/ethnic minority and lower-income students. While CAPs have helped to reduce such disparities, considerable challenges remain. U.S. higher education leaders are facing renewed urgency to address this issue because racial/ethnic minority and lower-income groups are now the fastest growing segments of the population, and because educational attainment – acquisition of a college degree – is increasingly important to national economic growth and individual well-being. However, to date, only a few researchers have examined CAPs' influence on participants beyond college enrollment, so there is a knowledge gap regarding the kinds of systems and supports needed to help members of these populations achieve a college degree. This study examines the relationship between

CAP participation and the undergraduate experiences and outcomes of CAP alumni who enrolled in college.

The primary data for this study consisted of individual interviews with 24 alumni from five CAPs in the New York City metropolitan area who subsequently attended college. The CAPs varied by primary funding source. Four to six participants per site were college juniors or seniors, recent college graduates, or individuals who enrolled in college but withdrew before graduating and never returned.

The data highlighted the following key themes and implications: (1) CAPs in this study were largely successful in helping alumni enroll in colleges and universities known to be selective; (2) While the CAPs exerted helpful influences, alumni nonetheless faced serious challenges through the college years, such as meeting academic demands and navigating barriers of bigotry and intolerance that are deeply embedded on many campuses; and (3) CAPs in this study influenced alumni's post-college aspirations, directions, and trajectories regarding career choices, and family and community uplift. Drawing on these findings, this study proposed a model of the psychosocial, academic, and sociocultural resources that appear to contribute to the undergraduate experiences, outcomes, and post-college trajectories of CAP alumni. The study concludes with implications for practice, policy and further research.

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## DEDICATION

I dedicate this manuscript to my ancestors and forebearers whose struggles to carve out the best lives possible in often-challenging circumstances, and commitment to securing the best futures for later generations have inspired me. I have inherited the professional pathway opened by John Zuñiga, my maternal grandfather, and my mother, Delva Zuñiga Williams, who were both educators, and I have inherited my intellectual curiosity and professional commitment from my father, Clive Williams, and my “methodical steadfastness” his father, Santos Williams, who was a carpenter. As a child, I witnessed my parents’ involvement in the struggle for dignity, equity and self-determination, which left an indelible imprint on me.

I also dedicate this manuscript to my nieces and nephews – Troy, Marco, and Nathan Williams Gelobter; Michaela, Jacolby, Elia and M’elani Williams; Daniella Colon; and Luke and Sienna Corless. I hope that you will continue to build on the achievements of previous generations of our families, chart successful futures for yourselves, and serve as inspiration to others.

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for the Chappaqua Summer Scholarship Program (CSSP), a college access program similar to those that are the focus of this dissertation study.

As a result of Mrs. Estrada's advocacy and guidance I was able to attend the Bronx High School of Science and participate in CSSP. At Bronx Science I realized that I was really drawn to the social sciences, especially after taking an economics class with Mr. Moss. At CSSP I benefited most from exposure to the knowledge of the higher education landscape. I am eternally grateful to the many volunteers who organized and ran CSSP, and especially to Mr. & Mrs. Auerbach, Mr. & Mrs. Fitch, Mr. & Mrs. Hartmann, Mr. & Mrs. Kelly, Mr. & Mrs. Sharfstein, Mr. & Mrs. Sobers, and Mr. & Mrs. Ward who hosted me, not only opening their homes to me but also their hearts.

After high school, I chose to attend Connecticut College following a wonderful visit during which I was hosted by Camille Lamont and Nick Burlingham, whose hospitality I am grateful for. I majored in economics and international relations and became involved in a number of campus organizations that sought to improve the experiences of students of color on campus. These experiences heightened my awareness of and concern for higher education access and success for students from historically underrepresented and underserved communities. I am grateful for the education I received there, both inside the classrooms and in the broader campus community and more importantly for the challenge, encouragement, mentorship, nurturing and support I received from faculty, administrators and staff. I am particularly grateful to Dean Grissel Benitez-Hodge, Officer Tony Gallimore, Prof. Rolf Jensen, Dean Chris Koutsovitis, Father Larry LaPointe, Dean Marji Lipshez, Dean Rick McLelland, Prof. Don Peppard, Dean Phillip Ray, Dean Peggy Sheridan, and Ms. Grace Clarke. I would also like to

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I arrived at Teachers College as a mid-career education professional, having spent five years as a middle and high school teacher, advisor and coach at independent schools in New York City, and eight years a director and dean of multicultural affairs at my alma mater, Connecticut College. I enrolled in the Higher and Postsecondary Education program to pursue my interest in college access and success for students from historically underrepresented and underserved communities. I owe a great deal of gratitude to my advisors, first Prof. Gregory Anderson then Prof. Anna Neumann, for guiding me through an incredibly rich learning environment. I am grateful to the brilliant and engaging faculty, Professors Gregory Anderson, Monica Christensen, Kevin Dougherty, Anna Neumann, and Janice Robinson from the Higher and Postsecondary Education program, and Lesley Bartlett, George Bond, Luis Huerta, Aaron Pallas, Doug Ready, Callie Waite, and Lyle Yorks from other programs, whose courses exposed me to ideas, methods and theories, which aided my development as scholar. I am also grateful for the advising, mentorship and support I received from Professors Katie Conway, Janice Robinson, and Erica Walker.

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My study, *Beyond College Enrollment: Exploring the Relationship between Historically Underrepresented Students' Prior Participation in College Access Programs and Undergraduate Success* was inspired by my previous personal and professional experiences, and informed by the ideas, methods and theories I was exposed to at Teachers College. I am eternally grateful to my sponsor, Prof. Neumann, who skillfully shepherded me through the twists and turns of this process, challenging me to meet high standards of rigor while also keeping me focused and motivated. Her knowledge and approach to qualitative inquiry were profoundly influential. I am deeply appreciative of my dissertation committee, Professors Neumann, Katie Conway, Janice Robinson and Sarah Cohodes who read my manuscript, posed engaging questions at my hearing and provided me with thoughtful feedback. Professor Conway's guidance on organizing my data patterns was particularly helpful. I am also extremely thankful to Professor Michelle Knight-Manuel who served as the second reader for my proposal hearing and provided me with invaluable feedback and guidance. Her scholarship on college access for historically excluded and underserved youth had a significant influence on my work.

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## I - INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

College access programs (CAPs) are one approach to addressing the problem of inequitable access to higher education in the United States for underrepresented racial/ethnic minority, low-income and first generation-students (Gándara & Bial, 2001; Fosnacht, 2011; Swail & Perna, 2001; Tierney, Corwin, & Colyar, 2005). These programs seek to support and prepare elementary through high school students from such backgrounds to gain admission and enroll in colleges and universities, thereby increasing their presence on campuses throughout the nation (Gándara, 2002a; Jager-Hyman, 2004; Hagedorn & Tierney, 2002). Also known as college preparation, early intervention or pre-college outreach programs, CAPs are supplementary educational organizations run by a wide range of entities including community and religious groups, colleges and universities, national non-profit organizations, and federal, state and local governments (Gándara & Bial, 2001; Swail & Perna, 2002; Walton, 2009). As such, the organizational structures of CAPs vary widely. Some are stand-alone entities within local communities including housing projects and settlement houses, programs embedded in local or state school systems, initiatives sponsored by colleges and universities, and branches of national non-profit organizations (Gándara & Bial, 2001; Tierney & Hagedorn, 2002; Swail, Quinn, Landis, & Fung, 2012a). Funding sources for CAPs are equally diverse. The federal government is the largest funder and other funders include state and local

governments, individual and corporate donors, and philanthropic foundations (Gándara & Bial, 2001; Swail & Perna, 2001; Walton, 2009).

While CAPs have contributed to significant expansion in access to higher education for targeted racial/ethnic minority and low-income groups with no family history of college attendance over the past fifty years, stubborn inequities in enrollment persist between students from these backgrounds and White, higher-income students whose parents did attend college (Gándara & Bial, 2001; Harper, Patton, & Wooden, 2009; Terenzini, Cabrera, & Bernal, 2001). Additionally, significant gaps in college completion exist between these two groups, with underrepresented racial/ethnic minority, low-income, and first-generation students graduating at much lower rates than their White and more affluent peers (Bowen, Chingos, & McPherson, 2009; MacDonald, Botti, & Clark, 2007; Pennington, 2004; U.S. Department of Education, 2009). My study assumes that CAPs will continue to exist and that they will be increasingly relied upon to help prepare these students to enroll in college and also to support their completion of undergraduate education. However, little is known about whether CAPs contribute to the undergraduate experiences of their alumni, including the journey to graduation, and if they do, how they do so. Even less is known about these issues from the perspective of CAP alumni. These are the issues that my dissertation addresses.

In this chapter I start by depicting the context in which college access programs have arisen by presenting a brief history of unequal access to higher education in the United States. I follow with a discussion of three policy and organizational responses implemented to date for the purpose of remedying this inequality: affirmative action policy, financial aid policy, and college access programs. I then describe the aims and the

limitations of each of these responses and discuss why inequities in higher education access and success have persisted despite them. Focusing in on CAPs, I then explain why, in my own view, as well as from the perspective of others, CAPs are a particularly viable approach to addressing the challenge of inequitable access to higher education for historically excluded and underrepresented students. I also articulate my concerns about the lack of research on whether and how CAP participation influences college experiences and outcomes. I then close with a statement of the purpose and importance of my study, my research questions, the roadmap of this manuscript, and definitions of key terms.

### **Brief History of Unequal Access to Higher Education in the United States**

As a result of a history of discrimination, subjugation, and de jure and de facto segregation, higher education in the United States has been the province of wealthy White male Anglo-Saxon Protestant elites since its establishment four hundred years ago (Anderson, 2005; Karabel, 2005; Lucas, 1994). In response to this historic pattern of exclusion, advocates for racial, ethnic and religious minorities, low-socioeconomic status (SES) communities, and women have long campaigned to expand access to colleges and universities so these groups could also derive the civic, economic, educational, political, religious, and social benefits associated with a college education (Anderson, 1988; Busenberg & Smith, 1997; Du Bois, 1903; Karabel, 2005; Washington, 1901; Wechsler, 2010). In response to these interests and pressures, public officials, higher education leaders, philanthropists, and concerned citizens developed a wide array of policies and

programs to increase higher education opportunities for these groups individually and collectively. While many groups have struggled to gain access to higher education as described above, my study will focus on racial/ethnic minority and low-SES students who are typically the first generation in their families to attend college (I will also refer to these groups as historically underrepresented students).

The middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century marked a major turning point in the struggle for equity, as major efforts opened the doors of America's colleges and universities to more than a token few racial/ethnic minority and low-income students. These initiatives included the G.I. Bill in 1944; Executive Orders 10925, 11246 and 11375, which established affirmative action policy in 1961 and extended it in 1965 and 1967; and the Higher Education Act in 1965 (Bowen & Bok, 1998; Busenberg & Smith, 1997; Lewis, 2004). Concurrent with these legislative and executive initiatives was the creation of programmatic endeavors designed to help prepare Black and, subsequently, Latino/a/x and low-income elementary through high school students for emerging higher education opportunities (Stulberg & Chen, 2011; Swail & Perna, 2002; Weinberg, 1977). These new programmatic initiatives focused on academic and cultural enrichment, standardized testing, college and financial aid applications, and recruiting activities (Gordon & Wilkerson, 1966; McElroy & Armesto, 1998; Walton, 2009). Collectively, these executive, legislative, and programmatic efforts have led to dramatic increases in postsecondary participation rates by students from racial/ethnic minority and low-income, backgrounds (Bowen & Bok, 1998; Howard, 1997; Karabel, 2005; Karen, 1991; Wilson, 1994). Three policy and programmatic responses have been especially noteworthy in supporting college attendance for these historically underrepresented students who are

often first-generation learners: affirmative action, financial aid, and college access programs. This dissertation reports on a study only of the latter, but here, I discuss all three to put this study in context.

### **Policy and Programmatic Responses to Increase Access to Higher Education**

Affirmative action, financial aid, and college access programs emerged or were expanded in the 1960s in response to pressure from Blacks and other disadvantaged groups and their allies to address the severe inequalities that afflicted those communities (Bush, 1999; Karen, 1991, 2002; Katznelson, 2005; Skrentny, 1996). I summarize each below.

#### **Affirmative Action Policy**

Affirmative action policy was established by Executive Order 10925 in 1961 to eliminate discrimination against Blacks in government employment and contracting (Bowen & Bok, 1998; Howard, 1997; Karabel, 2005). The policy was first extended and strengthened in 1965 by Executive Order 11246, which explicitly required that government contractors, including colleges and universities, take steps to increase the employment and enrollment of all underrepresented racial minority groups (Bowen & Bok, 1998; Katznelson, 2005; Lewis, 2004). Affirmative action policy was extended again in 1967 by Executive order 11375, which expanded coverage to women (Busenberg & Smith, 1997). Initially, the policy focused on remedying past racial and gender discrimination by allowing selective colleges and universities to consider

applicants' race, ethnicity and gender in the admissions process in order to intentionally increase enrollment of students from those groups (Bowen & Bok, 1998; Busenberg & Smith, 1997; Lewis, 2004). With this approach, affirmative action played a significant role in increasing higher and postsecondary enrollment for African Americans, Asian Americans, Latinos/as/x, Native Americans and women over its first two decades (Bowen & Bok, 1998; Busenberg & Smith, 1997; Karen, 1991, 2002; Wilson, 1994).

However, by the late 1960s the inclusion of race as an important factor in admissions decisions was being loudly criticized as a violation of the American ideal of merit (Anderson, 2005; Guinier & Sturm, 2001; Karabel, 2005). Legal challenges followed in the 1970s as critics charged that affirmative action policy discriminated against Whites, and the dispute eventually reached the U.S. Supreme Court (e.g. *Bakke*, 1978; *DeFunis*, 1974). Higher education institutions and their supporters responded to these allegations by contending that the consideration of applicants' race or ethnicity contributed to the diversity of their student bodies, which enhanced the overall educational experience (*Bakke*, 1978). While the Court accepted the higher education institutions' position and ruled in *Bakke* (1978) that race conscious affirmative action was legal in order to obtain the educational benefits of diversity, it struck down the rationale that affirmative action could be used to remedy past racial discrimination.

Following the *Bakke* (1978) decision, most selective colleges and universities dramatically scaled back their formerly aggressive efforts to recruit racial/ethnic minority students, causing their enrollment in those institutions to plateau (Harper et al., 2009; Karen, 1991, 2002; Miksch, 2008; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Despite the *Bakke* (1978) ruling, challenges to affirmative action have persisted and eight states have eliminated the



policy by ballot initiatives or executive order (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2018). Furthermore, four additional cases contesting the constitutionality of race-conscious affirmative action policies have reached the U.S. Supreme Court: *Grutter* (2003), *Gratz* (2003), *Fisher I* (2013) and *Fisher II* (2016). In each of these cases, the Court affirmed the use of race-conscious admissions policies to achieve the educational benefits of student body diversity (*Grutter*, 2003; *Gratz*, 2003; *Fisher I*, 2013; *Fisher II*, 2016). Nevertheless, legal challenges continue: Harvard University, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and the University of California are all presently being sued for considering race in their admissions processes (Jaschik 2018a, 2018b; Students for Fair Admissions, n.d.). These ongoing efforts to eliminate or restrict affirmative action have limited the effectiveness of this policy response over the last forty years (Anderson, 2005; Ashkenas, Park, & Pearce, 2017; Harper et al., 2009; Solórzano & Yosso; 2002). Another weakness of this approach is built into its very definition: Affirmative action policies focus only on admissions decisions, so they do little to support development of programs for preparing racial/ethnic minority students for college, nor do they address financial aid (Fosnacht, 2011; Harper & Griffin, 2011).

### **Financial Aid Policy**

The Higher Education Act of 1965 was established by the Johnson administration as a key weapon in its war on poverty, which was designed to improve conditions of racial/ethnic minority and low-income communities. A primary focus of this policy was the provision of financial assistance to reduce or eliminate costs as a barrier to higher education (Gladieux, King, & Corrigan, 2005; Johnstone, 2005; St. John, Hu, & Fisher,

2011). As such, this federal initiative provided grants and work-study funding for students from low-income families and guaranteed loans for students from middle-income families (Heller, 1999; Gladieux et al., 2005). As federal aid to students grew exponentially, access to higher education access increased dramatically for low-income students (Astin & Oseguera, 2004; Gladieux et al., 2005; Gladieux & Swail, 2000).

However, this trend ended in the early 1980s when the federal budget was cut and grant support was reduced (Ehrenberg & Rizzo, 2004; Long & Riley, 2007). A new era of unstable federal funding for student aid was ushered in as allocations ebbed and flowed due to the economic cycle and competition from other discretionary budget items (Gladieux et al., 2005; Long & Riley, 2007). While the federal contribution to student aid has grown over time, grants have increased by a small percentage whereas loans have multiplied exponentially, from 20 percent of federal aid in the mid-1970s to 69 percent in the early 2000s (Fosnacht, 2011; Gladieux, et al., 2005). Loans have replaced grants as the primary form of federal student aid (Hannah, 1996), exceeding \$42 billion in 2001-02, tripling the amount of grant funding provided (Gladieux et al., 2005). The overall purchasing power of student has not kept up with consistent tuition increases over the last several decades (Ehrenberg & Rizzo, 2004).

Additionally, tax policies, which provide relief to students and their families, have become an important component of federal funding for higher education (Fosnacht, 2011; Gladieux et al., 2005). Tuition tax breaks for students and families were introduced by the Clinton administration in the 1990s (Fosnacht, 2011; Gladieux et al., 2005). This policy features income requirements that primarily benefit middle- and upper-class

families who have pressured lawmakers into maintaining them, such that they have come to be viewed by many as an entitlement (Fosnacht, 2011; Gladieux et al., 2005).

While states are also major providers of student financial aid, there is wide variation among them, with some offering large grants for low-income students while others offer grants based on merit, or provide loans (Kipp, Price, & Wohlford, 2002; McGuinness, 2005). Merit aid, a recent and growing phenomenon designed to attract students with higher standardized test scores to state universities, also disproportionately benefits middle- and higher-income students who are more likely to meet this criterion (Heller, 2004, 2006; Long & Riley, 2007; St. John, Musoba, & Simmons, 2003). Much like the federal government, state financial support for higher education has tended to increase during times of economic expansion and decrease during recessions (Callan, 2002; Jaschik, 2009; Kane, Orszag, & Gunter, 2003). The trend of unstable and diminishing state financial support for higher education is expected to continue (Zusman, 2005). Colleges and universities also provide institutional financial aid, but much like states, are increasingly embracing merit aid to attract higher scoring students who can help elevate their position in college rankings (Doyle, Delaney, & Naughton, 2004; Haycock, 2006; Heller, 2006).

Overall, the changing nature of financial aid, which increasingly consists of loans, tax benefits and merit aid, favors middle- and upper-income groups at the expense of those with lower incomes and greater financial need. Thus, the impact of this approach on efforts to increase access to colleges and universities for the latter population has been limited (Astin & Oseguera, 2004; Haycock, 2006; Heller, 2006; St. John et al., 2003). Furthermore, the complex and cumbersome financial aid application process has deterred

responses from low-income students and families, many of whom find it difficult to navigate (Dynarski & Scott-Clayton, 2006; Fosnacht, 2011). The Obama administration recently provided a small increase to the major federal grant program, Pell Grants (U.S. Department of Education, 2009, 2012), though Congressional efforts to simplify the financial aid application process are ongoing (National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators, 2018).

Ultimately, then, financial aid policy is limited in its ability to help historically underrepresented students gain access to and succeed in college because this approach tends only to aid students who are already academically qualified (Cunningham, Redmond, & Merisotis, 2003; Fosnacht, 2011; Perna, 2002, 2005) and thus benefits those from higher-SES backgrounds (Astin & Oseguera, 2004; Haycock, 2006; Heller, 2006; St. John et al., 2003). Like affirmative action, financial aid policy approaches do not focus on preparing students to go through the admissions process, study and learn in college classes, and access various college resources. In brief, they do not prepare students for college access and success. However, these issues are addressed by college access programs, to which I will turn next.

### **College Access Programs**

College access programs (CAPs), a programmatic approach to increasing access to higher education for underrepresented students, emerged in the 1950s (Jager-Hyman, 2004; Swail & Perna, 2002; Walton, 2009). As mentioned previously, CAPs are supplementary educational organizations that explicitly focus on preparing elementary through high school students from racial/ethnic minority and low-income communities

for postsecondary education (Gándara & Bial, 2001; Swail & Perna, 2001; Tierney et al., 2005). These students typically hail from families and communities that have limited or no experience with higher education, including how to gain access to and succeed in college (Conteras, 2011; Fosnacht, 2011; Jack, 2014; Tierney & Hagedorn, 2002). Initially established by religious and community organizations, CAPs, as a programmatic effort, were subsequently established and supported by federal, state and local governments, and by colleges and universities throughout the country (Cunningham et al., 2003; Jager-Hyman, 2004; Walton, 2009).

Since CAPs have been established by such a wide range of entities, there is a great deal of variation among them in terms of goals, programmatic offerings, target population, funding sources, and other features (Hilberg, Joshi, & House, 2009; Swail, 2001; Walton, 2009). What constitutes the full “universe” of such programs is somewhat unknown (Hilberg et al., 2009; Swail et al., 2012a; Tierney & Hagedorn, 2002). Some examples of CAPs include Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID), the Chappaqua Summer Scholarship Program (CSSP), Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR-UP), Puente, Twenty-first Century Scholars Program, and Washington State Achievers Program (Black, Little, McCoach, Purcell, & Siegle, 2008; Chappaqua Summer Scholarship Program, n.d.; Gándara & Moreno, 2002; Standing, Judkins, Keller, & Shimshak, 2008; St. John, Gross, Musoba, & Chung, 2005). Surveys have revealed that the federally-funded TRIO programs account for approximately a quarter of all CAPs (Swail et al., 2012a; Swail & Perna, 2001).

I distinguish CAPs from other college access and success interventions such as Educational Opportunity Programs (EOP) and Summer Bridge (SB) programs, and from

scholarship programs such as the Gates Millennium Scholars that support students *after* their acceptance to and enrollment in higher education. Research has shown that students who received the necessary academic, cultural and social preparation *prior* to college enrollment are more likely to achieve successful experiences and outcomes (Adelman, 2006; Jack, 2014; Perna, 2005; Zweigenhaft & Domhoff, 1993). I also distinguish CAPs from dual enrollment programs, which allow high school students to enroll in credit-bearing college courses.

Despite the variety of these programs, they share much in common. Overall, CAPs seek to increase access to higher education for students from underrepresented groups by offering rigorous courses in academic disciplines; workshops on academic skills such as writing, critical thinking, and standardized test preparation; informational sessions on identifying and applying to colleges, and financial aid; and visits to college campuses as well as to museums and other cultural enrichment activities (Adelman, 2002; Cunningham et al. 2003; Gándara, 2002; McDonough, 2005; Perna, 2005; Schultz & Mueller, 2006). Generally, CAPs are compensatory in nature, as they are designed to make up for low quality schools and schooling, and limited family and neighborhood access to college-going information, resources and networks (Bloom, 2008; Gándara, 2002; Pitre & Pitre, 2009; Walton, 2009).

Research examining the impact of CAPs on college access has produced mixed results. Some studies have shown that CAPs contribute to increasing access to higher education for students from underrepresented groups (Gándara & Bial, 2001; Hagedorn & Fogel, 2002; Horn & Chen, 1998; Moreno, 2002; St. John et al., 2011), while others report only modest effects (Bergin, Cooks, & Bergin, 2007; Domina, 2009; Haskins &

Rouse, 2013; Myers, Olsen, Seftor, Young, & Tuttle, 2004; Seftor, Mamun, & Schirm, 2009). Conflicting reports such as these are likely due to various factors: the wide differences in CAPs with some forms being more effective than others, variations in implementation at program branches, unstable funding, imprecise targeting of students by focusing on those already likely to pursue higher education (vs. those with lower chances of doing so), and uneven staffing levels and quality of evaluations across different CAPs (Tierney et al., 2005; Domina, 2009; Gándara, 2002; Hagedorn & Fogel, 2002; Seftor et al., 2009; Swail & Perna, 2002). Furthermore, CAPs have been criticized for reaching only a small percentage of the students who would benefit from their services due to capacity limitations and rigid admission standards (Haskins & Rouse, 2013; Loza, 2003; Venezia & Rainwater, 2007). My own reading of the research and related commentaries is that while some CAPs appear to work well in preparing underrepresented students for the college application process, entry experience, and persistence through graduation, others do not. My study contributes to the extant research by highlighting specific elements of CAPs that contribute to successful outcomes for their participants.

Despite inconclusive findings regarding whether they are effectively realizing their missions, CAPs have grown in number. This is largely due to the fact that CAPs are seen as a race-neutral alternative to affirmative action because they seek to increase access to higher education for underrepresented racial/ethnic minorities while also serving low-income students, which includes Whites (Gándara, 2002a; Oakes, Rogers, Lipton, & Morrell, 2002; Yonezawa, Jones, & Mehan, 2002; U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, 2003). In fact, states such as California, Florida, Texas, and Washington, which have eliminated or limited the use of race-conscious

affirmative action in college admissions decisions, have either employed or considered employing CAPs to help prepare underrepresented racial/ethnic minority students for entry into their selective public colleges and universities (Gándara, 2005; Kaufmann, 2007; Moreno, 2002; Orfield, Marin, Flores, & Garces, 2007; Tienda, Leicht, Sullivan, Maltese, & Lloyd, 2003). Given this landscape and the reality that schools attended by predominantly racial/ethnic minority and low-income students often lack the academic courses and advising needed to prepare for college (Knight & Marciano, 2013; McDonough, 1997; Pitre & Pitre, 2009), it seems likely that CAPs will remain prominent in efforts to increase underrepresented students access to higher education.

### **Persisting Inequalities in Higher Education Access and Success**

Despite their limitations, there is evidence that affirmative action and financial aid policies, and CAPs have significantly increased college access for students from racial/ethnic minority and low-income backgrounds (Howard, 1997; Karabel, 2005; Wilson, 1994). In fact, the goal of obtaining higher education has become sufficiently commonplace that most high school students, regardless of race, ethnicity or socioeconomic status, now aspire to attend college (Adelman, 2002; Kao & Thompson, 2003; Perna & Titus, 2005; Solórzano, 1992). However, despite clear increases in college aspirations and enrollment, Black and Latino/a/x and low-income students remain underrepresented in higher education and significant gaps in postsecondary enrollment have persisted between these groups and Whites and high-income groups (Hagedorn &



Fogel, 2002; KewalRamani, Gilbertson, Fox, & Provasnik, 2007; Terenzini et al., 2001).

The evidence of this intractable problem is visible in the data:

- In 2001, 65 percent of Whites in the traditional college-aged population of 16 to 24-year-olds had enrolled in college as opposed to 55 percent of African Americans (Bowen, Kurzweil, & Tobin, 2005).
- In 2008, 37 percent of Whites ages 25 to 29 had earned a bachelor's degree while only 20 percent of African Americans and 12 percent of Latinos/as/x in this age group had accomplished the same (U.S. Department of Education, 2009).
- Low-income students are significantly less likely to attend and complete college than high-income students (Gándara, 2002a; Bowen et al., 2009). While 29 percent of all students in the United States earn a bachelor's degree, only 7 percent of these students are from the lowest socio-economic quartile (U.S. Department of Education, 2009).
- The proportion of students who do not earn a degree has remained stable for about four decades (Perna, 2006).

The research paints a troubling picture. So what might account for it? According to Adelman (1999), academic preparation is a primary predictor of college access and success. On average, Black, Latino/a/x, Native American, and low-income students begin school academically behind White, Asian American, and high-income peers and those gaps grow wider as these students progress through elementary and secondary schools (Gándara, 2002a; Lee & Burkam, 2002). Such disparities are compounded by the fact that historically underrepresented racial/ethnic minority and low-income students are less likely to enroll in and complete college preparatory courses in high school curricula such

as Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate coursework than are White, Asian American, and high-income students (Nagaoka, Roderick, & Coca, 2009; Trent et al., 2003).

Some researchers claim that such disparities in academic achievement are often the consequence of structural factors that result in leaks in the college access pipeline for underrepresented minority/ethnic minority and low-income students (Gándara, 2002a; Solórzano, Villalpando, & Oseguera, 2005). Such structural factors include the lack of rigorous college preparatory courses and other vital academic resources such as computer and science labs, ineffective guidance and counseling, and the disproportionate presence of under-prepared teachers in schools in racial/ethnic minority and low-income communities (Adelman, 1999; Gándara & Bial, 2001; McDonough, 1997; Oakes, 2003; Solórzano & Ornelas, 2002). In addition, the practice of tracking students in ability groups both within and between schools has often led to the placement of underrepresented racial/ethnic minority and low-income students in non-academic tracks that do not prepare them for college (Lucas, 1999; Oakes, 2005; Schultz & Mueller, 2006). Furthermore, historically underrepresented students often live in poor neighborhoods with limited resources, thus have few if any options for educational and career guidance beyond their schools (Gándara, 2002a; Hagedorn & Fogel, 2002; Knight & Marciano, 2013). Noguera (2003) contends that policymakers ignore the complex relationships between poverty, race and educational outcomes, and lack the political will to address this multifaceted problem.

Other scholars attribute college access and success to cultural factors within families, schools and communities. Adelman (1999) has identified high educational

expectations as a key element of college access and success. However, Gándara and Bial (2001) assert that underrepresented racial/ethnic minority and low-income students face significant barriers on the road to higher education because their families, schools and communities lack assets that foster high educational expectations. Several researchers point to the absence or limited availability of information and networks to help guide historically underrepresented students through a maze of challenges: the journey to college including questions of how best to prepare for college-level study, how to navigate the complexity of the college application process, how to persist toward one's goals with limited peer support and in the face of low expectations from teachers, guidance counselors and administrators, among others (Carter, 2005; Gándara & Bial, 2001; Stanton-Salazar, 2001; Valenzuela, 1999). Furthermore, while underrepresented racial/ethnic minority and low-income students aspire to attend college at rates similar to their White and high-income peers (Adelman, 1999; Perna & Titus, 2005; Solórzano, 1992), they lack tangible preparatory experiences – such as spending extended periods of time on college campuses – which would allow them to develop more concrete understandings of what college is like and how it might benefit them (Bloom, 2008).

Still other researchers have identified economic factors as key elements of college access and success. Due to limited earnings, which often prevent individuals and families from saving money for college, underrepresented racial/ethnic minority and low-income students and families tend to view the cost of higher education as being prohibitive without financial aid (Gándara, 2002a; Knight & Oesterreich, 2002; St. John et al., 2011). Even when financial aid may be available to cover tuition and fees, students from racial/ethnic minority and low-income communities often factor lost earnings into their

overall analysis of the costs of attending college; thus, some choose to forgo higher education (Gándara, 2002a).

Finally, several scholars highlight the impact of political factors on college access and success for historically underrepresented groups. These researchers point to the national political context that has spawned court challenges, ballot initiatives and referenda, and executive orders eliminating the use of affirmative action in higher education admissions and financial aid decisions. Eight states, including California and Florida, two of the most racially diverse states in the union, have banned affirmative action practices (Gándara, 2002b; Garces, 2012; National Conference of State Legislatures, 2018; Oakes et al., 2002), and opponents continue working to eliminate it (Ballhaus, 2014; Hoover, 2014; Savage, 2017) despite the fact that, as noted earlier, use of this policy was recently upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court. Within this same political context, colleges and universities, particularly public institutions, are increasingly relying on standardized test scores to determine eligibility and merit in their admissions decisions, which disadvantages underrepresented racial/ethnic minorities and low-income students (Comeaux & Watford, 2006; Gerald & Haycock, 2006; Oakes et al., 2002). Furthermore, political pressures from middle-class constituents have led many states to shift away from need-based to merit-based financial aid, another move that favors White and higher-income students at the expense of underrepresented racial/ethnic minority and low-income students (Dowd, 2004; Ehrenberg & Rizzo, 2004; Heller, 2004; Long & Riley, 2007).

These wide-ranging academic, structural, cultural, economic and political factors reveal the deep-rooted nature of the problem of unequal access to American higher

education and highlight the urgent need to address this issue. In addition, the dramatic demographic shift underway nationally, and the economic transition occurring globally, have increased the critical need to focus on this problem. Demographically, the American population has undergone significant changes in its racial/ethnic composition in the last half-century as the proportion of Asian Americans, Blacks, Latinos/as/x, Native Americans and multiracial people has grown rapidly while the proportion of Whites has begun to decline and grow older (Colby & Ortman, 2014; Humes, Jones & Ramirez, 2011; Vincent & Velkoff, 2010; ). The overall proportion of Whites in the population is projected to shrink steadily from 67 percent in 2005 to 47 percent in 2050 (Passel & Cohn, 2008). Furthermore, by 2060, the majority of the population over 65 years of age will be White, while approximately two-thirds of the population under 18 will be Asian American, Black, Latino/a/x, Native American or multiracial (Vespa, Armstrong, & Medina, 2018).

This demographic shift, featuring the dramatic growth of segments of the population that have the least likelihood of attending and completing higher and postsecondary education, is occurring at the same time as a global economic transition highlighting the importance of higher education for worker productivity, global competitiveness and individual well-being (Cooper & Coleman, 2010; Kanter, 2011; Matthews, 2012). “According to the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics (2005), approximately 80 percent of the fastest growing occupations in the United States require at least some postsecondary education” (Schultz & Mueller, 2006, p. 1). The persistence of significant differentials in higher education participation and completion by race and income lead to major differences in lifetime opportunity and well-being for individuals, a

dynamic that raises moral concerns (Bowen & Bok, 1998; Gándara, 2002). Inequitable access to higher education also results in negative consequences at multiple levels of American society: the availing of less stimulating learning in colleges and universities, lowering of tax revenues, heightening dependence on public services, higher rates of incarceration, prevalence of poorer health, and declines in moral authority and political legitimacy (Bowen & Bok, 1998; Gándara, 2002). Consequently, there are economic, political and moral rationales for increasing access to higher education for students from underrepresented groups.

Given the increasingly precarious position of affirmative action policy and the declining impact of financial aid policy, CAPs emerge as perhaps the most stable of the programmatic tools now available to increase access to and success in higher education for historically underrepresented groups. While the persistence of a programmatic solution to rampant educational inequity cannot be foretold, my sense is that the pervasiveness, to date, of the CAP movement signals that this organizational form will endure. My study enters the research conversation at this point, exploring CAPs' contributions to the students who participate in them. I consider whether and how CAPs help their participants get to the point of college enrollment, as well as whether and how the support they offer influence students through the college years.

### **Statement of Problem and Why It Matters**

Many scholars have considered whether and how CAPs programmatically address academic, structural, cultural, economic, and political factors likely to influence college

access, as well as the relationship between CAP participation and college enrollment. Although there is some disagreement among researchers about the impact of CAPs on college access, studies have generally shown that they increase enrollment in higher education for students from underrepresented groups. Studies have shown that CAPs accomplish the following: inspire participants to enroll in four-year institutions, which increases the likelihood that students will earn a bachelor's degree (Domina, 2009); promote attendance at higher education institutions that sponsored the CAP (Bergin et al., 2007); and encourage participants who had not been considering higher education to apply to and enroll in college (Myers et al., 2004).

While the extant research has dramatically advanced our knowledge of the relationship between CAP participation and college access, few scholars have considered the possible influence that CAPs may have on their participants beyond enrollment – that is, what happens to CAP alumni after they have gotten through the college door. As a result, little is known at this time about how students' participation in CAPs contributes to subsequent experiences in the college environment, degree attainment, and post-college aspirations and directions (Gándara, 2002a; Fosnacht, 2011; Moreno, 2002). Alarmed by low rates of college completion, national leaders, policymakers, and policy researchers have recently sought better understandings of how today's students, especially those from historically underrepresented groups that CAPs target, experience college, persist, and obtain degrees (Kazis, Vargas, & Hoffman, 2004; Matthews, 2012; Obama, 2009; Pennington, 2004; Prescott & Bransberger, 2012).

Unfortunately, most CAPs do not monitor how their alumni fare in college, and whether and how long they take to graduate; nor do they document elements of their

programming to determine whether some may be aiding or inhibiting their alumni's efforts to succeed in college and to graduate (Gándara, 2002a; Mendiola, Watt, & Huerta, 2010; Moreno, 2002; Schultz & Mueller, 2006; Swail, 2001). I posit that this gap in the research on CAPs' contributions to their alumni's undergraduate enrollment, experiences, and outcomes is a problem for two reasons: First, it is harder for some CAPs to pursue the funding they need to support their operations without explicit understanding of their positive influence. Second, while some features of CAPs may work exceedingly well toward moving targeted K-12 students from underrepresented populations into and through college, other features bearing on students work and experiences once in college, may be less effective. Without talking to students who have experienced CAPs first-hand, it is hard to differentiate the effective from the ineffective aspects of CAPs along these dimensions. My study sheds some light on some these conundrums, and thus contributes to a more nuanced understanding of a promising but not yet well understood practice for advancing underrepresented students to and through college.

Finally, it is important to note that postsecondary access and success for underrepresented students is an important public policy goal at this historical moment. This is because higher education and more importantly degree attainment are increasingly viewed as essential to improving national economic productivity. Further, racial/ethnic minority and low-income groups are the fastest growing segments of the American population, and thus it is these populations that will comprise the workforce of the future and play an essential role in determining the vitality of the American economy. Additionally, policymakers and leaders of philanthropies have become increasingly concerned about making higher education cost-effective (Dougherty, Natow, Bork, Jones,



& Vega, 2013; Kanter, 2011; Lumina Foundation for Education, 2005); leaders are increasingly interested in whether the financial resources expended on CAPs efficiently contribute to college degree attainment (Bowden & Belfield, 2015; Cahalan & Goodwin, 2014; Haskins & Rouse, 2013). What all this suggests is that what CAPs do and achieve, and how they make this happen, needs to be better understood, toward improving their functionality.

I suggest that it is important to understand how students who participated in CAPs translate and leverage their CAP experiences in ways that are meaningful and useful to them as they undertake their undergraduate pathways. This is an important part of the story of CAPs, and one that to date has not been told. The absence of narratives about the lived experiences of CAP alumni who enroll in higher education and progress through their collegiate studies suggests a need to study these individuals' perceptions of whether and how their CAP experience influenced their journeys into and through college, and beyond. While "influence" is hard to conceptualize and measure, this study offers insight into how CAP alumni make sense of what CAPs contributed, or not, to their subsequent college-going experiences and life aspirations. Such knowledge, however preliminary, may provide some guidance to policymakers, practitioners and researchers regarding strategies for aiding CAP alumni who enter college. These findings could also be applied to practice, policy and future research related to increasing and improving college access and success for CAP alumni. It is my hope that the findings of this study will contribute to the national goal of increasing higher education attainment for underrepresented racial/ethnic minority and low-income students and communities.

Furthermore, through this study I hope to demonstrate that while much of the advocacy for college access programs and college completion focuses narrowly on national economic benefits, such as enhancing America's global competitiveness (Carnevale & Desrochers, 2001; Fosnacht, 2011; Kantner, 2011; Matthews, 2012; Obama, 2009), these programs may have palpable impacts on participants' lives. Historically, much of the rhetoric around increasing access to higher education, especially for individuals from underrepresented groups, has been couched in economic terms (Anderson, 1988; Washington, 1901). This focus has largely ignored the aspirations individuals from these groups have for their lives - such as achieving academically and professionally, becoming engaged civically, and providing uplift for their communities (Anderson, 1988; Bowen & Bok, 1998; Du Bois, 1903; St. John et al., 2011; Woodson, 1992). In keeping with the many scholars who have advocated for a broader view of education and its capacity to help individuals live fulfilling lives (Delbanco, 2012; Du Bois, 1903; Nussbaum, 1997), my study seeks to capture a fuller view of CAP alumni's aspirations for their lives after college.

### **Purpose of Study and Research Questions**

In conducting this study, I sought to understand how individuals who participated in CAPs and who subsequently enrolled in college, made sense of their prior CAP experiences in the context of their college-going experiences. In this final report, I capture how CAP participants viewed their CAP participation, and how, in their experience, their learning in the CAP influenced their college work and lives. I undertook

the study assuming that thoughtful individuals can come to understand themselves and their experiences through retrospective analysis, and that learning gained from such analysis can lead to further study, and also to policy and practice improvements. Overall, the study sought to shed light on helpful (and where possible, unhelpful) aspects of CAP programming through the lens of CAP alumni's college experiences. I state my overall research question as follows:

To what extent, and how, may college access programs influence, shape or direct the college experiences and outcomes of CAP participants who subsequently enroll in colleges and universities? And if they do, how and through what means, or through which features of the CAPs, do they appear to do so? And if they do not, which features of the CAP, if any, may explain this?

To address this larger question, I designed a study and collected and analyzed data provided by students who, in the past, attended five targeted CAPs. My efforts were guided by the following guiding questions:

1) Which features of their CAP experiences do program alumni identify as contributing positively to their: (a) academic experiences in college? (b) non-academic experiences in college? (c) initial post-college aspirations and trajectories?

2) Which features of their CAP experiences do program alumni identify as not contributing to and possibly detracting from their academic and non-academic experiences in college or their post-college aspirations and trajectories?

3) Are there features of their college experiences that CAP alumni wish their program had prepared them for: (a) academically? If yes, what? Why? (b) non-academically? If yes, what? Why?

## Dissertation Manuscript Roadmap

This dissertation manuscript will unfold as follows: In Chapter II I review the literature on college access programs, briefly discuss the research on the college experiences of historically underrepresented racial/ethnic minority, low-income and first-generation students, and provide the conceptual framework that guides my study. In Chapter III I lay out my research design, data collection methods, and analytic approach. I report the results of my data analysis in Chapter IV, then conclude with Chapter V which summarizes the findings and presents implications for future research, policy and practice.

## Definition of Key Terms

Below I provide definitions for several terms which are central to my study: Black, College experiences, First-generation students, Income, Latino/a/x, Socio-economic status and White.

**Black** refers to individuals and groups of African descent in the United States. While African American and Black are often used to refer to the same population, I choose to use Black because I regard it as a broader term that encompasses peoples of African descent whose national origins extend beyond the United States and includes Africa, the Caribbean and Latin America (Tatum, 2017). As a result of immigration patterns over the last few decades, there are significant populations of peoples of African descent in the U.S. who trace their ancestry to within one or two generations to areas

outside of this country. This distinction is particularly appropriate for a study based in the New York City metropolitan area where large populations of first-generation students of African descent trace their ancestry to countries outside of the United States.

**College experiences** is an umbrella term that encompasses participation in academic and non-academic activities. Although it is difficult to precisely delineate all academic and non-academic activities, I offer the following general distinctions:

*Academic experiences* include academic advising and relationships with advisors, course and major selection and persistence, engagement with faculty and peers inside and outside the classroom regarding course-related matters, participation in academic enrichment or support services such as workshops and math or writing centers, study or writing group participation, participation in undergraduate research, attainment of academic honors and awards, and the like. In contrast, *non-academic* experiences include cultural and social activities; involvement in student government or co-curricular group leadership; fraternity or sorority membership; participation in mentoring activities and/or career guidance; participation in civic, cultural, or political groups; participation in varsity or intramural athletic teams; participation in residence hall activities; participation in internships, study abroad, and/or volunteering; attending to one's physical, emotional and psychological well-being; and working on or off campus, full- or part-time.

**First-generation** refers to students whose parents have not obtained formal education beyond high school (Chen & Carroll, 2005; Choy, Horn, Nuñez, & Chen, 2000). While students from all racial and socioeconomic backgrounds are included in this category, first-generation college students are, these days, likely to be members of

racial/ethnic minority and low-income and low-socioeconomic status groups (Chen & Carroll, 2005; Thayer, 2000).

**Income** includes all taxable earnings, including salary and wages, interest, dividends, or cash transfers such as social security and welfare collected by a family in a calendar year (Urahn et al., 2012). In this study, income will refer to the earnings of parents or guardians (Astin & Oseguera, 2004; Urahn et al., 2012). In general, the top quintile or quartile is regarded as high-income and the bottom quintile or quartile regarded as low-income. However, these designations are imprecise as they do not account for family size (family of four in the bottom quintile or quartile will have fewer financial resources to expend on each member than a single individual in the same quintile or quartile). Consistent with higher education scholarly research practices (e.g. Terenzini et al., 2001), I operationalize the phrase, socioeconomic status, to which I often refer in light of income. However, income should be understood as but one component of socioeconomic status, which I discuss below.

**Latino/a/x** includes individuals and groups of Spanish speaking Latin American descent in the United States. I use Latino/a/x to recognize members who identify with binary genders as well as those who do not identify with binary genders within that population. While Latino/a/x and Hispanic are often used to refer to the same population, I choose to use the term Latino/a/x because I regard it as a more accurate reflection of the histories and cultures of groups who have historical connections to Spain and, simultaneously, to Africa and indigenous peoples of the Americas.

**Socioeconomic Status (SES)** is an evolving concept in social science research. Scholars continue to search for ever more precise ways to define it. Though imprecise, I

use SES as a composite measure attentive to income, education, and occupational prestige (Bond, 1981).

**White** refers to individuals and groups of European descent in the United States. While significant variations around ethnicity, national origin, and religion characterize this group, the use of the term, White, to apply to them all maintains the prominence of race as an overriding category.

## II - REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Over the past half-century in the U.S., a college degree has become increasingly important for individual well-being, as well as national economic and democratic vitality (Allen, Bonous-Hammarth, & Teranishi, 2006; Baum, Ma, & Payea, 2010; Bowen & Bok, 1998; Carnevale, Smith, & Strohl, 2010; Kao & Thompson, 2003). During the same period, access to the American higher education system, which is the most comprehensive in the world, has grown dramatically for all segments of American society; most high school students now aspire to a college degree (Bowen et al., 2009; Kim, 2011; MacDonald et al., 2007; Nagaoka et al., 2009). However, disparities in higher education enrollment and outcomes between racial/ethnic minority and low-income students and White and higher-income students remain significant (Bastedo & Jaquette, 2011; Bowen et al., 2005; Kim, 2011). It is well documented that these disparities resulted from centuries of discriminatory and exclusionary practices (Allen, 2005; Anderson, 1988; Bowen & Bok, 1998; Harper et al., 2009; Yosso, Parker, Solórzano, & Lynn, 2004). Over the past half-century, policymakers and practitioners have sought numerous ways to eliminate such inequalities.

As explained in the preceding chapter, college access programs (CAPs) have emerged as a prominent and promising approach to increase access to higher education (Gándara & Bial, 2001; Nora, 2002; Swail & Perna, 2002). CAPs are supplementary educational programs that explicitly focus on preparing K-12 (mostly high school)



students from underrepresented groups for college entry (Pitre & Pitre, 2009; Tierney et al., 2005; Tierney & Hagedorn, 2002). However, little is known about whether and how CAPs contribute to the undergraduate experiences of their alumni.

Examining the role of CAPs in eliminating inequalities in access to and success in higher education has become increasingly more urgent in an era that highlights the growing importance of postsecondary education for individuals and the nation.

Individuals who earn college degrees benefit from more stable employment, higher incomes, and increased access to a wide range of networks, opportunities, and resources – all of which accompany upward socio-economic mobility (Baum et al., 2010; Carnevale, Jayasundera, & Cheah, 2012; Urahn et al., 2012). The nation benefits economically from a more educated population, which contributes to greater innovation in the workforce and enhances global competitiveness in an era of increasingly knowledge-based economic production (Allen et al., 2006; Gándara & Moreno, 2002; Matthews, 2012). College-educated citizens also benefit the nation politically; they are more likely than those without higher education to vote, run for office, and hold positions of civic leadership (Bowen & Bok, 1998; Gándara, 2002). Thus, increasing higher education access for historically underrepresented groups enhances democratic participation and integrity by helping all citizens view civic and political leadership opportunities as open to them (Bowen & Bok, 1998; Grutter, 2003).

Recognizing the escalating significance of higher education, President Obama made increasing access to and completion of higher and postsecondary education a centerpiece of his administration's education and economic development policy (Carey, 2009; Kanter, 2011; Obama, 2009). However, this is a complicated goal, especially for

the growing populations of historically underrepresented groups. Four issues are of note. First, public elementary and secondary schools persistently fail to prepare underrepresented students for postsecondary education (Jager-Hyman, 2004; Jones, Bensimon, McNair, & Dowd, 2011; Knight-Diop, 2010; Kozol, 2012). Second, higher education institutions, especially four-year colleges and universities, have either eliminated or drastically reduced remedial education services (Attewell, Lavin, Domina, & Levey, 2006; Tierney & Hagedorn, 2002; Parker, 2007). This reduction has had a powerfully negative impact on postsecondary opportunities for historically underrepresented students who have been underserved by their elementary and secondary schools, and thus need “remediation.” Third, the dramatic demographic shifts currently underway feature considerably high rates of growth among those in our society who are racial/ethnic minorities and low-income (Lloyd, Tienda, & Zajacova, 2001; Prescott & Bransberger, 2012; Shrestha & Heisler, 2011). Historically, these groups have been the least served by the public elementary and secondary education system and they are underrepresented in higher education, in comparison to Whites and higher-income groups (Anderson, 1988; Noguera, 2003; Oakes, 2005; Valenzuela, 1999). Finally, recurrent fiscal crises and slow economic growth over the last four decades have resulted in unstable public funding for higher education, and tuition and fee increases (Baum & Ma, 2011; Callan, 2002; Ehrenberg & Rizzo, 2004; Jaschik, 2009; Kane et al., 2003). Further, the shift from need-based to merit-based financial aid has decreased support to students with financial need while increasing support to students with higher academic profiles, who tend to be wealthier (Heller, 2004, 2006; Long & Riley, 2007; St. John et al., 2003).

Such changes impede college access for students from historically underrepresented groups (Dickeson, 2004; Heller, 1999; Long & Riley, 2007).

Despite this litany of complexities and obstacles, increasing higher education access and opportunities for success for members of historically underrepresented groups stands out as a primary tool for improving their socioeconomic mobility while also achieving national economic goals and contributing to national democratic goals, such as enhancement of political legitimacy and increases in civic participation and leadership (Bowen & Bok, 1998; *Grutter*, 2003). Extant research on CAPs, despite its limitations, coupled with abundant anecdotal evidence, indicate that CAPs can make important contributions to this worthwhile endeavor (Gándara & Bial, 2001; Moreno, 2002; Pitre & Pitre, 2009; St. John et al., 2011). To further explore this potential and begin to examine how CAPs may contribute to the subsequent college-going experiences of students who participate in them, it is useful to examine how CAP alumni who enter college make sense of their earlier CAP experiences.

In this chapter, I discuss what is known about CAPs. First, I describe the history of CAPs and the contexts from which they have emerged. Next, I depict the broad landscape of these programs, as well as their goals and programmatic activities. I then discuss the research that has been conducted on CAPs, exploring the strong focus on assessment and evaluation of these programs and the methodological and theoretical approaches that guide this research. Subsequently, I outline some gaps in the existing research on CAPs and explain the focus of my study and conceptual framework that guided it.

## History of College Access Programs

College access programs were first established in the 1950s in response to “a confluence of factors” that “helped to forge” a “growing social consensus about the need to create educational opportunity and to diversify the nation’s colleges and universities” (Walton, 2009, p. 151). Influential factors included efforts to maximize the use of American talent to protect U.S. interests during the Cold War, increased pressure from Civil Rights activists demanding the elimination of racial discrimination and inequality, and growing public awareness of the value of higher education to the advancement of national economic and political interests and individual social mobility (Bond, 1972; Bowen & Bok, 1998; Skrentny, 1996; Weinberg, 1977). CAPs emerged as a viable means for pursuing the above-stated goals and responding to pressures. They came to be distinguished by their explicit focus on preparing elementary through high school students from historically underrepresented groups for college entry (Gándara & Bial, 2001; Pitre & Pitre, 2009; Swail & Perna, 2001; Tierney & Hagedorn, 2002). Initially, colleges and universities, religious and community organizations, corporations, philanthropic foundations, and private donors established local efforts focused mostly on preparing African American students for higher education (Bowen & Bok, 1998; Jager-Hyman, 2004; Walton, 2009). These local efforts served as models and pilot programs that were successively revised, adopted by others, and eventually scaled up by federal, state, and local governments seeking to make higher education more accessible to students from a variety of historically underrepresented groups (Schultz & Mueller, 2006; Swail & Perna, 2002; Walton, 2009).

Walton (2009) describes such scaling up of a local college access model. The A Better Chance (ABC) Program was established by Dartmouth College in partnership with wealthy northeastern boarding schools and funded by the Rockefeller Foundation and Rockefeller Brothers Fund. According to Walton, the three key features to the ABC approach were: (1) targeting of low-income, mid-level students who demonstrated the potential to succeed in college but might not pursue higher education without support and encouragement; (2) preparing students for higher education, shifting away from mainstream practices of concentrating on admission and financial support; and (3) taking students away from their families, local schools, and home communities, which were, at the time, cast by education leaders and policymakers as deprived, and placing them in boarding schools to receive rigorous academic training and exposure to higher-status culture and social networks.

The ABC model caught the attention of President Johnson's administration, which had established the Office of Economic Opportunity and earmarked funding to support educational opportunities for "disadvantaged youngsters" (Walton, 2009). Financial support from the federal government and philanthropic organizations allowed ABC to expand quickly in the mid-1960s (Walton, 2009). The Johnson administration was simultaneously developing the 1965 Higher Education Act as part of its War on Poverty; the Act provided financial assistance to help low-income students attend college (Groutt, 2003; Pitre & Pitre, 2009; Swail & Perna, 2001). Officials from the Johnson administration borrowed the ABC model to establish a national-scale program that came to be known as Upward Bound (Groutt, 2003; Swail & Perna, 2001; Walton, 2009). Like the ABC program, Upward Bound targeted mid-level students with academic potential,

focused on improving their academic preparation and cultural knowledge (as needed for higher education). Also like ABC, Upward Bound took students out of their home communities for intense college preparatory courses and workshops, though only for a few weeks in the summer (Groutt, 2003; McElroy & Armesto, 1998). The Higher Education Act of 1965 established two other federal college access programs, Talent Search and Student Support Services, which subsequently were grouped with Upward Bound and referred to as the TRIO Programs (Swail & Perna, 2001).

This model for preparing historically underrepresented students for higher education proliferated across the nation and was adopted by states, colleges, universities, corporate and foundation philanthropies, and private and community-based non-profit organizations (Gándara & Bial, 2001; Jager-Hyman, 2004; Swail & Perna, 2001). Over the last two decades, state-sponsored CAPs grew dramatically because state policymakers throughout the country have increasingly viewed CAPs as important vehicles for achieving state policy goals (Cunningham et al., 2003; Gándara & Moreno, 2002; Oakes et al., 2002). Such policy goals include increasing higher education access for racial/ethnic minority and low-income groups to improve the state's economic competitiveness and reduce educational disparities between these historically excluded groups and their White, higher-socioeconomic counterparts (Cunningham et al., 2003; Gándara & Bial, 2001; Yonezawa et al., 2002). In the next section I describe the landscape of CAPs.

## **An Overview of the College Access Program Landscape**

Surveys of CAPs report that the majority currently in operation were established by colleges and universities, focus on historically underrepresented racial/ethnic minority, low-income, and first-generation students, and serve students starting in middle school or high school (Gándara & Bial, 2001; Swail & Perna, 2001; Swail et al., 2012a). CAPs exist throughout the nation but are more likely to be found in the nation's most populous states – California, Texas, and New York – and most often in urban centers where their target populations tend to be concentrated (Swail & Perna, 2001; Swail et al., 2012a). Most programs are situated on college campuses, in middle and high schools, and in community organizations (Bloom, 2008; Cunningham et al., 2003).

A majority of CAPs operate throughout the calendar year, though some are only open during the school year or over the summer (Swail & Perna, 2001; Swail et al., 2012a). When in operation, CAPs serve participants throughout the week, with most functioning after school, but many also open during the school day and on weekends (Swail & Perna, 2001; Swail et al., 2012a). Approximately one-third of CAPs serve participants for multiple years, while others engage students for shorter periods of time (Swail & Perna, 2001; Swail et al., 2012a). CAPs typically require students to complete an admission application with one-third featuring open enrollment and another third using competitive admission processes (Swail & Perna, 2001; Swail et al., 2012a).

While CAPs are regarded as a discrete organizational category in the landscape of American education, much variation exists among them (Cunningham et al., 2003; Gándara, 2002; Schultz & Mueller, 2006; Swail & Perna, 2002). CAPs differ in terms of

their geographic reach – national, statewide or local; they also differ in their funding sources (Cunningham et al., 2003; Gándara & Bial, 2001; Swail et al., 2012a).

Nationally, the federally funded TRIO Programs – Upward Bound, Talent Search, and Student Support Services – are among the oldest and most common CAPs (Gándara & Bial, 2001; Pitre & Pitre, 2009; Walton, 2009). These programs have received more funding than have state-funded or private non-profit CAPs (i.e., up to several billion dollars in federal support) (Swail & Perna, 2001). Despite this seemingly strong support, only a small fraction of eligible students actually participate in the TRIO programs because their funding is insufficient to cover the costs of the highly personnel-intensive services the programs provide (Balz & Esten, 1998; Swail & Perna, 2001).

Several private non-profit CAPs such as A Better Chance and the Posse Foundation exist nationally, largely relying on individual, corporate, and foundation philanthropic support to support their operations (Posse Foundation, 2009; Walton, 2009). At the state level, publicly funded CAPs include Indiana’s Twenty-first Century Scholars Program (Kirst & Venezia, 2006), New York’s Liberty Partnership Program (Knight & Oesterreich, 2002), and University of California’s Early Academic Outreach Program (Loza, 2003). Privately funded CAPs include the Washington State Achievers scholarship program supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (Hilberg et al., 2009). The local level features publicly funded CAPs such as College Now College Focus Summer Program, a collaborative program of the City University of New York and the New York City Department of Education (College Now, n.d.), as well as privately funded programs such as Prep for Prep in New York City (Prep for Prep, 2018). In addition, a significant number of CAPs are sponsored by colleges and universities and



serve youth in their surrounding communities (Gándara & Bial, 2001; Swail & Perna, 2001).

Overall, CAPs have provided services to a significant number of students. Near the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, CAPs responding to the National Survey of Outreach Programs (NSOP) reported that they had served approximately 1 million students throughout the U.S. (Swail & Perna, 2001). According to NSOP researchers, it is possible that the number of students served by CAPs could be as large as two million, though this figure cannot be substantiated due to limitations of the NSOP study design (Swail & Perna, 2001). Whatever the exact figure may be, the number is expected to continue to grow because states have increasingly turned to CAPs to help address inequalities in college access within their borders (Gándara & Bial, 2001; Cunningham et al., 2003). Furthermore, states that have restricted or eliminated affirmative action policy, such as California, have established and expanded CAPs in response to public outcry over declines in underrepresented racial/ethnic minority student enrollment in the public higher education system (Domina, 2007; Gándara, 2002; Kaufmann, 2007; Orfield et al., 2007; Tienda et al., 2003).

### **CAP Goals and Programmatic Activities**

Generally, CAPs have been designed to compensate for poor schools and schooling, and limited family and neighborhood resources and networks (Gándara, 2002a; Bloom, 2008; Swail & Perna, 2002; Pitre & Pitre, 2009). In fact, most programs attempt to address the previously described academic, structural, cultural, economic, and

political factors that influence college access and success, as well as the persistence of enrollment and completion gaps (Gándara, 2002a; Schultz & Mueller, 2006; Swail & Perna, 2001). An almost universal goal of all CAPs is to improve participants' academic abilities in order to prepare them for college-level work (Adelman, 2002; Contreras, 2011; Cunningham et al., 2003; Perna, 2005). In pursuit of this goal, many programs also attempt to raise students' aspirations, expectations, self-efficacy, and goal orientation toward learning (Gándara & Bial, 2001; Hagedorn & Fogel, 2002; Swail & Perna, 2001). Many CAPs seek to increase participants' awareness of college options, expectations, and financial aid, and the relationship between college education and career possibilities (McDonough, 2005; Schultz & Mueller, 2006; Swail & Perna, 2001).

Some CAPs focus on social skill development and foster supportive peer groups (Gándara & Moreno, 2002; Mendiola et al., 2010; Tierney et al., 2005). Additionally, many CAPs attempt to incorporate parents and families into the college preparation process by increasing parents' awareness of educational resources supportive of college attendance and providing the parents with skills to better advocate for their children (Hagedorn & Fogel, 2002; Swail & Perna, 2001; Tierney & Auerbach, 2005).

Additionally, some programs seek to leverage students' cultural backgrounds as an asset in efforts to improve their preparation for college (Jun & Colyar, 2002) (Gándara & Moreno, 2002; Tierney & Venegas, 2004; Villalpando & Solórzano, 2005). Such approaches also serve to counter notions of these students as lacking the cultural and social resources that contribute to educational achievement (Gándara & Moreno, 2002; Villalpando & Solórzano, 2005; Yosso, 2005).

College access programs strive to prepare participants for college by implementing academic and non-academic programs and services. Examples of academic programs include discipline-based enrichment courses and workshops that develop reading, writing, math, critical thinking, problem solving, and note-taking skills (Hagedorn & Fogel, 2002; Perna, 2005; Pitre & Pitre, 2009). Non-academic programs include campus visits (Schultz & Mueller, 2006), co-curricular activities (Hearn & Holdsworth, 2005), mentoring (Gándara & Mejorado, 2005), and individual, group, and family counseling and informational sessions (Jun & Colyar, 2002; Hagedorn & Fogel, 2002). Most of these programs have a parental component, and many require parental involvement (Cunningham et al., 2003; Swail & Perna, 2001; Swail et al., 2012a). Some CAPs seek to ground programmatic offerings and services in students' cultural backgrounds by, for example, offering enrichment courses that reflect their heritage or connecting them to mentors from the same racial or ethnic group (Gándara & Moreno, 2002; Jun & Colyar, 2002; Villalpando & Solórzano, 2005).

While the cost of attending college is regarded as a major impediment to postsecondary enrollment for historically underrepresented students (Gándara & Bial, 2001; Knight & Oesterreich, 2002; Macy, 2000; St. John et al., 2011; Tierney & Auerbach, 2005), financial assistance provided by CAPs varies widely, and few CAPs are able to offer participants significant monetary support such as scholarships or grants (Gándara, 2002a; Swail et al., 2012a; Tierney & Venegas, 2004). Most programs address financial concerns by providing students and their families with information about scholarships and grants, and by helping them navigate the financial aid process (Gándara, 2002a; Swail & Perna, 2001; Swail et al., 2012a). Lastly, some CAPs seek to

influence college access processes and policies in larger-scale ways, using strategies that might include: aligning with local, regional, and national coalitions to share research, best practices, and replicable models; hosting informational exchanges so college admissions officers can share concerns and recommendations; encouraging their alumni to become involved in education reform efforts; and/or lobbying elected officials (College Access Consortium of New York, n.d.; Council for Opportunity in Education, 2014; Social Impact Research, 2010).

### **Research on College Access Programs**

#### **Pronounced Focus on Assessment and Evaluation**

While CAPs have been in existence for more than five decades, they remained largely under-examined until the 1990s when research interest mushroomed as the era of accountability dawned and concerns about their impact surfaced (Swail & Perna, 2001; Tierney & Hagedorn, 2002). Many of the studies of CAPs came to reflect an evaluative bent, as researchers, policymakers, and practitioners sought to understand whether and how CAPs contributed to achieving the goal of increasing higher education access for historically underrepresented students in fiscally-responsible ways (Gándara & Bial, 2001; Swail & Perna, 2002; Tierney & Hagedorn, 2002). Among other efforts, scholars have sought to: pinpoint effective programmatic practices – academic and non-academic – and their outcomes; identify which students benefit the most from which programmatic practices; and conduct cost/benefit analyses of CAPs (Cunningham et al., 2003; Domina, 2009; Myers et al., 2004; Perna, 2002).

Overall, many researchers see CAPs as exerting a positive, though modest, impact on efforts to improve access to higher education for historically underrepresented students (e.g. Domina, 2009; Gándara & Bial, 2001; Hagedorn & Fogel, 2002; Horn & Chen, 1998; Huerta, Watt, & Reyes, 2013; Myers et al., 2004; Seftor et al., 2009). Gándara (2002) asserts that the most successful CAPs offer comprehensive services that meet participants' academic and non-academic needs and are well-implemented. Scholars have identified several programmatic practices that are critical for preparing students to successfully gain access to higher education. While there is some variation in what these experts document as the most important elements of a successful CAP, programmatic features that appear to contribute to CAP participants' college enrollment include:

- focusing services on students from middle school through high school (Cabrera & La Nasa, 2001; Cunningham et. al., 2003; Perna, 2002);
- hiring, supporting, and maintaining a stable staff cohort who treat participants with care, guiding students and monitoring their progress through their involvement in the program (Gándara & Bial, 2001; Moreno, 2002; Kahne & Bailey, 1999);
- encouraging and supporting students' long-term program participation (Gándara & Bial, 2001; Kahne & Bailey, 1999; Myers et al., 2004);
- offering counseling, support, and monitoring throughout the college preparation process (Gándara & Bial, 2001; McDonough, 2005; Oesterreich, 2000);
- providing rigorous academic preparation (Cunningham et al., 2003; Gándara & Bial, 2001; Perna, 2005);

- offering financial assistance or information on obtaining it (Gándara, 2002a; Bergin et al., 2007; St. John et al., 2011; Tierney & Venegas, 2004);
- providing programming and services early in a timely and relevant manner (Bonous-Hammarth & Allen, 2005; Cunningham et al., 2003);
- establishing an environment with supportive peer groups (Gándara & Bial, 2001; Mendiola et al., 2010; Tierney et al., 2005);
- providing mentors (Gándara & Mejorado, 2005; Moreno, 2002; Oesterreich, 2000);
- involving parents, guardians, and families (Bernhardt, 2013; Gonzalez et al., 2003; Jun & Colyar, 2002; Tierney & Auerbach, 2005);
- being sensitive to and leveraging students' cultural backgrounds (Gándara & Moreno, 2002; Tierney & Auerbach, 2005; Villalpando & Solórzano, 2005);
- connecting to the local elementary and secondary school system and participating in reform efforts (Gándara & Bial, 2001; Swail, 2000; Venezia & Rainwater, 2007);
- providing opportunities for college visits (Bloom, 2008; Oesterreich, 2000; Perna, 2002); and
- conducting rigorous evaluation (Domina, 2009; Dougherty, Long, & Singer, 2009; Gándara & Bial, 2001; Perna, 2002; Tierney, 2002).

Perna (2002) identified five strategies deemed essential for increasing college access for underrepresented racial and ethnic minority, low-income, and first-generation students: (1) expanding students' predisposition to attend college; (2) by eighth grade, helping students begin to think about and academically prepare for college; (3) involving

parents to encourage development of their children's predisposition to attend college, and promoting consideration of a wider range of choices around colleges to attend; (4) providing opportunities and encouraging students to take rigorous courses to improve their college preparation and broaden their college choices; and (5) supporting students' college searches through participation in college fairs and visiting college campuses. However, only one-quarter of CAPs participating in the National Survey of Outreach Programs were employing these practices, perhaps due to lack of awareness about the effectiveness of these strategies (Perna, 2002).

Horn and Chen (1998) reported that CAPs had significant positive impact on college enrollment of students with moderate to high risks of dropping out of high school. However, only five percent of such students participated in these programs, which suggests that the overall impact of CAPs on this population has been limited. Other scholars have found that CAPs increase access to postsecondary education for students who had not considered higher education as an option, and encourage students who may have only considered attending community college to apply and enroll in a four-year college (Domina, 2009; Myers et al., 2004; Seftor et al., 2009). However, on average, CAP participation does not result in statistically significant increases in high school grade point average (GPA) or standardized test scores (Domina, 2009; Myers et al., 2004; Seftor et al., 2009). Noting that CAPs have been shown to raise students' expectations, maximize their assets, and expand their goals, Gándara (2002) asserts that time constraints limit the opportunity for CAPs to appreciably alter students' academic achievement because even the most successful CAPs can only provide their high-impact services on a part-time basis after school, on weekends, and/or in the summer. Contreras

(2011), on the other hand, contends that CAPs have a limited impact on higher education access for target populations because the high-achieving students selected for participation would likely attend college without this intervention (Contreras, 2011).

Despite the emphasis on evaluating CAPs, research on program effectiveness is scant (Carey, 2011; Corwin et al., 2005; Domina, 2009; Gándara & Bial, 2001). Most CAPs concentrate their limited financial and personnel resources on programmatic activities; few focus on collecting data about participants, programmatic activities, and outcomes, or conduct rigorous program evaluation (Cunningham et al., 2003; Gándara, 2002; Tierney & Hagedorn, 2002). While it is important for CAPs to focus attention on programmatic activities that may improve higher education access for underrepresented students, the absence of research-based insight on the effectiveness and efficiency of these activities can undermine focal efforts and goals (Corwin et al., 2005; Dougherty et al., 2009; Swail & Perna, 2001).

My review of the literature mirrors what others, surveying the same research base, have noted as its key weakness: that the paucity of evaluative data, on CAPs' functioning and outcomes, constrains educational leaders' and policymakers' understandings of these programs, including whether and how CAPs contribute to participants' college-going outcomes (Domina, 2009; Gándara & Bial, 2001; Swail & Perna, 2001). Scholars have emphasized that the research base is especially lacking in studies that explain how the educational outcomes of CAP participants compare with those of non-participating students (Domina, 2009; Gándara & Bial, 2001; Hagedorn & Fogel, 2002). This criticism is echoed by Gándara (2002) and Schultz and Mueller (2006) who speak to the challenges of identifying adequate control groups. Studies utilizing control groups might reveal



whether identified outcomes are attributable to a program treatment rather than to participants' personal characteristics (academic ability, motivation, etc.) (Gándara, 2002b; Schultz & Mueller, 2006). However, advocates for the TRIO programs successfully lobbied Congress to ban the use of randomized control studies of such programs, arguing this practice would be unethical because it would require the deliberate exclusion of students who would benefit from TRIO services (Carey, 2011; Fields, 2008; Mitchem, 2007; Sparks, 2010). Schultz and Mueller (2006) assert that the best remaining option is the use of quasi-experimental designs that compare the academic outcomes of a group of students who have similar academic and demographic profiles, and either are or are not exposed to the focal treatment.

Despite the criticisms mentioned, some researchers have carried out rigorous studies of CAPs. One such study of the federally-funded Upward Bound program produced mixed evidence of program impact (Carey, 2011; Domina, 2009; Swail, 2005). Conducted by Myers et al. (2004), the study revealed that Upward Bound had a positive effect on students who did not aspire to a bachelor's degree prior to participating in the program. Furthermore, each additional year spent in the program increased the participant's likelihood of attending a postsecondary institution. However, while participation in Upward Bound increased the likelihood of a student enrolling in a four-year college, it decreased the likelihood of a student enrolling in a two-year college, resulting in no net effect on postsecondary enrollment. In addition, the study revealed that Upward Bound had limited impact on students' preparation for college as measured by high school credits earned, GPA, and graduation.

### **Prominent Perspectives and Theories for Studying College Access Programs**

Due to the predominant focus on evaluating impact on college access for historically underrepresented students, many of the initial studies of CAPs applied quantitative methods to analyze large data sets (Nora, 2002). However, increased use of qualitative methods permitted researchers to examine processes, within and outside CAPs, deemed to contribute to their outcomes (Nora, 2002). Some researchers have advocated the value of employing anthropological and ethnographic approaches (Koyama, 2007), “considering the total ecological context in which a child is raised – families, schools, and communities – as influences on development” (Gándara, 2002a, p. 87). Walton’s (2009) previously mentioned study of ABC appears to be a rare example of a historical examination of a CAP.

While a few scholars have departed from these methodologies and perspectives, employing conceptual frameworks such as feminist perspectives, social theory, and critical race theory, most studies of CAPs have focused internally on programmatic practices and outcomes, employing primarily cultural and social capital frameworks (Gándara, 2002a; King, 2009; Villalpando & Solórzano, 2005; Yonezawa et al., 2002; Hagedorn & Fogel 2002; Hagedorn & Tierney, 2002). Cultural capital theory contends that lower, middle, and upper social classes possess distinct cultural values, knowledge, and tastes that are transmitted to individuals and families within each respective group. In this view, the cultural values and knowledge of higher-ranked social classes are regarded as superior (Bourdieu, 1986). Thus, possession of middle- or upper-class cultural capital is essential for access to institutions, including colleges and universities, and opportunities controlled by dominant groups (Bourdieu, 1986).

Tierney and Hagedorn (2002) state that “one might think of college preparation programs as a structural response to low-income children’s deficit of cultural capital – a response that stimulates the conditions to deliver the social and academic capital necessary to succeed in college” (p. 4). However, Hagedorn and Tierney (2002) caution that “cultural capital is not viewed as unidimensional” and note that “one danger of using the notion of cultural capital as a driving framework is that it can be wrongly viewed as little more than assimilationist” (p. 5). These scholars assert that it is equally important that institutions and groups that possess cultural capital take responsibility for sharing their knowledge with individuals and groups who could use that information to prepare to gain access to postsecondary institutions, succeed therein, and, ultimately, graduate.

Critiquing the cultural capital framework’s inability to illuminate the role of institutional agents (such as school personnel) in the college preparation process of underrepresented students, Gonzalez et al. (2003) instead use social capital theory for this purpose. These scholars draw on the work of Stanton-Salazar (1997, as cited in Gonzalez et al., 2003), who “defined social capital as relationships with institutional agents that can be converted into socially valued resources and opportunities” (p. 148). These researchers conclude that social capital exists in a continuum, and that networks and relationships that can be converted into more valuable opportunities that are considered “higher” than are relationships that lead to less valuable opportunities. According to Gonzalez et al. (2003), the CAP was particularly useful to participants because it was considered the highest level of social capital and featured supportive and nurturing staff, which was not the case in the public schools participants attended.

Employing theoretical approaches other than cultural and social capital to explore the role of CAPs in the college-going experience of historically underrepresented students, Knight and Oesterreich (2002) “utilize two tenets of feminist policy research analyses to examine college preparation policy and programs: (1) an intersectional framework and (2) the significance of local contexts” (p. 124). This approach allowed these scholars “to examine how the intersections of multiple social structures are constructed to produce equities or inequities” within “the historical and political environment of a NY state-funded college preparation program – The Liberty Partnerships Program” (p. 124). Knight and Oesterreich situate students who participate in CAPs within complex realities that often include competing demands such as attending high school, working part-time to supplement family income, caring for siblings, and striving to meet college admissions standards. These scholars assert that shedding light on the complex realities of CAP participants through this framework can help CAP leaders provide programmatic responses that meet these students’ college preparation needs.

Oakes et al. (2002), on the other hand, use critical social theory as the lens through which they examine the college outreach program at the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA). These scholars assert that this critical theoretical framework sheds light on the “cultural and political contexts that frustrate and obstruct efforts to increase the capacity of schools in disadvantaged communities and to prepare students at these schools to gain admission to and succeed [in the school]” (Oakes et al., 2002, p. 109). This perspective illuminates how privileged groups employ the ideology of merit to protect their favored position in UCLA admissions by prioritizing prior academic

achievement such as high school GPA, standardized test scores, and completion of Advanced Placement courses – all of which favor middle class White students from well-resourced schools and disadvantage underrepresented students, who are more likely to attend low-resource schools. Beyond offering evidence that different conceptualizations of and standards for “merit” might increase access to and success in selective higher education research institutions for underrepresented students, this study also suggests that tackling technical aspects of college access – but ignoring the cultural, political, and ideological layers of access and success – might maintain existing inequities in college enrollment and completion.

Offering yet another theoretical approach, Auerbach (2002) uses critical race theory (CRT) as one of several conceptual frames to shed light on the experiences of Latino parents whose children participated in a CAP. She utilized the CRT method of counter-story, “the narratives of marginalized groups, as embodiments of experiential knowledge ... that challenge the status quo and ‘majoritarian’ institutional narratives while building a sense of community” (Auerbach, 2002, p. 1371), to highlight the efforts and struggles of Latino parents helping their children prepare for college. One parent’s story, for example, critiques school system structures that “give the good classes that are needed for university to some but not to others” (p. 1383), countering the majoritarian (dominant) narrative of “equal educational opportunity” by highlighting inherent inequalities in elementary and secondary schools that limit access to higher education for underrepresented students.

As illustrated, researchers have employed a range of theoretical frameworks and perspectives to guide their studies of CAPs. Collectively, these varied lenses have

allowed researchers to identify a wide array of cultural and social resources, contexts, identities, and conditions that influence CAP efforts: We can see and think about CAPS more fully due to their use. That said, much remains hidden from view. In the next section, I discuss some prominent gaps in understanding of CAPs.

### **Gaps in the Research on College Access Programs**

Perhaps as a result of the prominent focus on assessing the impact of CAPs on college enrollment, research on their other aspects has been neglected. Four areas seem especially deserving of attention: (1) the longer-term impacts of CAPs on students' experiences in/of college, college completion, and post-college experiences; (2) whether the kinds of financial support CAPs provide to their students (scholarships or access to information about financial aid) influence outcomes (enrollment or persistence in college); (3) how CAP staff develop program goals and practices, the kinds of relationships CAP staff forge with program participants, and, staff contributions to outcomes; and (4) the influence of external contexts on CAPs' programmatic offerings, processes, and participant outcomes. Below I briefly discuss each of these, including how having improved data on each could deepen understandings of CAPs, with an eye to informing policy and practice.

#### **Longer-Term Impacts**

Although scholars have dedicated significant attention to evaluating CAP processes and outcomes, such endeavors have largely focused on the short run. Gándara

(2002) reported that CAP staff often know very little about the paths and experiences of students after they leave their programs, including how they fare in college. This limitation is also evident in research designs that rely on cross-sectional snapshots derived from available data, as opposed to use of longitudinal designs, thus following students for several years (Gándara & Bial, 2001; Schultz & Mueller, 2006).

Longer-term studies have the potential to shed light on the relationship between CAP participation and college completion, an issue that was a centerpiece of the Obama administration's higher education and economic policy (Carey, 2009; Obama, 2009). Such studies could also examine patterns related to type of college and major chosen; time to completion; and, perhaps, the academic, cultural, social, and psychological factors that contribute to postsecondary experiences and success. While longitudinal investigations that examine the relationship between CAP participation and higher education outcomes have begun to emerge (e.g., Domina, 2009; Fosnacht, 2011; Huerta et al., 2013; Myers et al., 2004; Seftor et al., 2009), these have primarily been large-scale quantitative studies focusing on whether participants persist in college and/or graduate. This suggests that study designs aimed at accessing students' experiences during college and afterwards, qualitatively, might shed some light on the outcomes of CAPs. Such findings could then be pursued on a larger scale through subsequent quantitative or mixed-methods studies.

### **Financial Support from CAPs**

Though research reveals that the cost of attending college is a major impediment for underrepresented students (Astin & Oseguera, 2004; Cunningham et al., 2003;

Haycock, 2006; Heller, 2006), few studies consider whether CAPs that offer direct financial support for college attendance produce different outcomes than those that do not (Gándara, 2002a; Kirst & Venezia, 2006; Tierney & Venegas, 2004). Only a few CAPs, such as EXCEL, Indiana's Twenty-first Century Scholars Program, The Posse Foundation, and the Washington State Achievers, offer financial assistance to students in the form of scholarships or grants (Bergin et al., 2007; Gándara & Bial, 2001; St. John et al., 2011). The few studies that have examined the impact of CAPs that provide direct financial assistance to participants for college enrollment have yielded mixed findings. For example, a study of the EXCEL program sponsored by a research university in the Midwest, found no statistically significant difference in higher education enrollment between its participants who received a scholarship to the sponsoring university, and those assigned to the control group (students who had applied to EXCEL but were not selected even though they had similar academic profiles to those who were selected) (Bergin et al., 2007). On the other hand, the Twenty-first Century Scholars program in Indiana, another CAP that provides financial support for college attendance, is credited with raising that state's national ranking in college enrollment from 34<sup>th</sup> in 1992 to 10<sup>th</sup> in 2002 (Kirst & Venezia, 2006).

Studies of a larger number and variety of CAPs that provide direct financial aid for college could broaden our understanding of the role monetary support plays in participants' experiences and persistence, and could shed light on whether the outcomes of studies like those of EXCEL and Twenty-first Century Scholars, are unique or reflect larger patterns. Moreover, additional studies can explore whether differences exist among programs that offer financial assistance, those offering only information on financial



assistance, and those that do not address financial issues at all. Such studies could help shape policy and practice toward best possible use of CAPs' scarce financial resources.

### **Staff Roles**

Studies to date largely position the CAP as the unit of analysis rather than examining the operational features and dynamics of the CAP (e.g., Cunningham et al., 2003; Gándara & Bial, 2001; Hagedorn & Fogel, 2002; Swail & Perna, 2001; Swail et al., 2012a). Other studies position students participating in CAPs as units of analysis (e.g., Bloom, 2007; Fosnacht, 2011; Huerta et al., 2013; Mendiola et al., 2010; Moreno, 2002; Seftor et al., 2009). Still others focus on the role parents and families play in the college preparation process (e.g., Auerbach, 2002; Jun & Colyar, 2002; Tierney, 2002). However, few studies position CAP staff as the primary unit of analysis (e.g., Grubb, Lara, & Valdez, 2002). This gap is worthy of attention because studies show that CAP alumni view CAP staff as playing central roles in their experiences and outcomes (Gándara & Bial, 2001; Kahne & Bailey, 1999; Moreno, 2002). Gonzalez et al. (2003) assert that several scholars have addressed the contributions of "school personnel in the college decision-making process of students" (p. 148), noting that these individuals serve as institutional agents, organizational personnel who can aid or impede students' access to valuable information or other resources that could be helpful on their journey to college. The concept of institutional agents can be extended to include CAP staff who serve as conduits to valuable college-going information, resources, and networks. Studies focused on CAP staff can illuminate how individuals in these roles understand the issue of college access for underrepresented students, the sources that influence their

understandings, how those understandings are translated into goals and practices, and, ultimately, how they contribute to college access for the students with whom they work.

### **External Contexts**

As noted, most of the research on CAPs has focused on examining internal practices and on evaluating outcomes (Tierney et al., 2005; Tierney & Hagedorn, 2002). However, scholars such as Knight and Oesterreich (2002) and Oakes et al. (2002) demonstrate that external forces have a profound influence on the establishment, functioning, and outcomes of CAPs, and on CAP participants. Such external factors may be framed as follows: escalating reliance, by colleges and universities, on merit as measured by standardized tests scores for college admission (Comeaux & Watford, 2006; Gerald & Haycock, 2006); attacks on affirmative action in college admissions (Cokorinos, 2003; Gándara & Bial, 2001); rapidly changing racial and ethnic demographics of the college-going population (Gándara & Bial, 2001; Lloyd et al., 2001); an intensifying sense of crisis, particularly among politicians and policymakers, that the U.S. is not producing enough college-educated workers to remain globally competitive (Carnevale & Desrochers, 2001; Kanter, 2011; Obama, 2009; U.S. Department of Education, 2010); and increasing financial pressure on CAPs as a result of reductions in federal, state, and philanthropic support (Swail, 2005). Studies exploring the influence of these and other external forces on CAPs could add nuance to current understandings of participants' experiences, programmatic offerings, and participant outcomes, including how these come to be.

### **The Aim of My Study: Personal and Public Significance**

Though all these gaps are worthy of attention, I chose to study the influence of CAPs on their participants' college experiences, graduation, and post-college plans and aspirations. I see this topic as core to understanding virtually all operational features of CAPs – how they work and how they may touch participants' lives, in the long run, especially as participants themselves understand this. However, I did not use a multi-year study design, rather opting for snapshots, gathered and analyzed qualitatively, to compose a summary view of a select set of participants' recollections of their CAP experiences, their experiences subsequently of college, and their decisions, actions, and experiences post-college. (I discuss the specifics of this design and methods in Chapter 3.) Still more to the point, I sought to identify features of students' CAP experiences that they recall as having served them well in college, as well as aspects of college-going for which, they wish, the CAP had better prepared them. My research question and the related guiding questions (as presented in Chapter I) are rooted in this identified gap in the literature.

My reasons for proposing this research are straightforward and anchored in my own deep concerns about increasing higher education access and success for underrepresented racial/ethnic minority, low-income, and first-generation students. My interest in this issue is deeply rooted in my personal experience as an immigrant of Afro-Caribbean descent who is from a low-income family and was a first-generation college student and graduate. While I was fortunate to attend an academically rigorous urban public high school, unlike most students who share my demographic characteristics, I believe that I benefited socially and culturally from participating in a CAP during high

school. Although it has been many years, I still recall experiences that exposed me to college-going cultural and social capital that were absent in my family. The cultural and social resources I acquired from participating in my CAP aided my access to, and journey through, the selective private liberal arts college I attended as an undergraduate. My CAP experiences and related resources also influenced my post-college aspirations, educational plans, and career objectives. This is my story. I contend that the larger story, of which mine is but one part, has yet to be told. I hope that what I offer here contributes usefully to knowledge about CAPs and that it helps to frame future inquiry.

In addition to my personal interest in this issue, the topic also reflects a broad public policy concern. With anxiety mounting nationally regarding persistent inequalities in college access and completion (Bowen et al., 2009; Carnevale & Fry, 2001; Gándara & Bial, 2001), funders, policymakers, practitioners, and researchers have become increasingly interested in exploring whether and how CAPs contribute to undergraduate experiences beyond getting high school students to enroll in college. Increasingly, policymakers and funders voice concerns about CAPs' influence on participants' college completion (Fosnacht, 2011; Haskins & Rouse, 2013). Researchers such as Fosnacht (2011) and Seftor et al. (2009) have carried out research that sheds some light on *whether* CAP participation contributes to college experiences, yet researchers have paid scant attention to the equally important question of *how* CAPs – or how certain CAPs – do so. To date, research has neglected to identify those features of CAPs that enhance the academic and/or non-academic undergraduate experiences of their alumni, though such features may impact participants' likelihood of graduating, and post-college aspirations and trajectories.

Thus, through this study, I sought to identify aspects of CAPs that my study participants described as contributing positively, and also negatively (or perhaps not at all), to their collegiate experiences and post-college aspirations. Given the paucity of research on CAP participants' experiences of learning in CAPs, I hope that my study will spur additional research on the "insides" of CAPs. I also hope that this work informs efforts by policymakers, academic leaders, CAP leaders, researchers and funders to shape the field of CAPs to their best use in heightening all features of access. I turn next to my conceptual framework, college optimizing capital, which offers my approach for considering whether and how CAPs may contribute to the college experiences, persistence, and outcomes of historically underrepresented students.

### **Conceptual Framework**

Research to date reveals that there is a great deal of variation among CAPs and that not all of them are equally successful in increasing access to higher education for the targeted populations – racial/ethnic minority, low-income, and first-generation students. CAPs that offer comprehensive services and are well-implemented, surface as the most effectual in increasing college enrollment (Gándara, 2002a). My study seeks to flesh out further the internal contours of CAPs' contributions to student success (defined as persistence in/through college, getting to graduation, and moving productively into post-college life), notably from the perspective of CAP alumni's experiences, thus through retrospective analysis. The perspective yields a preliminary picture of how CAP experiences enter into and settle into individuals' lives.

To recap: Although research, to date, has identified several features of CAPs that appear to support students' success in college and persistence through graduation (Fosnacht, 2011; Swail, Quinn, Landis, & Fung, 2012b), we have no representations of how these aspects of CAPs enter into and touch students' lives, including how students encounter, interact with, experience, and take them into themselves. We also need improved understanding of nuances, around how CAPs' resources and services are delivered, and how recipients experience them; we have no research-based studies around this. My study was premised on the belief that an in-depth interview-based study would illuminate both how and what CAPs contribute to the undergraduate experiences of historically underrepresented students, including what CAPS can offer to support them toward graduation and beyond, thus after initial enrollment. An analysis of this sort, anchored in personal perception, experience, and sense-making, requires the use of conceptual frameworks that allow the researcher to get "close" to the experiences of CAP alumni who are currently enrolled or recently graduated from college, and to the extent possible, CAP alumni who enrolled in college but did not graduate.

I describe my conceptual framework as *college optimizing capital* and present it in four parts: 1) achievement-oriented psychosocial capital, 2) collegiate academic capital, 3) context-aware cultural capital, and 4) barrier-transcending social capital. Each part of this framework, especially the theories and concepts comprising it, illuminates some aspect of how CAPs might contribute to the undergraduate experiences of their participants or alumni who enrolled in college. These concepts, which I brought together for use in this study, have all been employed, largely independent of each other, in previous studies examining college access and success for racial/ethnic minority, low-

income, and first-generation students. Together, they shed a broadly spanning light that will help me explore the questions I pose about the insides of CAP alumni's college going experiences.

I drew from this rich array of perspectives, including the prior work that informed them, to develop my conceptual framework for exploring CAP alumni perceptions of the relationship between CAP participation and undergraduate experiences and outcomes.<sup>1</sup>

### College Optimizing Capital

My theoretical framework is based on the concept of capital, which refers to the accumulated resources of an individual or group that can be exchanged in a marketplace for other desired commodities. The idea of capital arose from the field of economics and was extended by Bourdieu (1986), who applied it to the social world, regarding it as “the material product of *accumulated* labor such as machines ... utilized by its owners to produce goods through the use of *living* labor. The resulting products could be converted

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<sup>1</sup> Cultural and social capital have served as popular guiding concepts in research on college preparation of historically underrepresented students, including research on CAPs (e.g. Bloom, 2008; Fosnacht, 2011; Gándara, 2002; Hagedorn & Fogel, 2002; Jun & Colyar, 2002; Moreno, 2002; Walpole, 2003; Yonezawa et al., 2002). These theories shed light on the cultural and social assets that may accrue to CAP students and their families (Bloom, 2008; Hagedorn & Tierney, 2002; Jun & Colyar, 2002). Several scholars have sought to further shape theories of cultural and social capital to better focus on race and ethnicity, in some cases with attention to the characteristics of individuals and families from racial and ethnic minority communities that appear to allow them to benefit from CAP participation (Hagedorn & Fogel, 2002; Jun & Colyar, 2002; Tierney & Auerbach, 2005). Other investigators have documented familial and individual asserts that support pursuit of educational goals despite myriad obstacles (Carter, 2005; Stanton-Salazar, 2001; Villalpando & Solórzano, 2005; Yosso, 2005). Some researchers also have employed academic capital to guide studies of underrepresented students' collegiate experiences, for example, spotlighting academic resources necessary for college enrollment, persistence, and graduation (e.g., Adelman, 1999, 2002, 2006; Cabrera, La Nasa, & Burkham, 2001; Conley, 2007; Perna, 2005; Walpole, 2003). Still others working have used psychosocial theories and concepts to guide their studies, focusing on the psychosocial orientations and assets that influence educational aspirations, effort, and outcomes. These approaches focus on students' mindsets (Yeager & Dweck, 2012), perseverance (Duckworth, Peterson, Matthews, & Kelly, 2007; Strayhorn, 2013), and resilience (Griffin & Allen, 2006; Waxman, Gray, & Padron, 2003).

to money or property rights and used to produce profits, thus allowing capital to accumulate and expand” (p. 241). Noting that differences in the quantity of accumulated capital generated differences in opportunity and constraints, ultimately producing inequalities, Bourdieu extended this concept to social interactions, advancing the theories of cultural and social capital. These ideas, which I further elaborate for this study, portray capital as the accumulation of cultural and social resources that can be exchanged.

Following on Bourdieu’s (1986) approach, *college optimizing capital*, a term that encompasses my conceptual framework, is based on the proposition that certain accumulated assets can be exchanged for college enrollment, persistence, and graduation. This framework recognizes that capital, like currency, has exchange value within specific contexts (Carter, 2003; Stanton-Salazar, 1997, 2001). In this case, specific forms of capital have exchange value for students in colleges and universities just as specific currencies have exchange value in countries using those currencies. My conceptualization builds on the work of scholars who have focused on four components of this perspective – achievement-oriented psychosocial capital (e.g., Duckworth, Peterson, Matthews, & Kelly, 2007; Griffin & Allen, 2006; Strayhorn, 2013; Waxman et al., 2003; Yeager & Dweck, 2012); collegiate academic capital (e.g., Adelman, 1999, 2002, 2006; Cabrera, La Nasa & Burkum, 2001; Conley, 2007; Perna, 2005); context-aware cultural capital (e.g., Bourdieu, 1986; Carter, 2003, 2005; Gándara, 2002; Lareau, 2003; Villalpando & Solórzano, 2005; Yosso, 2005); and barrier-transcending social capital (Bourdieu, 1986; Jun & Colyar, 2002; Stanton-Salazar, 1997, 2001) – frames I will now describe in greater detail.



**Frame I: Achievement-Oriented Psychosocial Capital**

As mentioned, racial/ethnic minority, low-income, and first-generation students experience psychosocial barriers in academic contexts such as low educational expectations (Chen, 2005; Choy, 2001; Engle, 2007; Ishitani, 2006; Terenzini et al., 2001), lack of confidence in academic abilities (Bui, 2002; Engle, 2007), stress caused by racially insensitive and hostile environments within and beyond classrooms (Harper & Hurtado, 2007; Howell & Tuitt, 2003; Loo & Rolison, 1986; Smith, 1981; Steele & Aronson, 1995; Sue & Constantine, 2007; Turner, 1994; Yosso, Smith, Ceja, & Solórzano, 2009), and feelings of not being validated (Rendón, 1994) or not belonging (Hurtado & Carter, 1997). The achievement-oriented psychosocial capital frame draws primarily on research in education, psychology, and social psychology, through a focus on non-cognitive skills and attention to the personal characteristics, orientations, and traits likely to enhance achievement. This frame highlights resources historically underrepresented students may need to overcome the psychosocial challenges they experience in the context of educational environments such as colleges and universities. This frame is grounded in three key concepts – growth mindset, resilience, and grit.

The concept of growth mindset considers how individuals perceive themselves in specific contexts and how their perceptions can influence their responses. In this study, I use this concept to mean assessing how students perceive themselves in specific educational contexts, with attention to how their perceptions can influence their academic performance (Yeager, Paunesku, Walton, & Dweck, 2013). Researchers have identified student responses to academic and social challenges along a spectrum that ranges from *fixed mindset* to *growth mindset* (Dweck, 2007; Yeager & Dweck, 2012; Yeager et al.,

2013). Students with fixed mindsets view intellectual and social attributes as unalterable, whereas students with growth mindsets believe such traits can be developed and enhanced – and tend to respond to academic and social challenges from the belief that those obstacles can be overcome (Dweck, 2007; Yeager & Dweck, 2012; Yeager et al., 2013). For example, a student with a growth mindset who struggles in math will be more likely to believe s/he can implement strategies to improve performance, while a student with a fixed mindset is more likely to attribute her/his struggles to a lack of ability that cannot be improved. Importantly, scholars have demonstrated that (1) growth mindsets can be cultivated in K-12 and college students through messages of encouragement that affirm that students' academic performance can improve; and (2) such a shift may improve academic performance, educational expectations, and confidence (Dweck, 2007; Yeager & Dweck, 2012; Yeager et al., 2013).

The second concept that grounds the achievement-oriented psychosocial capital frame for my study, resilience, focuses on individuals' ability to withstand adversity amidst challenging environments and experiences (Griffin & Allen, 2006; Waxman et al., 2003). Applied to educational settings, the concept of resilience highlights students' persistence, perseverance, and likelihood of success despite their experiences with specific difficult events, for example in challenging environments. Researchers have found that, when faced with adverse encounters or more broadly, environments, resilient students maintain motivation, high expectations, aspirations, and goal orientations, and also develop and display problem-solving skills (Griffin & Allen, 2006). As an example, Solórzano, Ceja, and Yosso (2000) report that some African American students who experience racial microaggressions respond by creating affirming academic and social

counter-spaces that support their learning and provided social support. An important feature of this concept is that while resilience is located within individuals, it is developed and nurtured by the context/s in which they live (Ceja, 2004; Clauss-Ehlers & Wibrowski, 2007; Griffin & Allen, 2006; Waxman et al., 2003). As such, resilience can be nurtured and enhanced in both CAPs and higher education institutions.

The third and final concept in this frame, grit, focuses on how individuals persevere and persist through adversity, delay gratification, and maintain passion for their goals over multiple years (Duckworth et al., 2007). Gritty individuals take a longer view on life and sustain a commitment to their goals and objectives that cannot be deterred by setbacks and stumbles (Duckworth et al., 2007). Studies of high-achieving individuals reveal that their sustained effort and stamina contribute as much to their success as their talent (Duckworth et al., 2007). In particular, Strayhorn (2013) reports that grit contributes to the academic achievement of Black males, after accounting for high school GPA and standardized test scores. As such, grit is important to the long-term academic and life aspirations of historically underrepresented students. Like the other two concepts in this frame, growth mindset and resilience, grit can be nurtured and developed (Duckworth et al., 2007).

**Contributions and limitations of the achievement-oriented psychosocial capital perspective.** The achievement-oriented psychosocial capital frame, attentive largely to development of non-cognitive skills, highlights the psychosocial resources that historically underrepresented students may need to respond to the psychological challenges they experience in the social context of educational environments in order to persist and graduate. Any or all of the factors addressed by this frame may bear on

aspects of my study. For example, I have already laid out my concerns that despite their expressed interests to go to college and even to pursue post-graduate studies, first-generation students are far less likely to apply, enroll in, and complete graduate or professional school than peers whose parents graduated from college (Chen, 2005; Choy, 2001; Engle, 2007). This frame highlights non-cognitive resources that students bring to college from their lives or from CAPs themselves, helping them to persist toward graduation. That said, the achievement-oriented psychosocial frame largely fails to consider the academic assets required for college access and success. I thus turn next to collegiate academic capital, a complementary concept, also part of my framework.

### **Frame II: Collegiate Academic Capital**

Collegiate academic capital is the sum of educational experiences and resources, accrued over time, which can be exchanged for college access and success. This concept combines the work of higher education scholars who have demonstrated that academic preparation is critically important for college access and success (Adelman, 1999, 2002, 2006; Cabrera et al., 2001; Conley, 2007; Hagedorn & Fogel, 2002; Perna, 2005) with Bourdieu's (1986) notion that capital is an accumulation of resources that can be traded in a marketplace for other desired goods. Several higher education researchers have empirically established that the quality of a student's high school preparation, assessed by factors such as the "academic intensity" of the curriculum, GPA, class rank, and standardized test scores, play significant roles in contributing to the student's access to and success in college (Adelman, 1999; Cabrera et al., 2001; Perna, 2005). This

collective body of academic experiences and assets, which are built over time, are akin to Bourdieu's (1986) notion of capital, the accumulation of exchangeable resources.

Studies by Adelman (1999, 2002, 2006) and Hagedorn and Fogel (2002) established that academic intensity, as reflected by a rigorous curriculum, is the most important of the several factors that support high school preparation. A rigorous curriculum offers high-quality coursework in English; foreign languages; social studies and history; laboratory sciences such as biology, chemistry, and physics; and mathematics courses such as algebra, geometry, trigonometry, and calculus (Adelman, 1999; Hagedorn & Fogel, 2002). In fact, Adelman (1999) identified the highest level of mathematics coursework that a student achieves as the most important factor in the academic intensity construct for determining college completion, an observation he acknowledges was first pinpointed by Pallas and Alexander (1983).

However, "simply requiring that students take more years of math, science or language arts will not ensure that they are prepared for the academic demands of college," according to Conley (2007), who affirms the 2002 National Research Council report finding that students must be helped to learn to "draw inferences, interpret results, analyze conflicting source documents, support arguments with evidence, solve complex problems that have no obvious answer, draw conclusions, offer explanations, conduct research, and generally think deeply about what they are being taught" (p. 2).

Academically rigorous high school courses also prepare students for the faster pace, greater volume of reading, and more frequent assignments they will experience in tertiary education, and equip them with the ability to work independently and in groups during and outside classroom time (Conley, 2007; Greene & Forster, 2003; Roderick, Nagaoka,

& Coca, 2009). The demanding academic expectations and requirements of college have been shown to be markedly different from average high school experiences, which often fail to challenge students to push themselves, for example, moving themselves from simply understanding a text to critically assessing it (Conley, 2007; Oakes, 2005; Roderick et al., 2009).

Many scholars have utilized standardized test scores, GPA, and class rank as measures of academic ability – and policymakers, practitioners, and the general public often accept these measures as exclusive and infallible indicators. However, Adelman (1999) contends that these are unreliable predictors of college success, noting that: (1) standardized test scores have a positive relationship to college access but are not as strong a predictor of college graduation; (2) approximately 20 percent of high schools do not record class rank at all; and (3) class rank and GPA do not typically incorporate measures of academic rigor (e.g. the calculation of GPA at more 50 percent of all secondary schools includes non-academic courses and may also include remedial courses). Consequently, Adelman suggests that these measures may serve as explanatory factors, but that it is the quality of the curriculum in which a student obtains a GPA and class rank that provide the most robust explanation of that student's academic preparation. Significantly, secondary school curricular quality is an even more important predictor of college completion for underrepresented minority students than it is for Whites, and class rank and GPA are even less reliable for this population (Adelman, 1999). Ultimately, students enrolled in an academically intense curriculum are more likely to enroll in, persist through, and complete college, regardless of race or socioeconomic status (Adelman, 1999; Cabrera et al., 2001).

According to Adelman (1999) curricular quality reflects the *opportunity to learn* for the students enrolled in any high school. The availability of intense, high-quality courses provides high school students with the opportunity to develop their academic abilities to think analytically, critically, and problem-solve. Enrollment in and completion of these rigorous courses throughout the four years of high school allows college students to build on their prior academic knowledge and existing skills and habits (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 1999; Castillo-Montoya, 2013). Students in demanding courses experience “changed cognition” (Neumann, 2009), through which they may develop deepened comprehension of academic subject matter that allows them to draw inferences and make connections, and, hopefully, “transfer” their understandings to settings beyond school (Bransford et al., 1999). Beyond academic knowledge, rigorous courses enhance students’ understandings of the types of skill and habits necessary for success in and completion of college (Bonous-Hammarth & Allen, 2005; Cabrera et al, 2001; Conley, 2007; Greene & Forster, 2003; Roderick et al., 2009).

It is at this point that CAPs can come into play and that my own interests in what these programs can and should offer move to the forefront: Do CAPs assist in fostering students’ readiness to engage in in-depth learning? If so, how? The collective accumulation of the academic knowledge, skills, and habits associated with academically intense courses, coupled with completion and/or performance recorded on students’ transcripts, serves as a credential (Bourdieu, 1986) that can be compared with transcript information for other students in admissions, scholarship, and placement decisions. The accumulation of challenging educational experiences, encoded over time in a transcript

(perhaps as a form of currency), thus serves as an asset, *academic capital*, that can be exchanged for college access and success.

However, as with any form of capital, differences in the quantity and quality of accumulated academic capital can generate disparities in educational opportunity, constraining those with less and ultimately producing inequalities in educational attainment. Substantial disparities in curricular intensity and quality impact opportunities to learn and exist between public schools in low-income areas (typically attended by underrepresented racial/ethnic minority students) and public schools in higher-income communities (more often attended by White students) (Adelman, 1999; Perna, 2005). Public schools in high-income communities are significantly more likely to offer high-intensity, high-quality mathematics, laboratory science, and Advanced Placement courses that prepare students to succeed in college (Adelman, 1999; Gándara, 2002; Perna, 2005).

Even within public high schools that do offer a rigorous curriculum, underrepresented racial/ethnic minority and low-income students are less likely to be placed in challenging courses that prepare them for college (Auerbach, 2002; Lucas, 1999; Oakes, 2005, 2005; Perna, 2005). Oakes (2005) revealed how racial/ethnic minority and low-income students in public schools were routinely placed on lower academic tracks to which they became almost permanently confined despite policies allowing students to change tracks. Even after some schools replaced the practice of “tracking” with a new policy of “ability grouping,” underrepresented racial/ethnic minority and low-income students were more likely to be placed in low-ability groups (Perna, 2002). Ultimately, students in lower academic tracks and ability groups have been shown to learn less than students in higher tracks or ability groupings (Lucas, 1999;



Oakes, 2005). Over time, then, significant disparities in academic capital have grown between underrepresented racial/ethnic minority and low-income students, and White and higher-income students, especially given the encoding of academic performance in the “currency” of transcripts. As a result, racial/ethnic minority and low-income students overall have less capital to exchange for college access and success, which results in lower rates of college enrollment and completion for these groups, particularly at the four-year college level (Adelman, 1999; Perna, 2005).

**Contributions and limitations of the collegiate academic capital perspective.**

One strength of the collegiate academic capital perspective, from the viewpoint of this study, is that it affirms the efforts of many CAPs to address the inadequate academic preparation of racial/ethnic minority and low-income students who attend high schools that either lack high-intensity, high-quality curricula or practice tracking or ability grouping. These CAPs offer rigorous academic courses after school, on weekends, and/or during summer break, or advise students on the courses necessary for college enrollment and assist in securing access to such coursework where available (Gándara, 2002a; Perna, 2005; Swail & Perna, 2001). Furthermore, several CAPs begin assisting historically underrepresented students as early as elementary school to increase their academic capital, acknowledging that accumulating these academic resources requires time (Adelman, 1999; Bonous-Hammarth & Allen, 2005). This viewpoint spotlights the academic resources racial/ethnic minority and low-income students need to succeed in college.

However, one limitation of the academic capital frame is that it fails to shed light on how students and families, in communities lacking high-intensity and high-quality

curricula in their schools, gain access to better opportunities to learn. In fact, one common explanation of the disparities in access to academic capital between students targeted by CAPs and high-income and White students is the difference between these groups with respect to knowledge of how educational systems and processes work (Gándara, 2002a; Perna, 2005; Tierney & Auerbach, 2005). White and higher-income students are more likely to have parents who attended college and are familiar with the academic requirements for college access and success, as well as the processes of applying, enrolling, and succeeding in college, than are racial/ethnic minority and low-income students (Bloom, 2008; Fosnacht, 2011). Parents of the former can advise their children about appropriate college preparatory courses of study and college application and enrollment processes, and/or can intervene with high school authorities to ensure that their children are placed on the appropriate academic track (Auerbach, 2002; Bloom, 2008; Demerath, 2009; Gándara, 2002; Oakes, 2005) – they have more capital to support such actions.

Racial/ethnic minority and low-income students whose parents lack these experiences cannot count on comparable support. In fact, racial/ethnic minority and low-income students who do successfully complete rigorous academic curricula and qualify for admission to selective colleges and universities (which are more likely to ensure that their students graduate) often matriculate to less selective schools where graduation is less likely, and some choose to forgo college altogether (Bowen et al., 2009; Roderick, Nagaoka, Coca, & Moeller, 2008; Roderick et al., 2009). Because such outcomes are often linked to cultural norms and/or lack of knowledge about, for example, differences in quality among higher education institutions, I now turn to the complementary concept

of context-aware cultural capital, which can highlight how cultural knowledge, values, and tastes provide assets that can be leveraged to gain access to and succeed in higher education, or can constitute a disadvantage.

### **Frame III: Context-Aware Cultural Capital**

All social groups possess cultural resources and assets such as attitudes, dispositions, knowledge, values, and tastes that can be converted into cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986; Carter, 2003, 2005; Tierney & Hagedorn, 2002; Villalpando & Solórzano, 2005; Yosso, 2005). However, because societies are hierarchically stratified, the cultural resources and assets of dominant groups are a more valued form of capital than those of non-dominant groups (Bourdieu, 1986; Carter, 2003, 2005; Lareau, 2000). Thus, acquiring the cultural capital associated with dominant groups is typically seen as necessary for upward mobility for individuals from lower-status groups (Bourdieu, 1986). That said, non-dominant groups also possess cultural resources and assets that can help them in their communities, as well as in the wider society (Carter, 2003, 2005; Yosso, 2005), and some individuals from subordinate groups find ways to employ both dominant and non-dominant cultural resources in a context-dependent manner (Carter, 2003, 2005).

Cultural assets, according to Bourdieu (1986), are resources that “can exist in three forms: in the *embodied state*; in the *objectified state*; and in the *institutionalized state*” (p. 243). Cultural capital in the embodied state is the sum of cultural attitudes, dispositions, knowledge, values, and tastes possessed by individuals but transmitted by families across generations through the routines of daily life and without formal and organized cultivation. As such, Bourdieu points out that this process goes unrecognized

by almost everyone, including transmitters, recipients, and scholars. With respect to college access, cultural capital, in its embodied state, might be reflected in the knowledge parents and extended family have about how the system of and process for college enrollment works, or “knowing how to manage public resources, like school curricula, to the advantage of one’s children” (Gándara, 2002a, p. 92). Beyond knowledge about what coursework and extra-curricular activities are likely to resonate with college counselors, this form of cultural capital might include awareness of the following: the different types of higher education institutions and their positions in the postsecondary education hierarchy; dispositions towards particular types of colleges and universities based on factors such as their selectivity, educational philosophy, options for majors, and expected social and economic outcomes for alumni; and/or the value of non-academic experiences such as studying abroad, volunteering, or internships.

The objectified form of cultural capital consists of “material objects and media such as writings, paintings, monuments, instruments, etc., and is transmissible in its materiality” (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 246). While cultural capital, in objectified form, is represented by material objects and media, it derives its significance from the value placed on them in the embodied form. Examples of this type of cultural capital that could be useful with regards to college access and success includes knowledge conveyed by way of the “Great Works” by authors such as Homer, Joyce, Melville, Shakespeare, Tolstoy, and Voltaire. It also might include knowledge and abilities to use more modern technologies such as laptop and tablet computers and knowing how to access internet-based resources. Possession of and facility with these types of goods can be leveraged to send signals to significant gatekeepers and resource providers, for example, college

admissions officers who, in reading applicants' personal essays, may search them for signals that an applicant has mastered valued cultural knowledge. Bourdieu notes that objectified cultural capital is closely related to economic capital because typically, it requires financial resources to acquire the material goods that inscribe this form of capital.

Cultural capital in the institutionalized state is derived from legally-sanctioned "institutionalized recognition" of "the cultural capital possessed by any given agent" (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 248). In the case of an academic credential, an individual's embodied and objectified cultural capital is certified and standardized, allowing it to be publicly compared with the capital of other holders of related institutionalized cultural capital. With respect to higher education access and success, institutionalized cultural capital would be reflected by high school diplomas and higher education degrees, as well as awards and honors, all of which are evaluated in the college admissions process. For example, holders of high school academic credentials such as a New York State Regents diploma, which certifies that a student has completed a particular course of study and passed the required exams with a minimum score of 65, can be compared with each other and/or with holders of other types of diplomas by college admissions officers and others. It is important to recognize that institutionalizing cultural capital "makes it possible to establish conversion rates between cultural capital and economic capital by guaranteeing the monetary value of a given academic capital" (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 248). As such, a high school or higher education credential could be examined by a potential employer and subsequently assigned monetary value in the form of a salary offer.

Individuals and families are viewed as embedded in and distinguished by hierarchically stratified upper, middle, and lower social classes, with those at the top of the social order playing a dominant role (Bourdieu, 1986; Carter, 2003, 2005; Lareau, 2000). Bourdieu noted that attitudes, knowledge, tastes, and values tend to be shared with those of similar backgrounds, with cultural dispositions typically confined within groups and not widely available. The cultural assets of the higher-status middle and upper classes, who dominate society through their control of cultural, economic, educational, governmental, and other institutions, are widely viewed as superior to those of lower classes. Due to their presumed superiority, middle- and upper-class cultural dispositions are prerequisites for entry to these social groups and to the various domains and opportunities they control (Bourdieu, 1986). But because upper-class dispositions are confined, in fact, to the upper classes, these are hard to access by members of lower classes, whose upward mobility will then be slowed or deterred (Bourdieu, 1986).

Further, the middle and upper classes of society control higher education institutions, and their attitudes, dispositions, knowledge, values, and tastes are reflected in multiple features of college and university life. Because possession of the cultural resources higher education institutions value is not universally distributed, middle- and upper-class individuals and their families are advantaged over lower-status groups (Bourdieu, 1986). Furthermore, because middle- and upper-class individuals have always been more likely to enroll in postsecondary education than have members of lower-classes, this advantage has become compounded over generations (Carnevale & Rose, 2003; Gándara, 2002). The limited availability of this embodied form of cultural capital makes it scarce and further enhances its value to those who possess it (Bourdieu, 1986).

Many scholars argue that it is necessary for lower-status groups to acquire middle- and upper-class cultural dispositions to gain access to and succeed in higher education (Bourdieu, 1986; Hagedorn & Tierney, 2002; Yonezawa et al., 2002).

As mentioned, however, non-dominant groups possess their own cultural resources, which help them in their communities as well as in the wider society, despite its oppressive nature (Carter, 2003, 2005; Villalpando & Solórzano, 2005; Yosso, 2005). Consequently, subordinate groups rely on their own cultural assets as they pursue educational and life goals (Carter, 2003, 2005; Tierney & Hagedorn, 2002; Villalpando & Solórzano, 2005; Yosso, 2005). However, some individuals from subordinate groups recognize that both dominant and non-dominant cultural resources are necessary in specific contexts. Gaining both, and knowing when to use them, could advantage individuals and groups searching for access to social goods beyond those limited to their own social class.

**Contributions and limitations of the context-aware cultural capital perspective.** The context-aware cultural capital perspective promises to enhance understanding of what some CAPs provide to their participants, but it too is limited. The perspective sheds light on the cultural resources racial/ethnic minority and low-income students possess or need to acquire and “exchange” (in social transactional situations) to negotiate their way to and through college. As mentioned, such cultural resources are complex and must be deployed in a contextually-sensitive manner. I posit that underrepresented racial/ethnic minority and low-income undergraduates are likely to possess and would benefit from the ability to deploy both dominant and non-dominant cultural capital to successfully navigate their undergraduate experiences and graduate.

These students could utilize dominant cultural capital in formal settings such as classrooms, advising meetings with faculty, interactions with campus administrators, and extracurricular activities such as clubs, organizations, and teams. They could learn to do so, of course, with appropriate support, and such assets and resources might be provided by CAPs.

Students from historically underrepresented communities could also be encouraged to deploy their non-dominant cultural capital to their advantage – for example, with peers who share, or are familiar with and/or open to the norms that characterize their racial/ethnic, socioeconomic, and/or geographic backgrounds. Doing so may permit students to demonstrate and also experience in-group solidarity and thereby secure the benefits of community and a sense of belonging (see, for example, Carter, 2003). The ability to deploy this kind of cultural capital could benefit racial/ethnic minority, low-income, and first-generation students attending predominantly White institutions; on these campuses, students of color, first-generation learners, and low-SES students are prone to experience feelings of isolation and tokenism (Allen, 1992; Choy, 2001; Levine & Ancheta, 2013; Turner, 1994; Walpole, 2003). In such settings, possession of aspirational, linguistic, familial, navigational, and resistant capital (Yosso, 2005) is of high value. Like non-dominant cultural capital, familial and linguistic capital can be used to create a “home away from home.” Navigational capital, too, can be used in formal settings to identify resources necessary to persist in college, such as securing financial aid and scholarships, and accessing limited-enrollment classes, honors, awards, and study abroad and internship opportunities. All these capacities may, potentially, be



nurtured by CAPs. I turn now to discussion of my final frame, forms of social capital that support students in transcending barriers.

#### **Frame IV: Barrier-Transcending Social Capital**

The key features of the barrier-transcending social capital frame are similar to those of context-aware cultural capital, but the former highlights practices inherent to cultures, whereas social capital refers to information or insight that individuals can access via social ties and networks. The two forms of capital are analytically distinct from one another though they may co-exist and become intertwined. As noted, all groups possess social capital, but social stratification results in its differential valuing, by different social groups variously positioned on the societal hierarchy. In this view, the social capital of dominant groups will be more valued than the social capital of subordinate groups, similar to cultural capital described in the preceding frame. In this view, institutional agents can play a key role.

Bourdieu (1986) argues that all groups possess social capital, “the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network....” (pp. 248–249). Such networks may emerge from individuals, groups, or institutions (Jun & Colyar, 2002; Stanton-Salazar, 2001; Yosso, 2005). Establishing and maintaining relationships in social networks is then key, and requires that individuals be willing to invest the time and energy to forge friendships and be able to contribute reciprocally when called to do so (Bourdieu, 1986; Stanton-Salazar, 2001). As such, selection into and membership in social networks is limited by informal rules established by the group in order to protect and advance its interests (Bourdieu, 1986).

A key tenet of this frame is that social networks are embedded within stratified societies marked by socio-economic differences between hierarchically ranked social classes (Bourdieu, 1986; Stanton-Salazar, 2001), again a view similar to that of the preceding frame. Higher socio-economic status (SES) individuals and groups are regarded as having more valuable social capital than those who have lower SES (Bourdieu, 1986; Stanton-Salazar, 2001). Since members seek to maximize the group's social capital, networks comprised of middle- and upper-class individuals often limit membership to those of similar socio-economic status, again mirroring dynamics of cultural capital. Further, although dominant groups often view their lower-SES counterparts as lacking social capital, it has been shown that all groups possess social capital – though the nature of that capital may differ (Stanton-Salazar, 1997; Villalpando & Solórzano, 2005; Yosso & Garcia, 2007). Moreover, it is also pertinent that power differentials exist within groups, with more influential members serving, typically, as primary providers of social capital (Stanton-Salazar, 2001). Ultimately, one's social capital depends on the size and social class characteristics of one's network, as well as one's ability to mobilize collective resources to one's benefit (Bourdieu, 1986).

For the purposes of this study, it is important to note that “well-developed social networks” may have a “positive” impact on students’ “educational outcomes” (Coates, 1987 as cited in Jun & Colyar, 2002, p. 201). Thus, students’ access to social networks can contribute to their college enrollment and experiences, depending on the characteristics of those networks. For example, Bloom (2008) shows how social networks helped middle-class high school students gain knowledge of and advice about a wide range of colleges and universities, visit college campuses, secure college interviews with

friends of their parents, and receive help in completing college applications. Similarly, Gonzalez et al. (2003) illustrated how a group of low-income Latinas participating in a CAP used the social capital gained from the program, their parents, siblings, and high school to develop college aspirations, visit colleges campuses, prepare for the SATs, and complete applications. Students from both groups used their social networks to increase their knowledge of higher education options and admission processes. In brief, the students benefitted from the resources available in those relationships – again, the emphasis on social ties and networks. In contrast, students lacking those relationships are largely excluded from such benefits.

**Contributions and limitations of the barrier-transcending social capital perspective.** The barrier-transcending social capital frame highlights social networks and other social ties toward accessing valued resources embedded in them. This frame illuminates the kinds of relationships and social linkages which, if accessed, may help racial/ethnic minority, low-income, and first-generation students enroll in and navigate their way through college – to graduation and beyond. Historically, racial/ethnic minority, low-income, and first-generation students have lacked access to such social capital. That remains true to this day, though no doubt in ways that are unique to the current era. While helpful in illuminating the obstacles historically underrepresented youth face in college, as well as potential strategies for overcoming challenges, the barrier-transcending social capital perspective neglects to show how the resources in these networks may be activated, including how institutional agents may be mobilized, to aid the targeted student populations.

## Summary

The four perspectives of my conceptual framework align with the goals of my study and research questions. The first perspective of my framework, achievement-oriented psychosocial capital, illuminates the psychosocial orientations and resources historically underrepresented students need to pursue their educational aspirations and overcome challenging and sometimes hostile environments whose dynamics threaten to derail their goal of college graduation. The second perspective, collegiate academic capital, sheds light on the academic resources that these students require to perform academically and persist through college. Finally, the third and fourth perspectives highlight the social and cultural resources, including relationships and networks, necessary for college success. Additionally, each of these four perspectives brings into focus how crucial resources may be acquired. In the next chapter, I discuss the research design and methods I employed to conduct the study.

### III - RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

In this study I sought to understand whether and how college access program alumni who subsequently enrolled in college retrospectively viewed their CAP as helping them enter and advance through their undergraduate education and shape their post-college plans and direction. I also sought to identify and explore features of their CAP that alumni viewed as unhelpful, along with services they thought would have been beneficial but were not provided by their CAPs.

In pursuit of these objectives, I studied 24 alumni of five CAPs who subsequently enrolled in four-year colleges and universities. These CAP alumni included: (1) undergraduates who, at the time of my study, were juniors or seniors in college and were on track to earn a bachelor's degree within six years of initial enrollment; (2) individuals who had earned a bachelor's degree and graduated within three years of this study; and (3) individuals who had withdrawn from their undergraduate institution before earning a bachelor's degree and had not re-enrolled in higher education for over two years. The five CAPS attended by the 24 individuals I studied reflected the structural diversity explained in the preceding chapter.

I begin this chapter by restating my research question and the related guiding questions. I then describe my research perspective, with its implications for my chosen methodology. Next, I detail the study design and methods, including site selection and access, sampling, and data collection. Subsequently, I outline the strategies I utilized to

protect my study participants' rights and explain how I analyzed my data. Finally, I discuss the limitations of my study relative to issues of validity, reliability, generalizability, and the influence of my perspective as a researcher.

### **Research Question**

To provide context for the forthcoming discussion I re-state my research question, initially presented in Chapter 1, as follows:

To what extent, and how, may, college access programs influence, shape or direct the college experiences and outcomes of CAP participants who subsequently enroll in colleges and universities? And if they do, how and through what means or which features do they appear to do so? And if they do not, what features of a CAP, if any, may explain this?

I sought to address these questions from within the perspectives of CAP alumni. I hope that my study will help to corroborate, extend, or question the findings of others who have examined such matters from perspectives differing from my own (e.g., Fosnacht, 2011; Hilberg et al., 2009; Seftor et al., 2009; St. John et al., 2011). My review of the literature, in Chapter II, revealed that an analysis of CAPs and their outcomes, from within their participants' experiences, is missing in the extant research and in policy discussions of CAPs.

Finally, I note that the current study is but one part of a much larger program of research which I hope to pursue over many years; there is much more to study about CAPs and the students who participate in them. Here, I took a first step that I hope will

open pathways into research around how CAPs can better serve those who enroll in them. In addition to informing the work of future researchers, I hope that this study will guide policymakers, CAP leaders, and others attuned to enhancing the collegiate success of CAP students.

To achieve my aim, I relied, for data, on the experiences, memories, and sense-making of CAP alumni, articulated in retrospect (Weick, 1979). I acknowledge that these recollections, largely subjective, are partial – as are all features of human knowing – but argue that personal experience, represented in memory and awareness, can be a rich source of knowledge and insight about individuals’ experiences (Krieger, 1991; Neumann & Peterson, 1997; Solórzano & Villalpando, 1998). I also believe that such knowledge, drawn from individuals’ subjective experiences, can serve as useful starting points for consideration of policy options that can be corroborated and extended later through other research approaches. Memory-based data, in the context of well-designed studies, scrupulously employed methods, and carefully framed limitations, can be useful for understanding how, in the present day, people live with what they know of and from their pasts (Neumann & Peterson, 1997). As such, I viewed the experiences of CAP alumni as fertile sites of knowledge.

I focused on the perspectives of CAP alumni who followed the more traditional college attendance pattern by enrolling full-time in a four-year college after graduating from high school. Thereafter, my participants had pursued one of three routes: (1) they had persisted to their junior or senior year, (2) they had earned a bachelor’s degree within three years of study participation, or (3) they had withdrawn from college for more than two years and had not re-enrolled. I acknowledge that I could have drawn on other

populations toward assessing the trajectories of CAP participants - for example, CAP alumni who attended four-year colleges on a part-time basis or two-year colleges full- or part-time. I did not study these groups in the current study, choosing instead to focus on a narrower range of experiences. I also did not compare the experiences of the CAP alumni in my study individuals to who did not participate in CAPs in high school prior to enrolling in higher education. While I had hoped to include a more substantial comparison group of CAP alumni who did not persist through college, I succeeded in recruiting only four individuals falling into this category.<sup>1</sup> I do not detail their experiences here but what they shared did usefully inform my data analysis.

In the context of this bounded study, I sought to recruit research subjects possessing knowledge that reflected my research aim: All had recently experienced or were experiencing the phenomenon I wished to examine (Creswell, 2007; Maxwell, 2005; Seidman, 2006): CAP participation and subsequent full-time four-year college attendance. In the research, I emphasized focal participants' experiences relative to their academic and non-academic experiences in college, and initial post-college aspirations and trajectories. I also sought to portray their CAP experience from their epistemic standpoints (Collins, 1986; Harding, 1987) thereby offering an assessment of the CAPs through the lens of those for whom the CAPs were intended (e.g., Castillo-Montoya, 2013; Harper, 2012; Knight & Marciano, 2013; Solórzano & Villalpando, 1998). By enrolling in college, all focal participants had fulfilled at least one of their CAP's goals. Some met another CAP objective by completing college. Guided by the previously stated research question, I relied on the following guiding questions to carry out my study:

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<sup>1</sup> Recruiting participants from this category was difficult because they were less-likely to remain in contact with their CAPs. As a result, study sites did not have contact information for most alumni in this category.



1. Which features of their CAP experiences do program alumni identify as contributing positively to their: (a) academic experiences in college? (b) non-academic experiences in college? (c) initial post-college aspirations and trajectories?
2. Which features of their CAP experiences do program alumni identify as not contributing to and possibly detracting from their academic and non-academic experiences in college or their post-college aspirations and trajectories?
3. Are there features of their college experiences that CAP alumni wish their program had prepared them for: (a) academically? If yes, what? Why? (b) non-academically? If yes, what? Why?

### **Perspectives Informing the Study's Design and Method**

For this study I have drawn on two research paradigms, interpretivist and critical approaches, in order to develop a “paradigmatic synthesis” (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010, p. 76). I believe each of these two paradigms is relevant and offers unique contributions to address my research question.

#### **Interpretivist Paradigm**

My study drew on the interpretivist paradigm, which is based on the view that reality is socially constructed (Cerwonka, 2007; Creswell, 2007; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; LeCompte & Schensul, 2010; Maxwell, 2005). As such, “what people know and believe to be true ... is constructed or created and reinforced and supported as people interact

with one another over time in specific social settings” (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010, p. 67). Therefore, what individuals claim to know is based on their interpretations of their experiences and the subjective understandings they attach to those events when describing them to others, such as researchers (Creswell, 2007; LeCompte & Schensul, 2010). Since the interpretive paradigm views reality as socially constructed, all understandings are viewed as equally legitimate and significant (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010) “but . . . more or less informed and/or sophisticated” (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 111). However, interpretivists believe that meanings and understandings are not permanently entrenched but subject to re-interpretations based on new experiences and information (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; LeCompte & Schensul, 2010).

My study drew on the interpretivist paradigm because I view reality as socially (including personally and interpersonally) constructed and sought to understand how CAP alumni make sense of their CAP’s influence on their subsequent undergraduate and post-college experiences. As such, I employed semi-structured individual and group interviews (Creswell, 2007; Rubin & Rubin, 2005; Seidman, 2006), which allowed me to elicit and document CAP alums’ interpretations of their experiences and the understandings they attached to those experiences (Krieger, 1991). I viewed each participant’s perception of the CAP, and their sense of its influence on their undergraduate experience, as authentic and meaningful to that person, while acknowledging the possibility that over time, or in different settings, that individual may reframe his/her understandings. This view acknowledges the power of subsequent historical, educational, professional, and/or other contexts to shape one’s understandings of experiences (see Krieger, 1991; Neumann & Peterson, 1997).

I also relied on a critical approach to understand the data I elicited from CAP alumni as to whether and how their CAP influenced their college experiences. I turn next to discuss this perspective.

### **Critical Paradigm**

The critical paradigm is rooted in the view that reality exists and is knowable but is situated in economic, historical, and political contexts and at global, national, local, and institutional levels where power is unequally distributed, and thus heavily shaped by the words and actions of dominant groups (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Guba & Lincoln, 2005; LeCompte & Schensul, 2010). This paradigm is consistent with my discussion, in Chapter II, of social and cultural capital as central ideas in my study's overarching conceptual framework. It was thus fitting for use in this study.

Critical theorists are "interested in which groups in society enjoy privileged access to knowledge and power" and thus their work "guides investigation into sources and dimensions of inequality in such systems ... so as to change inequities inherent in them" (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010, p. 63). As such, researchers employing the critical paradigm consider how individual and group characteristics such as race/ethnicity, socio-economic status, gender, and national origin independently or in combination contribute to inequalities (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Guba & Lincoln, 2005; LeCompte & Schensul, 2010). Critical researchers focus on institutions and structures to identify whether and how they contribute to inequities, as well as how such systems might be transformed (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010). Finally, researchers working within the critical tradition

are expected to share goals and values with those they study, thereby contributing to their empowerment (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010).

My study drew on several aspects of the critical paradigm. I have already stated the first: that I view that reality as socially constructed but as shaped by larger economic, historical, and political contexts existing at global, national, local, and institutional levels. At those levels, power is unequally distributed and shaped by dominant groups. A second aspect of the critical paradigm as applied to my study may be stated as follows: I am interested in identifying those groups in American society who enjoy privileged access to knowledge and power, as well as those groups who do not. Building on such knowledge, I am especially interested in considering how inequities between such groups might be transformed. In light of this paradigm, my study focuses on racial and ethnic minority, low-SES, and first-generation college students who have been historically excluded from higher education. Students of such backgrounds have not had the kind of privileged access to knowledge and power that others have had and continue to have. I sought to understand, from the perspective of students drawn from these populations, whether and how the CAPs in which they participated, as elementary, middle and/or high school students, contributed to their undergraduate experiences and initial post-college aspirations and trajectories. My aim in conducting this study was to contribute knowledge that can help CAPs better prepare their alumni to persist in and graduate from college, thus empowering them to participate, to the highest extent possible, in the ongoing transformation of their lives, communities, and country.

## Site Selection

I employed a purposeful criterion-based selection approach to secure sites for my study of CAP alumni's perceptions of the influence of their CAP on their college experiences and initial post-college aspirations and trajectories (Creswell, 2007; LeCompte & Schensul, 2010; Maxwell, 2005). Accordingly, I selected five CAPs, all located in the New York City metropolitan area, that collectively represent most of the funding models described in Chapter II. Variation in study sites, by funding model, is important because funding sources often determine programmatic expectations, offerings, and, when conducted, assessments (Kirst & Venezia, 2006; Swail & Perna, 2002; Walton, 2009). These five CAPs in my study fell into the following funding categories: (1) federally-funded national programs, (2) privately-funded national programs, (3) publicly-funded state programs, (4) privately-funded local programs, and (5) publicly-funded or community-based local program.<sup>2</sup> Utilizing "maximum variation" as a standard for site selection enabled me to "document diverse variations and identify important common patterns" (Creswell, 2007, p. 127) in CAP alumni experiences and outcomes.

My selected sites met three additional criteria. First, the participating CAPs served students who lived at home and mostly attended public schools as opposed to CAPs that placed students in independent day or boarding schools. Second, the participating CAPs had been in operation for at least ten years and thus had alumni who

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<sup>2</sup> I limited my study to five sites which I thought was manageable based on my physical capacity and financial resources, and conducted the study at the first five sites, representative of the variation in the field, that agreed to participate. Thus, my study does not include a college or university-funded site though two participating study sites were located on college and university campuses. My study also did not include a privately-funded state CAP as I was not aware of any such program in New York State therefore did not recruit any.

had proceeded through college within a four- to six-year timeframe. Third, the participating CAPs had data regarding their alumni's current college enrollment status, graduation information, and contact information that was available for my use.

Conducting this study in the New York City metropolitan area helped meet my study requirements as follows: First, there is a significant population of racial and ethnic minority and/or low-SES individuals in this area (U.S. Census, 2010) whose parents did not attend college (Knight & Marciano, 2013), heightening the likelihood that I would find members of my targeted populations in area CAPs. Second, the vast majority of students from racial/ethnic minority and/or low-SES families in the New York metropolitan area have likely attended local public schools lacking adequate resources to prepare students for college (Cookson, 2013; Darling-Hammond, 2000; Kozol, 2012; Ladson-Billings, 2006; Orfield & Lee, 2005). This pattern has persisted over many years and influenced my study participants' schooling experiences. Third, there are 57 CAPs in a ten-mile radius from midtown Manhattan (National College Access Program Directory website, n.d.), an area that was physically accessible to me; this was important given needs to make multiple visits to each site for data collection. These programs offer college preparation courses and services that traditional public schools often fail to provide (Gándara, 2002a; Knight & Marciano, 2013; McDonough, 1997; Oakes, 2005). In the next section I describe how I gained access to my study sites.

## Site Access

As described above, I selected CAPs purposefully for their substantive connection to my research question (Creswell, 2007; LeCompte & Schensul, 2010; Seidman, 2006). My site selection was guided by three factors. First, I relied on my previously established connections to CAPs. I conducted a pilot study for a qualitative research methods course at Teachers College, Columbia University in the fall semester of 2011 at two CAPs in the metropolitan New York City area. One was part of a federally-funded national program while the other was a branch of a privately-funded national program. This experience allowed me to develop rapport with mid- and senior-level administrators I relied on to gain access to these sites for this study. Second, in preparation for this study, I spoke informally, but at length, to five current or past CAP administrators, one CAP board chairperson, and one program officer of a philanthropic foundation that funds CAPs about the topic of my research to assess the value of the topic and viability of my research plan. These individuals, all of whom work in the metropolitan New York City area, thought that my proposed study would be valuable to their field and offered to serve as resources for my project by providing contacts and making introductions at CAPs that fit my research criteria. Finally, I relied on resources such as the College Access Consortium of New York, the National College Access Program Directory, and the *Directory of Pre-College Outreach Program* (Swail et al., 2012) to identify CAPs that fit my criteria.

With this groundwork in place, I compiled a list of CAPs in each of the funding categories. I sought to gain entry to a CAP site representative of five of the categories by

contacting the program's chief executive officer (CEO) with an email in which I introduced myself and requested the opportunity to meet in person, speak by telephone, or communicate online about the possibility of conducting my study at her/his site (Appendix A). At sites where I had internal contacts, I informed them that I had contacted their CEO and enlisted their help to gain access. I followed up on my email to the CEO with a telephone call a few days later and called up to two additional times over a two-week period if I had not received a response. If these efforts were unsuccessful, or if the CEO refused participation in an initial conversation, I moved on to the next CAP in that category. At sites where I was granted the opportunity to communicate with the CEO in person, by telephone, or online, I described my study and requested permission to conduct the study at the CEO's site. If my request was approved, I asked the CEO to write a letter of agreement allowing their CAP to participate. I then turned to selecting my study participants.

### **Study Sample: Participants in the Research and How They Were Selected**

I employed a purposeful criterion-based selection process to select participants<sup>3</sup> and informants for this study (Berg, 2009; LeCompte & Preissle, 1993; Seidman, 2006). The study participants, who provided primary data, were CAP alumni who subsequently

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<sup>3</sup> I use *study participant* to refer to the focal subjects of my study (i.e., selected CAP alumni who fit my criteria) as I believe this term best captures their level of involvement in the interview process, which called on them to "reconstruct their experience actively within the context of their lives" (Seidman, 2006, p. 14). These study participants all were *CAP participants*, also referred to as *CAP alumni*. I use *study informant* to refer to the secondary subjects of my study (i.e., one CEO or senior administrator from each CAP site) as I believe this term best captures their role as guides who helped me gain access to a CAP and become familiar with its context, and connected me to study participants (Berg, 2009).



enrolled in a four-year college. As mentioned, these alumni were drawn from three groups: (1) undergraduates who were juniors or seniors in college at the time of this study and were on track to earn a bachelor's degree within six years of their initial enrollment (n=10 from across five CAPs); (2) individuals who had earned a bachelor's degree within three years of this study (n=10 from across five CAPs); and (3) individuals who had withdrawn from college for more than two years and had not earned a bachelor's degree nor re-enrolled in higher education (n= 4 from across five CAPs). The study informants, who I relied on as guides to the site and sources of secondary, contextual information, consisted of one CEO or senior administrator from each participating CAP site. While their titles varied, all had college preparation programming and alumni outreach, programming, and support responsibilities. The breakdown of my study sample is described in Table 1.

Table 1. Study Sample

Study Participants	CAP alumni n = 24	college juniors or seniors n = 10 (approx. 2/CAP)
		had graduated from college in the past three years n = 10 (approx. 2/CAP)
		had withdrawn from college for more than two years and had not earned a bachelor's degree or re-enrolled n = 4
Study Informants	CAP administrators (exact titles varied) n = 5	CEO or senior administrator responsible for college preparation programming or alumni outreach, programming, and support n= 5

### Study Participant Criteria and Rationale

I selected four to six alumni from each of the five participating sites for a total of 24 CAP alumni study participants using the following criteria: (1) individuals self-

identifying as racial and/or ethnic minority or low-income student whose parents did not attend college; (2) individuals classified as undergraduates in their junior or senior year; college graduates who had earned their bachelor's degrees within the past three years, and individuals who had withdrawn from college for more than two years and had not earned a bachelor's degree or re-enrolled in higher education; and (3) individuals who are representative of their CAP's racial/ethnic and gender demographics as well as other salient features.

Racial/ethnic minority groups who do not have prior experiences with what it means to attend college were important to my study for several reasons (see Chapter II). In brief: (1) these individuals are underrepresented in higher education in comparison to Whites; (2) they are often inadequately prepared for higher education as a result of attending under-resourced elementary and secondary schools, and are therefore more likely than Whites to rely on the supplementary educational services offered by CAPs to prepare for college; (3) once enrolled in college they face more challenges and do not persist through graduation at the same rate as their White counterparts; and (4) they are experiencing higher population growth rates than Whites and are becoming a larger proportion of the national and college-going populations.

Low-income students were important to my study for the same reasons as racial/ethnic minorities discussed above. In addition, students from low-SES communities are more likely than higher-SES peers to be first-generation college students, which further increases the likelihood that they will face barriers in higher education.

Undergraduates who were in their junior or senior year were important to my study for several reasons. First, attaining junior or senior status meant they already spent more than two years at their higher education institution and were thus likely to have been exposed to a range of academic and non-academic experiences. Furthermore, these students' persistence through their first two years of college suggested that they had successfully navigated their undergraduate experiences past the often challenging first-year transition, which increased the likelihood that they would successfully complete their education and graduate (Hurtado & Carter, 1997; Rendón, 1994; Tinto, 2012). Lastly, this timeframe likely allowed these CAP alumni a reasonable interval to reflect on their CAP's influence on their undergraduate experiences and initial post-college aspirations.

College graduates who had earned their bachelor's degrees within the past three years were important to my study because their graduate status suggested that they were able to successfully navigate their way through college despite the obstacles they faced. Furthermore, including graduates from within the past three years provided adequate time to allow these CAP alumni to reflect on their CAP's influence on their undergraduate experiences and initial post-college aspirations and trajectories. This timeframe was also not too far removed from their time as undergraduates, which limited the likelihood that their recollections would be influenced by other experiences and events.

Individuals who had withdrawn from college for more than two years and had not earned a bachelor's degree or re-enrolled in higher education were important to my study because they offered contrasting experiences to those of the juniors, seniors, and recent graduates. Through discussion of the challenges they faced and/or description of their

college-going experience broadly, these individuals offered some insight into the barriers that prevented them from persisting to graduation despite their CAP involvement. As noted, though, data from these non-persisters were limited because I was only able to include four in this study.

Overall, I sought to include study participants who reflected the racial/ethnic and gender breakdown of their CAPs. I also sought to include study participants who attended different types of four-year colleges and had a range of major areas of study. These characteristics were important to my study because they allowed me to capture patterns of both variation and similarity among persons, social groups, and CAPs (see Creswell, 2007; Maxwell, 2005).

### **Rationale for Number of Study Participants**

My study sought to develop insights into how CAPs may influence participants' subsequent undergraduate experiences and post-college aspirations and trajectories. As such, I was interested in understanding what CAP alumni experienced while participating in their CAP and how they perceived those experiences as influencing their journeys through and beyond college. Creswell (2007) recommends that studies seeking to develop grounded insights, potentially relevant to theory development (Charmaz, 2005, 2006; Glaser & Strauss, 2017; Strauss & Corbin, 1998), conduct 20–60 interviews with participants who have shared the experience of an action or process to acquire sufficient data to develop claims, sometimes referred to as propositions (Neumann & Pallas, 2015). My study focused on the participants' shared experiences of attending a CAP and enrolling in college. Thus, I sought a study sample that fit within the guidelines

established by Creswell and secured 24 study participants. I believe that this sample represented a reasonable number to capture the breadth and depth of CAP alumni perceptions and fit within my own limited capacity to capture and consider their experiences fully, as well as my financial resources (Berg, 2009).

### **Process for Soliciting Study Participants**

Once I obtained IRB approval and gained access to each research site, I requested the email and telephone contact information of all site alumni who met the criteria for my study. My solicitation of study participants unfolded in two phases. In the first phase, I emailed all alumni (with available email addresses) who met the participant criteria from each site and invited them to participate in an individual interview for my study (Appendix B). I also employed a snowball sampling technique and asked these prospective study participants to forward my email to other site alumni (Berg, 2009; Seidman, 2006; Weiss, 1994). I created a spreadsheet with the names of each CAP and potential study participant, date contacted, enrollment status, and date of individual interview for those who responded affirmatively to my invitation. I sent at least two follow-up emails to those who did not respond to my initial email and then moved on if I got no response. I continued this process until I no longer received affirmative responses from potential participants.

### **Criteria and Process for Soliciting Informants**

I selected from each CAP site one study informant using the following criteria: (1) holds the role of chief executive officer or senior administrator; (2) responsible for

college preparation programming; and (3) responsible for college student and alumni outreach, programming, and support. Though actual titles of these administrative staff informants varied by CAP, CEOs and other senior administrators of CAPs contributed useful contextual information that helped me understand what I heard from their alumni. These individuals shared their sense of how their CAP's programmatic decisions and offerings aligned with their objectives, thus helping me understand the specifics of the setting that students experienced. Importantly, they helped facilitate my recruitment of study participants. Since I sought access to the research site through the CEO, I also formally solicited her/his participation in the study as an informant at the same time (Appendix C). If s/he agreed to participate, I scheduled an in-person interview with him/her. If s/he preferred that another senior staff member serve as the informant, I requested that person's name and email and made contact. Ultimately, four CEOs and one senior administrator served as study informants.

## **Data Collection**

### **Individual Semi-structured Interviews**

I conducted individual semi-structured interviews with 24 CAP alumni, the study participants described in Table 1. The semi-structured individual interview protocol, which was pilot-tested in advance (Berg, 2009; Creswell, 2007; Kvale & Brinkman, 2009), contained questions asking study participants to discuss the various activities they participated in and individuals they interacted with while attending their CAPs (Appendices D, E, & F). Further, study participants were asked to discuss whether and

how those activities and individuals influenced their undergraduate experiences and post-college aspirations and directions. The semi-structured interview protocol also included questions asking whether there were features of their college experiences that study participants wished their CAP had better prepared them for. These interviews lasted one to three hours.

I also conducted an individual semi-structured interview with the designated study informants at each participating CAP for a total of five. The semi-structured individual interview protocol for these CAP administrators contained questions about the CAP's organizational mission, goals, structure, and academic and non-academic programmatic offerings (Appendix G). They also were asked to share their views about how the CAP influenced its alumni's college experiences and post-college aspirations and trajectories. Each semi-structured interview with CAP administrators lasted one to two hours.

Semi-structured interviews were an ideal tool for this study because they were written up in advance but allowed for flexibility as necessary. These interviews permitted me to alter the order of the questions, follow up with probing questions, skip questions that had been answered in previous responses, and/or add questions that emerged (Berg, 2009; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). I utilized a digital voice recorder to capture study participant and informant responses, which I had transcribed; I also took notes when feasible (Creswell, 2007).

### **Group Interviews**

In addition to individual interviews, I conducted two group interviews with study participants. Each group interview included one study participant from each of the five

CAP sites who had not participated in an individual interview. One group interview included five CAP alumni who were undergraduate juniors or seniors; the other consisted of five CAP alumni who graduated from college within three years of this study. Thus, a total of ten individuals participated in group interviews. Each group interview lasted approximately 90 minutes. As with the individual semi-structured interviews, I asked study participants in the group interviews to discuss the various courses, programs, and events they participated in while enrolled in their CAP, as well as the individuals responsible for them. I also asked them to relate whether and how those activities and individuals influenced their undergraduate experiences and post-college aspirations and trajectories.

Group interviews allowed me to assemble individuals to discuss similarities and differences in experience (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009). Group interviews are regarded as particularly effective at stimulating discussion and interaction, potentially yielding unexpected issues and topics (Berg, 2009; LeCompte & Schensul, 2010). Kvale and Brinkman (2009) state that group interviews can trigger “lively collective interaction” that “may bring forth more spontaneous expressive and emotional views than in individual ... interviews” (p. 150). In addition, the presence of peers might also encourage participants to share more openly than they would in individual interviews (Creswell, 2007; Kvale & Brinkman, 2009). I served as moderator for the group interviews and facilitated discussion among the members guided by a protocol comprised of 9-15 open ended questions, which I pilot tested beforehand, along with follow-up probes as necessary (Berg, 2009; Creswell, 2007; Kvale & Brinkman, 2009). Finally, I



took notes and utilized a digital voice recorder to capture the discussions but did not transcribe these recordings.

## **Observations**

I conducted two to three observations at each CAP site. During these observations I sought to develop a sense of the spatial setting, build rapport with the administrative staff and instructors, and familiarize myself with the programmatic offerings (Berg, 2009). Whenever possible, I observed academic activities such as courses or workshops, as well as non-academic events such as college and career awareness workshops, and alumni, mentoring, networking, and social events that helped make CAP alumni and administrator descriptions of events and processes more concrete for me than otherwise they would be. The focus and duration of my actual observations were determined by the programmatic offerings at each CAP.

I developed and utilized an observational protocol to record descriptive and analytic field notes (Appendix H) (Berg, 2009). My descriptive field notes depicted physical settings, identified individuals who were present, and recorded discussions and other verbal exchanges (Cerwonka & Malkki, 2007; Creswell, 2007; LeCompte & Schensul, 2010). My analytic fieldnotes captured my thoughts, impressions, and preliminary connections and interpretations I drew from what I had seen and heard (Cerwonka & Malkki, 2007; Creswell, 2007; LeCompte & Schensul, 2010).

Conducting observations allowed me to capture the “where, when, how, why, what, who” (Cerwonka & Malkki, 2007, p. 76) that enabled me to develop a detailed description of what took place at each CAP site. These observations offered me a sense of

each context's unique atmosphere and internal dynamics. They also helped me make connections between what I saw on-site and what participants shared through interviews (Berg, 2009; Creswell, 2007; LeCompte & Schensul, 2010). I also came to more deeply appreciate similarities and differences among the sites.

### **Document Review**

I collected external and internal organizational and programmatic documents from each CAP site (Appendix I). External and internal documents are akin to what Berg (2009) describes as public archives available for anyone to see and private archives available only to individuals within the organization. External organizational documents included annual reports, brochures, information and application packets, media reports, newsletters, press-releases, and web-based materials that provide general information to the public such as the CAP's history, mission, goals, programmatic offerings, application process, governing or advisory board and staff titles and bios, and organizational achievements. External programmatic documents included brochures, publications, and applications for courses, college visits, cultural activities, internships, alumni, mentoring, networking, social events, and summer study or travel. Internal organizational documents included governing or advisory board and staff meeting agendas and evaluation reports. Internal programmatic documents included course syllabi and assignments; college visit itineraries; lists and descriptions of internships, mentors, summer study, and travel opportunities; and programs and agendas for mentoring, networking, and social events.

Documents such as these helped me understand the CAP's organizational context, goals, and structure. They also helped familiarize me with the CAP's programmatic

offerings and personnel. Importantly, reviewing these documents helped inform my other data collection activities and allowed me to better understand what CAP alumni and administrators reported in interviews. Much like observational data, the documents, alongside administrators' comments, helped me grasp what CAP alumni reported by way of interviews.

### **Triangulated Data Collection**

Triangulation is the collection of data utilizing a variety of methods from a range of sources to expand the researcher's view of the phenomenon under study, enhance accuracy and validity, and heighten the rigor of a study overall (Berg, 2009; Creswell, 2007; Maxwell, 2005). Each data collection method and source sheds light on a different part of the research question (Berg, 2009); multiple sources also can enlarge views toward addressing any one. The four data collection techniques described above – individual semi-structured interviews, group interviews, observations, and document review – and the four different sources of data – CAP alumni, administrators, documents, and CAP contexts – reflected my effort to triangulate the varied study data I collected (Berg, 2009; Creswell, 2007; Maxwell, 2005).

For example, the documents contributed to my understanding of each CAP's organizational context and its programmatic offerings and personnel. Observations enabled me to obtain a detailed description of each site, gain a sense of what occurs within each CAP context and make connections and comparisons among sites. Group interviews helped to stimulate discussion and interaction among CAP alumni, revealing unexpected issues and topics that I explored further in individual interviews; the group

setting also encouraged hesitant participants to share more openly than they would have in individual interviews (Berg, 2009; Kvale & Brinkman, 2009; LeCompte & Schensul, 2010). Individual semi-structured interviews with CAP administrators enhanced my knowledge of the context of each CAP, as an organization, and the broader field of CAPs. These administrator interviews also expanded my understanding of CAP leaders' perceptions of their respective organization's influence on alumni's college experiences and post-college aspirations and trajectories. Finally, and most importantly, individual semi-structured interviews with CAP alumni allowed me to gain in-depth understanding of their perceptions as to whether and how their CAP influenced their undergraduate experiences and post-college aspirations and trajectories. All these forms of data mattered to my study. Given the nature of my research question – which centers on CAP alumni's perspectives – I substantiate my findings most heavily with the interview data, though my readings of the interview data were certainly closely shaped by my review of the other data sources.

Taken together, the various data sources and collection methods helped me gain a broad and deep understanding of CAP alumni's perceptions of the relationship between their CAP participation and college experiences, thus enhancing the credibility and validity of my findings (Berg, 2009; Creswell, 2009; Maxwell, 2005). However, collecting data from human subjects does involve some challenges and risks. In the next section I describe how I protected the privacy and confidentiality of my study participants and informants.

## **Human Subjects Protection**

Protecting the individuals and organizations participating in my study from harm was of paramount concern. Thus, I took all necessary steps to ensure that the privacy and confidentiality of these individuals and organizations were protected at the highest level. Detailed in this section are the measures I took to meet human subject research training requirements, maintain the privacy and confidentiality of the individuals and organizations participating in my study, minimize risks to participants, and ensure informed consent. Once my dissertation proposal was approved, I applied to the Teachers College Institutional Review Board (IRB) for permission to pursue my study. After I received permission from the Teachers College IRB, I also secured permission to conduct my study at each CAP site.

### **Human Subjects Research Protection Training**

In accordance with Teachers College IRB requirements I completed two trainings to protect human subjects in research. First, I successfully completed the National Institutes of Health (NIH) online training course, Protecting Human Research Participants, on September 20, 2010, earning certificate number 527117, which is on file at the Teachers College IRB Office. This training was required by Professor Anna Neumann for her Fall 2010 The Craft of Interview Research course, where I received further training on the ethics of conducting human subject research. I subsequently completed the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative for Social and Behavioral Researchers on September 5, 2013. The completion report, number 3702702, is on file at

the Teachers College IRB Office. I also received training on the ethics of conducting research on human subjects through two additional Teachers College courses, Qualitative Research Methods: Design and Data Collection (Spring of 2011) and Methods of Inquiry: Ethnography Participant Observation (Fall of 2011). I had also received training on protecting human subjects in research and obtained IRB approval for studies conducted while I served as Assistant Dean of the College for Multicultural Affairs at Connecticut College from 1996 to 2004. These trainings and experiences prepared me to protect the rights of human subjects and reflected my commitment to conducting ethical research.

### **Ensuring Informed Consent**

In order to protect the rights of human subjects and conduct ethical research I discussed the purpose of my study and what participation in it would entail with each participant and informant prior to beginning data collection activities. I also fully described the study, explained potential benefits and risks, discussed time commitment, laid out my approaches to data storage, and explained how I would use the results in accordance with the Teachers College informed consent policy. I provided all informants with a copy of Participants' Rights, which detail rights such as the freedom to withdraw at any point (Appendices J, K, & L), and obtained their informed consent. By following these procedures, I sought to ensure that all study participants were treated with respect and made fully aware of what participation in my study entailed (NIH, 2006).

### **Maintaining Privacy and Confidentiality**

To protect the privacy of all individual participating in my study I conducted individual and group interviews in private and secure spaces such as offices and Teachers College library meeting rooms. I did not disclose the names or identify the participants and informants in my study to anyone and took extra care to minimize the possibility of anyone at the participating CAPs knowing which of their alumni or administrative staff took part in my study. Further, during observation visits I did not communicate with any study participants or informants in ways that might convey that they were participating in my study.

I protected the confidentiality of the participating individuals and CAPs by using pseudonyms in place of real names. I also masked the titles of administrative staff and documents by referring to them only with generic terms. I removed the real names of all individuals in raw data such as interview transcripts and field notes, replacing them with pseudonyms that were also used in my analysis and final report. I have not, nor will I ever, publicly share any “off the record” information obtained from study participants and informants. I have kept and will continue to keep all hard copies of documents containing the real names of study participants and informants and research sites along with their code names in a securely locked file cabinet, and will keep all electronic documents containing this information on a password protected computer or internet cloud folder. I have and will continue to retain sole possession of the key for the filing cabinet and password for the computer or internet cloud folder containing these documents.

### **Minimizing Risks to Participants**

In conducting my study, I asked CAP alumni to describe the programmatic activities they participated in at their CAP. I also asked them to describe their academic and non-academic college experiences, and post-college aspirations and initial trajectories. Finally, I asked them to discuss whether and how they saw relationships among these experiences. Interviews with CAP administrators had a different focus: I asked them to describe their organization's history, mission, goals, structures, programmatic offerings, and outcomes. In addition, I asked them to discuss their perceptions of their own CAP's influence on their alumni's college experiences and post-college aspirations and trajectories.

I explained to study participants and informants that my purpose was to understand whether and how CAPs influence former participants' undergraduate experiences and post-college aspirations and trajectories. I explained that the information obtained through this study might contribute to the improvement of the college preparation of students enrolled in CAPs in ways that enhance their abilities to persist in college, graduate, and pursue rewarding lives and careers. Additionally, I conveyed to them that they may benefit from the opportunities provided by the interviews to reflect on their experiences, efforts, and organizations in ways that might otherwise not occur, noting that such reflection sometimes leads to personal or professional growth.

Further, in discussing forthcoming interview sessions, I pointed out that it was possible that interviews could induce some discomfort. I sought to reassure my alumni participants that taking part in my study would not have any adverse effects on their relationship with their CAP, present occupation, or career. Similarly, I explained to my



administrator informants that participation in my study would not cause harm to their employment, career, or relationships with alumni and colleagues. Furthermore, I made it clear to all study participants and informants that my study was by no means evaluative of their experiences, efforts, or organizations. Additionally, I advised study participants and informants of their rights to choose not to respond to questions or provide data that made them uncomfortable or uneasy, and affirmed that refusal to share information would not result in adverse consequences. I informed study participants and informants that their participation was voluntary and that they had the right to withdraw at any point without incurring any penalties or retribution.

### **Data Analysis**

I initiated data analysis during data collection by paying close attention to and reflecting on the information I gathered as I collected it (Miles & Huberman, 1984; Maxwell, 2005). However, I concentrated more fully on analysis after data collection activities were over (Seidman, 2006; Weiss, 1994), utilizing the procedures described in this section.

#### **Organization, Transcription, Assessment, and Preliminary Analysis of Data**

I established a system to label, file, and securely store my raw data (i.e., by type, date collected, site, participants, etc.) and maintained accurate records of file contents (Berg, 2009; Creswell, 2007; LeCompte, 2000; LeCompte & Schensul, 2010; Seidman, 2006). I transcribed my handwritten fieldnotes into Word documents but contracted out

the transcription of the 24 individual interview recordings to an external service. I listened to the individual and group interview recordings and reviewed transcripts of them for accuracy, making corrections where necessary (Neumann, 2009). Through these processes I also reflected on the data, paying attention to information that stood out (Creswell, 2007; LeCompte, 2000; Weiss, 1994).

### **Full-Focus Analysis**

Once I determined that my data were complete, I read through all individual interview transcripts, field notes and documents, and listened to the recordings of the group interviews, several times, and reflected on all these sources of data (Berg, 2009; LeCompte & Schensul, 2010; Maxwell, 2005). As I engaged in this process, I took note of what stood out in the data such as information that was frequently mentioned, stressed by respondents, surprising, or contradictory, as well as issues I thought were missing or out of place based on my review of the literature and personal and professional experiences (Creswell, 2007; LeCompte & Schensul, 2010; Miles & Huberman, 1994). I wrote memos to capture my thoughts and impressions of what I noticed emerging from the data that might be noteworthy (Creswell, 2007; Maxwell, 2005). I used these memos to develop tentative analytic questions (Neumann & Pallas, 2015) and ideas about categories containing similar items, and to make comparisons and pinpoint relationships among them (LeCompte, 2000; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Seidman, 2006). I subscribe to the view that while qualitative research is largely inductive, researchers nonetheless initiate their studies with ideas in place, informed by the extant literature and theory, as

well as by personal and professional experiences (Saldaña, 2016). As such, the categories I identified were also influenced by these sources of information.

I used the emerging categories as guides to develop first-level analytic questions that I then used to probe the data further (Neumann, 2009; Neumann & Pallas, 2015). My first-level analytic questions which I focused on for each individual transcript were:

1. What does this person say s/he gained from her/his CAP experiences that was helpful in her/his undergraduate experience and/or post-college direction?
2. What does this person say that s/he wishes s/he had gotten from her/his CAP that would have been helpful in her/his undergraduate experience and/or post-college direction?

These analytic questions helped me establish meaningful criteria for each category (LeCompte, 2000; Neumann, 2009; Seidman, 2006). I revised my categories and relationships among them several times via an iterative review process (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010; Neumann, 2009). This process enabled me to identify “substantive categories” that stayed “close to the data categorized” and were “primarily descriptive” (Maxwell, 2005, p. 97). Substantive categories reflected the detail and specificity of my data and did not, at least initially, lean toward more general conceptual or theoretical ideas (Maxwell, 2005; Weiss, 1994). I took note of patterns of interest in the data and coded them by systematically, dividing the transcript-based data into developing categories (Berg, 2009; Maxwell, 2005; Weiss, 1994). This step helped me recognize key themes represented by each category (Creswell, 2007; LeCompte & Schensul, 2010).

I then developed second-level analytic questions to probe these categories further and to identify more general themes (Creswell, 2007; Weiss, 1994). My second-level analytic questions which I focused on the group of 24 transcripts were:

1. Collectively, what do these 24 CAP alumni say they gained from their CAP experiences that was helpful in their undergraduate experiences and/or post-college directions?
2. Collectively, what do these 24 CAP alumni say that they wished they had gotten from their CAP that would have been helpful in their undergraduate experience and/or post-college direction?

Focusing these analytic questions on all 24 transcripts led to me “theoretical categories” as I “place[d] the coded data into a more general framework” (Maxwell, 2005, p. 97–98). Ultimately, my analysis led to propositions (Creswell, 2007; LeCompte & Schensul, 2010; Maxwell, 2005) regarding how CAPs could influence their alumni’s undergraduate experiences and post-college aspirations and trajectories (see the process as outlined in Neumann & Pallas, 2015).

### **Limitations**

My study, like all other research, reflects limitations. I already mentioned the limitations that resulted from my sampling only study participants who enrolled full-time in four-year colleges and universities immediately after high school, as opposed to taking other pathways to and through higher education. Another limitation is that this study does not include a comparison group of individuals from backgrounds similar to study

participants who did not attend CAPs before enrolling in college. Additional limitations of this study can be grouped around the following ideas: potential threats to validity, challenges to reliability, constraints on generalizability, and influence of researcher bias. Below I discuss these additional limitations and the steps I took to minimize their influence and related challenges.

### **Validity and Reliability**

Validity is a contested term in qualitative research, but there is widespread agreement that it is a valuable concept (Creswell, 2007; Maxwell, 2005; Seidman, 2006). The idea of validity is originally drawn from the positivist paradigm and quantitative methods and refers to the accuracy of research studies (Creswell, 2007). However, qualitative research has been critiqued for its inability to adhere to standards of validity, or practices for assuring validity, applicable to many quantitative studies (Creswell, 2007). Such practices include maintenance of researcher neutrality and objectivity, strivings for “generalization to populations” via practices of random sampling, and tendencies toward standardization of data collection and analysis methods across, at times, widely divergent data. Such features are less applicable to the types of qualitative studies which typically are based on views that: (a) investigators, much like respondents, bring their perspectives to the research process and these are both monitored for undue influence and used as sources of insight (Krieger, 1991) (in contrast to traditional neutrality and objectivity goals/standards of positivist research); (b) qualitative research study samples are typically too small to usefully represent larger populations; and (c) data

collection and analysis cannot be standardized given case-to-case variation, an important feature of many studies.

Qualitative researchers have also engaged in a vigorous debate over whether and how qualitative studies should be judged for accuracy, with many rejecting the positivist underpinnings of validity (Creswell, 2007; Seidman, 2006). Nevertheless, there is widespread agreement among qualitative investigators that studies should seek to accurately portray the data as presented by participants and informants, and interpreted by the researchers, within its context (Creswell, 2007; LeCompte & Schensul, 2010; Seidman, 2006). In this vein, Maxwell (2005) asserts that validity in qualitative studies “refer[s] to the correctness or credibility of a description, conclusion, explanation, interpretation, or other sort of account” (p. 106). As such, qualitative researchers seek to guard against threats to validity by offering “alternative explanations ... rival hypothesis” or “a way you might be wrong” (Maxwell, 2005, p. 106).

I took several steps to guard against threats to the validity of my study via efforts to assure accuracy. I engaged in rigorous data collection, analysis, and report writing (Creswell, 2007; Maxwell, 2005; Seidman, 2006). My data collection was thorough, as I interviewed multiple participants and informants and gathered data from documents and observations. These different sources and strategies allowed me to triangulate my data and guard against incomplete or inaccurate information from respondents, as well misinterpretation on my part (Creswell, 2007; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Weiss, 1994). Throughout my data collection I recorded detailed fieldnotes and interviews. I wrote up the fieldnotes myself and had the individual interviews transcribed, and I then closely checked transcripts for accuracy (Creswell, 2007; Maxwell, 2005; Seidman, 2006). I then

undertook a recursive and exhaustive analysis of my data to ensure that I “tell the story meaningfully and validly, from and with the data” (Neumann, 2009, p. 240). I also sought out discrepant data and took those into consideration in formulating themes, patterns, and propositions (Creswell, 2007; Maxwell, 2005).

Finally, I periodically solicited reflective feedback on selected aspects of my data collection strategies, analysis, and findings with CAP alumni and practitioners I know personally or professionally who were not participating in my study, as well other researchers, including some who have studied CAPs (Creswell, 2007). My aim was to assess resonance or insight from these external resources, while being careful to realize that their perspectives, drawn typically from their unique experiences, may differ from the broader, comparative view I had by virtue of talking to numerous CAP alumni and informants with diverse experiences.

### **Generalizability**

The criterion of statistical generalizability – addressing whether a study’s findings can be assumed to reflect a larger population (Maxwell, 2005; Seidman, 2006) – does not apply to my study. Though seeking to sample across key patterns of variation in the organizational (CAP) population of focus (via attention to the various funding models described in Chapter II), due to the small sample size and other factors around organizational and participant selection, my sample cannot generalize to any larger population of CAPs or CAP alumni. That said, this study, like some other qualitative studies, does strive for something general, namely, in the ability of this study to offer a vision (however limited) of targeted experiences and processes within groups and

settings, offering, in effect, a generalization to theory that might deepen understandings of selected phenomena (see Maxwell, 2005 for enhanced explanation of these differing views on generalizability).

It is also worth noting Maxwell's (2005) assertion that qualitative studies have "face generalizability" – that, in selected cases, there may be "no reason *not* [emphasis in original text] to believe that the results apply more generally" (p. 115). Further, we may be able to say that the stories shared by the CAP alumni about their experiences in CAPs, and their sense of how those experiences shaped their lives, resonate to some extent with the experiences of other CAP alumni, even though they may differ in substantive ways (Krieger, 1991). It is in this vein, though, that Maxwell (2005) contends that qualitative study findings *may* contribute to enhanced theoretical or conceptual understanding of a phenomenon of interest.

### **Researcher Perspective**

Qualitative researchers serve as the primary instrument for the collection, analysis, and interpretation of data (Creswell, 2007; Maxwell, 2005; Weiss, 1994). Consequently, it is likely that their life's experiences and perspectives influenced their choice of research topic, paradigm, theoretical lens, data collection, analysis, and interpretation (Creswell, 2007; Maxwell, 2005; Seidman, 2006). One can, of course, argue that something similar happens for quantitative researchers. In reference to qualitative research, Weiss (1994) states, "How we code ... depends on our theoretical assumptions and the research interests we bring to the project," which "come from our training, our reading, our life experiences, and our general understandings" (p. 155).



My interest in and research approach to this study was undoubtedly based on my personal and professional experiences. On a personal level, I am an immigrant Garifuna (of African and Carib Indian descent) male from a low-income family who attended a CAP for three years while I was in high school and subsequently attended a four-year college as a first-generation student. On a professional level, I have worked as an educator and on education issues for the past two decades. Through this work, I have taught, advised, supported, and advocated for racial and ethnic minority, low-income, and first-generation students, first as a middle and high school teacher at an independent K-12 school, then as a mid-level administrator at a private liberal arts college. I have also worked as a K-12 education reform and higher education access and success consultant at a philanthropic foundation seeking to improve the educational outcomes of historically excluded groups. Furthermore, I focused my graduate studies on issues related to higher education access, experiences, and outcomes for racial and ethnic minority, low-SES, and first-generation students. The combination of these experiences shaped my interest in this study of whether and how CAPs influence the undergraduate experiences and post-college aspirations and trajectories of their alumni, as well as the paradigms and approaches I employed for this research. These experiences also provided me with theoretical lenses and methods for broadening and scrutinizing my beliefs and understandings.

Indeed, these personal and professional experiences have served as “a major source of insights” and offered me an array of “hunches,” “hypotheses,” (Maxwell, 2005 pg. 38) and analytic preferences in the initial conceptualization of this study and in its execution. But I expect, too, that my experiences also offered me a number of “validity

checks” as I proceeded through data collection and analysis, namely lenses for assuring that the descriptions or explanations I heard, or the interpretations or conclusions I considered, were credible. For example, my professional experiences as a middle and high school teacher and as a college multicultural affairs administrator, through which I observed high-achieving racial/ethnic minority, low-income, and first-generation students try to make their way through the education pipeline, contributed to my perspective that these underrepresented students need more than academic ability and academic support to successfully proceed through higher education and graduate. Meanwhile, my graduate studies helped me understand that contrary to popular notions (e.g., that these students lack resources such as cultural and social capital), the students in this study possess personal, family-derived, and/or community-derived assets that have aided them on their educational journeys.

As I launched the study, I suspected and hypothesized that CAP alumni who successfully navigate their undergraduate education leverage their personal resources, as well as resources that have been implicitly or explicitly cultivated through CAP involvement, on their journeys to and through colleges and universities. It was unavoidable that I looked out for this possibility (exploring whether this was happening) in my data, though a researcher with a different background might not have been inclined or able to do so.<sup>4</sup> Some might view my pursuit, in this spirit, as biased; I contend that it was not because I questioned it continually throughout my study. Instead, my background and experiences were a resource that allowed me to envision a way of thinking about CAPs and their students in ways others have not.

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<sup>4</sup> For related views, see Harding (1987), Krieger (1991), and Saldaña (2016).

While a researcher's background can, potentially, provide helpful conceptual and analytic leverage to a study, it also may misdirect a study if deployed without rigor and without cross-checks. I recognized that I needed to take steps to guard against unfounded and indefensible preconceived ideas unduly influencing my study (Maxwell, 2005; Seidman, 2006), including being guided by what I might have expected or wanted to see. To combat this possibility, I drafted a researcher identity memo to explore how my identity, beliefs, perspectives, and goals might influence my study (Maxwell, 2005). I used this memo as a source of awareness and reflection that, I hope, helped limit my biases as I selected research sites, study participants, and informants, and conducted interviews and engaged in analysis and interpretation (Weiss, 1994). I drafted memos reflecting on the various stages of my methodological approach and revisited my researcher identity memo as I proceeded through the study. In addition, I continually asked myself, "How do I know this?" "Which data, among all I have collected, support this claim?" "Which data might support a contrary view, and how prevalent are those data?" I believe that these practices reduced the influence of undue biases on my study, permitting me to conduct research and report findings with integrity (Weiss, 1994). At the same time, they allowed me to use my experiences and knowledge to inform my decisions, productively and richly.

Having described the study I designed to pursue my research aim, and how I then carried it out, I turn now, in Chapter IV, to what I learned in response to my research questions – my findings.

IV - TOWARD AN UNDERSTANDING OF  
COLLEGE ACCESS PROGRAMS' POTENTIAL INFLUENCE ON PARTICIPANTS  
BEYOND UNDERGRADUATE ENROLLMENT

In this chapter, I present the results of my study of the possible influence of college access programs (CAPs) on college enrollment, undergraduate experiences, and post-college trajectories of CAP alumni. The questions that guided my data analysis (sometimes referred to as “analytic questions,” Neumann & Pallas, 2015) closely mirror the research questions that, initially, guided data collection (presented in prior chapters): To what extent and how may CAPs influence, shape or direct the college experiences and outcomes of CAP participants who subsequently enroll in colleges and universities? And if they do, how and through what means or through which features of the CAP do they appear to do so? And if in some ways they do not, what features of a CAP, if any, may explain this? The latter question – pertaining to the reality that in some ways CAPs may not be successful – would have been better addressed had I been able to recruit more students who did not go to college or who left before completion. That said, the 20 I spoke to, and who did graduate, or appeared poised to, provide pertinent insights.

To address the research question, I draw on the data collected from 24 CAP participants who attended five CAPs, then later enrolled in college. Below, I present these findings in three sections, each presenting themes that speak to the CAPs' influences on their participants at three points: 1) college enrollment; 2) undergraduate experiences and

outcomes; and 3) post-college aspirations and trajectories. These findings offer strong support for the view that CAPs can influence participants as they seek to enroll in college -- including in highly selective institutions -- and as they move through their college years; they also can support participants' envisioning of their future trajectories, thus beyond college.

### **Theme A and Supporting Data Patterns**

*Theme A: Participating CAP alumni report that CAPs were largely successful in helping them achieve their goal of enrolling in four-year colleges or universities, all of which were selective.*

All 24 study participants portrayed their CAPs as largely successful in helping them enroll in four-year colleges and universities characterized as "selective." Study participants attributed this outcome to CAPs' efforts to: (1) cultivate, encourage and support high aspirations among participants for college-going; (2) provide participants with information, access to networks and support in the college search and selection process; and (3) help participants prepare for and improve their performance on standardized tests, which many selective colleges and universities rely on in their admissions process. I describe these findings by way of three patterns, summarized below.

## **Explanation of Pattern A1**

*Pattern A1: All participating CAP alumni reported that their CAPs helped them maintain and enact high aspirations for enrolling in selective four-year colleges and universities.*

All 24 CAP alumni who participated in this study claimed that their CAPs helped them maintain and enact high aspirations to attend selective colleges and universities by explicitly and implicitly encouraging them to explore, apply to, and enroll in these institutions. Explicit support and encouragement came in various forms: advising sessions with CAP staff, workshops, college visits, alumni and guest panelists, meetings in CAP facilities decorated with college banners, and participation in ceremonies and rituals celebrating college acceptance and enrollment decisions. Less obvious but nonetheless powerful support showed through in CAPs' staffs' efforts to cultivate activity settings where participants were surrounded by peers who shared high college-going aspirations. Further, two CAP sites in this study were located on university campuses, which helped participants develop a sense of familiarity with college environments.

All 24 study participants reported benefiting from this web of support, leading to their enrollment in selective colleges and universities. However, these benefits reflected some limitations as three study participants enrolled in institutions that were more rigorous than they were prepared for, and another enrolled in an institution that was less selective than that individual's capacities warranted given their academic profile. The influential role of the CAPs in moving individuals toward enrollment in selective institutions is highlighted below in the words of a few participants<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> To provide readers with a sense of the data, I re-present each theme in the words of two participants speaking from within their own experiences.

### Case Examples for Pattern A1

Tyrone,<sup>2</sup> a participant in my study, reported that his CAP, The Renaissance Center for Academic Achievement (TRCAA), supported and sustained his and his peers' high college aspirations. At the time of our interview, Tyrone, a recent graduate of a selective research university in the northeast, was employed in the technology industry and was pursuing a master's degree in technology. In response to my question about what he gained from TRCAA's efforts to help participants explore college options and complete applications, Tyrone responded,

[A] few things. One of the things that I really like to harp on is [I learned] I belong... at an institution of higher learning. TRCAA has put it in my mind that this is where I want to belong and want to excel here. I remember ... I was graduating [from a dual enrollment high school] with an associate's [degree] in liberal arts, so I mean, eventually I was going to find my way, but TRCAA sort of made me realize this [earning an associate degree] is good. [But] What's next? And [that] sort of added to the hunger and the fuel of really doing what I needed to get done, you know, taking the time to do the work [complete his applications to selective four-year colleges and universities], so that way I can reap the benefits.

Tyrone credited his CAP with helping him enroll in a four-year selective institution instead of being satisfied with the associate degree that he earned from high school.

One prominent feature of all CAPs that helped study participants maintain and enact their goals of attending selective four-year colleges and universities was the presence of peers who shared high aspirations for college-going. All study participants described their CAP as a place where they were likely to find peers who also had high ambitions for college. While some participants disclosed that the aspiration to attend college was not high consistently among all their CAP peers, at a minimum, they were

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<sup>2</sup> Names of all study participants and other individuals, CAPs, high schools, and colleges and universities are pseudonyms.

able to identify and connect with a few others who shared their objectives. Monica, a junior at the time of our interview, described how peers at her CAP, Exploring Educational Opportunities for Youth (EEOY), helped her maintain and enact her aspirations for attending a selective college, which contrasted with the attitude of her high school peers. Monica shared:

My peers at North Meadow [her high school] ...were taking life as it goes. Honestly, they weren't serious. I don't think they thought about college much until it was shoved in their faces. I feel like my peers at EEOY were, like, a good college was the end goal. EEOY made that obvious...college is the end goal, that's what you're here for. My peers at North Meadow were just like, "I'm here to graduate... and not sure what's going to happen after high school but whatever..."

Monica's perception was that her high school and neighborhood peers didn't share the same aspirations for higher education as those in her CAP. Thus, her CAP provided her a space for pursuing her aspirations to attend college among like-minded peers. Monica's view, that her neighborhood and high school peers' aspirations to attend college were less than those of her peers in her CAP, was echoed by the other study participants.

### **Summary of Pattern A1**

All 24 study participants reported that their CAPs promoted and supported high aspirations for college-going; the CAPs offered such support through a range of programs and services. However, the participants' stories were not consistently positive, as noted in three discrepant cases. While the major point of this pattern is that CAPs supported students' high aspirations to attend college, it is important to note that the colleges targeted, and those in which students enrolled, were highly selective. This latter feature of



what a CAP can do for its participants has not been previously emphasized in the literature and is deserving of further study.

### **Explanation of Pattern A2**

*Pattern A2: For all participants (24), the CAPs played an important information-giving role, and in a variety of ways, toward supporting college choice, application, and enrollment processes.*

All 24 study participants reported that their CAPs provided them with information, access to networks and support in the college search, application and selection process. CAPs aided participants in this process through activities such as visits to college fairs and college campuses; introductions to college personnel such as admissions officers and campus services such as educational opportunity programs; and one-on-one meetings with advisors to discuss participants' college wish lists, review and edit applications, guide participants and their families through the FAFSA application process, and garner advice on college choice options. All study participants found these activities and services to be beneficial as they helped them identify, apply to and enroll in selective colleges and universities that they believed to be good fits for their interests and abilities. However, this support had some down sides to it. For example, a few study participants realized, after they had enrolled, that their institutions did not offer majors they desired or that programs of study were more academically rigorous than they were prepared for.

## Case Examples for Pattern A2

Tamara reported that her CAP, Envisioning a Brighter Future through Education (EBFE), helped her identify, apply to, and enroll in a selective four-year college. She was a senior at a selective liberal arts college at the time of our interview. Tamara explained that a central feature of EBFE was to expose participants to colleges and universities by taking them to several different types of campuses in the metropolitan New York City area as well as in other parts of the country. In describing what she gained from these college trips she stated:

A lot. I learned [the importance of] school sizes. I particularly enjoyed smaller school sizes, which is more beneficial for me because I like a teacher to remember my name, and for my advisor to be hands on [in close contact] with me... Going to a small school, it's like they are on your back. Same thing with my CAP, they're always on my back, and I guess I got used to that. I like my advisor to be on my back. If I don't respond to you in a day, which I usually do, but if I don't I want you to email me again, and again. That helped me.... Beside the fact of the school sizes I wondered, "Do I want to stay in New York City or do I want to travel out?" I [decided I] wanted to go upstate.

Tamara credited the college trips organized by her CAP with exposing her to the range of schools, in her case with attention to size, that she could target for enrollment. Through these trips she discovered that she preferred smaller schools where she could receive the type of personal attention she received from advisors at her CAP. These trips also helped her to compare schools in New York City with those upstate and to determine that she preferred the latter. All of this was useful to her informationally.

Similarly, Monica, who earlier described how her CAP peers helped her maintain high aspirations for attending college, recounted going on CAP-sponsored trips that influenced her college search and selection process. When asked to explain the value of such trips, she described, in detail, how a visit to a small selective residential liberal arts

college in a rural town a few hours away from New York City exposed her to their Educational Opportunity Program [EOP] where she learned about the assistance such programs can give low-income students. Monica shared:

I think it's [getting to know about EOP] important. I think it [EOP] makes the idea of college more accessible to low income students such as myself. It also shows them that they can [afford these types of colleges]... We were doing college trips, the college trips we took were out of the city. That's important because they [EEOY] don't want you to stay in the city. I actually wanted to leave [the city], so finding out about these [educational opportunity] programs helped [achieve that goal] ... The college trip I went to that time was not only like, oh here is Mohawk University and River Valley College... They had the scholarship office talk to us, the HEOP [Higher Education Opportunity Program] office. It was like, "Okay, yeah you can't afford it, but look, we have these opportunities available for you, so this is still possible."

As Monica's words show, she wanted to attend a college outside of New York City; but like many low-income students, she was apprehensive about this possibility due to the cost of attending such institutions. Learning about the college's higher education opportunity program allayed her fears and she later applied to and enrolled at that college. She would not have gained this information without her CAP.

While all study participants reported benefiting in many ways from their own CAP's efforts to identify, apply to and enroll in selective colleges and universities that were good fits for their interests and abilities, a few study participants described experiences that contrasted with those of Tamara and Monica. One participant felt that her CAP advisor did not know her well and thus recommended institutions that she did not feel were good matches for her. Three participants reported that their CAPs supported their enrollment at selective higher education institutions that were more academically rigorous than they were prepared for, and so they struggled; two of them withdrew after

their first year. These four participants were not served as well by their CAPs as others were with regard to information around college choice.

### **Summary of Pattern A2**

All 24 study participants reported that they benefited from their CAPs' efforts to help them identify, apply to, and enroll in selective colleges and universities that were good fits for their interests and abilities. Study participants reported that CAPs aided their college search and selection process through a variety of programs and services including visits to college fairs and college campuses, attendance at presentations by CAP alumni and college officials, and comprehensive one-on-one guidance and counseling. The CAPs, then, played an important information-providing role.

When I hold up these patterns to the literature, I can see that the experiences described by CAP alumni contrast sharply with those of students from families with college-going experience, especially those from high SES background (Bergerson, 2009; Cabrera & La Nasa, 2000; McDonough, 1997; Perna, 2006). In comparison to the experiences of this latter group, the vast majority of study participants (23/24) were members of families who had little familiarity with the college search and selection process (for background on this, see Knight & Marciano, 2013; McDonough, 1997; Nagaoka et al., 2009). By providing a broad range of information, about college application, enrollment, study, and the like, CAPs seek to bridge this kind of gap (Corwin et al., 2005; Gándara, 2002), though it is known that this is hard to do. The majority of participants in this study reported positively on their CAPs' achievement of their information-sharing aim.

### **Explanation of Pattern A3**

*Pattern A3: All participating college access program alumni reported that CAPs emphasized standardized test preparation that most found helpful.*

All 24 study participants reported taking part in opportunities, offered by their CAPs, to enhance their standardized test-taking skills. For example, CAPs typically offer courses and workshops on taking standardized tests such as state subject-matter exams, the ACT and the SAT. Sixteen participants (approx. 70%) saw these opportunities as positive: They learned study and test-taking strategies and gained confidence. Further, they disclosed that the standardized test-taking workshops also prepared them for high-pressure academic situations once in college.

However, eight participants (33%) saw limited value in the standardized test-taking courses and workshops. In discussing their concerns, they stated views that such measures are biased against low-income and racial and ethnic minorities. Further, they contended that they would have benefited more from activities aimed at enhancing other kinds of knowledge and skills, for example, strengthening academic and professional competencies that they would need for longer-term purposes well beyond the test.

### **Case Examples for Pattern A3**

Tariq reported that his CAP, The Renaissance Center for Academic Achievement (TRCAA), emphasized standardized test preparation, which he found helpful. He was a recent graduate of a selective public urban university and was a staff member at TRCAA at the time of our interview. Tariq saw the standardized test-taking course he participated

in at TRCAA as enhancing his academic abilities and having a positive influence on his undergraduate experience. He said:

[As a result of participating in the standardized test-taking course] I definitely became a more structured student, like [I] strategized a lot more. [I] definitely used [the test-taking] strategies [I learned at TRCAA] and, like, going into a test [in college] with less nervousness, because when you practice [taking standardized tests] a lot it's just like, "Oh, I've done this a thousand times." ... [I] Definitely [gained] more confidence ... I've always been a good student ... [yet] when it came to taking tests sometimes, I would get nervous and not do my best, but having that [the standardized test-taking course] was kind of like, "Oh, I know this test. I know it back and front. I have nothing to worry about." I wasn't getting none of this [standardized test-taking practice] in high school. High school didn't care. They had us do one PSAT and that's it.

Tariq explained that the standardized test-taking course he took while at TRCAA helped him become a better student in college. He explained that he benefited from the test-taking strategies he learned in the course, which increased his confidence and reduced his anxiety in the high-pressure contexts of tests. Further, he pointed out that his public high school did not provide meaningful opportunities to enhance his standardized test-taking proficiency.

Unlike Tariq, Rosa exemplifies the more critical posture, questioning the utility of standardized tests. Rosa contrasted what she derived from preparation for standardized tests with opportunities she found more helpful – like learning to develop her public speaking skills:

I really hated taking tests, so with the SAT, I really just discovered that I'm not a test-taker. I have issues with the education system because of that especially when it comes to targeting low-income people of color. Tests are not made for us. Historically, they have been made to marginalize us and that's how I felt throughout my educational career taking exams. However, public speaking, for example, things you actually need in your life ... skills that you can take over into any aspect of life, not just here at a professional career. I got over that fear ... Not that I'm a perfect speaker and not that I don't get nervous when I have to speak in public but I gained some skills that I will use for the rest of my life. Those were valuable, but some [other] things were temporary like an SAT... It was helpful for

that time [that I was applying to college] and it prepared me. If I didn't have that I don't know. I would have had a difficult time getting into college probably because I'm not a test-taker, but it's not one of those things that I'll carry over the rest of my life.

Rosa did not view herself as a standardized test-taker and was critical of the role these tests have played in shaping educational opportunities for low-income people of color. She acknowledged that the SAT prep course offered by her CAP helped her gain access to college but she viewed that benefit as limited. She would have liked more exposure to longer-term skills, like public speaking, which she felt would have benefited from throughout her life.

### **Summary of Pattern A3**

All CAPs offered standardized test-taking courses and workshops, and all study participants took part in these activities. Most of the participants in this study (16/24) stated that the standardized test-taking courses and workshops offered by their CAPs improved their performance on exams like the SAT and helped them gain access to the selective colleges and universities they wished to attend; they saw these offerings, then, as a positive service. Several also said that preparation for the standardized tests, for admission, helped ready them for high-pressure academic situations they would face as undergraduates. However, a significant proportion of participants (8/24) reported that they saw little or no value in participating in preparation sessions for standardized test-taking, as they objected to the tests themselves, believing that they furthered marginalization of students of color.

It is interesting that the views, positive and negative, of study participants, about the value of standardized test preparation, are echoed in the established research

literature. For example, some researchers have shown that higher standardized tests improve opportunities for admission to selective colleges and universities (Bowen & Bok, 1998; Gerald & Haycock, 2006; Massey, Charles, Lundy & Fischer, 2006). However, other scholars assert that standardized test scores do nothing to enhance the persistence of underrepresented students in college (Adelman, 1999; 2006) and that they are also biased against these groups (Freedle, 2003; Hoffman & Lowitzki, 2005; Jencks, 1998). Views about the value of support for test-taking are, then, somewhat mixed in the research, much as they were in the opinions of the participants.

### **Proposition A**

*Proposition A: College access programs may help participants enroll in college.*

College access programs can be helpful to participants in enrolling in selective four-year colleges and universities in that they can help: (a) cultivate, encourage, and support high aspirations among CAP participants; (b) provide participants with information, access to networks and support in the college search and selection process; and (c) help participants prepare for and improve their performance on the standardized tests on which many selective institutions rely for admissions purposes.

### **Theme B and Supporting Data Patterns**

*Theme B: Participating CAP alumni report that beyond getting them to the point of enrollment in college, their CAP – in particular all they had gained from it -- helped*



*them persist through the undergraduate course of study, to graduation. They nonetheless faced challenges along the way.*

The 24 study participants reported that, through their elementary, middle and/or high school years, their CAPs provided programs and services from which they benefitted later as undergraduates. A substantial number of participants (18/24) reported that their CAPs continued to provide guidance and support, formally and informally, following college matriculation. Such efforts by the CAPs were intended to help their alumni transition to undergraduate life, address the academic demands of selective institutions, navigate unfamiliar and complex campus administrative offices, and negotiate campus climates and cultures that threatened to marginalize, exclude or otherwise harm vulnerable students.

Study participants were mixed in their views of these services, some of which they described as very helpful, and others as less so. Ultimately, the vast majority of study participants had graduated, or were on track to graduate within four or five years of matriculation. But along the way, per their reports, they experienced significant challenges, academic and non-academic, which threatened their goals of earning a bachelor's degree from their college of choice. I describe these findings in the five data patterns below.

### **Explanation of Pattern B1**

*Pattern B1: A majority of participating CAP alumni (approximately 80%) reported that CAPs helped to ease their transition into selective colleges and universities.*

All 24 study participants reported that their CAPs offered programs and services designed to ease their transitions into colleges and universities. All study participants took part in programs and services before enrolling in college including, for example, individual advising delivered by CAP staff, CAP-sponsored workshops and role-play exercises, CAP alumni panel presentations and networking events, and activities providing guidance and support in applying to education opportunity or summer bridge programs, or in registering for other early transition programs. Eighteen of the 24 study participants (75%) reported partaking in formal programs and services offered by their CAP or receiving informal guidance and support from CAP staff after enrolling in college. These programs and services ranged across a variety of activities and services: care packages with needed items to phone calls, emails and text messages to check in on participants once they had arrived on campus, and gatherings during the winter break following the first semester. Twenty of the 24 study participants (approximately 80%) reported that elements of these programs and services were beneficial to them as they embarked on their college years.

These study participants reported that such programmatic offerings and support aided their transition to college in multiple ways – for example, preparing them for what to expect once they arrived on campus; connecting them to staff, services and other students of backgrounds similar to their own; and providing them with support and encouragement from individuals who knew them well and understood what they might be going through. Ten of the 24 study participants had participated in CAPs -- two of this study's five -- located on college campuses, which helped familiarize the students with both academic and non-academic aspects of campus life. For example, students from

these two CAPs reported having spent several days per week in college buildings, interacting with college students, faculty and staff. Some had spent a few weeks living in residential halls over several summers.

Despite the overwhelmingly positive sense among study participants that they appreciated and benefited from their CAPs' efforts to help them transition to college, almost all experienced academic or social challenges during their first undergraduate year. Many attributed their struggles to what they referred to as the impossibility of preparing anyone, regardless of background, for the "reality" of college life. They realized then that the transitional challenges they experienced, on college entry, were not unique to them as underrepresented minority and (typically) first-generation students. While many of these study participants felt that their CAPs had provided them with information useful in navigating their transition into college, putting that knowledge into practice in their day-to-day lives as new college students was neither easy nor simple.

### **Case Examples for Pattern B1**

Tyrone, who earlier described how his CAP, TRCAA, supported and sustained his high college aspiration, reported that TRCAA also helped ease his transition to his selective university. He explained that TRCAA began guiding participants on their transition to college during campus tours. Tyrone shared,

[On] our college tours, we would stay with students who were from TRCAA [and enrolled] at the schools [colleges visited], so they [TRCAA participants] would confirm and make sure it [that college or university] was a good fit. [The staff at TRCAA advised] "We want you guys [alumni from TRCAA at that institution] to tell them what your experiences were ... and what's going to happen once you get here... from a peer... someone who literally may be there a year or two before you..." It helped me because it was real advice and those interactions were very strong. TRCAA had also told me, like, "There are other students there who are a

higher grade [upperclassmen] than you... You need to reach out to them...and make those networks and connections...we'll put you in contact with them." So [that is how] I had met Danielle...she was graduating [a college senior] when I came in [as a first year student] and she looked out for me and said, "Hey, this is what you need to do, how you set yourself up." The conversations [with Danielle] were truly beneficial to me because they helped me navigate my way through it.

Tyrone described how TRCAA purposefully connected him and other TRCAA participants with TRCAA alumni attending the institutions they visited on college tours to get their perspective on that institution. Once he chose the university he would attend, TRCAA connected him with an alumna on that campus, who provided him with information on navigating that institution which, Tyrone found useful.

Another tactic CAPs employed to help participants embark on campus life was to connect them to transition programs which were designed to help low-income, racial and ethnic minority and first generation students adjust to college prior to their first semester. Twelve study participants (50%) took part in such programs. Of these 12 participants, 10 took part in education opportunity programs which select prospective students, then require them to attend intensive summer programs prior to the start of their first semester. The others participated in one-day early orientation programs that sought to familiarize incoming students with the institution prior to the general first-year orientation; such "pre-orientation" sessions introduced students to peers from similar backgrounds.

Rosa reported benefiting from participation in a transition program at the selective liberal arts college in which she enrolled after completing high school. Rosa described how the staff at her CAP, Envisioning a Brighter Future through Education (EBFE), guided her to apply to her selective liberal arts college through its education opportunity program (EOP):

My program manager [at EBFE] was a very good worker and very good at networking so she actually helped me get into a college... so I ended up getting into the HEOP program [Higher Education Opportunity Program] at Toscana College, and that helped me throughout college. I got a full ride [all expenses covered] with Toscana.... I had to do a pre-college program and basically prove to them that I was prepared for college. [As a result of participating in the HEOP pre-college program] I was already exposed to college life without all of the craziness of having a whole bunch of students there because there were 17 of us who were accepted... in the summer time. I did this intensive semester's worth of work in 30 days or something like that... I was pretty much prepared for college, not just because of EBFE but also because I had HEOP. It [HEOP] prepared me academically and socially. We had so many workshops and so many talks. Because the majority of us were people of color and we were in a predominantly White school, the director and the employees of the HEOP program were able to share things with us and prepare us for the experience we were going to have as minorities on campus... I had my own cohort of people that I could go to like my own little family. That was really great for me because it reminded me of the support that I received while I was in EBFE. I'm sure that I would have missed out on a lot if I didn't have HEOP.

Rosa credited her CAP with helping her gain admission to her college through their HEOP program, which required her to successfully complete a pre-college summer program before she could enroll for the fall semester. Rosa described receiving comprehensive support from her HEOP program, which aided her transition to and journey throughout her undergraduate years.

### **Summary of Pattern B1**

All study participants (24) reported that their CAP provided a range of programs and services to help them transition into college. While most participants still struggled academically or socially during their first year, the majority (18/24) found these programs and services helpful. This finding, that CAPs aid in participants' successful transition into colleges and universities, aligns with extant research showing that the transition to college is likely to be challenging, if not difficult, for all students -- and even more so for

racial and ethnic minority, low-income and first-generation students (Cabrera, Nora, Terenzini, Pascarella, & Hagedorn, 1999; Carter, Locks, & Winkle-Wagner, 2013; Harper & Newman, 2016). The latter, of course, include populations of students served by CAPs. It may be inferred then that beyond getting students to apply to and enroll in college, that CAPs can offer support to students as they transition into college, and launch their first year.

### **Explanation of Pattern B2**

*Pattern B2: Fourteen (of 24) participants took CAP-sponsored academic subject-matter courses through their CAP experiences. Eleven of these reported that doing so prepared them for the academic demands of selective colleges and universities.*

Fourteen of the 24 study participants (approx. 58%) took subject matter prep courses as part of their CAP experience; such courses were offered in three of the five participating CAP sites. This pattern pertains to the experiences of the fourteen alumni of these CAPs only.

A substantial majority (11) of these fourteen reported that the knowledge gained from the subject matter courses contributed positively to their undergraduate experiences and outcomes. They described benefits that included expanded subject matter knowledge, enhanced awareness of potential academic majors, increased familiarity with how college instructors teach (pedagogical approaches), and an improved sense of college instructors' expectations for quantity and quality of reading and writing by students. Below, I provide examples drawn from participants' experiences of the contribution of CAP-sponsored academic coursework:

## Case Examples for Pattern B2

Alex reported that he took several college preparatory academic courses at his CAP, EEOY, which he found to benefit his studies at Monarch University, an Ivy League institution. Asked to discuss the influence of the CAP-sponsored academic courses on his undergraduate experiences, he described one focusing on the “Great Books” of the Western canon. Alex said:

It [the course at EEOY which focused on the “Great Books”] prepared me significantly because the work I was reading through the special program at EEOY was a curriculum prescribed by the current curriculum at Monarch. As a result of that, I'm required to take those classes anyway my first year [in college]. A lot of the stuff I was actually reading during my 11th grade, I actually read [later in] my second year in college.... Just getting a good understanding of what the expectations are and not to say that I understood everything when I read it [in 11th grade at EEOY], obviously I didn't. I was struggling, but having a certain expectation I think prepares you for what the rigor of the work is like [in college].... There is no high school curriculum, at least where I'm from [my public high school] .... where you're reading Plato or Aristotle. I'm in college, I'm like, all right, I was exposed to the Western canon [by EEOY]. But imagine me reading the works of Odysseus [in college] without having seen it before... a lot of that is prescribed in other high schools [other than the one I attended] all around the city. But the first time I saw it was in college. Without that expectation, would have been much worse.

Alex explained that he was exposed to key texts of the Western canon at his CAP – for example, the works of Odysseus. He also said that his own public high school did not offer comparable opportunities. While he still found study of the “Great Books” at Monarch University to be quite challenging, he nonetheless felt that his prior exposure to them at EEOY offered preparatory insights. Had he not been previously exposed to this literature, through EEOY, he would have struggled even more. Further, his introduction to the course on the Western at EEOY, while he was in 11th grade, helped him better

understand what to expect from professors and courses at the Ivy League university in which he would eventually matriculate.

Much like Alex, Jessica also took academic subject matter courses at her CAP, Empire STEM Education Initiative (ESTEMEI), which she found helpful in college. She attended a selective private liberal arts college and chose Environmental Studies as one of her majors. I asked her if the courses she took at her CAP influenced her choice of major. She responded:

I did take an environmental science class at ESTEMEI which I did well in. It just kind of reinforced that it [environmental studies] was something I was interested in. I wouldn't say it sparked it, it just kind of led through that process of solidifying that it was something I wanted to do and could enjoy and I felt adequately prepared to be successful.

Jessica was interested in environmental studies so took an environmental science class at her CAP. The course exposed her to academic subject matter in this discipline which she enjoyed and successfully completed. This experience made her aware of a potential academic major in college and gave her the confidence to pursue and complete it.

Not all participants reported experiences as positive as those of Alex and Jessica. Three CAP participants shared that they felt overwhelmed by the volume of reading material, larger than what they had experienced in previous schooling. They spoke to challenges in absorbing and comprehending content; they also noted that the quantity and quality of writing that they had to produce in college was greater than what they were prepared for. These three participants wished that their CAPs had done still more to help them succeed academically at the selective higher education institutions they attended.



### **Summary of Pattern B2**

The majority (11) of participants whose CAPs provided academic subject matter courses (14) reported that their CAPs prepared them for the rigorous academic demands of selective colleges and universities. They reported that they gained subject matter knowledge, awareness of potential academic majors, and a sense of how college instructors teach, as well as of the quantity and quality of work they expect of students. These alumni drew on the academic learning in which they had engaged in their CAP to help them make their way through their college's curricular requirements.

It merits pointing out that prior research on the educational experiences of racial/ethnic minority and low-income students has shown that rigorous academic courses taken in high school can enhance students' abilities to engage in and complete still more demanding coursework in college (Conley, 2007; Greene & Forster, 2003; Roderick et al., 2009). But as the preceding cases along with many others in my study sample show, CAP students, like those I studied, generally do not have access to such coursework in their high schools. Their CAPs filled this gap.

### **Explanation of Pattern B3**

*Pattern B3: Ten study participants were alumni of CAPs that did not offer academic subject-matter courses. Seven of these 10 reported struggling academically at colleges and universities in which they enrolled. This pattern is, of course, inverse to that of B2, in effect, supporting the claim that CAP-sponsored academic offerings may support their participants' academic success later in college.*

In contrast to the fourteen students who took CAP-sponsored courses, ten did not. This is because they attended CAPs that did not offer academic subject-matter courses. In interviews these ten individuals said they did not view the absence of such courses as a hindrance to their academic success at their selective colleges and universities. They either believed that their CAPs had done all they could to prepare them to be successful in college or that they participated in their CAPs only to learn about the college-going process, and therefore, were not interested in taking academic subject-matter courses. That said, seven of these ten CAP alumni described themselves as struggling academically early in college, and two eventually withdrew without completing.

### **Case Examples for Pattern B3**

Tamara, who earlier shared how her CAP, EBFEE, helped her identify, apply to, and enroll in a selective four-year college, also reported that EBFEE did not offer academic subject matter courses. She recounted struggling academically at Phoenician College, the selective private liberal arts college she attended. Tamara had planned to major in bio-chemistry but found her first-year biology and chemistry classes to be too challenging, given her level of preparation. She failed both courses, which forced her to enroll for an additional (9th) semester to earn the credits required for graduation. I asked Tamara whether she thought her CAP could have done anything more to help her succeed academically in college. She responded, “No. The only way [that EBFEE could have been more helpful] is if they have a branch at Phoenician College. They’re in the city, I’m upstate.”

Tamara came to the conclusion that EBFE had done what it could to help her and now it was up to her to succeed because she had chosen a college far away from the CAP. She never considered whether she would have been better prepared for the demands of a bio-chemistry major if she had had the opportunity to enhance her academic abilities through academic subject-matter courses offered by her CAP.

Sheryl's experience was similar to that of Tamara. She attended a selective public urban university and planned to major in accounting. However, she experienced academic challenges in that discipline. Sheryl shared:

Like I said, in high school I was great at accounting, but it was hard for me to go to college and not have an A in my class. That was very frustrating. It was kind of devastating. I hated that. I hated it. It stressed me out a lot... I just did what I could. I actually cried and broke down, but it didn't change anything, so it was pointless to continue to do that. It was just like, well, do the best you can in the rest of your classes because you're going to have to pull up this grade. That was my worst experience. I've always been an A student, straight A student, so to go down to like a B, not even a B. That was a B overall [average across all classes], but a C, C+ in class, that was stressful.

Sheryl selected accounting as her major because she had done well in it in high school. However, she struggled in her first college-level accounting course, which she took in her first semester. She was accustomed to being an A student in high school, but found herself earning Cs in her college accounting course, which she found much more demanding. Sheryl was "frustrated and devastated" and decided to drop her plans to major in accounting. She subsequently switched to economics but also struggled there. She eventually settled on Human Resources which she successfully completed. However, Sheryl's overall grade point average never recovered from the low grades she received in the Accounting and Economics classes.

I asked Sheryl whether she thought her CAP, Generation Next Academic Achievement Program (GNAAP), could have done anything more to have prevented or somehow reduced her academic struggles. She responded,

I think GNAAP offered all it could offer. I don't know, I think maybe there could have been things that would have contributed [to her academic success] if there were resources available for it, but I just think ... GNAAP just did everything that they could ... you know what I mean? They only had so much....

Despite her academic struggles, Sheryl felt her CAP had done all it could given the resources it had.

Three members of this group of ten participants reported that they joined their CAPs only to learn about the college-going process. As such, they were not interested in taking academic subject-matter courses. These three study participants did not report facing academic difficulties at their selective colleges and universities.

### **Summary of Pattern B3**

Ten of the 24 CAP alumni who participated in this study reported that their CAPs did not offer academic subject-matter courses; seven of those ten (7/10) reported struggling academically in college. However, these study participants did not attribute their undergraduate academic struggles to the absence of academic subject-matter support from their CAPs. They reported either that their CAPs had done all they could to help them succeed in college or that they participated in their CAPs only to learn about the college-going process and were not interested in taking academic subject-matter courses. This pattern, in conjunction with the preceding pattern, provide support for the following claim: That academic preparation coursework, offered by CAPs, can, at least in some

cases, give underrepresented students “a leg up” in meeting the rigorous demands of coursework in selective colleges.

#### **Explanation of Pattern B4**

*Pattern B4: A majority of participating CAP alumni (20/24) reported that their CAPs connected them to helpful and supportive individuals, offices, programs and services at the college or university in which they enrolled.*

Twenty of the 24 study participants (approximately 83%), representing all five study sites, reported that their CAPs connected them to campus programs, services and individuals that provided help and support – for example education opportunity programs (EOPs), retention programs and multicultural affairs centers or offices; this included access to staff members. Services offered by these offices included: summer transition programs, advice on and advocacy services regarding academic and other issues, intellectual, cultural or social programming that affirmed students’ ethnic or racial identities, and physical spaces for fostering of community. Several study participants also shared that CAP staff connected them with older campus-based CAP alumni to serve as mentors. The four study participants who did not report benefiting in these ways were attending institutions that, they said, their CAP’s staff were unfamiliar with, or to which they had had no connections via the CAP alumni network.

### Case Examples for Pattern B4

Monica, a study participant whose CAP, EEOY, connected her to the education opportunity program (EOP) at her selective private liberal arts college, described positive academic, social, and financial outcomes:

At Shakespeare College we called the SEOP family, which is [the] Shakespeare Education Opportunity Program. I met other SEOP upperclassmen [during her first year] and they took me under their wing, and I ended up being really close friends with a lot of them. They knew what they were doing. They kind of knew the Shakespeare dynamics. So I looked to them for guidance and really liked that. Also [I] spent a lot of time in the SEOP office and people are always in that office so I naturally clicked with them ... The office becomes our refuge for just students of color on campus ... the undergrad [population] is 2000 students, most of them White... The SEOP office is kind of a place just for students of color....

Monica's CAP steered her to the education opportunity program which provided her with academic, social and financial support. She benefited from these efforts as SEOP provided a space for her to meet other students of color who offered mentorship and community on a campus that was predominantly White.

Similarly, Rodney explained that the retention program to which his CAP, EEOY, referred him, offered academic services such as advising and tutoring, and also provided space for students to study and socialize. Rodney shared that he struggled academically during his first year, and so he turned to the retention program for help. He said:

I guess what was challenging was figuring out how should I manage my time for studying. How much [I should study] for each class based on my performance.... I was taking chemistry, physics and writing, and struggling ... It started to get better as I started to get used to it and know my limits ... and how I can work around that. So I know I can't do this, but I know someone who can... I know [the retention program] has tutoring during the week so I could go there and ask questions....

Like Monica, Rodney's CAP connected him to the retention program at his university so that he could benefit from the available academic support services. As Rodney struggled

academically during his first year, he recalled that the retention program offered tutoring services, so he accessed those, and found them helpful. Further, Rodney explained that he was aided directly by the professional staff, and in broader ways, by the sense of community he gained from studying alongside other students who frequented the retention program offices and activities.

#### **Summary of Pattern B4**

The majority (20/24) of CAP alumni who participated in this study described benefiting from their CAPs' efforts to connect them to supportive individuals, offices, programs, and services at their colleges and universities. These study participants drew on these individuals, networks, and services to help them adjust socially and meet academic demands. While many study participants still struggled academically and socially from time to time, the supports aided their undergraduate journeys and, per the participants' reports, helped keep them on track to meet their goal of earning a bachelor's degree from a selective college or university.

This finding - that CAPs actively steer participants to offices and services fit to struggling students' needs - is important in that extant research shows that resources of this sort can play an important role in the undergraduate success of racial and ethnic minority, low-income and first-generation students. Those resources include education opportunity programs, retention programs, and multicultural centers and staff, among others (Choy et al. 2001; Harper & Newman, 2016; Kraemer, 1997; Patton, 2006).

**Explanation of Pattern B5**

*Pattern B5: All CAP alumni who participated in this study reported experiencing explicit and/or implicit racist, sexist and classist attacks on or challenges to their racial, gender, or social class identities. Though all participating CAPs had sought to prepare students for such incidents, only a few study participants felt sufficiently prepared to cope with their reality, while also remaining focused on their goal of graduating from a selective college or university.*

All twenty-four study participants reported that they had experienced attacks on or challenges to their racial, gender or social class identities. References to racist incidents were most prevalent, followed by classist and sexist experiences. Some study participants described explicit attacks, including racial harassment by White roommates in shared residence hall rooms or by groups of White students in dining halls. Others described more implicit challenges to their racial, social, class, or gender identities. Examples that participants experienced included: Black males being stopped by campus police and being asked for identification as proof that they are students; micro-aggressions in classrooms whereby White students asked to touch an Afro-Latina's hair; an African American female getting excluded from work and study groups, in STEM, her major area of study; and a professor questioning whether a Black male had plagiarized an assignment because it was "written too well." Study participants also described the isolation they experienced as, at times, the only person of color in a classroom or meeting, or at an event, and the pressure they felt of representing their race. Participants shared that experiences such as these had a negative impact on their sense of belonging to the larger campus community, and that such incidents consumed emotional and



psychological energy, as well as precious time that they would have preferred to expend on their studies.

All study participants reported that issues of race, social class and gender were discussed during their time in their CAP. Sixteen of twenty-four (approximately 67%) of study participants reported that their CAPs had offered programming designed to affirm their social identities and provide tools to respond to challenges such as those described above. Regardless of their exposure to such programming, the study participants felt unprepared as they found themselves amid the reality of a racist, classist, or sexist challenge in the context of their college education.

### **Case Examples for Pattern B5**

Rosa, who earlier described benefiting from her CAP, EBFEE, steering her to participate in the EOP program at Toscana College, spoke of being subjected to an explicit verbal racial attack from her roommate. She described how she applied lessons from EBFEE to this jarring incident. Rosa shared:

My freshman year in the second semester, and I was rooming with a Caucasian girl who had a terrible reputation because she was a wild problem child. She got upset for whatever reason, and she spoke about her grandfather's trust fund that's in her name. She just said, "The only reason why you even got into Toscana College is because of affirmative action." That was very unpleasant, actually dealing with racism ... I remained calm. I already knew that it was bound to happen ... we did have that communication class at EBFEE so they taught us how to problem-solve, and how to communicate with people when you have issues. That stuck with me. I still remember those classes, and that's the first time I heard about different ways of approaching issues: being aggressive, being passive aggressive, or being assertive which is what you want to be. That stuck with me absolutely. I reported the incident [to college officials,] and she got in trouble ... She had to move out of the room and couldn't take any classes that I was taking.

As the preceding illustrates, Rosa was the subject of an explicit verbal racial attack by her White roommate. She had anticipated that she would have problems with this roommate and was fortunate to have received some tools from EBFEE with which to respond. She remained calm and kept the situation from escalating, then reported it to campus officials who responded by moving her roommate to another room and preventing her from taking classes in which Rosa was enrolled. While Rosa skillfully managed this unpleasant experience and managed to cope and persist to graduation, it shocked her and remains an unforgettable part of her undergraduate journey.

Monica, who earlier described benefiting from her CAP, EEOY, steering her to participate in the EOP program at Shakespeare College, described being subjected to implicit attacks, which she described as micro-aggressions that targeted her racial and social class identities in classrooms. She felt these experiences made her self-conscious and negatively affected her confidence to participate in discussions, thus limiting her learning opportunities. Monica did not feel prepared for these experiences and wished EEOY had given her some tools to address them. She described these experiences stating:

There's a lot of micro-aggressions on campus. You always have a lot of White students who say very slick things, and not only the White students, but the professors, too, who just say really subliminally racist things. They [White students] say stuff like, "Oh, so like you are in Vanguard [a scholarship and leadership program that serves many students of color]. My dad is a lawyer; he can pay for my full tuition." It's an assumption that because of your skin tone, you must have come on a ... low-income scholarship.... I wish EEOY kind of gave us exposure to being a student of color in a predominantly White space and how that can make you feel because for the longest time I never really spoke in a classroom, because I felt, like, I wasn't smart enough, and a lot of it came with my own lack of confidence.

Monica described experiencing micro-aggressions that targeted her racial and social class identities throughout her undergraduate journey. She explained that she had no way of

anticipating what it would be like to be a low-income student of color on a predominantly White, wealthy, selective, private liberal arts college campus and wished that her CAP had better prepared her for that experience. She reported that the cumulative effect of these experiences negatively impacted her confidence, which affected her willingness to participate in classroom discussions. One may infer that such reluctance to participate in class, around the material being learned, may adversely affect the learning itself.

### **Summary of Pattern B5**

All study participants described experiencing explicit or implicit attacks on or challenges to their racial, gender or social class identities. They reported that issues of race, social class, and gender had been discussed in their CAPs in order to prepare them for life in academic communities whose members would differ demographically, and culturally, from themselves, and from the members of communities in which they had spent their lives – their neighborhoods, for example, or their CAPs. A majority of study participants reported that their CAPs had offered programming designed to affirm their social identities; such programming also provided underrepresented students with tools for negotiating campus climates and cultures that posed threats to students, sometimes actively harming them. As indicated, some study participants were able to employ tools and tactics gained while in their CAPs to respond to such challenges. Despite such preparation, all study participants struggled to cope with the incidents of racist, classist and sexist discrimination they all experienced.

These patterns align closely with extant research findings: that racial and ethnic minority and low-income students experience high levels of marginalization and hostility

on college campuses (Cabrera et al., 1999; Carter et al., 2013; Yosso et al., 2009). Further, challenges to racial/ethnic minorities may be even greater at selective colleges and universities, which tend to be Whiter and wealthier than less selective colleges that may be more demographically diverse (Aries & Seider, 2005). One may conclude that although CAPs, like those I studied, may be providing participants with tools to respond to challenges such as those herein described, still more needs to be done.

### **Proposition B**

*Proposition B: College access programs may help participants persist through and graduate from selective colleges and universities.*

Beyond getting students to the college door, CAP's, by way of their resources and services, may help to minimize the struggles, academic and non-academic, that their participants, attending selective institutions, would otherwise experience. While CAPs are known for getting students through the initial college choice and application process to the point of actual enrollment, their contribution to students' learning and lives, once inside the college door, is not well established. The preceding patterns make the case that at least some CAPs (for example, those in my study) do offer an array of supports to students through the first college year, and possibly beyond. This, then, is something that more CAPs could, possibly do, if they and their staffs were adequately supported to do so. Such supports can involve: (a) helping participants transition to their college campuses and lives as undergraduates; (b) providing them with academic subject-matter courses to prepare them for the academic demands of learning and life on the campuses of selective institutions; (c) connecting them to helpful and supportive individuals,

offices, programs and services at the college or university in which they are enrolled; and (d) preparing them for campus climates and cultures where racist, sexist and classist incidents are prevalent, and equipping them with tools to respond to them.

### **Theme C and Supporting Data Patterns**

*THEME C: Participating college access program alumni report that their CAPs influenced their post-college aspirations, directions, and trajectories with regard to choice of career and participation in family and community uplift efforts.*

As described above, a significant majority of study participants (22/24) reported that their CAPs influenced their post-college aspirations, directions and trajectories regarding career choices, and family and community uplift. Most (23/24) came from working class families and were not especially familiar with the range of professions and occupations available to them; nor did they fully grasp the qualifications needed for pursuing them. Without such knowledge, students' choice of career, and preparation for it, will likely be narrowed. The CAPs addressed both these concerns, giving attention to their participants' post-college goals (around career choice) and preparatory options.

Study participants also described how attending their CAPs made them acutely aware that their families and communities had far fewer resources than did many others living in the metro New York City region. Twenty-two of these study participants reported that their CAP experiences influenced their post-college desires and actions to use their education to uplift their families and communities, and also to give back to their CAPs. Many study participants aspired to careers and/or chose jobs that they believed

would help their families and communities; in some cases this included positions at their CAPs. Most study participants also volunteered in their communities or at their CAPs. I describe these findings in the two patterns below.

### **Explanation of Pattern C1**

*Pattern C1: A significant majority of college access program alumni who participated in this study (18/24) reported that their CAPs influenced their post-college educational and career choices.*

Each of the five CAP study sites provided participants with opportunities to learn about career options and the education required to pursue them. As such, all 24 study participants reported taking part in panels, workshops, site visits, internships, mentorships, and related activities designed to expose them to possible careers and the education needed to pursue them. Several study participants also described how informal interactions, during CAP-sponsored activities, or with staff or CAP alumni, heightened their awareness of career options. Eighteen study participants (75%) found these experiences helpful. These study participants reported that such activities influenced their post-college education and career choices by confirming interests they already held, allowing them to learn more about professions they knew little about, or helping them to clarify which careers options were not meaningful to them.

### **Case Examples for Pattern C1**

Lenora described her CAP, ESTEMEI, as influencing her decision to pursue a career in the health professions. She reported that during her years at ESTEMEI, the staff

there organized a variety of career panels, most of which did not capture her attention.

However, she recollected the following:

When I was young, I always wanted to be a doctor so when I heard about a panel on the medical field [sponsored by ESTEMEI] I made sure I was there. One of the panelists was a young female doctor so I paid close attention to what she said. She talked about her experiences in college and med school, how she went through it and stuff. I learned from that, and it actually helped me to narrow my choices.... The next semester I did an internship at a hospital helping the operating room nurses and decided that I want to be a nurse too. So that's what I'm studying now.

While Lenora had long aspired to become a doctor, she did not have a clear sense of what pursuing that profession would entail. On hearing about an upcoming career panel that aligned with this aspiration, she made sure to attend. The panel provided her with valuable information and insight on the health professions, confirming her interests in them and thus reconnecting her to her earlier life aspiration. Shortly thereafter, Lenora secured an internship assisting operating room nurses and she decided subsequently that she would pursue nursing as a career. Lenora enrolled in college with the goal of following this career path.

Tamara, who earlier described how her CAP, EBF, helped her enroll in a selective four-year college, also shared how her career direction was influenced by resources made available to her through EBF. However, her experience was more indirect than Lenora's. Tamara explained that EBF offered therapeutic counseling to participants. To provide this service, EBF employed graduate students who were completing practicum requirements in their programs of study. Tamara reported that she took advantage of the opportunity to receive counseling herself. Through conversations with one of her counselors, a young female psychology graduate student, Tamara learned about the field of psychology, the professional field of psychotherapy, and what it would

take, educationally, to become a therapist. As a result of this experience and struggling in pre-med courses, she decided that she wanted to become a family or child therapist to help youth from backgrounds like her own. She chose psychology as her major in college and planned to go to graduate school after finishing her undergraduate studies. Tamara developed a career plan which she also shared:

After I finish my studies, I want to work in a non-profit organization such as EBF E for a couple years just to help because I understand ... because I lived it.... I want to help other students that were given crappy situations and have the mindset and capability of doing better for themselves.... Then when I'm about 35 to 40 I want to have my own private practice.

Tamara's participation in therapeutic counseling at EBF E informally exposed her to her future profession as well as to educational requirements for getting there. She actively pursued the field after struggling in pre-med classes in her first year of college and switched to Child Development as her major. She also envisioned pursuing graduate education upon college graduation, and afterwards she hoped to work, initially, at a non-profit like EBF E where she could help youth who came from backgrounds similar to hers. She would then go into private practice which she thought would provide her with financial security and allow her to help her parents and siblings.

Although the majority of study participants (18/24) reported that their CAPs influenced their post-college education and career choices, there were a few exceptions (25%). Monica, for example, shared that she did not think that programs describing career options, as offered by her CAP, EEOY, were helpful. She explained that she did not take such sessions seriously because she was a high school student, and it was hard for students at that stage to focus on careers. Therefore, EEOY's efforts to provide career guidance did little for her. Elizabeth, who was also an EEOY alumna, offered a different



critique of the CAP's efforts to help participants choose careers. She reported that she benefited from EEOY's efforts to guide her to a career in journalism when she was in high school but lamented that these efforts did not go far enough. She thought EEOY could have helped her pursuit of a career in journalism by cultivating an alumni network where she could make the connections necessary to advance in that field. However, EEOY never developed such a network.

### **Summary of Pattern C1**

Overall, the majority of study participants (18/24) reported that their CAPs helped them learn about career options, and that doing so influenced their post-college education and career aspirations and trajectories. These study participants described programs and activities, like panels, workshops, and internships, that led them to commit to particular undergraduate majors, graduate education possibilities, and career pathways. That said, a small handful of study participants (6/24) did not report benefiting from such programs and activities or wished that their CAPs could have done still more to help them fulfill their career goals. This finding echoes research by St. John et al., (2011) that CAPs can influence participants' post-college career and education choices. This literature is, however, sparse, and would benefit from further development.

### **Explanation of Pattern C2**

*Pattern C2: The majority of college access program alumni who participated in this study (22/24) reported that their CAPs influenced their desires and efforts to uplift their families and communities and give back to their CAPs.*

Virtually all study participants (22/24) reported that their CAPs had influenced their desires to contribute to uplift of their families and communities, and to give back to the very CAPs that had supported them in their youth. They recognized, through their experiences in the CAPs and later in college, that their communities were drastically under-resourced and underserved, and took it upon themselves to address such inequities. The twenty-two study participants said they expected to pursue careers of public service, or had already chosen public-service jobs, that they often volunteered with underserved youth in their home or campus communities, and that they also worked for their CAPs (sometimes as volunteers) at some point during or after their undergraduate years. That said, it is a point of interest that none of the CAPs that these participants attended stated this intent, formally, as an organizational goal. It may well have been a byproduct of their functioning, albeit, in my view, a significant one.

### **Case Examples for Pattern C2**

Rosa, the alum who had earlier experienced racial harassment from a White roommate, reported that her CAP, EBFE, had influenced her desire to help to uplift her community as well as others similar to her own. Rosa explained that she had grown up in public housing, and through her experiences at EBFE, she became increasingly aware of economic and educational inequality in society and realized that her family and community were positioned near the bottom of the socioeconomic ladder. Rosa described how EBFE provided her and other participants with a wide range of academic, cultural, social and emotional support programs and services designed to enhance their chances of enrolling in and completing college, and in the longer run, improving their life chances.

While benefiting from these programs and services, she could not help but notice that most of the youth in her community did not have the same opportunities. She became determined to learn more about the causes of such inequality and to find ways to reduce or eliminate it. She said:

Becoming aware of and seeing that [educational and economic inequality] ... I was curious. I wanted to know why it [inequality] was like that. Why is it that these youth development programs [like EBFEE] come into our neighborhoods to help some of us? Why aren't schools set up to do that for us? What's the problem? I started to realize that there were some major issues in the community that I wanted to discover what the problem was. That's how EBFEE shaped that idea and that desire to help the community.... I feel like I owe my community something.

The rich array of programs and support that Rosa received from EBFEE contrasted starkly with the sparse services available to peers in her community who did not have opportunities comparable to her own. This led her to question the causes of such inequality and shaped her desire to combat this situation. In order to develop skills and abilities to help her community, she majored in social work as an undergraduate and then enrolled in a graduate program in public policy where she focused on urban housing and education. At the time of our interview she was working at an urban development non-profit that focused on building low-income housing near the community where she had grown up.

Similarly, Tyrone's experience at TRCAA influenced his desire to give back to his CAP and help the next generation of youth, just as he had been helped. Tyrone, who earlier described how TRCAA supported his high aspirations for college, reported that TRCAA had been instrumental in helping him fulfill his goal of enrolling in and graduating from a selective four-year university. He earned a bachelor's degree in computer science and launched a career in the technology sector. Tyrone shared that

TRCAA continued to influence his post-college trajectory because it instilled in him the desire to continually learn, grow, and improve, all of which inspired him to pursue a graduate degree in computer science. In gratitude for the major influence his CAP had on his life, Tyrone said:

I made it my business to come back to TRCAA and some way share and give back a little.... They've given a ton and I felt like it was on me to give back to my community. What TRCAA gave me was a home and a really great place for me to start [my journey to college].... This is why I started coming back. I was the robotics coach ... as well as always helping out with whatever they need in the STEM program.... And I'm involved with the alumni committee as well.

Tyrone credited TRCAA with having a profound impact on his undergraduate journey and his post-college trajectory. Thus, he felt that he should give back and help to uplift the next generation of youth from his community. Drawing on his experiences in the computer industry, he volunteered to coach TRCAA's first robotics team and help on various STEM projects. He also became involved in the CAP's alumni committee which sought to connect TRCAA alumni to each other as well as to cultivate them as volunteers and donors in support of the organization's broader mission.

### **Summary of Pattern C2**

While none of the CAPs included this as an organizational goal, most of their participants (22/24) reported that their CAP experiences had instilled in them a desire to provide uplift for their families and communities, and in the long run, to give back, including to the very CAPs they had attended. Study participants reported that their CAP had opened their eyes to the severe inequalities that afflicted their home communities and inspired them to work to remedy them. Thus, many study participants aspired to or chose careers that were public-service oriented, or they did volunteer work to help support and

uplift their home or campus communities. Consistent with their interests, several participants actively worked or volunteered for their CAPs during or after their undergraduate years.

This finding supplements initial work by St. John et al. (2011), asserting that CAPs influence participants' desires to uplift their families and communities. My study adds that beyond growing in their desire to "give back," CAP participants may actively follow through in so doing, as did 22 of my study's participants. Such work may contribute to the growing body of research that illustrates how marginalized communities use education to uplift their families and communities (e.g. Anderson, 1988; Du Bois, 1903; Grande, 2004; Freire, 1972; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Nieto, 2011; Paris, 2012; Woodson, 1992).

### **Proposition C**

*Proposition C: College access programs may influence participants' post-college aspirations, directions and trajectories with regard to what they can do for themselves, their families, their communities, and their CAPs.*

College access programs may influence participants' post-college aspirations, directions, and trajectories in a variety of ways. For example, programmatic offerings (career panels, internships, networking, etc.) may shape participants' educational and career pathways. CAPs also may expose participants to opportunities that otherwise would be invisible to them, their families and neighborhood peers, which may heighten their awareness of inequalities and influence their desires to reduce or eliminate them through their chosen careers or volunteerism.

## Conclusion

In this chapter, I presented my findings, culminating in three propositions:

*Proposition A:* College access programs may help their participants see college as possible for them and as desirable. They may support and propel their participants to enroll in selective colleges and universities.

*Proposition B:* College access programs may help participants persist through and graduate from selective colleges and universities.

*Proposition C:* College access programs may influence participants' post-college aspirations, directions and trajectories with regard to what they can do for themselves, their families, their communities, and their CAPs.

These findings suggest that CAPs – or to be precise, at least some CAPs – can provide meaningful support to historically underserved K-12 students as they pursue college enrollment, make their way through college and chart their futures. However, the abilities of CAPs to achieve this aim will vary – in terms of individual students' interests and proclivities, the CAP's own resources and goals, and the goals, demands, and expectations of the college a student attends. In the next chapter, I offer further comments on these findings along with implications for policy, practice and research.

## V - SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, AN EMERGENT MODEL, AND IMPLICATIONS

In this chapter, I offer my conclusions and recommendations for future work involving CAPs. I begin with recapitulations of the gap in the literature addressed by my study, along with discussion of my findings and their significance. I also offer a model for conceptualizing how CAPs may influence program participants beyond undergraduate enrollment. Next, I reflect on the utility of the conceptual framework guiding my study. I then discuss the implications of my findings for practice, policy, and future research.

### **Gap in the Literature Addressed by this Study**

As detailed earlier, college access programs emerged in the 1950s to help racial and ethnic minority and low-income students gain access to college and thereby reduce the significant disparities in college enrollment between these groups and White higher-income students (Cunningham et al., 2003; Jager-Hyman, 2004; Walton, 2009). In pursuit of these goals, CAPs drew on the model established by A Better Chance, which emphasized the improvement of participants' academic preparation and cultural knowledge as preparatory to their participation in higher education (Gordon & Wilkerson, 1966; Walton, 2009; Zweigenhaft & Domhoff, 1991). This approach assumed that CAP participants equipped with appropriate academic and cultural resources would enroll in colleges and universities, and that CAPs would have thus met their goal.

Since the primary goal of college access programs was, for many years, seen as to help racial and ethnic minority and low-income students enroll in higher education, research on CAPs focused on assessing whether this objective was accomplished. Overall, studies have shown that CAPs have progressed modestly toward achieving this goal (Domina, 2009; Gándara & Bial, 2001; Huerta et al., 2013). However, by focusing solely on the goal of getting students to enroll, researchers have failed to consider the potential impact of CAPs beyond undergraduate enrollment. Consequently, little is known about any longer-term contributions of CAPs. To my knowledge, this is the first study to examine the long-term influence of several CAP types on participants' undergraduate enrollment, persistence to graduation and post-college direction. The study is indeed preliminary, drawing on a straightforward design, but it opens important doors of thought.

### **Significance of Study**

Addressing the gap in knowledge – about the longer-term impact of CAPs on their participants – is important for several reasons. First, numerous studies over the last four decades have shown that racial and ethnic minority and low-income students, the groups targeted by CAPs, do not persist through and graduate from colleges and universities at rates comparable to their White and wealthier counterparts (e.g. Carter, 2006; Kao & Thompson, 2003; KewalRamani et al., 2007; Terenzini et al., 2001). Persistence, for any one person, is a long-term endeavor. Second, national leaders and policymakers have become increasingly concerned about college completion for underrepresented youth since they represent the fastest growing segments of the



American population and will be increasingly relied upon to fill roles in the national economy (Matthews, 2012; Obama, 2009; Pennington, 2004). These subpopulations include students attending CAPs like those I studied. Third, in this era of increasing scrutiny of and calls for accountability for the use of public funds, there is mounting interest in whether the financial resources expended on CAPs efficiently contribute to college degree attainment (Bowden & Belfield, 2015; Cahalan & Goodwin, 2014; Haskins & Rouse, 2013). Fourth, CAPs continue to proliferate, especially in states that have banned affirmative action policy; we may expect that they will continue to play a significant role in helping racial and ethnic minority and low-income students enroll in and persist through college (Gándara, 2005; Kaufmann, 2007; Orfield et al., 2007). Finally, increasing college access and success for historically underrepresented groups can have significant positive effects on their members' personal lives, improving their socioeconomic status, increasing their capacity to uplift their families and communities, and enhancing their civic engagement (Anderson, 1988; Bowen & Bok, 1998; Du Bois, 1903; St. John et al., 2011; Woodson, 1992). We need documented evidence as to whether this happens, toward garnering support for CAPs.

As noted, my study expands on current knowledge about the viability of a policy tool, the CAP, that has been shown to support students' enrollment in college, thereby enhancing access. My study shows that this tool can do even more than has been noted to date: CAPs can help underrepresented students persist through the college years and get to graduation. They can also guide them toward productive post-college decision-making, around careers and volunteerism. Thus the effects of CAPs exceed simply getting underrepresented students to enroll in college.

## Summary of Study Findings

As reported in the preceding chapter, my study reveals that CAPs influenced participants at three distinct points: 1) undergraduate enrollment, 2) undergraduate persistence, and 3) post-college direction and trajectory. Further, my study sheds light on *how* CAPs aided participants through these three stages that, together, may represent a process model of CAP support for college success:

*Stage 1:* In the first stage of the proposed model, college access programs helped participants enroll in selective colleges and universities by: (a) cultivating, encouraging, and supporting high aspirations among CAP participants; (b) providing participants with college enrollment information, access to social networks, and support in the college search and selection process; and (c) helping participants prepare for and improve their performance on the standardized tests that many selective institutions rely on for admissions purposes.

The finding from this study that CAPs helped participants enroll in selective four-year colleges and universities is noteworthy for two reasons. First, extant research has revealed that racial and ethnic minority and low-income students, the populations targeted by CAPs, are less likely to attend selective four-year colleges and universities than their White, higher income counterparts (Bowen et al., 2009; Hoxby & Avery, 2012; Roderick, Coca, & Nagaoka, 2011). Second, students that attend selective four-year colleges and universities have better outcomes -- including higher rates of persistence, graduation, graduate school enrollment, and higher career earnings -- than those who attend less selective colleges and universities (Bowen & Bok, 1998; Carnevale & Rose, 2003; Reardon, 2013). This finding may be an artifact of conducting the study in the

metropolitan New York City area, amid a high-aspiring civic culture. But the influence of CAPs – supporting students in enrolling in selective institutions – is nonetheless real.

*Stage 2:* In the second stage, CAPs helped participants persist through the many social and academic obstacles they encountered at selective four-year colleges and universities – that is, after they’d “moved in.” CAPs: (a) helped participants transition into their college campuses and into lives as undergraduates; (b) provided participants with academic subject matter courses that prepared them for the academic demands of selective colleges and universities; (c) connected participants to helpful and supportive individuals, offices, programs, and services at the college or university in which they enrolled; and (d) prepared participants for campus climates and cultures where racist, sexist, and classist incidents are prevalent, equipping them with tools to respond to and persist within such challenging contexts.

College access programs have long endeavored to support participants’ transitions to college, help them meet the academic demands of higher education, and not least, help connect them with helpful and supportive individuals and services (Perna, 2005; Yonezawa et al., 2002; Zweigenhaft & Domhoff, 1991). CAPs’ efforts to prepare participants for hostile and harmful campus climates and cultures – for example, how to cope with and respond to them – appear to be a more recent, and in my view important, programmatic development.

*Stage 3:* In the third stage, CAPs influenced participants’ post-college aspirations, directions, and trajectories with respect to career choices and commitment to family and community uplift. They involved CAP participants actively in career panels, internships, and networking events, and they also exposed participants to educational,

social, cultural, and other opportunities they would not have known of. These experiences heightened participants' awareness of deeply embedded structural inequalities with power to affect them, their families, and their communities. They spurred the desires of many participants to reduce or eliminate disparities in freedom and opportunity.

Research on the post-college influence of CAPs is rather limited. I have only come across one study (St. John et al., 2011) that explores this issue. As such, my findings may open a new path in the study of the long-term influence of CAPs.

### **Modeling of How CAPs May Influence Participants Beyond Undergraduate Enrollment**

The model I have proposed also considers ways that CAPs may influence participants beyond undergraduate enrollment. In brief, CAPs provide three categories of resources – academic, sociocultural, and psychosocial – that participants can leverage in each of the three stages described in the previous section. I discuss these below.

*Academic resources* consist of two components, academic skills and academic subject matter knowledge. Academic skills include the learned and developed ability to perform academic tasks such as standardized test-taking, studying, writing, and reading competently. College access program participants can leverage academic skills gained or honed at CAPs in all three previously mentioned stages to: enroll in selective colleges and universities through enhanced performance on standardized entrance exams; persist as undergraduates by drawing on reading, study, and writing abilities nurtured at CAPs; and pursue post-college educational and career aspirations through enhanced performance on standardized tests. CAP participants can also capitalize on academic

subject matter knowledge gained in CAPs through all three stages to: in being admitted to and enrolling in selective colleges and universities whose admissions processes demand demonstration of applicants' subject-matter proficiency; in persisting through their undergraduate journey by leveraging disciplinary knowledge gained in CAPs to meet the demands of college-level coursework; and in pursuing post-college educational and career aspirations through their knowledge of particular disciplines and through entry into professional careers.

*Sociocultural resources* include knowledge of college options and requirements, networks and supportive individuals who facilitate college access and success, familiarity with college services and supports, and knowledge of graduate education and professional career pathways. College access program participants can leverage sociocultural resources obtained in CAPs in all three stages to support participants to: enroll in selective four-year colleges and universities by making use of knowledge of college options and requirements gained through exposure to CAP resources; persist through selective colleges and universities with assistance from a variety of support services; and pursue post-college educational and career aspirations.

*Psychosocial resources* include the nurturing of participants' confidence to pursue aspirations for college, affirmation of their social identity, and cultivation of resilience and ability to cope with and respond to challenging situations. College access program participants can leverage psychosocial resources nurtured by their CAPs through all three stages to: enroll in selective four-year colleges and universities by drawing on the support and encouragement of CAP staff and peers to maintain and enact high aspirations for college-going; persist to graduation by being aware that campus climates and cultures are

potentially racist, sexist, and classist, and by being able to draw on tools to respond to incidents of bigotry and harassment if and when they occur, all while remaining focused on one's educational goals; and pursue post-college educational and career goals by again drawing on support and encouragement from CAP staff and peers.

One might also say that CAPs can help participants develop sociopolitical consciousness (Ladson-Billings, 1995). In my study, participants became increasingly aware of the inequitable life conditions that they and their families and communities have been and continue to be subjected to, acquired knowledge and analytical skills to critique these conditions, and actively worked to reduce or eliminate disparities (Castillo-Montoya, 2013; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Watts, Williams, & Jagers, 2003). While the gaining of sociopolitical consciousness did not occur as a result of explicitly stated intents, by CAP staff, it may be viewed as an indirect outcome of CAPs' programmatic initiatives designed to provide participants with the academic, sociocultural, and psychosocial resources necessary for college access and success. College access program participants leveraged the sociopolitical consciousness they had inadvertently developed while in their CAPs during their undergraduate careers to help other historically underrepresented college students on their campuses persist by organizing cultural and social activities that increased those students' sense of belonging and community. Many CAP participants also developed and/or contributed to programmatic endeavors for underserved K-12 students, such as tutoring and/or college awareness activities, in their local and campus communities during their undergraduate years. Finally, CAP participants leveraged sociopolitical consciousness in their post-college lives as they sought to uplift their families and communities by choosing careers in public service,

including working at their CAP, becoming civically involved, and giving back to their communities and CAPs by volunteering.

### **Reflecting on My Conceptual Framework**

The three categories of resources shown in this study to be provided by CAPs to their participants – academic, sociocultural, and psychosocial resources – were foreshadowed by my conceptual framework, College Optimizing Capital, explained in Chapter II. Anchored in conceptions of social and cultural capital advanced by Bourdieu (1986), this framework emphasized: (1) achievement-oriented psychosocial capital (Duckworth et al., 2007; Griffin & Allen, 2006; Waxman, Gray, & Padron, 2003; Yeager & Dweck, 2012); (2) collegiate academic capital (Adelman, 1999, 2002; Cabrera et al., 2001; Conley, 2007; Perna, 2005); (3) college-relevant cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986; Carter, 2003, 2005; Yosso, 2005); and (4) college-navigating social capital (Bourdieu, 1986; Stanton-Salazar, 1997, 2001). Together, these concepts and perspectives indeed helped shed light on how CAPs might, possibly, contribute to successful college experiences and outcomes for historically underrepresented students. However, my conceptual framework did not account for CAPs' influence on the development of participants' sociopolitical consciousness, an addition that I now posit as worthy of further study. Moreover, my framework, at this point in the research, is far more grounded in the reality of CAP participants' experiences than was the initial framework which was more broadly applicable to many social phenomena.

## Implications for Practice

I offer three pointers for practitioners and leaders:

First, my study finding that a majority of participants who took part in academic subject matter courses at their CAPs found them beneficial once they enrolled in college suggests that more CAPs could consider offering such courses. I offer this as a recommendation growing out of this study. This recommendation is further supported by the finding that most of the study participants who did not take part in academic subject matter courses struggled academically during the early part of their journeys through selective four-year colleges and universities. As shown in Chapter II, it is well-established that the rigor of students' high school academic courses is the strongest predictor of college persistence and graduation, especially for those from historically underrepresented groups. Since this is the population of students targeted by college access programs, it is somewhat surprising that more CAPs do not, at this time, offer academic subject matter courses. I offer that this is a viable direction for the future.

Second, the finding that all study participants took part in standardized admission test preparation but that only some found those experiences helpful beyond college enrollment gives support to many advocates' claims that current emphasis on standardized test-taking should be reconsidered. There are several reasons for this: For one thing, research has established that standardized tests are of limited value for predicting undergraduate persistence for historically underrepresented students (Adelman, 1999, 2006; Freedle, 2003; Jencks, 1998). Moreover, selective four-year colleges and universities are increasingly adopting standardized test-optional admissions



policies, so standardized test preparation may, by default, become less important in undergraduate admission decisions. Further, given the limited time and resources available to CAPs to help participants prepare for college access and success, reducing the emphasis on standardized test preparation could free up time and resources to focus on other activities that could be more helpful to participants – for example, the offering of academic subject matter courses.

Finally, the finding that all study participants experienced a variety of racist, sexist, and classist incidents on their campuses – but that only some of them felt that their CAPs prepared them to cope with these incidents – suggests that greater time and attention should be paid to these realities. College access program participants could benefit from programmatic efforts to: affirm students’ racial, ethnic, gender, and class identities; prepare them for potentially hostile and harmful campus climates; and provide them with tools to respond to such incidents while remaining focused on success.

### **Implications for Policy**

Policymakers should pursue and adopt policies that support the implications for practice discussed above. Policymakers should work to: develop and adopt policies that require CAPs to offer academic subject matter courses, as well as programmatic activities that help participants affirm their racial, ethnic, gender, and class identities; prepare participants for potentially hostile and harmful campus climates; and provide participants with tools to respond to such incidents while remaining focused on their success in and

beyond college. Furthermore, policymakers should work to develop and adopt policies that require CAPs to de-emphasize standardized test-taking.

### **Implications for Research**

The findings of this study should be further pursued in large-scale regional and/or national qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-method research to test the proffered propositions. Furthermore, although this study focused on the perspectives of CAP participants, future studies should also focus on other aspects of the CAP, such as CAP staff who play a primary role in the experiences of CAP participants. Future research could examine the characteristics of CAPs through various organizational theories to shed light on how CAPs pursue their goals of increasing college access and success for participants while being influenced by wider local and national external contexts. Finally, future studies could explore CAPs' influence on participants' development of sociopolitical consciousness.

### **Closing**

My interest in examining the influence of college access programs on undergraduate experiences and outcomes first emerged from my experiences as an independent school history teacher and advisor to the minority student association. Many of the racial and ethnic minority students whom I taught and advised were placed in the independent school through college access programs. There they received rigorous

academic preparation for college otherwise unavailable to them. Later in my career, I worked as a multicultural affairs administrator responsible for supporting racial and ethnic minority students at a selective private liberal arts college. Many of the racial and ethnic minority students on campus had participated in a range of college access programs. I noticed differences in how students from different types of programs navigated their way through the college. I found myself becoming increasingly interested in understanding how these CAPs might influence participants' undergraduate journeys and post-college trajectories. I have pursued my interest through this study and learned from participants how CAPs may offer pathways not just to, but also through and beyond college enrollment.

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## Appendix A

## Site Recruitment Letter

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

My name is Leslie Williams. I am a doctoral candidate in the Higher & Postsecondary Education program at Teachers College, Columbia University. I am launching my dissertation study of how college access programs influence participants' undergraduate success at four year colleges and universities. **I am hoping to interview 8 CAP alumni or current participants, each from 5 different college access (and success) programs in the NYC metropolitan area who have enrolled in college.** My goal is to capture how they view their program as influencing their undergraduate experiences and outcomes. I also plan to interview one administrator per site.

The ideal sites for my study are as follows:

**I would like to draw participants from 5 college access (and success) programs that serve K-12 public school students and fit into one of the following categories:**

- *Primarily federally funded national program*
- *Primarily privately funded national program*
- *Primarily New York State funded program*
- *Primarily publicly funded or community-based local program*
- *Primarily privately funded local program*
- *Primarily university or college funded program*

I would also like to include programs that serve students in college but that is not required. **I would request assistance from each site to recruit approximately 8 study participants per site from the following groups:**

- *Currently enrolled college juniors or seniors who are/were program participants (3)*
- *Recent college graduates within the past 5 years who participated in a program (3)*
- *Individuals who participated in a program and later enrolled in college but withdrew without graduating (2)*

Most of the research on college access programs considers whether these programs help to increase undergraduate enrollment for their participants. However, **policymakers and funders have become increasingly interested in learning whether and how college access programs contribute to successful undergraduate outcomes.** My study seeks to contribute to this emerging area of research. In doing this research, I hope to contribute to what all of us need to know toward strengthening and supporting college access (and success) programs.

Please contact me at [law2107@tc.columbia.edu](mailto:law2107@tc.columbia.edu) if you think your organization might be interested in participating in this study or would like more information about it.

Also, I would appreciate if you would forward this letter or refer me to individuals at other college access (and success) programs that you think might be interested in participating in this study.

Regards,

Leslie

Leslie Williams  
Doctoral Candidate, Research Assistant & Internship Program Coordinator  
Higher & Postsecondary Education Program  
Organization & Leadership Department  
Teachers College, Columbia University

## Appendix B

## Individual Interview Recruitment Email, CAP Participants &amp; Alumni

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

My name is Leslie Williams and I am a doctoral candidate in the Higher and Postsecondary Education Program at Teachers College, Columbia University. I am conducting a dissertation study that considers whether and how college access programs influence participants' undergraduate success at four-year colleges and universities. I am writing to invite your participation in the study.

**About the study:** Most of the existing research on college access program (CAPs) considers whether and how these programs contribute to their participants' college *enrollment*. However, that research has said little about how CAPs help participants get *through* college. College access program leaders, policymakers and funders have become increasingly interested in learning whether, in fact, CAPs contribute to successful undergraduate outcomes – and importantly, how they do so. My study seeks to contribute to this emerging area of research.

**Participation in the study:** College access program participants and alumni who subsequently enroll in college, possess unique and valuable perspectives on this issue. Therefore, \_\_\_\_\_, the college access program in which you participated, has agreed to help me recruit participants for this study. You were suggested as a potential participant by \_\_\_\_\_ (name), the \_\_\_\_\_ (administrative position) at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP). Your participation in this study can contribute to understanding of how CAPs may help students succeed in college and beyond. Participation in this study would entail taking part in an individual interview that would last approximately 2 hours. Your participation in this study is completely free and voluntary: you will be free to participate or decline participation; you may answer all questions or decline to respond to any questions you prefer not to answer; and you may discontinue your participation in the study at any time.

**Confidentiality:** I will treat your interview with the strictest confidence. For example, I will not use your name or the names of any person or organizations you mention in public reports of this study. I will employ a variety of other measures as well to safeguard study participants' confidentiality and privacy. I will discuss these measures with all study participants prior to interviews.

**Logistical Information for Participation in the study:** All interviews will be conducted at Teachers College, Columbia University (525 W. 120<sup>th</sup> Street, New York, NY) or at a location and time that is mutually convenient for you. **Please let me know if you are interested and available to participate in this study by replying to me by email at [law2107@tc.columbia.edu](mailto:law2107@tc.columbia.edu) or calling me at 646-391-7193.**

***Referrals:*** I would appreciate it if you would refer me to other individuals who participated in \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) with you and later enrolled in college whom you think might be interested in participating in this study or would like more information about it. You can email me at [law2107@tc.columbia.edu](mailto:law2107@tc.columbia.edu) to do so.

Regards,

Leslie Williams  
Doctoral Candidate, Research Assistant & Internship Program Coordinator  
Higher & Postsecondary Education Program  
Organization & Leadership Department  
Teachers College, Columbia University  
Email: law2107@columbia.edu



## Appendix C

## Letter to Interested CAP CEOs

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for your expression of interest in participating in my study, "*Beyond college enrollment: Exploring the relationship between historically underrepresented students' prior participation in college access programs and undergraduate success.*" I am excited by the opportunity to work with you and your colleagues at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) to carry out this study, which I hope will prove informative. Your organization's participation will involve the activities listed below. These activities will take place later this summer or fall, as soon as I receive approval to proceed with this study from the Teachers College Institutional Board (IRB) as well as your own IRB if one exists.

**Providing lists:** I will appreciate receiving from you lists of \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) participants or alumni who exemplify the following characteristics:

- (i.) currently are juniors and seniors in college.
- (ii.) have recently graduated from college, ideally over the past three to five years (but possibly longer).
- (iii.) in the past, enrolled in college but did not graduate from college.

In identifying these individuals, I will ask you, if possible, to identify their racial/ethnic background and gender. Having this information will guide me in constructing a diverse study sample that also reflects \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP's) demographics.

**Interview:** As CEO, you (or your designee) will be invited to participate in an approximately 1 hour-long interview to discuss \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP's) organizational mission, goals and academic and non-academic programmatic offerings. We will also discuss how you believe \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) influences its participants' or alumni's college experiences and post-college trajectories. I will be happy to schedule this interview at your convenience.

**Observation:** I would like to carry out one 2 - 4 hour-long observation on-site at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) to familiarize myself with your organization. I will be happy to schedule this observation at a time that is convenient to you and your staff.

**Documents:** I would like you to provide me with access to documents descriptive of \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) and its activities such as brochures, evaluation reports, course and/or workshop syllabi, and event agendas. Reading these will help me better understand your organization and its activities.

If you agree to participate in this study, by July 15, 2015, I will need to receive a signed letter from you confirming your agreement to have \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) participate in

the research. This brief letter of agreement is required by the Teachers College Institutional Review Board. The letter should state that you agree to allow me to recruit study participants from \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP). The letter should also include a statement of your agreement to have your organization participate in the activities listed above. Your agreement to your organization's participation will be pending Teachers College IRB approval of my study, and likewise, approval of your own IRB if one exists. Please note in your letter as well whether you and your organization will require me to seek IRB approval, or whether the Teachers College IRB approval will be sufficient. Please email your letter to me at [law2107@tc.columbia.edu](mailto:law2107@tc.columbia.edu). Please let me know if you should have any questions about the letter.

Once I receive approval from the Teachers College IRB and your own IRB if necessary, I will contact your office to schedule an interview with you or your designee, conduct an observation of \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP), and arrange for receiving the lists of participants or alumni and documents described above.

I would like to assure you that all data collected through this study will be treated with the utmost confidentiality. I will never use the name of your organization, your own name, or the names of others interviewed or observed in public reports of the study. Your participation and the participation of other individuals is fully voluntary, and you (and others) may choose to decline participation in any aspect of the study that you wish. I will be happy to provide additional information about the study, and to respond to any questions you might have when we meet. Again, if you would like to discuss the study before we meet, please feel free to contact me at [law2107@tc.columbia.edu](mailto:law2107@tc.columbia.edu), and I will be happy to arrange to speak with you at your earliest convenience.

I look forward to receiving your letter of agreement to participate. Again, thank you very much for your interest in this study.

Regards,

Leslie Williams

Doctoral Candidate, Research & Teaching Assistant & Internship Program Coordinator  
Higher & Postsecondary Education Program  
Organization & Leadership Department  
Teachers College, Columbia University  
Email: [law2107@tc.columbia.edu](mailto:law2107@tc.columbia.edu)

## Appendix D

## CAP Participants &amp; Alumni Who Are Current Undergraduates: Individual Interview Protocol

**NOTE to IRB:** *The questions herein included are the best possible that I can produce at this time. It is possible that as I proceed with data collection that (a) I will find better ways to word these questions, (b) I will find it useful to omit some, (c) I will identify new questions that are not accessible to me at this time. I will adjust this protocol accordingly.*

**I. COLLEGE ACCESS PROGRAM EXPERIENCES**

***Let's begin with some questions about your experiences in your college access program.***

1) Your college access program is \_\_\_\_\_. Is that correct?

a) How did you learn about and become enrolled in \_\_\_\_\_(CAP)?

b) Were there any requirements to participate in \_\_\_\_\_(CAP)?

Yes\_\_ No\_\_

***If yes:*** Could you tell me what those requirements were?

c) How many years did you participate in \_\_\_\_\_(CAP)?

d) How often did you attend \_\_\_\_\_(CAP) during the week/month?

i.) Was there an attendance requirement for \_\_\_\_\_(CAP)?

Yes\_\_ No\_\_

***If yes:*** What was the attendance policy?

ii.) When did activities like classes, workshops, trips, etc. typically take place at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP)? (e.g. weekdays, during school hours, weekdays after school, weekends, summer, etc.)

e) Were you enrolled in any other college access programs? Yes\_\_ No\_\_

***If yes:***

i.) what program(s) were you enrolled in?

ii.) How did you learn about and become enrolled in that (or those) college access program(s)?

***NOTE: For those who were enrolled in more than one college access programs:*** Let's try to focus on your experiences at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP).

2) While in \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) did you take courses in academic subjects like English, math, science, history, social studies or others?

***If yes:***

a) Would you name some of the academic courses you took at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP)?

b) How was it decided that you should take these courses? (i.e Were they required or were they based on your own interests and choice, or a combination of required and personal choice)?

- c) Did you take these academic courses throughout your time at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) or during a particular period of time?
- d) You've just provided me with an overall sense of the academic courses you took at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP). Now let's discuss one of these courses in a little more detail. What course would you like to talk about?
- i) Would you tell me a bit about the instructor of \_\_\_\_\_?
  - ii) At what point in your experience at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) did you take \_\_\_\_\_ (course)?
  - iii) Where did this course take place? (e.g. CAP facility, college campus, etc.)
  - iv) How was this course taught? (i.e. Did it involve lectures, group work, labs, etc.)
  - v) What did you have to do out of the classroom for this course? (e.g. assignments, homework, term or research papers etc.)
- e) As you look back, what do you think you learned from these academic subject courses?

3) Did you receive tutoring (or any other type of support) in academic subjects like English, math, science, history, social studies or others?

**If yes:**

- a) Would you name some of the academic tutoring you received at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP)?
- b) How was it decided that you should receive this tutoring? (i.e. Was it required, did you choose to or a combination of requirement and choice)?
- c) Did you receive tutoring throughout your time at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) or during a particular period of time?
- d) Thanks for giving me a broad sense of your experiences with tutoring at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP). Now let's talk about one example of your experiences with tutoring in a little more detail. What tutoring experience would you like to discuss?
  - i) Okay, would you tell me a bit about who tutored you in \_\_\_\_\_ (subject)?
  - ii) At what point in your experience at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) did you receive this tutoring?
  - iii) Where did this tutoring take place? (e.g. CAP facility, college campus, etc.)
  - iv) What did you work on during the tutoring sessions?
  - v) Was the tutoring one-on-one, in groups or both?
  - vi) Did you have assignments outside of the sessions?
- e) As you look back, what do you think you learned from the academic tutoring you received?

4) Did you take classes or attend workshops on academic skills such as SAT/ACT Prep, writing, public speaking, time management, etc.?

**If yes:**

- a) Would you name some of the academic skill courses or workshops you took or participated in at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP)?
- b) How was it decided that you should take these academic skill courses or workshops? (i.e. Were they required, did you choose to or a combination of requirement and choice)?
- c) Did you take these academic skill courses and workshops throughout your time at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) or during a particular period of time?
- d) Let's focus on one example of an academic skill course or workshop that you took in a little more detail. What course or workshop would you like to discuss?
  - i) Would you tell me a bit about the instructor of \_\_\_\_\_?
  - ii) At what point in your experience at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) did you take \_\_\_\_\_ (course or workshop)?
  - iii) Where did this course or workshop take place? (e.g. CAP facility, college campus, etc.)
  - iv) How was this course or workshop taught? (i.e. Did it involve lectures, group work, labs, etc.)
  - v) What did you have to do out of the classroom for this course or workshop? (e.g. assignments, homework, term papers etc.)
- e) As you look back, what do you think you learned from these academic skill courses or workshops?

5) Did take any courses, receive advising or participate in workshops or other activities on identifying, applying to, selecting, paying for and enrolling in college while in \_\_\_\_\_(CAP)?

**If yes:**

- a) What did the courses, workshops, advising or other activities involve? (e.g. lectures, college fairs, website searches, college visits, alumni panels, networking events, drafting college essays, financial aid & scholarships, etc.)
- b) How was it decided that you should take these courses or workshops or receive advising? (i.e. Were they required, did you choose to or a combination of requirement and choice)?
- c) Did you take these courses and workshops or receive advising throughout your time at \_\_\_\_\_(CAP) or during a particular period of time?
- d) What do you think you learned from the courses, workshops, advising or other activities?

6) Do you recall taking any courses, receiving advising or participating in workshops or other activities that focused on being academically successful in college while in \_\_\_\_\_(CAP)?

**If yes:**

- a) What did the courses, workshops, advising or activities involve? (e.g. lectures, one-to-one meetings, college fairs, website searches, college visits, alumni panels, networking events, etc.)
- b) How was it decided that you should take these courses or workshops or receive advising? (i.e. Were they required, did you choose to or a combination of requirement and choice)?

c) Did you take these courses and workshops, receive advising or participate in these types of activities throughout your time at \_\_\_\_\_(CAP) or during a particular period of time?

d) Now that you're in college, what do you think you learned from these courses, workshops, advising sessions or activities?

7) Did you take any courses, receive advising or participate in workshops or other activities to prepare you for extracurricular life in college while in \_\_\_\_\_(CAP)?

**If yes:**

a) What did these courses, workshops, advising sessions or other activities involve? (e.g. lectures, college fairs, website searches, college visits, alumni panels, networking events, etc.)

b) How was it decided that you should take these courses or workshops, receive advising or participate in these activities? (i.e. Were they required, did you choose to or a combination of requirement and choice)?

c) Did you take these courses and workshops, receive advising or participate in these types of activities throughout your time at \_\_\_\_\_(CAP) or during a particular period of time?

d) Now that you're in college, what do you think you learned from these courses, workshops, advising sessions or activities?

8) Do you recall taking any courses, receiving advising or participating in workshops or other activities to identify and prepare for a career while in \_\_\_\_\_(CAP)?

**If yes:**

a) What did these courses, workshops, advising sessions or activities involve? (e.g. lectures, college fairs, website searches, college visits, alumni panels, networking events, etc.)

b) How was it decided that you should take these courses or workshops, receive advising or participate in these activities? (i.e. Were they required, did you choose to or a combination of requirement and choice)?

c) Did you take these courses and workshops, receive advising or participate in these types of activities throughout your time at \_\_\_\_\_(CAP) or during a particular period of time?

d) From your current position as a college student, what do you think you learned from these courses, workshops, advising sessions or activities?

9) Were there any other types of courses, workshops, advising or other activities that you recall participating in while in \_\_\_\_\_(CAP)?

**If yes:**

a) What did the courses, workshops, advising or activities involve? (e.g. community service, cultural or social events, internships, networking, travel or foreign study, etc.)

- b) How was it decided that you should take these courses or workshops, receive advising or participate in these activities? (i.e. Were they required, did you choose to or a combination of requirement and choice)?
- c) Did you take these courses and workshops, receive advising or participate in these types of activities throughout your time at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) or during a particular period of time?
- d) What do you think you learned from these activities?

10) Were there any other services or networks that \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) connected you to help you prepare for college? Yes\_\_ No\_\_

**If yes:**

- a) Would you describe one example of a service, network or individual that \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) connected you to?
- i. First, please tell me about the service, network or individual.
  - ii. Now, would you tell me how the service, network or individual helped you prepare for college?

11) Let's discuss your experiences with the staff at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP).

a) Were there any individuals who you recall were particularly helpful to you at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP)? Yes\_\_ No\_\_

**If yes:**

- i.) Would you tell me about this(these) person(s) and their role(s) at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP)?
- ii.) How they were helpful (If necessary: What was it about what they did [or said] that was so helpful to you?).

b) Were there any individuals who you think could have been more helpful at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP)? Yes\_\_ No\_\_

**If yes:**

- i.) Would you tell me about this (these) person(s) and their role(s) at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP)?
- ii.) How do you think they could have been more helpful (If necessary: What could they have done [or said] to be more helpful to you?)

12) Now, let's discuss your experiences with your peers at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP).

a) Were there any peers who you recall were particularly memorable, helpful or enjoyable? Yes\_\_ No\_\_

**If yes:**

- i. Would you tell me about this(these) peer(s)?
- ii. How was(were) he/she(they) particularly memorable, helpful or enjoyable. (What do you think it was about your interaction/work with/ time with \_\_\_\_\_ that led to this?)

b) Did you have any experiences with peers who you recall were challenging for you with regard to your own participation in \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP)?

Yes\_\_ No\_\_

**If yes:**

- i. Would you tell me about your experience(s) with this(these) peer(s)?
  - ii. Please tell me what you found in your interactions/work with/time with them that was particularly difficult.
  - c) How would you say your peers at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) compared with your peers in your high school?
  - d) How about your peers in your neighborhood? How did they compare with your peers at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP)?
- 13) Now let's discuss your family's involvement with your college preparation efforts.
- a) How was your family involved in your college preparation?
  - b) Did \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) provide opportunities for your family to be involved in any way in your college preparation efforts? Yes\_\_ No\_\_
    - i) ***If yes:*** Could you tell me how \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) involved your family in your college preparation.
    - ii) ***If no:*** What do you think \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) might have done to help members of your family become (more) involved in your college preparation efforts?

## ***II. TRANSITION TO COLLEGE EXPERIENCES***

***Now I'd like to turn to some questions about your undergraduate experiences, beginning with your transition to college.***

- 14) What college are you currently attending? \_\_\_\_\_
- a) Were you enrolled in any other college(s) prior to \_\_\_\_\_? Yes\_\_ No\_\_
    - i) ***If yes:*** What college(s) were you enrolled in prior to \_\_\_\_\_?
  - b) What year did you enroll in (1st) college?
 

***If more than one college:***

    - i) What year did you enroll in 2nd or 3rd college?  
 2<sup>nd</sup> College \_\_\_\_\_ 3<sup>rd</sup> College \_\_\_\_\_
- 15) Could you tell me what role, if any, \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) played in your decision to enroll at \_\_\_\_\_ (1<sup>st</sup> college)?
- If more than one college:***
- a) What role, if any, did \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) play in your decision to enroll at \_\_\_\_\_ (2nd college) or \_\_\_\_\_ (3rd college)?
- Follow up:***
- Do you think you would have attended \_\_\_\_\_ (current college) without participating in \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP)?
- Do you think you would have attended college ***at all*** if you hadn't participated in \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP)? Yes\_\_ No\_\_
- If yes:*** Where do you think you would have gone to college?

- 16) Where did you live while you were enrolled at:  
 (1st institution) \_\_\_\_\_?



a) Could you tell me where you lived during your time there?

**If more than one college:**

(2nd institution) \_\_\_\_\_?

b) Could you tell me where you lived during your time there?

(3rd institution) \_\_\_\_\_?

c) Could you tell me where you lived during your time there?

17A) What was your transition to \_\_\_\_\_ (1st college) like in the first:

a) Month?

b) Semester?

c) Year?

d) Sometimes when students go to college, they find things that surprise them.

i. Can you think of one or two things that surprised you during your transition to college?

ii.) You just gave me an example of an experience that was surprisingly enjoyable (or unpleasant). Can you now give me an example of an experience that was surprisingly unpleasant (or enjoyable)?

**If needed:**

iii.) What role do you think your housing/living situation played in these enjoyable/challenging experiences?

**If more than one college:**

17B) Could you tell me what was your transition to \_\_\_\_\_ (2nd college) like in the first:

a) Month?

b) Semester?

c) Year?

d) Can you think of one or two things that surprised you during your transition to \_\_\_\_\_ (second college)?

i.) You just gave me an example of an experience that was surprisingly enjoyable (or unpleasant). Can you now give me an example of an experience that was surprisingly unpleasant (or enjoyable)?

ii.) Could you describe any ways that your experiences as a new student at \_\_\_\_\_ (first college) influenced your experiences as a new student at \_\_\_\_\_ (second college)?

18) Were you still participating in activities or receiving services from \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) once you enrolled in college? Yes\_\_ No\_\_

a) **If yes:** Could you tell me about any activities or services that you thought helped your transition?

b) **If no:** Could you tell me about any experiences you had or guidance/advice you received at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) before enrolling in college that was helpful in your transition to \_\_\_\_\_ (your college)?

**If more than one college:**

c) Could you tell me about any experiences you had or guidance/advice you received at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) prior to enrolling in college that was helpful in your transition to \_\_\_\_\_ (2nd college)?

19) Are there ways in which you think \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) could have prepared you better for your transition to college?

***III. ACADEMIC-RELATED CLASSROOM EXPERIENCES IN COLLEGE***

***Now, let's take some time to discuss your academic-related classroom experiences in college.***

20) Could you tell me what discipline(s) are you majoring/concentrating in?

a) What were the primary influences on your decision to choose this/these majors/concentrations?

**If necessary:**

b) Were there any experiences at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) that influenced your decision to choose your major(s)/concentration(s)?

21) How would you describe your overall academic experiences at \_\_\_\_\_ (current college) thus far?

**Follow ups/probes:**

For example, could you tell me about your experiences with:

a) Advising (Pre-major, major, guidance, availability, etc.)

b) Faculty (General education/pre-major courses, major(s), feedback, interactions in class, interactions outside of class, expectations, teaching styles, support, etc.)

c) Courses (pre-major, major, level of challenge, size)

d) Peers in classes (Interactions in general education/pre-major courses, major courses, in class work groups, out of class study groups, etc.)

e) Awards or recognition (Honors/Dean's List, etc.)

f) Enriching academic experiences (Independent Study/Thesis, undergraduate research with faculty, Study abroad)

g) Were there any other particularly memorable and enjoyable academic experiences that you would like to share?

h) Were there any other particularly challenging or difficult academic experiences that you would like to share?

i) Is there anything else that you would like to share about your academic experiences?

22) Are there ways in which you think the academic courses, workshops, and other activities you participated in at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) in any way influenced:

a) The major you chose to pursue in college?

b) How you studied while in college?

c) How you went about reading an assignment – for example, a book, a chapter, or an article you were assigned to read in class?

d) How you went about writing papers?

- e) How you took notes?
- f) How about any other parts of your academic experiences?

**Follow-up if needed:**

You said that \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) experiences influenced \_\_\_\_\_.  
Can you tell me more about that?

23) Are there ways in which you think \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) could have better prepared you to have more successful academic experiences in college?

***IV. OUT-OF-CLASSROOM EXPERIENCES IN COLLEGE***

***We've been talking about your academic classroom-related experiences so far. Now, I want to ask you some questions about your out-of-classroom experiences.***

24) Could you tell me about your overall out-of-classroom experiences at \_\_\_\_\_ (current college)?

**Follow up probes if needed:**

For example, could you tell me about your experiences with:

- a) The residence hall in which you lived.
- b) Student clubs and organizations (e.g. art, cultural, performance, professional, social, etc.) of which you were a part.
- c) Student government
- d) Campus committees that you were involved with
- e) Fraternities or sororities
- f) Intercollegiate athletics
- g) Intramural athletics
- h) Employment including work study or off campus work
- i) Social events (parties, etc)
- j) Campus events such as lectures
- k) Volunteering or community service
- l) Can you tell me about a particularly memorable and enjoyable out-of-classroom experience that you've had at \_\_\_\_\_ (current college)?
- m) Can you tell me about a particularly challenging or difficult out-of-classroom experience that you've had at \_\_\_\_\_ (current college)?

25) You just described your out-of-classroom experiences at \_\_\_\_\_ (current college). Do you think the courses, workshops, and activities you participated in at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) have influenced those experiences? Yes\_\_ No\_\_

- a) **If yes:** Could you tell me more about that? Can you give me an example?
- b) **If no:** Why do you think that's the case?

26) Are there ways in which you think \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) could have better prepared you to have more successful or meaningful out-of-classroom experiences in college?

27) How have you paid for your college education?

- a) Did you receive any financial support from \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP)?

Yes\_\_ No\_\_

**If yes:** Could you tell me more about that?

**If no:** Why do you think that's the case?

b) Did you receive any assistance in applying for financial support such as scholarships or grants from \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP)? Yes\_\_ No\_\_

**If yes:** Could you tell me more about that?

**If no:** Why do you think that's the case?

28) Were there any other services or networks that \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) connected you to that have helped you to be successful academically and otherwise in college? Yes\_\_ No\_\_

a) **If yes:** Could you tell me more about that?

### ***V. POST-COLLEGE GOALS***

***Now I'd like to take some time to discuss your education, career and personal goals for life after college.***

29) What are your education and/or career goals and aspirations for after college?

a) What do you plan to do for the first 5 years after you graduate from college?

30) Do you think the courses, workshops, and other activities you participated in at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) have influenced your education and career goals? Yes\_\_ No\_\_

a) **If yes:** How would you say they have influenced you? Can you give me an example?

b) **If no:** What do you think may have kept that from happening?

31) In attending college, students sometimes develop personal goals and aspirations that they hope to pursue after they finish college. Have you thought of any post-college goals you intend to pursue?

**If needed for clarification:** These could include goals or aspirations for yourself, your family or your community.

32) You just shared your post-college goals with me. Do you think the courses, workshops, and other activities you participated in at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) influenced the personal goals you described in any way?

a) **If yes:** Could you tell me how and provide some examples?

b) **If no:** Why do you think this is not the case?

33) Overall, do you think the courses, workshops, and other activities you participated in at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) have influenced your ability to persevere in college?

a) **If yes:** How do you think those courses, workshops, and other activities influenced your ability to stay enrolled in college? Can you give me an example?

b) **If no:** Why do you think those courses, workshops, and other activities have not influenced your ability to stay enrolled in college?

- c) If the staff of \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) were to ask your opinion on which activities and services should definitely be retained for future students, what would you tell them?
- d) If the staff of \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) were to ask your opinion on which new activities and services should definitely be added or expanded for future students, what would you tell them?
- e) Are there ways in which you think \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) could have better prepared you to persevere and be successful from college?

## **VI. CONCLUSION**

***We're almost finished with this interview but before we end I'd like to ask you one more question.***

- 34) Is there anything else that you would like to share with me about \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP's) influence on your:
- a) Academic experiences in college
  - b) Out-of-classroom experiences in college
  - c) Education/career goals and direction
  - d) Personal goals and aspirations

***Thank you so much for your time and willingness to speak with me today! Please let me know if there is anyone else from your program that you think I should interview. I'm particularly interested in finding a couple people who went through your program and enrolled in college but didn't graduate. I would appreciate any help identifying such individuals.***

## Appendix E

## CAP Participants &amp; Alumni Who Are Recent College Graduates: Individual Interview Protocol

NOTE to IRB: *The questions herein included are the best possible that I can produce at this time. It is possible that as I proceed with data collection that (a) I will find better ways to word these questions, (b) I will find it useful to omit some, (c) I will identify new questions that are not accessible to me at this time. I will adjust this protocol accordingly.*

**I. COLLEGE ACCESS PROGRAM EXPERIENCES**

***Let's begin with some questions about your experiences in your college access program.***

1) Your college access program is \_\_\_\_\_. Is that correct?

a) How did you learn about and become enrolled in \_\_\_\_\_(CAP)?

b) Were there any requirements to participate in \_\_\_\_\_(CAP)?  
Yes\_\_ No\_\_

***If yes:*** Could you tell me what those requirements were?

c) How many years did you participate in \_\_\_\_\_(CAP)?

d) How often did you attend \_\_\_\_\_(CAP) during the week/month?

i.) Was there an attendance requirement for \_\_\_\_\_(CAP)?

Yes\_\_ No\_\_

***If yes:*** What was the attendance policy?

ii.) When did activities like classes, workshops, trips, etc. typically take place at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP)? (e.g. weekdays, during school hours, weekdays after school, weekends, summer, etc.)

e) Were you enrolled in any other college access programs? Yes\_\_ No\_\_

***If yes:***

i.) what program(s) were you enrolled in?

ii.) How did you learn about and become enrolled in that (or those) college access program(s)?

***NOTE: For those who were enrolled in more than one college access programs:*** Let's try to focus on your experiences at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP).

2) While in \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) did you take courses in academic subjects like English, math, science, history, social studies or others? (Not tutoring, test prep or other academic skills.)

***If yes:***

a) Would you name some of the academic courses you took at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP)?

- b) How was it decided that you should take these courses? (i.e. Were they required or were they based on your own interests and choice, or a combination of required and personal choice)?
- c) Did you take these academic courses throughout your time at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) or during a particular period of time?
- d) You've just provided me with an overall sense of the academic courses you took at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP). Now let's discuss one of these courses in a little more detail. What course would you like to talk about?
- i) Would you tell me a bit about the instructor of \_\_\_\_\_?
  - ii) At what point in your experience at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) did you take \_\_\_\_\_ (course)?
  - iii) Where did this course take place? (e.g. CAP facility, college campus, etc.)
  - iv) How was this course taught? (i.e. Did it involve lectures, group work, labs, etc.)
  - v) What did you have to do out of the classroom for this course? (e.g. assignments, homework, term or research papers etc.)
- e) As you look back, what do you think you learned from these academic subject courses?

3) Did you receive tutoring (or any other type of support) in academic subjects like English, math, science, history, social studies or others?

**If yes:**

- a) Would you name some of the academic tutoring you received at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP)?
- b) How was it decided that you should receive this tutoring? (i.e. Was it required, did you choose to or a combination of requirement and choice)?
- c) Did you receive tutoring throughout your time at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) or during a particular period of time?
- d) Thanks for giving me a broad sense of your experiences with tutoring at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP). Now let's talk about one example of your experiences with tutoring in a little more detail. What tutoring experience would you like to discuss?
  - i) Okay, would you tell me a bit about who tutored you in \_\_\_\_\_ (subject)?
  - ii) At what point in your experience at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) did you receive this tutoring?
  - iii) Where did this tutoring take place? (e.g. CAP facility, college campus, etc.)
  - iv) What did you work on during the tutoring sessions?
  - v) Was the tutoring one-on-one, in groups or both?
  - vi) Did you have assignments outside of the sessions?
- e) As you look back, what do you think you learned from the academic tutoring you received?

4) Did you take classes or attend workshops on academic skills such as SAT/ACT Prep, writing, public speaking, time management, etc.?

**If yes:**

- a) Would you name some of the academic skill courses or workshops you took or participated in at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP)?
- b) How was it decided that you should take these academic skill courses or workshops? (i.e Were they required, did you choose to or a combination of requirement and choice)?
- c) Did you take these academic skill courses and workshops throughout your time at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) or during a particular period of time?
- d) Let's focus on one example of an academic skill course or workshop that you took in a little more detail. What course or workshop would you like to discuss?
  - i) Would you tell me a bit about the instructor of \_\_\_\_\_?
  - ii) At what point in your experience at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) did you take \_\_\_\_\_ (course or workshop)?
  - iii) Where did this course or workshop take place? (e.g. CAP facility, college campus, etc.)
  - iv) How was this course or workshop taught? (i.e. Did it involve lectures, group work, labs, etc.)
  - v) What did you have to do out of the classroom for this course or workshop? (e.g. assignments, homework, term papers etc.)
- e) As you look back, what do you think you learned from these academic skill courses or workshops?

5) Did take any courses, participate in workshops, receive any advising or other activities on identifying, applying to, selecting, paying for and enrolling in college while in \_\_\_\_\_(CAP)?

**If yes:**

- a) What did the courses, workshops, advising or activities involve? (e.g. lectures, college fairs, website searches, college visits, alumni panels, networking events, drafting college essays, financial aid & scholarships, etc.)
- b) How was it decided that you should take these courses or workshops? (i.e Were they required, did you choose to or a combination of requirement and choice)?
- c) Did you take these courses and workshops throughout your time at \_\_\_\_\_(CAP) or during a particular period of time?
- d) What do you think you learned from these courses, workshops or activities?

6) Do you recall receiving any advising, taking any courses, participating in workshops or other activities that focused on being academically successful in college while in \_\_\_\_\_(CAP)?

**If yes:**

- a) What did the courses, workshops, advising or activities involve? (e.g. lectures, college fairs, website searches, college visits, alumni panels, networking events, etc.)
- b) How was it decided that you should take these courses or workshops? (i.e Were they required, did you choose to or a combination of requirement and choice)?



- c) Did you take these courses and workshops or participate in these types of activities throughout your time at \_\_\_\_\_(CAP) or during a particular period of time?
- d) Now that you've graduated from college, what do you think you learned from these courses, workshops or activities?

7) Did you receive any advising, take any courses or participate in workshops or other activities to prepare you for extracurricular life in college while in \_\_\_\_\_(CAP)?

**If yes:**

- a) What did the courses, workshops, advising or activities involve? (e.g. lectures, college fairs, website searches, college visits, alumni panels, networking events, etc.)
- b) How was it decided that you should take these courses or workshops or participate in these activities? (i.e. Were they required, did you choose to or a combination of requirement and choice)?
- c) Did you take these courses and workshops or participate in these types of activities throughout your time at \_\_\_\_\_(CAP) or during a particular period of time?
- d) Now that you've graduated from college, what do you think you learned from these courses, workshops or activities?

8) Do you recall receiving any advising, taking any courses or participating in workshops or other activities to identify and prepare for a career while in \_\_\_\_\_(CAP)?

**If yes:**

- a) What did these courses, workshops or activities involve? (e.g. lectures, college fairs, website searches, college visits, alumni panels, networking events, etc.)
- b) How was it decided that you should take these courses or workshops or participate in these activities? (i.e. Were they required, did you choose to or a combination of requirement and choice)?
- c) Did you take these courses and workshops or participate in these types of activities throughout your time at \_\_\_\_\_(CAP) or during a particular period of time?
- d) From your current position as a college graduate, what do you think you learned from these courses, workshops or activities?

9) Were there any other types of advising, courses, workshops or other activities that you recall participating in while in \_\_\_\_\_(CAP)?

**If yes:**

- a) What did the courses, workshops, advising or activities involve? (e.g. community service, cultural or social events, internships, networking, travel or foreign study, etc.)
- b) How was it decided that you should take these courses or workshops or participate in these activities? (i.e. Were they required, did you choose to or a combination of requirement and choice)?

c) Did you take these courses and workshops or participate in these types of activities throughout your time at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) or during a particular period of time?

d) What do you think you learned from these activities?

10) Were there any other services or networks that \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) connected you to help you prepare for college? Yes\_\_ No\_\_

**If yes:**

a) Would you describe one example of a service, network or individual that \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) connected you to?

i. First, please tell me about the service, network or individual.

ii. Now, would you tell me how the service, network or individual helped you prepare for college?

11) Let's discuss your experiences with the staff at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP).

a) Were there any individuals who you recall were particularly helpful to you at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP)? Yes\_\_ No\_\_

**If yes:**

i.) Would you tell me about this(these) person(s) and their role(s) at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP)?

ii.) How they were helpful (If necessary: What was it about what they did [or said] that was so helpful to you?).

b) Were there any individuals who you think could have been more helpful at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP)? Yes\_\_ No\_\_

**If yes:**

i.) Would you tell me about this(these) person(s) and their role(s) at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP)?

ii.) How do you think they could have been more helpful (If necessary: What could they have done [or said] to be more helpful to you?).

12) Now, let's discuss your experiences with your peers at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP).

a) Were there any peers who you recall were particularly memorable, helpful or enjoyable? Yes\_\_ No\_\_

**If yes:**

i. Would you tell me about this(these) peer(s)?

ii. How was(were) he/she(they) particularly memorable, helpful or enjoyable. (What do you think it was about your interaction/work with/ time with \_\_\_\_\_ that led to this?)

b) Did you have any experiences with peers who you recall were difficult to deal with while at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP)?

Yes\_\_ No\_\_

**If yes:**

i. Would you tell me about your experience(s) with this(these) peer(s)?

ii. Please tell me what you found in your interactions/work with/time with them that was particularly difficult.

- c) How would you say your peers at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) compared with your peers in your high school?  
 d) How about your peers in your neighborhood? How did they compare with your peers at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP)?

- 13) Now let's discuss your family's involvement with your college preparation efforts.  
 a) How was your family involved in your college preparation?  
 b) Did \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) provide opportunities for your family to be involved in any way in your college preparation efforts? Yes\_\_ No\_\_  
 i) ***If yes:*** Could you tell me how \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) involved your family in your college preparation.  
 ii) ***If no:*** What do you think \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) might have done to help members of your family become (more) involved in your college preparation efforts?

## ***II. TRANSITION TO COLLEGE EXPERIENCES***

***Now I'd like to turn to some questions about your undergraduate experiences, beginning with your transition to college.***

- 14) What college did you first attend? \_\_\_\_\_  
 a) What year did you enroll at \_\_\_\_\_?  
 b) Was \_\_\_\_\_ (college) where you graduated from?  
 Yes\_\_ No\_\_  
***If no:***  
 c) What other college(s) did you attend after \_\_\_\_\_?  
 d) What year did you enroll at \_\_\_\_\_?  
 e) Was \_\_\_\_\_ (College) where you graduated from?  
**Repeat questions above if more than two colleges:**

- 15) Could you tell me what role, if any, \_\_\_\_\_(CAP) played in your decision to enroll at \_\_\_\_\_ (1<sup>st</sup> college)?

***If more than one college:***

- a) What role, if any, did \_\_\_\_\_(CAP) play in your decision to enroll at \_\_\_\_\_(2nd college) or \_\_\_\_\_ (3rd college)?

***Follow up:***

Do you think you would have attended \_\_\_\_\_ (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> college) without participating in \_\_\_\_\_(CAP)?

Do you think you would have attended college ***at all*** if you hadn't participated in \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP)? Yes\_\_ No\_\_

***If yes:*** Where do you think you would have gone to college?

- 16) Could you tell me where you lived while you were enrolled at \_\_\_\_\_ (1st college)?

***If more than one college:***

Could you tell me where you lived while you were enrolled at (2<sup>nd</sup> college)  
\_\_\_\_\_?

Could you tell me where you lived while you were enrolled at (3<sup>rd</sup> college)  
\_\_\_\_\_?

17A) What was your transition to \_\_\_\_\_ (1<sup>st</sup> college) like  
in the first:

a) Month?

b) Semester?

c) Year?

d) Sometimes when students go to college, they find things that surprise them.

i. Can you think of something that surprised you during your transition to  
\_\_\_\_\_ (your first) college?

ii.) You just gave me an example of an experience that was surprisingly  
enjoyable (or unpleasant). Can you now give me an example of an  
experience that was surprisingly unpleasant (or enjoyable)?

**If needed:**

iii.) What role do you think your housing/living situation played in these  
enjoyable/challenging experiences?

**If more than one college:**

17B) Could you tell me what was your transition to \_\_\_\_\_  
(2<sup>nd</sup> college) like in the first:

a) Month?

b) Semester?

c) Year?

d) Can you think of something that surprised you during your transition to  
\_\_\_\_\_ (2<sup>nd</sup> college)?

i.) You just gave me an example of an experience that was surprisingly  
enjoyable (or unpleasant). Can you now give me an example of an  
experience that was surprisingly unpleasant (or enjoyable)?

ii.) Could you describe any ways that your experiences as a new student  
at \_\_\_\_\_ (1<sup>st</sup> college) influenced your  
experiences as a new student at \_\_\_\_\_ (second  
college)?

18) Were you still participating in activities or receiving services from  
\_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) once you enrolled in college? Yes\_\_ No\_\_

a) **If yes:** Could you tell me about any activities or services that you thought  
helped your transition to the college(s) you attended?

b) **If no:** Could you tell me about any experiences you had or guidance/advice  
you received at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) prior to enrolling in college that was  
helpful in your transition to \_\_\_\_\_ (1<sup>st</sup> college)?

**If more than one college:**

c) Could you tell me about any experiences you had or guidance/advice you received at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) prior to enrolling in college that was helpful in your transition to \_\_\_\_\_ (2nd college)?

19) Are there ways in which you think \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) could have prepared you better for your transition to college?

### ***III. ACADEMIC-RELATED CLASSROOM EXPERIENCES IN COLLEGE***

***Now, let's take some time to discuss your academic-related classroom experiences at the college you graduated from.***

20) Could you tell me what discipline(s) you majored/concentrated in at \_\_\_\_\_ (college graduated from)?

a) What were the primary influences on your decision to choose that/those majors/concentrations?

***If necessary:***

b) Were there any experiences at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) that influenced your decision to choose your major(s)/concentration(s)?

21) How would you describe your overall academic experiences at \_\_\_\_\_ (college graduated from) thus far?

***Follow ups/probes:***

For example, could you tell me about your experiences with:

a) Advising (Pre-major, major, guidance, availability, etc.)

b) Faculty (General education/pre-major courses, major(s), feedback, interactions in class, interactions outside of class, expectations, teaching styles, support, etc.)

c) Courses (pre-major, major, level of challenge, size)

d) Peers in classes (Interactions in general education/pre-major courses, major courses, in class work groups, out of class study groups, etc.)

e) Awards or recognition (Honors/Dean's List, etc.)

f) Enriching academic experiences (Independent Study/Thesis, undergraduate research with faculty, study abroad)

g) Were there any other particularly memorable and enjoyable academic experiences that you would like to share?

h) Were there any other particularly challenging or difficult academic experiences that you would like to share?

i) Is there anything else that you would like to share about your academic experiences?

22) Are there ways in which you think the academic courses, workshops, and other activities you participated in at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) in any way influenced:

a) How you studied while in college?

b) How you went about reading an assignment – for example, a book, a chapter, or an article you were assigned to read in class?

c) How you went about writing papers?

d) How you took notes?

e) How you overcame challenges/struggles/disappointments?

f) How about any other parts of your academic experiences?

**Follow-up if needed:**

You said that \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) experiences influenced \_\_\_\_\_.

Can you tell me more about that?

23) Are there ways in which you think \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) could have better prepared you to have more successful academic experiences in college?

***IV. OUT-OF-CLASSROOM EXPERIENCES IN COLLEGE***

***We've been talking about your academic classroom-related experiences so far. Now, I want to ask you some questions about your out-of-classroom experiences.***

24) Could you tell me about your overall out-of-classroom experiences at \_\_\_\_\_ (college graduated from)?

**Follow up probes if needed:**

For example, could you tell me about your experiences with:

a) The residence hall in which you lived.

b) Student clubs and organizations (e.g. art, cultural, performance, professional, social, etc.) of which you were a part.

c) Student government

d) Campus committees that you were involved with

e) Fraternities or sororities

f) Intercollegiate athletics

g) Intramural athletics

h) Employment including work study or off campus work

i) Social events (parties, etc)

j) Campus events such as lectures

k) Volunteering or service

l) Internships

m) Making use of support services such as tutoring or writing centers, counseling centers, financial or bursar/student accounts offices, etc.

n) Can you tell me about a particularly memorable and enjoyable out-of-classroom experience that you've had at \_\_\_\_\_ (college graduated from)?

o) Can you tell me about a particularly challenging or difficult out-of-classroom experience that you've had at \_\_\_\_\_ (college graduated from)?

25) You just described your out-of-classroom experiences at \_\_\_\_\_ (college graduated from). Do you think the courses, workshops, and activities you participated in at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) influenced those experiences?

Yes\_\_ No\_\_

a) **If yes:** Could you tell me more about that? Can you give me an example?

b) **If no:** Why do you think that's the case?

c) How you overcame challenges/struggles/disappointments?

26) Are there ways in which you think \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) could have better prepared you to have more successful or meaningful out-of-classroom experiences in college?

27) How did you pay for your college education?

a) Did you receive any financial support from \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP)?

b) Did you receive any assistance in applying for financial support such as scholarships or grants from \_\_\_\_\_?

28) Were there any other services or networks that \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) connected you to that have helped you to be successful academically and otherwise in college? Yes\_\_ No\_\_

a) **If yes:** Could you tell me more about that?

### ***V. POST-COLLEGE GOALS***

***Now I'd like to take some time to discuss your education, career and personal goals for life after college.***

29) When you were in college, what would you say were your future goals and aspirations with regard to education and/or career?

a) What did you plan to do for the first 5 years after you graduated from college?

b) Could you tell me about how your goals your goals and aspirations have unfolded so far?

30) Do you think the courses, workshops, and other activities you participated in at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) in any way influenced your education and career goals?

Yes\_\_ No\_\_

a) **If yes:** Can you give me an example?

b) **If no:** What do you think may have kept that from happening?

31) In attending college, students sometimes develop personal goals and aspirations that they hope to pursue after they finish college. Can you tell me about the personal goals and aspirations you intended to pursue after college?

**If needed for clarification:** These might have been goals or aspirations for yourself, your family or your community for after college that you held while you were an undergraduate.

32) You just shared what your personal post-college goals were while you were an undergraduate. Do you think the courses, workshops, and other activities you participated in at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) in any way influenced these personal goals?

a) **If yes:** Could you tell me how?

**Follow-up if necessary:** Could you provide me with an example?

b) **If no:** Why do you think this is not the case?

## **VI. GRADUATING FROM COLLEGE**

*I'd like to take a few minutes to discuss your graduation from college.*

- 33) Could you tell me what year did you graduate from college?
- 34) What degree or degrees did you earn?  
 a) Was/were this(these) the degree(s) you intended to earn when you enrolled at \_\_\_\_\_ (college graduated from)? Yes\_\_ No\_\_  
 i. ***If no:*** What degree(s) did you intend to earn?  
 ii. Could you tell me why you switched degree programs?
- 35) Do you think the courses, workshops, and other activities you participated in at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) influenced your ability to complete the degree you intended to pursue or the change in your degree program? Yes\_\_ No\_\_  
 a) ***If yes:*** Could you tell me how these courses, workshops and activities you participated in influenced the degree(s) you earned?  
 b) ***If no:*** Could you tell me why you don't think these courses, workshops and activities influenced the degree(s) you earned?  
***Follow-up if needed:***  
 c) Are there ways in which you think \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) could have better prepared you to remain enrolled in and be successful in your degree program of choice?
- 36) As you look back on your college experiences, do you think the courses, workshops, and other such activities at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) had an influence on your graduation from college?  
 Yes\_\_ No\_\_  
 a) ***If yes:*** Could you please tell me how the activities you participated in at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) influenced your graduation from college and provide some examples?  
 b) ***If no:*** Why do you think the activities you participated in at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) did not influence your graduation from college?  
 c) Are there ways in which you think \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) could have better prepared you to persevere and graduate from college?

*We're nearing the end of our interview so now I'd like to take some time to discuss your experiences after college.*

- 37) Now that you have graduated from college, what is your current occupation?  
 a) How does your current occupation compare to your goals and aspirations while you were an undergraduate?  
 b) Where do you see your career going in the next 5-10 years?  
 i) What steps are you taking to pursue your career goals?
- 38) Do you think the courses, workshops, and other activities you participated in at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) influenced your aspirations and direction after college? Yes\_\_ No\_\_



- a) ***If yes:*** Could you tell me how the programs you participated in at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) influenced your aspirations and direction after college?  
 b) ***If no:*** Could you tell me why you think the programs you participated in at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) have not influenced your aspirations and direction after college?

39) Were there any other services or networks that you got connected to through \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) that have helped you prepare for a career after college?  
 Yes\_\_ No\_\_

- a) ***If yes:*** Could you please describe these services or networks and how they helped you prepare for a career after college?

40) Thinking beyond your career/profession, do you think \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) has influenced your life? Yes\_\_ No\_\_

- a) ***If yes:*** Could you tell me more about how \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) has influenced your life?

***Follow-up if needed:*** Could you provide me with an example?

- b) ***If no:*** Could you tell me why you don't think \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) has influenced your life?

41) Looking back, if the staff of \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) were to ask your opinion on the services you received from them that helped you get through college and launch your career and post-college life:

- a) Which activities and services would you tell them should definitely be retained for future students?  
 d) Which new activities and services, would you say, should definitely be added or expanded for future students?

## ***VI. CONCLUSION***

***We're almost finished with this interview but before we end I'd like to ask you one more question.***

42) Is there anything else that you would like to share with me about \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP's) influence on your:

- a) Academic experiences in college  
 b) Out-of-classroom experiences in college  
 c) Education/career goals and direction  
 d) Personal goals and aspirations

***Thank you so much for your time and willingness to speak with me today! Please let me know if there is anyone else from your program that you think I should interview. I'm particularly interested in finding a couple people who went through your program and enrolled in college but didn't graduate. I would appreciate any help identifying such individuals.***

## Appendix F

## CAP Alumni Who Enrolled in College but Withdrew Before Graduating: Individual Interview Protocol

NOTE to IRB: *The questions herein included are the best possible that I can produce at this time. It is possible that as I proceed with data collection that (a) I will find better ways to word these questions, (b) I will find it useful to omit some, (c) I will identify new questions that are not accessible to me at this time. I will adjust this protocol accordingly.*

**I. COLLEGE ACCESS PROGRAM EXPERIENCES**

*Let's begin with some questions about your experiences in your college access program.*

1) Your college access program is \_\_\_\_\_. Is that correct?

a) How did you learn about and become enrolled in \_\_\_\_\_(CAP)?

b) Were there any requirements to participate in \_\_\_\_\_(CAP)?  
Yes\_\_ No\_\_

**If yes:** Could you tell me what those requirements were?

c) How many years did you participate in \_\_\_\_\_(CAP)?

d) How often did you attend \_\_\_\_\_(CAP) during the week/month?

i.) Was there an attendance requirement for \_\_\_\_\_(CAP)?  
Yes\_\_ No\_\_

**If yes:** What was the attendance policy?

ii.) When did activities like classes, workshops, trips, etc. typically take place at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP)? (e.g. weekdays, during school hours, weekdays after school, weekends, summer, etc.)

e) Were you enrolled in any other college access programs? Yes\_\_ No\_\_

**If yes:**

i.) what program(s) were you enrolled in?

ii.) How did you learn about and become enrolled in that (or those) college access program(s)?

**NOTE: For those who were enrolled in more than one college access programs:** Let's try to focus on your experiences at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP).

2) While in \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) did you take courses in academic subjects like English, math, science, history, social studies or others?

**If yes:**

a) Would you name some of the academic courses you took at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP)?

b) How was it decided that you should take these courses? (i.e. Were they required or were they based on your own interests and choice, or a combination of required and personal choice)?

c) Did you take these academic courses throughout your time at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) or during a particular period of time?

d) You've just provided me with an overall sense of the academic courses you took at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP). Now let's discuss one of these courses in a little more detail. What course would you like to talk about?

i) Would you tell me a bit about the instructor of \_\_\_\_\_?

ii) At what point in your experience at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) did you take \_\_\_\_\_ (course)?

iii) Where did this course take place? (e.g. CAP facility, college campus, etc.)

iv) How was this course taught? (i.e. Did it involve lectures, group work, labs, etc.)

v) What did you have to do out of the classroom for this course? (e.g. assignments, homework, term or research papers etc.)

3) Did you receive tutoring (or any other type of support) in academic subjects like English, math, science, history, social studies or others?

**If yes:**

a) Would you name some of the academic tutoring you received at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP)?

b) How was it decided that you should receive this tutoring? (i.e. Was it required, did you choose to or a combination of requirement and choice)?

c) Did you receive tutoring throughout your time at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) or during a particular period of time?

d) Thanks for giving me a broad sense of your experiences with tutoring at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP). Now let's talk about one example of your experiences with tutoring in a little more detail. What tutoring experience would you like to discuss?

i) Okay, would you tell me a bit about who tutored you in \_\_\_\_\_ (subject)?

ii) At what point in your experience at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) did you receive this tutoring?

iii) Where did this tutoring take place? (e.g. CAP facility, college campus, etc.)

iv) What did you work on during the tutoring sessions?

v) Was the tutoring one-on-one, in groups or both?

vi) Did you have assignments outside of the sessions?

4) Did you take classes or attend workshops on academic skills such as SAT/ACT Prep, writing, public speaking, time management, etc.?

**If yes:**

a) Would you name some of the academic skill courses or workshops you took or participated in at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP)?

- b) How was it decided that you should take these academic skill courses or workshops? (i.e. Were they required, did you choose to or a combination of requirement and choice)?
- c) Did you take these academic skill courses and workshops throughout your time at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) or during a particular period of time?
- d) Let's focus on one example of an academic skill course or workshop that you took in a little more detail. What course or workshop would you like to discuss?
- i) Would you tell me a bit about the instructor of \_\_\_\_\_?
  - ii) At what point in your experience at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) did you take \_\_\_\_\_ (course or workshop)?
  - iii) Where did this course or workshop take place? (e.g. CAP facility, college campus, etc.)
  - iv) How was this course or workshop taught? (i.e. Did it involve lectures, group work, labs, etc.)
  - v) What did you have to do out of the classroom for this course or workshop? (e.g. assignments, homework, term papers etc.)

5) Did take any courses or participate in workshops or other activities on identifying, applying to, selecting, paying for and enrolling in college while in \_\_\_\_\_(CAP)?

**If yes:**

- a) What did these courses, workshops or activities involve? (e.g. lectures, college fairs, website searches, college visits, alumni panels, networking events, drafting college essays, financial aid & scholarships, etc.)
- b) How was it decided that you should take these courses or workshops? (i.e. Were they required, did you choose to or a combination of requirement and choice)?
- c) Did you take these courses and workshops throughout your time at \_\_\_\_\_(CAP) or during a particular period of time?
- d) What do you think you learned from these courses, workshops or activities?

6) Do you recall taking any courses or participating in workshops or other activities that focused on being academically successful in college while in \_\_\_\_\_(CAP)?

**If yes:**

- a) What did these courses, workshops or activities involve? (e.g. lectures, college fairs, website searches, college visits, alumni panels, networking events, etc.)
- b) How was it decided that you should take these courses or workshops? (i.e. Were they required, did you choose to or a combination of requirement and choice)?
- c) Did you take these courses and workshops or participate in these types of activities throughout your time at \_\_\_\_\_(CAP) or during a particular period of time?
- d) Now that you're in college, what do you think you learned from these courses, workshops or activities?

7) Did you take any courses or participate in workshops or other activities to prepare you for extracurricular life in college while in \_\_\_\_\_(CAP)?

**If yes:**

- a) What did these courses, workshops or activities involve? (e.g. lectures, college fairs, website searches, college visits, alumni panels, networking events, etc.)
- b) How was it decided that you should take these courses or workshops or participate in these activities? (i.e Were they required, did you choose to or a combination of requirement and choice)?
- c) Did you take these courses and workshops or participate in these types of activities throughout your time at \_\_\_\_\_(CAP) or during a particular period of time?
- d) Now that you're in college, what do you think you learned from these courses, workshops or activities?

8) Do you recall taking any courses or participating in workshops or other activities to identify and prepare for a career while in \_\_\_\_\_(CAP)?

**If yes:**

- a) What did these courses, workshops or activities involve? (e.g. lectures, college fairs, website searches, college visits, alumni panels, networking events, etc.)
- b) How was it decided that you should take these courses or workshops or participate in these activities? (i.e Were they required, did you choose to or a combination of requirement and choice)?
- c) Did you take these courses and workshops or participate in these types of activities throughout your time at \_\_\_\_\_(CAP) or during a particular period of time?
- d) From your current position as a college student, what do you think you learned from these courses, workshops or activities?

9) Were there any other types of courses, workshops or other activities that you recall participating in while in \_\_\_\_\_(CAP)?

**If yes:**

- a) What did these courses, workshops or activities involve? (e.g. community service, cultural or social events, internships, networking, travel or foreign study, etc.)
- b) How was it decided that you should take these courses or workshops or participate in these activities? (i.e Were they required, did you choose to or a combination of requirement and choice)?
- c) Did you take these courses and workshops or participate in these types of activities throughout your time at \_\_\_\_\_(CAP) or during a particular period of time?
- d) What do you think you learned from these activities?

10) Were there any other services or networks that \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) connected you to help you prepare for college? Yes\_\_ No\_\_

**If yes:**

- a) Would you describe one example of a service, network or individual that \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) connected you to?
  - i. First, please tell me about the service, network or individual.

ii. Now, would you tell me how the service, network or individual helped you prepare for college?

11) Let's discuss your experiences with the staff at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP).

a) Were there any individuals who you recall were particularly helpful to you at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP)? Yes\_\_ No\_\_

**If yes:**

i.) Would you tell me about this(these) person(s) and their role(s) at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP)?

ii.) How they were helpful (If necessary: What was it about what they did [or said] that was so helpful to you?).

b) Were there any individuals who you think could have been more helpful at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP)? Yes\_\_ No\_\_

**If yes:**

i.) Would you tell me about this(these) person(s) and their role(s) at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP)?

ii.) How do you think they could have been more helpful (If necessary: What could they have done [or said] to be more helpful to you?).

12) Now, let's discuss your experiences with your peers at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP).

a) Were there any peers who you recall were particularly memorable, helpful or enjoyable? Yes\_\_ No\_\_

**If yes:**

i. Would you tell me about this(these) peer(s)?

ii. How was(were) he/she(they) particularly memorable, helpful or enjoyable. (What do you think it was about your interaction/work with/ time with \_\_\_\_\_ that led to this?)

b) Did you have any experiences with peers who you recall were challenging for you with regard to your own participation in \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP)?

Yes\_\_ No\_\_

**If yes:**

i. Would you tell me about your experience(s) with this(these) peer(s)?

ii. Please tell me what you found in your interactions/work with/time with them that was particularly difficult.

c) How would you say your peers at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) compared with your peers in your high school?

d) How about your peers in your neighborhood? How did they compare with your peers at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP)?

13) Now let's discuss your family's involvement with \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP).

a) Did \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) provide opportunities for your family to be involved in any way in your college preparation efforts? Yes\_\_ No\_\_

i) **If yes:** Could you tell me how \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) involved your family in your college preparation.

- ii) ***If no:*** What do you think \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) might have done to help members of your family become (more) involved in your college preparation efforts?

## ***II. TRANSITION TO COLLEGE EXPERIENCES***

***Now I'd like to turn to some questions about your undergraduate experiences, beginning with your transition to college.***

- 14) What college did you first attend? \_\_\_\_\_  
 a) What year did you enroll at \_\_\_\_\_?  
 b) Did you enroll in any other college(s) after \_\_\_\_\_?  
 Yes\_\_ No\_\_  
***If yes:***  
 i) What college(s) was(were) that(those)?  
 ii) What year(s) did you enroll in 2<sup>nd</sup> (or 3<sup>rd</sup>) college(s)?  
 2<sup>nd</sup> College \_\_\_\_\_ 3<sup>rd</sup> College \_\_\_\_\_

- 15) Could you tell me what role, if any, \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) played in your decision to enroll at \_\_\_\_\_ (1<sup>st</sup> college)?

***If more than one college:***

- a) What role, if any, did \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) play in your decision to enroll at \_\_\_\_\_ (2nd college) or \_\_\_\_\_ (3rd college)?

***Follow up:***

- Do you think you would have attended \_\_\_\_\_ (current college) without participating in \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP)?  
 Do you think you would have attended college ***at all*** if you hadn't participated in \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP)? Yes\_\_ No\_\_

***If yes:*** Where do you think you would have gone to college?

- 16) Where did you live while you were enrolled at: (1st institution) \_\_\_\_\_?  
 a) Could you tell me where you lived during your time there?  
***If more than one college:***  
 (2nd institution) \_\_\_\_\_?  
 b) Could you tell me where you lived during your time there?  
 (3rd institution) \_\_\_\_\_?  
 c) Could you tell me where you lived during your time there?

- 17A) What was your transition to \_\_\_\_\_ (1st college) like in the first:

- a) Month?  
 b) Semester?  
 c) Year?  
 d) Sometimes when students go to college, they find things that surprise them.  
 i. Can you think of one or two things that surprised you during your transition to college?

ii.) You just gave me an example of an experience that was surprisingly enjoyable (or unpleasant). Can you now give me an example of an experience that was surprisingly unpleasant (or enjoyable)?

**If needed:**

iii.) What role do you think your housing/living situation played in these enjoyable/challenging experiences?

**If more than one college:**

17B) Could you tell me what was your transition to \_\_\_\_\_ (2nd college) like in the first:

- a) Month?
- b) Semester?
- c) Year?
- d) Can you think of one or two things that surprised you during your transition to \_\_\_\_\_ (2nd college)?

i.) You just gave me an example of an experience that was surprisingly enjoyable (or unpleasant). Can you now give me an example of an experience that was surprisingly unpleasant (or enjoyable)?

ii.) Could you describe any ways that your experiences as a new student at \_\_\_\_\_ (1st college) influenced your experiences as a new student at \_\_\_\_\_ (2nd college)?

18) Were you still participating in activities or receiving services from \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) once you enrolled in college? Yes\_\_ No\_\_

- a) **If yes:** Could you tell me about any activities or services that you thought helped your transition?
- b) **If no:** Could you tell me about any experiences you had or guidance/advice you received at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) before enrolling in college that was helpful in your transition to \_\_\_\_\_ (your college)?

19) Are there ways in which you think \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) could have prepared you better for your transition to college?

***III. ACADEMIC-RELATED CLASSROOM EXPERIENCES IN COLLEGE***

***Now, let's take some time to discuss your academic-related classroom experiences in college.***

20) Could you tell me what discipline(s) you considered or chose to major/concentrate in?

- a) What were the primary influences on your decision to consider or choose this/these majors/concentrations?

**If necessary:**

- b) Were there any experiences at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) that influenced your decision to consider or choose those major(s)/concentration(s)?



21) How would you describe your overall academic experiences at the college(s) you attended?

**Follow ups/probes:**

For example, could you tell me about your experiences with:

- a) Advising (Pre-major, major, guidance, availability, etc.)
- b) Faculty (General education/pre-major courses, major(s), feedback, interactions in class, interactions outside of class, expectations, teaching styles, support, etc.)
- c) Courses (pre-major, major, level of challenge, size)
- d) Peers in classes (Interactions in general education/pre-major courses, major courses, in class work groups, out of class study groups, etc.)
- e) Awards or recognition (Honors/Dean's List, etc.)
- f) Enriching academic experiences (Independent Study/Thesis, undergraduate research with faculty, study abroad)
- g) Were there any other particularly memorable and enjoyable academic experiences that you would like to share?
- h) Were there any other particularly challenging or difficult academic experiences that you would like to share?
- i) Is there anything else that you would like to share about your academic experiences?

22) Are there ways in which you think the academic courses, workshops, and other activities you participated in at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) in any way influenced:

- a) How you studied while in college?
- b) How you went about reading an assignment – for example, a book, a chapter, or an article you were assigned to read in class?
- c) How you went about writing papers?
- d) How you took notes?
- e) How about any other parts of your academic experiences?

**Follow-up if needed:**

You said that \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) experiences influenced \_\_\_\_\_.

Can you tell me more about that?

- f) Are there ways in which you think \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) could have better prepared you to have more successful academic experiences in college?

***IV. OUT-OF-CLASSROOM EXPERIENCES IN COLLEGE***

***We've been talking about your academic classroom-related experiences so far. Now, I want to ask you some questions about your out-of-classroom experiences.***

23) Could you tell me about your overall out-of-classroom experiences at the college(s) you attended?

**Follow up probes if needed:**

For example, could you tell me about your experiences with:

- a) The residence hall in which you lived.
- b) Student clubs and organizations (e.g. art, cultural, performance, professional, social, etc.) of which you were a part.
- c) Student government

- d) Campus committees that you were involved with
- e) Fraternities or sororities
- f) Intercollegiate athletics
- g) Intramural athletics
- h) Employment including work study or off campus work
- i) Social events (parties, etc)
- j) Campus events such as lectures
- k) Can you tell me about a particularly memorable and enjoyable out-of-classroom experience that you've had at \_\_\_\_\_ (the college(s) you attended)?
- l) Can you tell me about a particularly challenging or difficult out-of-classroom experience that you've had at \_\_\_\_\_ (the college(s) you attended)?

24) You just described your out-of-classroom experiences at \_\_\_\_\_ (the college(s) you attended). Do you think the courses, workshops, and activities you participated in at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) have influenced those experiences?

Yes\_\_ No\_\_

- a) ***If yes:*** Could you tell me more about that? Can you give me an example?
- b) ***If no:*** Why do you think that's the case?
- c) Are there ways in which you think \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) could have better prepared you to have more successful or meaningful out-of-classroom experiences in college?

25) Were there any other services or networks that \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) connected you to that were intended to help you succeed academically and otherwise in college?

Yes\_\_ No\_\_

- a) ***If yes:*** Could you tell me more about that?

## ***V. POST-COLLEGE GOALS***

***Now I'd like to take some time to discuss your education, career and personal goals for life after college.***

26) What were your education and/or career goals and aspirations for after college?

- a) What did you plan to do for the first 5 years after you graduated from college?

27) Do you think the courses, workshops, and other activities you participated in at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) influenced your education and career goals?

Yes\_\_ No\_\_

- a) ***If yes:*** How would you say they influenced you? Can you give me an example?
- b) ***If no:*** What do you think may have kept that from happening?

28) In attending college, students sometimes develop personal goals and aspirations that they hope to pursue after they finish college. Can you tell me about any personal goals you intend to pursue after college?

***If needed for clarification:*** These could include goals or aspirations for yourself, your family or your community.

29) You just shared your post-college personal goals with me. Do you think the courses, workshops, and other activities you participated in at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) influenced the personal goals you described in any way? Yes\_\_ No\_\_

- a) **If yes:** Could you tell me how and provide some examples?
- b) **If no:** Why do you think this is not the case?

## ***VI. WITHDRAWING FROM COLLEGE***

***Now I'd like to take some time to discuss your reasons for leaving college, what you have been doing since you left and what your plans are.***

30) What year did you originally plan to graduate from college?

31) What would you say were the most significant factors that influenced your decision to leave (or not return to) college?

32) Are there ways in which you think \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) could have better prepared you to overcome those challenges and possibly graduate?

- a) **If yes:** Could you tell me how you think \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) could have made a difference?
- b) **If no:** Could you tell me why you don't think \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) could have made a difference?

33) Can you tell me how you have spent your time since leaving college?

- a) What have you been doing in terms of work or your occupation?
- b) What have you been doing with regard to your personal life – family, friends, community, etc?
- c) Is there anything else that has occupied your time since leaving college?

34) Do you have plans to return to finish your undergraduate education? Yes\_\_ No\_\_

- a) **If yes:** Could you tell me about your plans?
- b) **If no:** Could you tell me more about why you have not made plans to return to college?

35) Overall, do you think the courses, workshops, and other activities you participated in at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) have influenced your life in any way?

- a) **If yes:** How do you think those courses, workshops, and other activities influenced your life? Can you give me an example?
- b) **If no:** Do you have any thoughts as to why those courses, workshops, and other activities did not influenced your life?
- c) If the staff of \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) were to ask your opinion on which activities and services should definitely be retained for future students, what would you tell them?
- d) If the staff of \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) were to ask your opinion on which new activities and services should definitely be added or expanded for future students, what would you tell them?

e) Is there anything else that \_\_\_\_\_(CAP) could have done for you but didn't?

i) ***If yes:*** How do you think \_\_\_\_\_(CAP) could have had a larger influence your life?

ii) ***If no:*** Why do you think \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) could not have had a larger influence your life?

## **VI. CONCLUSION**

***We're almost finished with this interview but before we end I'd like to ask you one more question.***

35) Is there anything else that you would like to share with me about \_\_\_\_\_(CAP's) influence on your:

- a) Academic experiences in college
- b) Out-of-classroom experiences in college
- c) Decision to leave college
- c) Education/career goals and direction
- d) Personal goals and aspirations

***Thank you so much for your time and willingness to speak with me today!***

## Appendix G

## CAP Administrators (CEOs or Their Designee): Individual Interview Protocol

Note to IRB: *The questions herein included are the best possible that I can produce at this time. It is possible that as I proceed with data collection that (a) I will find better ways to word these questions, (b) I will find it useful to omit some, (c) I will identify new questions that are not accessible to me at this time. I will adjust this protocol accordingly.*

**I. CAP Administrator Tenure and Experiences in Field**

*Let's start with a few questions about your role at \_\_\_\_\_ and your experiences in the field of college access programs.*

- 1) Your current title is \_\_\_\_\_. Is that correct?
  - A) ***If yes:*** Could you tell me how long have you served in this role at \_\_\_\_\_?
  - B) ***If no:*** Could you tell me what your current title is?  
\_\_\_\_\_
    - i) How long have you served in this role? \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) Could you tell me what the primary responsibilities of your position are?
- 3) Prior to your current position, have you worked at \_\_\_\_\_ in any other capacity?
  - A) ***If yes:*** Could you tell me about that(those)role(s)?
- 4) Have you worked at any other CAPs prior to \_\_\_\_\_?
  - B) ***If yes:*** Could you tell me about your experiences at previous CAPs?

**II. CAP Mission and Goals**

*Now I'd like to move to some questions about \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP's) mission and goals.*

- 5) Could you describe the mission of \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP)?
 

**Follow-ups/probes:**

  - A) Please tell me about what \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) hopes to accomplish.
  - B) Could you describe the characteristics of the students \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) seeks to serve for example in terms of race/ethnicity, gender, social class, national origin, neighborhood(s) and other demographic characteristics you think might describe them well?
  - C) Could you describe the typical educational profile of your participants?
  - D) Are there any other distinguishing characteristics of the students \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) serves?

E) Could you tell me about why \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) has chosen to focus on this(these) populations?

F) Could you tell me how, if at all, has \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP's) mission changed over time?

6) Could you tell me how you think \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) might develop or evolve in the future?

### **III. Organizational Structure**

*Let's shift to some questions about \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP's) organizational structure.*

7) Could you tell me about how \_\_\_\_\_ CAP is organized to carry out its mission and goals?

#### **Follow-ups/probes:**

A) What are the major departments/units at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAPs)?

i) What are the primary responsibilities of each of these departments/units?

B) Could you tell me how many staff members work at \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP)?

8) Could you tell me what, if anything you might change – add to or remove from \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP's) organizational structure to better carry out its mission and goals?

### **IV. Timing of Services**

*I'd like to shift to some questions about when services are provided to participants.*

9) Could you tell me about the typical timeframe in which \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) serves its participants (e.g. middle school – high school, high school – college, etc.).

A) How many years does the typical participant stay involved with and receive services from \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP)?

B) Are there requirements for participants to enroll in and remain involved in your program? Yes\_\_ No\_\_

i) **If yes:** Could you tell me more about these requirements?

ii) **If no:** Could you tell me why \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) does not have requirements for participants?

10) Could you tell me when services are typically provided to participants (e.g. during the school day, after school, weekends, during the school year, summers, etc.)?

a) What is the rationale for the timing of delivery of this/these service/services?

### **V. Programmatic Offerings, Services and Activities**

*Now I'd like to move on to some questions about the types of programmatic activities and services \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) provides.*

11) Could you tell me about any academic programming provided by \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP).

**Follow-ups/probes:** For example:

A) Does \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) offer academic courses (e.g. College Prep English, Algebra, Geometry, Trigonometry, History)? Yes\_\_ No\_\_

**If yes:**

- i) Could you give me an example of a course that is offered?
- ii) At what stage in the program is this course offered to students?
- ii) Are program participants required to take courses such as this?
  - a) **If yes:** Could you tell me why this is the case?
  - b) **If no:** Could you tell me why not?
  - c) **Probe if necessary:** How do participants decide which courses to take?

B) Does \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) offer tutoring in any academic subjects? (e.g. College Prep English, Algebra, Geometry, Trigonometry, History)? Yes\_\_ No\_\_

**If yes:**

- i) Could you give me an example of the kind of tutoring that is offered?
- ii) At what stage in the program is this kind of tutoring offered?
- iii) Are program participants required to attend tutoring?
  - a) **If yes:** Could you tell me why this is the case?
  - b) **If no:** Could you tell me why not?
  - c) **Probe if necessary:** How do participants decide which courses to take?

C) Does \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) offer courses, workshops or other activities aimed at improving participants' academic skills such as academic writing, standardized test taking, critical thinking? Yes\_\_ No\_\_

**If yes:**

- i) Could you give me an example of an academic skill course, workshop or activity that is offered?
- ii) At what stage in the program are such services offered?
- ii) Are program participants required to participate in these types of services?
  - a) **If yes:** Could you tell me why this is the case?
  - b) **If no:** Could you tell me why not?
  - c) **Probe if necessary:** How do participants decide which courses to take?

D) Could you tell me what goals or objectives these academic offerings and services are intended to meet?

E) How do you think these academic offerings and services contribute to your alumni's experiences in college?

12) Does \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) offer services and opportunities such as courses, workshops, college fairs, college tours, and college advising for participants (and their families) to explore college options? Yes\_\_ No\_\_

**If yes:**

- A) Could you give me an example of a course, workshop or activity that is offered?
- B) At what stage in the program are such services offered?
- C) Are program participants required to participate in these types of services?

- i) **If yes:** Could you tell me why this is the case?
- ii) **If no:** Could you tell me why not?
- iii) **Probe if necessary:** How do participants decide whether or not to participate in these activities and services?
- D) Could you tell me what goals or objectives these courses, workshops, college fairs, etc. are intended to meet?
- E) How do you think these activities and services contribute to your alumni's experiences in college?

13) Does \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) offer services and opportunities to assist participants (and their families) with college and financial aid applications? Yes\_\_ No\_\_

**If yes:**

- A) Could you give me an example of such an opportunity that is offered?
- B) At what stage in the program are such services offered?
- C) Are program participants required to participate in these types of services?
  - i) **If yes:** Could you tell me why this is the case?
  - ii) **If no:** Could you tell me why not?
  - iii) **Probe if necessary:** How do participants decide whether or not to participate in these activities and services?
- D) Could you tell me what goals or objectives these services are intended to meet?
- E) How do you think these activities and services contribute to your alumni's experiences in college?

14) Does \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) provide opportunities for participants (and their families) to select among college options such as overnight visits at colleges, comparing or advocating for financial aid, applying for scholarships or other activities? Yes\_\_ No\_\_

**If yes:**

- A) Could you give me an example of such an opportunity that is offered?
- B) Are program participants required to participate in these types of services?
  - i) **If yes:** Could you tell me why this is the case?
  - ii) **If no:** Could you tell me why not?
  - iii) **Probe if necessary:** How do participants decide whether or not to participate in these activities and services?
- C) Could you tell me what goals or objectives these services are intended to meet?
- D) How do you think these activities and services contribute to your alumni's experiences in college?

15) Does \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) provide opportunities for participants (and their families) to connect with peers, alumni, staff, other families, etc? Yes\_\_ No\_\_

**If yes:**

- A) Could you give me an example of such an opportunity that is offered?
- B) Are program participants required to participate in these types of services?
  - i) **If yes:** Why is this included as an element of the program?
  - ii) **If no:** Why is this not included as an element of the program?



iii) **Probe if necessary:** How do participants usually decide whether or not to participate in these activities and services?

C) Could you tell me what goals or objectives these services are intended to meet?

D) How do you think these activities and services contribute to your participants' later experiences in college?

16) There's a lot of discussion these days about the possibility of Caps finding ways to bring out students' cultural strengths through their programming. Where does \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) stand with regard to this idea?

**If in favor:**

A) What are some ways in which you do that or are thinking of doing that?

B) Are program participants required to participate in these types of services?

i) **Probe if necessary:** How do participants decide whether or not to participate in these activities and services?

C) Could you tell me what goals or objectives these services are intended to meet?

D) How do you think these activities and services contribute to your participants' later experiences in college?

**If not in favor:**

E) Can you tell me more about your thinking about this?

17) Does \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) provide opportunities for participants (and their families) to prepare for and navigate life in college? Yes\_\_ No\_\_

**If yes:**

A) Could you give me an example of such an opportunity that is offered?

B) Are program participants required to participate in these types of services?

i) **If yes:** Could you tell me why this is the case?

ii) **If no:** Could you tell me why not?

iii) **Probe if necessary:** How do participants decide whether or not to participate in these activities and services?

C) Could you tell me what goals or objectives these services are intended to meet?

D) How do you think these activities and services contribute to your participants' later experiences in college?

18) Does \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) refer or connect participants (and their families) to other programs and services to help participants succeed in college? Yes\_\_ No\_\_

**If yes:**

A) Could you give me an example of such an opportunity that is offered?

B) Are program participants required to participate in these types of services?

i) **If yes:** Could you tell me why this is the case?

ii) **If no:** Could you tell me why not?

iii) **Probe if necessary:** How do participants decide whether or not to participate in these activities and services?

C) Could you tell me what goals or objectives these services are intended to meet?

D) How do you think these activities and services contribute to your participants' later experiences in college?

19) Are there any programs or services that \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) does not offer but you wish it could? Yes\_\_ No\_\_

**If yes:**

A) Could you tell me more about this?

***VI. Funding***

*As we begin to wind down I'd like to ask some questions about \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP's) funding.*

20) Could you tell me what sources \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) primarily receives it funding from?

A) How was it decided that \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) would receive most of its funding from these sources?

21) Sometimes where an organization gets its resources shapes what they can offer. How would you say that the sources of your funding shape what you can and can't offer to your participants?

***VI. Conclusion***

22) Could you tell me what hopes and aspirations you have for the \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP) participants?

23) Is there anything else that you would like to share with me about \_\_\_\_\_ (CAP's) programmatic goals, services, activities or funding?

***Thank you so much for your time!***

## Appendix H

Observational Protocol<sup>1</sup>

Note to IRB: *The information and ideas that I seek to record in this protocol are the best possible that I can produce at this time. It is possible that as I proceed with data collection that (a) I will find new information and ideas to record that are not accessible to me at this time, or (b) I will find it useful to omit some. I will adjust this protocol accordingly.*

**Researcher Name:**

**Site Observed:**

**Date of Observation:**

**Time Observation Started:**

**Time Observation Ended:**

**Date of Write-up:**

**Description and Diagram of Location:**

**Description and Number of Participants:**

**Things to look for:**

- What activities are in process?
- Context of focus of activity
- Who is present (approximately)?
- What is happening; what changes and/or stays the same during period of observation?
- Other issues of interests.

**Observation Notes:** I will record my observations of who is present, what they do or say using the following abbreviations for my key terms:

DN = Descriptive Notes - My descriptive fieldnotes will depict physical settings, identify individuals who are present, and record discussions and non-verbal actions and interactions.

MN = Methodological Notes – My methodological fieldnotes will capture ideas that surface relating to my study’s methodology.

TN = Theoretical Notes - My theoretical fieldnotes will record connections I see between what I am observing and the theories guiding my study.

AN = Analytic Notes - My analytic fieldnotes will capture my thoughts, impressions and any preliminary interpretations I draw from what I have seen and heard.

**Summary:**

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Bartlett, L. (Fall 2011). Methodological Inquiry: Ethnography & Participant Observation Course.

## Appendix I

Documents Collected Archive<sup>2</sup>

Note to IRB: *The information and ideas that I seek to record in this archive are the best possible that I can produce at this time. It is possible that as I proceed with data collection that (a) I will find new information and ideas to record that are not accessible to me at this time, or (b) I will find it useful to omit some. I will adjust this protocol accordingly.*

**College Access Program****Name:****Code:****Document****Title:****Code:****Date Obtained:****How Received:****Date Reviewed:****Type & Description:****Summary of Contents** (*Purpose and key features/ideas*):**Significance of Document for Study:**


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<sup>2</sup> Adapted from Castillo, M., (2011). Teachers College Institutional Review Board Application.

## Appendix J

## Informed Consent for CAP Participants &amp; Alumni Individual Interviews

**DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH:** You are invited to participate in a research study on college access program participants and alumni who subsequently enrolled in a four-year college. The purpose of this study is to examine whether individuals who enrolled in college after (and in some cases also while) participating in a college access program (CAP) view their CAP as contributing to their undergraduate experiences and outcomes, and post-college aspirations and directions, and if so, how, and if not, why. You will be asked to respond to questions regarding the various courses, programs and events you participated in, and individuals with whom you interacted while enrolled in your college access program. You will also be asked to discuss your thoughts as to whether and how those activities and relationships influenced your undergraduate experiences and post-college aspirations and/or trajectory. You will also be asked whether there were features of your college experiences that you wish your CAP had prepared you for.

This research is being conducted by myself, Leslie A. Williams (principal investigator), doctoral candidate in Higher and Postsecondary Education at Teachers College, Columbia University. This study is being conducted for my dissertation in partial fulfillment of the Doctor of Education degree at Teachers College, Columbia University. I will conduct the interview in which you will participate. The interview will take place at Teachers College, Columbia University (525 W. 120<sup>th</sup> St., Manhattan) or at another mutually agreed upon location. I will request your permission to audio-record the interview. If you do grant me permission to audio-record the interview, the recorded interview will be transcribed by a paid transcriber who will be bound by a confidentiality agreement. I will store the audio-taped interview on my password-protected computer hard drive and a password-protected cloud storage folder to which only I will have access. If you do not wish to be audio-recorded I will take handwritten notes.

**RISKS AND BENEFITS:** Participation in research usually includes some risks and benefits. This study reflects risks comparable to those that a college student or recent graduate might experience when discussing their undergraduate experiences and future hopes and plans with others in everyday conversations. For example, individuals might, in some cases, find that discussing such personal experiences is stressful or annoying, as they recollect disappointing or negative events. However, individuals may also find discussing such experiences, and what transpired, to be beneficial as they consider some of the positive features of their experiences, for example, relationships made with peers and mentors, their own personal strength in the face of hardship, and the like.

Furthermore, discussion of post-college aspirations and directions may help put past experiences in perspective.

Your participation in all aspects of this study is voluntary and as such you may refuse to participate, choose not to respond to particular interview questions, or withdraw from study participation at any time without any penalties. If you allow me to audio-record the

interview, you may ask me turn off the recorder at any time during the interview. You may also inform me if anything you have said should be kept off- the-record in a public report.

**PAYMENTS:** There will be no payment or reimbursement for your participation in this study.

**DATA STORAGE TO PROTECT CONFIDENTIALITY:** I will make every effort possible to preserve your confidentiality and privacy. First, I will not use any real names of persons, organizations or institutions in public reports of this study. I will mask the identity of all participants, as well as of any individuals, organizations or institutions that you may mention in the interview. To do this I will replace all names, your own included, with codes or pseudonyms in all interview records (file names and transcripts) and final reports. Second, I will store all interview audio recordings and accompanying transcripts in my password-protected computer hard-drive and a password-protected cloud storage folder to which only I will have access. Third, I will store all hard copy documents (i.e. transcripts, notes, participant lists and contact information) in a cabinet with a lock to which only I will have access.

**TIME INVOLVEMENT:** Your participation in this study will involve one interview which will take approximately two hours. This time includes a brief discussion before the interview, completion of a brief background questionnaire, and the interview itself. You may choose to participate for less or more time. This interview will take place at Teachers College, Columbia University (525 W. 120<sup>th</sup> St., Manhattan) or at another place that is convenient for you. We will select a time that works for both of us.

**HOW WILL RESULTS BE USED:** The results of the study will be used as follows: First, study results will be used for my doctoral dissertation. Second, I expect to present the results of this study at professional meetings and conferences. Third, I expect to report the results of this study in articles, chapters, and books. Fourth, I will use the results of this study in writing of future proposals for funding and in related presentations.

#### **PARTICIPANT'S RIGHTS - College Access Program Alumni**

Principal Investigator: Leslie A. Williams

Research Title: *Beyond college enrollment: Exploring the relationship between historically underrepresented students' prior participation in college access programs and their undergraduate success* (IRB #)

- I have read and discussed the Research Description with the researcher. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the purposes and procedures regarding this study.
- My participation in research is voluntary. I may refuse to participate or withdraw from participation at any time without jeopardy to future medical care, employment, student status or other entitlements.
- The researcher may withdraw me from the research at his/her professional discretion.

- If, during the course of the study, significant new information that has been developed becomes available which may relate to my willingness to continue to participate, the investigator will provide this information to me.
  - Any information derived from the research project that personally identifies me will not be voluntarily released or disclosed without my separate consent, except as specifically required by law.
  - If at any time I have any questions regarding the research or my participation, I can contact the investigator, who will answer my questions. The investigator's phone number is 646-391-7193 and his email address is law2107@tc.columbia.edu.
  - If at any time I have comments, or concerns regarding the conduct of the research or questions about my rights as a research subject, I should contact the Teachers College, Columbia University Institutional Review Board /IRB. The phone number for the IRB is (212) 678-4105. Or, I can write to the IRB at Teachers College, Columbia University, 525 W. 120th Street, New York, NY, 10027, Box 151.
  - I should receive a copy of the Research Description and this Participant's Rights document.
  - If video and/or audio taping is part of this research, I ( ) consent to be audio/video taped. I ( ) do NOT consent to being video/audio taped. The written, video and/or audio taped materials will be viewed only by the principal investigator and members of the research team.
  - Written, video and/or audio taped materials ( ) may be viewed in an educational setting outside the research  
( ) may NOT be viewed in an educational setting outside the research.
  - My signature means that I agree to participate in this study.
- Participant's signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Investigator's Verification of Explanation**

I certify that I have carefully explained the purpose and nature of this research to \_\_\_\_\_ (participant's name) in age-appropriate language. He/She has had the opportunity to discuss it with me in detail. I have answered all his/her questions and he/she provided the affirmative agreement (i.e. assent) to participate in this research.

Investigator's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix K

### Informed Consent for CAP Participants and Alumni Group Interviews

**DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH:** You are invited to participate in a research study on college access program participants and alumni who subsequently enrolled in a four-year college. The purpose of this study is to examine whether individuals who enrolled in college after (and in some cases also while) participating in a college access program (CAP) view their CAP as contributing to their undergraduate experiences and outcomes, and post-college aspirations and directions, and if so, how, and if not, why. You will be asked to respond to questions regarding the various courses, programs and events you participated in, and individuals with whom you interacted while enrolled in your college access program. You will also be asked to discuss your thoughts as to whether and how those activities and relationships influenced your undergraduate experiences and post-college aspirations and/or trajectory. You will also be asked whether there were features of your college experiences that you wish your CAP had prepared you for.

This research is being conducted by myself, Leslie A. Williams (principal investigator), doctoral candidate in Higher and Postsecondary Education at Teachers College, Columbia University. This study is being conducted for my dissertation in partial fulfillment of the Doctor of Education degree at Teachers College, Columbia University. I will conduct the interview in which you will participate. The interview will take place at Teachers College, Columbia University (525 W. 120<sup>th</sup> St., Manhattan) or at another location that is mutually agreed upon by the group. I will ask you as well as all group interview participants for permission to audio-record the interview. If I am granted permission by you and all other participants to audio-record the interview, the recorded interview will be transcribed by a paid transcriber who will be bound by a confidentiality agreement. I will store the audio-taped interview on my password-protected computer hard drive and a password-protected cloud storage folder to which only I will have access. If you or other group interview participants do not wish to be audio-recorded I will take handwritten notes.

**RISKS AND BENEFITS:** Participation in research usually includes some risks and benefits. This study reflects risks comparable to those that a college student or recent graduate might experience when discussing their undergraduate experiences and future hopes and plans with others in everyday conversations. For example, individuals might, in some cases, find that discussing such personal experiences is stressful or annoying, as they recollect disappointing or negative events. However, individuals may also find discussing such experiences, and what transpired, to be beneficial as they consider some of the positive features of their experiences, for example, the relationships made with peers and mentors, their own personal strength in the face of hardship, and the like. Furthermore, discussion of post-college aspirations and directions may help put past experiences in perspective.



Your participation in all aspects of this study is voluntary and as such you may refuse to participate, choose not to respond to particular interview questions, or withdraw from study participation at any time without any penalties. If you allow me to audio-record the interview, you may ask me turn off the recorder at any time during the interview. You may also inform me if anything you have said should be kept off- the-record in a public report.

**PAYMENTS:** There will be no payment or reimbursement for your participation in this study.

**DATA STORAGE TO PROTECT CONFIDENTIALITY:** I will make every effort possible to protect your confidentiality and privacy. First, I will not use any real names of persons, organizations or institutions in public reports. I will mask the identity of all participants, as well as of any individuals, organizations or institutions that you may mention in the interview. To do this I will replace all names, your own included, with codes or pseudonyms in all interview records (file names and transcripts) and final reports. Second, I will store all interview audio recordings and accompanying transcripts in my password-protected computer hard-drive and a password-protected cloud storage folder to which only I will have access. Third, I will store all hard copy documents (i.e. transcripts, notes, participant lists and contact information) in a cabinet with a lock to which only I will have access. Finally, I will ask all group interview participants to sign an agreement for maintaining group confidentiality.

**TIME INVOLVEMENT:** Your participation in this study will involve one group interview which will take approximately 90 minutes. This time includes a brief discussion before the interview, completion of a brief background questionnaire, and the interview itself. You may choose to participate for less or more time. This interview will take place at Teachers College, Columbia University (525 W. 120<sup>th</sup> St., Manhattan) or at another place that is convenient for you and the rest of the group. We will select a time that works for all of us.

**HOW WILL RESULTS BE USED:** The results of the study will be used as follows: First, study results will be used for my doctoral dissertation. Second, I expect to present the results of this study at professional meetings and conferences. Third, I expect to report the results of this study in articles, chapters, and books. Fourth, I will use the results of this study in writing of future proposals for funding and in related presentations.

### **PARTICIPANT'S RIGHTS - College Access Program Alumni**

Principal Investigator: Leslie A. Williams

Research Title: *Beyond college enrollment: Exploring the relationship between historically underrepresented students' prior participation in college access programs and their undergraduate success* (IRB #)

- I have read and discussed the Research Description with the researcher. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the purposes and procedures regarding this study.
  - My participation in this research is voluntary. I may refuse to participate or withdraw from participation at any time without jeopardy to future medical care, employment, student status or other entitlements.
  - The researcher may withdraw me from the research at his/her professional discretion.
  - If, during the course of the study, significant new information that has been developed becomes available which may relate to my willingness to continue to participate, the investigator will provide this information to me.
  - Any information derived from the research project that personally identifies me will not be voluntarily released or disclosed without my separate consent, except as specifically required by law.
  - If at any time I have any questions regarding the research or my participation, I can contact the investigator, who will answer my questions. The investigator's phone number is 646-391-7193 and his email address is law2107@tc.columbia.edu.
  - If at any time I have comments, or concerns regarding the conduct of the research or questions about my rights as a research subject, I should contact the Teachers College, Columbia University Institutional Review Board /IRB. The phone number for the IRB is (212) 678-4105. Or, I can write to the IRB at Teachers College, Columbia University, 525 W. 120th Street, New York, NY, 10027, Box 151.
  - I should receive a copy of the Research Description and this Participant's Rights document.
  - If video and/or audio taping is part of this research, I ( ) consent to be audio/video taped. I ( ) do NOT consent to being video/audio taped. The written, video and/or audio taped materials will be viewed only by the principal investigator and members of the research team.
  - Written, video and/or audio taped materials: ( ) may be viewed in an educational setting outside the research; ( ) may NOT be viewed in an educational setting outside the research.
  - My signature means that I agree to participate in this study.
- Participant's signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_  
 Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Group Agreement for Maintaining Confidentiality<sup>3</sup>**

This agreement is intended to further ensure the confidentiality of data collected during this group interview for the study, *Beyond college enrollment: Exploring the relationship between historically underrepresented students' prior participation in college access programs and their undergraduate success* (IRB #). All parties involved in this research, including all group interview participants, will be asked to read the following statement and indicate their agreement to comply by signing their names below.

I hereby affirm that I will not communicate or in any manner publicly disclose information discussed during the course of this group interview or pertaining to this

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<sup>3</sup> Adapted from Berg, B., (2009). *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

study with anyone with anyone outside of the other group interview participants  
and the researcher.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Principal Investigator's

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Investigator's Verification of Explanation**

I certify that I have carefully explained the purpose and nature of this research to  
\_\_\_\_\_ (participant's name) in age-appropriate  
language. He/She has had the opportunity to discuss it with me in detail. I have answered  
all his/her questions and he/she provided the affirmative agreement (i.e. assent) to  
participate in this research.

Investigator's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix L

## Informed Consent for CAP Administrators Individual Interviews

**DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH:** You are invited to participate in a research study on college access program participants and alumni who subsequently enrolled in four-year college. The purpose of this study is to examine whether individuals who enrolled in college after (and in some cases also while) participating in a college access program (CAP) view their CAP as contributing to their undergraduate experiences and outcomes, and post-college aspirations and directions, and if so, how, and if not, why. You will be asked to respond to questions regarding your CAP's organizational mission, goals, structure and academic and non-academic programmatic offerings. You will also be asked to share your views on how your CAP influences its participants' or alumni's college experiences and post-college aspirations and trajectories.

This research is being conducted by myself, Leslie A. Williams (principal investigator), doctoral candidate in Higher and Postsecondary Education at Teachers College, Columbia University. This study is being conducted for my dissertation in partial fulfillment of the Doctor of Education degree at Teachers College, Columbia University. I will conduct the interview in which you will participate. The interview will take place at Teachers College, Columbia University (525 W. 120<sup>th</sup> St., Manhattan) or at another location that is mutually agreeable. I will request your permission to audio-record the interview. If you do grant me permission to audio-record, the audio-taped interview will be transcribed by a paid transcriber who will be bound by a confidentiality agreement. I will store the audio-taped interview on my password-protected computer hard drive and a password-protected cloud storage folder to which only I will have access. If you do not wish to be audio-recorded I will take handwritten notes.

**RISKS AND BENEFITS:** Participation in research usually includes some risks and benefits. This study reflects risks comparable to those that a college access program administrator might experience while discussing their organization or their roles and responsibilities in everyday conversations. For example, individuals might, in some cases, find that discussing such experiences is stressful or annoying as they recollect disappointing or negative events. However, individuals may also find discussing such experiences to be beneficial as they consider their organization and their role and responsibilities within it. Furthermore, such discussions may provide an opportunity for reflection on organizational goals and outcomes.

Your participation in all aspects of this study is voluntary and as such you may refuse to participate, choose not to respond to particular interview questions or withdraw from participation at any time without any penalties. If you allow me to audio-record the interview, you may ask me turn off the recorder at any time during the interview. You may also inform me if anything you have said should be kept off-the-record in a public report.

**PAYMENTS:** There will be no payment or reimbursement for your participation in this study.

**DATA STORAGE TO PROTECT CONFIDENTIALITY:** I will make every effort possible to protect your confidentiality and privacy. First, I will not use any real names of persons, organizations or institutions in public reports of this study. I will mask the identity of all participants, as well as of any individuals, organizations or institutions that you may mention in the interview. To do this I will replace all names, your own included, with codes or pseudonyms in all interview records (file names and transcripts) and final reports. Second, I will store all interview audio recordings and accompanying transcripts in my password-protected computer hard-drive and a password-protected cloud storage folder to which only I will have access. Third, I will store all hard copy documents (i.e. transcripts, notes, participant lists and contact information) in a cabinet with a lock to which only I will have access.

**TIME INVOLVEMENT:** Your participation in this study will take approximately two hours. This time will involve one interview and coordinating your staff to provide me with lists of your alumni as well as my visit to observe your program. The interview will take approximately one hour, which includes a brief discussion before the interview as well as the interview itself. You may choose to participate for less or more time. This interview will take place at a location that is convenient to you as well as at a time that is convenient to you. I estimate that it will take no more than an hour to coordinate your staff to provide me with lists of alumni and to arrange my visit to observe.

**HOW WILL RESULTS BE USED:** The results of the study will be used as follows: First, study results will be used for my doctoral dissertation. Second, I expect to present the results of this study at professional meetings and conferences. Third, I expect to report the results of this study in articles, chapters, and books. Fourth, I will use the results of this study in writing of future proposals for funding and in related presentations.

### **PARTICIPANT'S RIGHTS - College Access Program Administrators**

Principal Investigator: Leslie A. Williams

Research Title: *Beyond college enrollment: Exploring the relationship between historically underrepresented students' prior participation in college access programs and undergraduate success* (IRB #).

- I have read and discussed the Research Description with the researcher. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the purposes and procedures regarding this study.
- My participation in research is voluntary. I may refuse to participate or withdraw from participation at any time without jeopardy to future medical care, employment, student status or other entitlements.

- The researcher may withdraw me from the research at his/her professional discretion.
  - If, during the course of the study, significant new information that has been developed becomes available which may relate to my willingness to continue to participate, the investigator will provide this information to me.
  - Any information derived from the research project that personally identifies me will not be voluntarily released or disclosed without my separate consent, except as specifically required by law.
  - If at any time I have any questions regarding the research or my participation, I can contact the investigator, who will answer my questions. The investigator's phone number is 646-391-7193 and his email is law2107@tc.columbia.edu.
  - If at any time I have comments, or concerns regarding the conduct of the research or questions about my rights as a research subject, I should contact the Teachers College, Columbia University Institutional Review Board /IRB. The phone number for the IRB is (212) 678-4105. Or, I can write to the IRB at Teachers College, Columbia University, 525 W. 120th Street, New York, NY, 10027, Box 151.
  - I should receive a copy of the Research Description and this Participant's Rights document.
  - If video and/or audio taping is part of this research, I ( ) consent to be audio/video taped. I ( ) do NOT consent to being video/audio taped. The written, video and/or audio taped materials will be viewed only by the principal investigator and members of the research team.
  - Written, video and/or audio taped materials: ( ) May be viewed in an educational setting outside the research. ( ) May NOT be viewed in an educational setting outside the research.
  - My signature means that I agree to participate in this study.
- Participant's signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_  
 Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Investigator's Verification of Explanation**

I certify that I have carefully explained the purpose and nature of this research to \_\_\_\_\_ (participant's name) in age-appropriate language. He/She has had the opportunity to discuss it with me in detail. I have answered all his/her questions and he/she provided the affirmative agreement (i.e. assent) to participate in this research.

Investigator's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date: \_\_\_\_\_