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NATIONAL LOUIS UNIVERSITY

EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF THE MASSTRANSFER PROGRAM: A LOOK AT LATINA/LATINO STUDENT TRANSFER SUCCESS AT A TWO YEAR HISPANIC-SERVING INSTITUTION INTO A FOUR YEAR NON-HISPANIC-SERVING UNIVERSITY IN MASSACHUSETTS

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS

FOR THE DEGREE

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

IN

COMMUNITY COLLEGE LEADERSHIP

BY

LIZETTE V. RIVERA

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

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Final Approval Meeting:	April 13, 2016

We certify this dissertation, submitted by the above name candidate, is fully adequate in scope and quality to satisfactorily meet the dissertation requirement for attaining the Doctor of Education degree in the Community College Leadership Doctoral Program.

Signature	Date
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	4/13/16

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Dedication x

Acknowledgments xi

Abstract xii

List of Tables viii

List of Figures ix

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION 1

Background and Context of the Issue 2

Purpose of the Study 4

Guiding Questions 5

Definition of Terms 5

Significance of the Study 7

Conceptual Framework 7

Research Design 8

Data Collection Methods 10

Organization of Dissertation 11

Chapter Summary 12

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW OUTLINE 13

History of Community Colleges 13

Career and technical education 17

Transfer mission 17

Massachusetts Community Colleges 18

Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs) 24

Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) 27

Federal classification and funding 27
Previous literature 29
Theoretical and Conceptual Framework 36
Validation theory 36
Latina/Latino critical race theory 38
Critical race theory 38
Latina/Latino critical race theory 42
Chapter Summary 46
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY 47
Introduction 47
Purpose of the Study 47
Guiding Questions 47
Research Design 48
Qualitative research 48
Case study methodology 51
Site selection 52
Participant selection 53
Data Collection procedures 55
Document review 56
Research limitations 56
Data Analysis Procedures 57
Validity and trustworthiness of research 57
Researcher as the tool/instrument 58

Chapter Summary 59

CHAPTER 4: DATA FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS 60

Introduction 60

Data Findings 60

Antonia Pantoja Community College 60

APCC document review 60

Staff demographic survey 61

Staff profiles 62

Staff interviews questions and responses 63

Student demographic surveys 70

Student profiles 71

Student interviews questions and responses 73

Commonwealth State University 87

CSU document review 87

Staff demographic survey 90

Staff profile 91

Staff interview questions and responses 91

Student demographic survey 94

Student profiles 95

Student interviews questions and responses 97

Findings: Guiding Questions Applied to APCC Student Interviews 107

Findings: Guiding Questions Applies to CSU Student Interviews 112

Document Findings

Analysis 118

Laura Rendón's validation theory and community college student responses 118

Latina/Latino critical race theory and community college student responses 119
Guiding question 1: What are the driving factors that impact a Latina/Latino student's decision to attend a community colleges or a university? 120
Validation theory as it relates to question 1 120
Latina/Latino critical race theory as it relates to question 1 121
Guiding question 2: What factors contribute to Latina/Latino student success in college? 121
Validation theory as it relates to question 2 122
Latina/Latino critical race theory as it relates to question 2 122
Guiding question 3: How has the MassTransfer program impacted transfer of Latina/Latino students? 123
Validation theory as it relates to question 3 124
Latina/Latino critical race theory as it relates to question 3 124
Guiding question 4: What role do college faculty and staff play in the transfer success of Latina/Latino students? 125
Validation theory as it relates to question 4 125
Latina/Latino critical race theory as it relates to question 4 126
Laura Rendón's validation theory and university student responses 127
Latina/Latino critical race theory and university student responses 127
Guiding Question 1: What are the driving factors that impact a Latina/Latino student's decision to attend a community colleges or a university? 128
Validation theory as it relates to question 1 128

Latina/Latino critical race theory as it relates to question 1 129
Guiding Question 2: What factors contribute to Latina/Latino student success in college? 129
Validation theory as it relates to question 2 129
Latina/Latino critical race theory as it relates to question 2 130
Guiding Question 3: How has the MassTransfer program impacted transfer of Latina/Latino students? 130
Validation theory as it relates to question 3 131
Latina/Latino critical race theory as it relates to question 3 131
Guiding Question 4: What role do college faculty and staff play in the transfer success of Latina/Latino students? 132
Validation theory as it relates to question 4 132
Latina/Latino critical race theory as it relates to question 4 133
Emerging Themes 134
Chapter Summary 135
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS 136
Discussion 136
Community College Conclusion, Implications, and Recommendations 137
Guiding question 1 137
Conclusion 137
Implications 138
Recommendations 138
Guiding question 2 138

Conclusion 138
Implications.....138
Recommendations.....138
Guiding question 3.....139
Conclusion 139
Implications.....139
Recommendations.....139
Guiding question 4.....139
Conclusion 139
Implications.....140
Recommendations.....140
University Conclusion, Implications and Recommendations.....140
Guiding question 1.....140
Conclusion 140
Implications.....141
Recommendations.....141
Guiding question 2.....141
Conclusion 141
Implications.....141
Recommendations.....141
Guiding question 3.....142
Conclusion 142
Implications.....142

Recommendations....142
Guiding question 4....142
Conclusion....142
Implications....142
Recommendations....142
Recommendations for Further Research....143
Recommendations for Dissemination of Findings....143
Lizette Rivera Model for Latina/Latino Student Transfer Success....144
References....146
Appendices....152
Appendix A: Informed Consent Form....152
Appendix B: Community College Staff Member Affiliated with Transfer Programs Solicitation Email/Letter....153
Appendix C: University Staff Member Affiliated with Transfer Programs Solicitation Email/Letter....155
Appendix D: Student Solicitation Email/Letter....157
Appendix E: Student Participant Demographic Survey....159
Appendix F: Staff Participant Demographic Survey....160
Appendix G: Student Interview Questions: Currently Enrolled Community College Students....162
Appendix H: Student Interview Questions: Currently enrolled university students that transferred from a community college....164
Appendix I: Staff Interview Questions....166
Appendix J: Title V (HSI) Grant Staff Interview Questions....168

List of Tables

Table 1. Breakdown of Minority Serving Institutions 25

Table 2: Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs): 2014-2015 30

Table 3. Top 10 Hispanic-Serving Institutions Awarding Associate Degrees to Latinos 31

Table 4: Massachusetts Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs): 2014-2015 33

Table 5: Emerging Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs): 2014-2015 34

Table 6: Massachusetts Emerging Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs): 2014-2015 35

Table 7. Antonia Pantoja Community College Student Enrollment 61

Table 8. APCC Staff Demographic Survey Questions and Responses 62

Table 9. APCC Staff Interview Questions and Responses: Interviewee 1 63

Table 10. APCC Staff Interview Question and Responses: Interviewee 2 69

Table 11. APCC Student Demographic Survey Questions and Responses 71

Table 12. CSU Student Enrollment: Degree Seeking Undergraduate Students 88

Table 13. CSU Transfer Student Undergraduate Enrollment 89

Table 14. CSU Transfer Enrollment: Top Feeder Colleges and Universities 90

Table 15. CSU Staff Demographic Survey Questions and Responses 90

Table 16. CSU Staff Interview Questions and Responses 91

Table 17. CSU Student Demographic Survey Questions and Responses 95

Table 18. Relationship of APCC Interview Questions to Study's Guiding Questions 107

Table 19. Relationship of CSU Interview Questions to Study's Guiding Questions 112

List of Figures

Figure 1. Map of Massachusetts Community Colleges 19

Figure 2. Branches of Critical Race Theory 41

Figure 3. Participant Selection.....55

Figure 4. Lizette Rivera Model for Latina/Latino Student Success.....145

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my mother Mary for her unconditional support and love along this journey. I would not have made it this far without her encouragement. I would also like to dedicate my dissertation to my nieces Raven and Camila. I hope this inspires you both to continue your educational journeys and become the next doctors in the family.

Acknowledgments

First and foremost, I would like to acknowledge and thank God for all amazing people He placed in my life to guide me on this doctoral journey. I have dedicated this dissertation to my mother but that does not begin to express the level of gratitude I have for her support. Mom, you were always by my side and have been my biggest cheerleader. It may be my name on this dissertation and the diploma but you deserve credit. You sacrificed so much to see me succeed and complete this degree; I'd be lost without you. Thank you.

I would also like to acknowledge and thank the students I have mentored over the years. The process to completing this degree has been long which has allowed me to see so many of you grow and give meaning to the work I do. I have learned just as much from my students as they may have learned from me. You continue to inspire me and I thank you each for your encouragement along the way.

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A special thank you to Dr. Dennis Haynes; this dissertation would not be possible without your support. I count you as one of the special people God placed in my life to complete this degree. There have been so many times that I have gone "MIA" on you and my dissertation but you still never let me give up. I can only hope to be half the mentor to my students that you are to me. Thank you.

Abstract

The majority of Latina/Latino students enrolling into higher education are doing so through community colleges. Latina/Latino students are not transferring at comparable rates to their peers. This study explored the impact of the MassTransfer program on the transfer success of Latina/Latino students at a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) community college into a 4-year Non-HSI state university in Massachusetts. Twelve students were individually interviewed for this study. Six of the students attend an HSI community college. The remaining six students were enrolled in a Massachusetts state university and had successfully transferred from the HSI in this study. Their stories will help bridge the transfer process and share what did or did not help these students succeed at the state university. The MassTransfer program encourages degree specific articulation agreements between public community colleges and state universities. It was implemented in fall 2009 and replaced all other transfer programs. Understanding the impact of MassTransfer on Latina/Latino students can help to increase their transfer rates into baccalaureate programs.

This study was conducted using qualitative research situated in an interpretive paradigm. Laura I. Rendón's Validation Theory and Latina/Latino Critical Race Theory were utilized to explore Latina/Latino student transfer success. Some Latina/Latino students face obstacles that their White and sometimes African-American counterparts do not encounter. Although Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs) aspire to be welcoming to all; they often overlook the unique cultural needs of marginalized students. Increasing the diversity of the student body without institutional changes designed to better meet their needs often leads to lower retention rates. Understanding the validating factors that support Latina/Latino transfer and the unique

obstacles these students encounter can assist colleges and universities to build targeted retention programs.

This research concluded that the majority of Latina/Latino students interviewed rely on their family members as validating influences outside of the classroom. They rely on the encouragement of family members despite the fact that they will be the first to graduate with a bachelor's degree. A majority of the students agreed that Latina/Latino faculty and staff also provided a sense of comfort and ease on the campus. The MassTransfer program was not a fit for all the study participants. Half of study participants could not take advantage of MassTransfer due to limited program offerings. The program has proven effective for the students who were able to use MassTransfer.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Between 2000 and 2010 the Latina/Latino "population increased by 15.2 million, accounting for over half of the 27.3 million increase in the total population of the United States" (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011, p.2). This is a growth of 43 percent "which was four times the growth in the total population at 10 percent" (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011, p.2). In 2010, Cynthia Mosqueda, Faculty Coordinator at El Camino College in Torrance, California, conducted a study as a doctoral student on *The Effect of a First-Year Program on Transfer Readiness and the Transfer Process of Community College students.* According to Mosqueda (2010), "close to 71 percent of Latino students enrolled in community colleges declare transfer as their primary goal, but only 7-20 percent ever transfer" (p.12). Mosqueda found that

> Latinos attend community colleges at a rate disproportionate to all other groups in the United States, with over 55 percent of students choosing community colleges as their point of entry. However, even with these high enrollments, Latinos have some of the lowest transfer rates in the country. (2010, p.4)

Her research also found that "Latino students lack a clear understanding of how to navigate the transfer process due to the absence of a "transfer culture" at two year community colleges" (Mosqueda, 2010, p11). She argues that "research in this area is critical to understanding the problem and, more importantly, to developing viable solutions and programs that work best for ensuring community college transfer among Latino students" (Mosqueda, 2010, p.6).

Background and Context of the Issue

One contributing factor to the increase in Latina/Latino enrollment in post-secondary education is higher high school and General Education Diploma (GED) completion rates. Richard Fry and Mark Hugo Lopez of the Pew Hispanic Center reported that "76.3 percent of all Hispanics ages 18 to 24 had a high school diploma or a GED in 2011, up from 72.8 percent in 2010. And among these high school completers, nearly half (45.6 percent), is enrolled in two-year or four-year colleges" (Fry & Lopez, 2012, p. 5). Their study also found that Latina/Latino students now made up 25 percent of community college students. (Fry & Lopez, 2012, p. 4).

> Between 2010 and 2011, the number of young Hispanics enrolled in college grew by 15 percent, or 265,000 students, to 2.1 million. Alone, Hispanic college enrollment growth accounted for nearly three-quarters (74 percent) of the growth in college student enrollments over the last year. The White non-Hispanic student population also grew between 2010 and 2011, increasing by 219,000 students, or 3 percent, to 7.9 million. Meanwhile, the number of Blacks enrolled in college and the number of Asians enrolled in college fell, by 3 percent and 8 percent respectively between 2010 and 2011. (Fry & Lopez, 2012, p. 7).

In 2014-2015, Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) enrolled 62 percent of Latina/Latino college students which is an increase from 60 percent last year (Excelencia in Education, 2016b, pp.4-5). Excelencia in Education also reported that HSIs have grown 130 percent over the past twenty-one years increasing from 189 to 435 (2016b, p 4). "Hispanic-Serving Institutions are defined as accredited, not-for-profit degree-granting postsecondary institutions whose Latino enrollment exceeds 25 percent of its total full-time equivalent (FTE) undergraduate enrollment" (College Board Advocacy and Policy Center, 2011, p. 1). Excelencia in Education found that

"just over half of all HSIs are 2-year institutions (219), and just under half are 4-year institutions (216). Over half (68 percent) are public institutions, compared to 32 percent that are private, not-for-profit institutions" (2016b, p.4). HSIs will only continue to grow as does the Latina/Latino population. "There are 310 Emerging HSIs which are defined as institutions with 15-24 percent Hispanic Full Time Enrolment [FTE]. The majority of states have at least one Emerging HSI which are located in 33 states and the District of Columbia" (Excelencia in Education, 2016b, p.4). Observing the enrollment, transfer, and gradation trends of Latinas/Latinos at HSIs will assist educators to better meet the needs of these students.

> Most HSIs have a high concentration of Latino students enrolled. Over half (54 percent) of HSIs (236 institutions) have Hispanic FTE enrollments between 40-100 percent. Some HSIs have a very high concentration of Latino enrollment. Nearly 20 percent of HSIs (80 institutions) have an FTE enrollment where at least 80 percent of the student body is Latino. Almost half of students enrolled at HSIs are Hispanic. On average, 46 percent of students enrolled at HSIs are Hispanic, and 54 percent of students are from other racial/ethnic groups. HSIs enroll a diverse student body. Over 25 percent of HSI students are White and 10 percent are Black. (Excelencia in Education, 2016b, p. 4).

In 2010, Patricia A. Pérez and Miguel Ceja conducted a study on "the existing information related to transfer objectives and rates. According to Pérez and Ceja, "although most Latina/o transfer students declare intentions to transfer from a community college, few move on to 4-year colleges and universities" (2010, p. 7). They site a 2007 California Postsecondary Education Commission (CPEC) study that followed community college students over 6 years. The CPEC study found "that only 17 percent of Latina/o students transferred to a 4-year institution-this is compared with 31 percent and 39 percent of White and Asian students"

(Pérez & Ceja, 2010, p.7). "The data on community college enrollment and completion rates indicates discouraging outcomes for Latina/o students, especially in light of their higher than average propensity to enroll in community colleges and their low success rate in transfer to baccalaureate institutions" (Pérez & Ceja, 2010, p.9). Pérez & Ceja conclude that "the data on Latina/o community college students makes it clear that the current transfer culture is failing Latina/o, many whom enter the community college with a goal of earning a 4-year college degree" (2010, p.9).

Through their study Pérez & Ceja, 2010 state that "promoting a viable community college transfer culture for Latina/o students is an important educational policy necessity" (p. 10). They also reported that:

- Identifying the components that help facilitate successful transfer for Latina/o students must be at the forefront of discussions of access and success in higher education. (Pérez & Ceja, 2010, p.10)
- Although there is extensive research on barriers to retention and persistence for transfer populations, less scholarship is dedicated to the successful practices and promising programs that facilitate transfer from a 2-year to a 4-year higher education institution. (Pérez & Ceja, 2010, p.10)
- Additionally, fewer studies have focused specifically on the plight of students of color and their transfer process although literature has documented inequalities across race and ethnicity. (Pérez & Ceja, 2010, p.10)

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the impact of the MassTransfer program on the transfer success of Latina/Latino students at a suburban HSI community college into a 4-year

state university in Massachusetts. The researcher explored the experiences of students preparing to graduate and transfer from the HSI community college. The study also explored the experiences of students from the HSI that have successfully transferred into a four year state university.

Guiding Questions

The guiding questions addressed in the study are:

1. What are the driving factors that impact a Latina/Latino student's decision to attend a community colleges or a university?
2. What factors contribute to Latina/Latino student success in college?
3. How has the MassTransfer program impacted transfer of Latina/Latino students?
4. What role do college faculty and staff play in the transfer success of Latina/Latino students?

Definition of Terms

- *Antonia Pantoja Community College (APCC):* This is a pseudonym for the Hispanic-Serving Institute community college researched in this study. Dr. Antonia Pantoja was a Puerto Rican educator and founder of ASPIRA and Boricua College in New York. In 1996, she was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom.
- *Commonwealth State University:* This is a pseudonym for the 4-year public state university researched in this study.
- *Hispanic-Serving Institutes (HSIs)*: Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) are defined as accredited, not-for-profit degree-granting postsecondary institutions whose Latino enrollment exceeds 25 percent of its total full-time equivalent (FTE) undergraduate enrollment" (College Board Advocacy and Policy Center, 2011, p. 1).

- *Latina/Latino:* For the purpose of this study, the researcher is intentionally using the terms Latina/Latino and not just Hispanic or Latino (when not directly quoting the works of others). Latino when not used in a masculine manner is meant to generally capture both men and women. Latina is the feminine of Latino and only refers to women. Using Latina/Latino provides a voice and place for women instead of being lumped into a generalization with men. Latin@ and Latinx are other common terms meant to remove the masculine undertone.
- *Latina/Latino Critical Race Theory (LatCrit*): LatCrit extends critical race discussions to address the layers of racialized subordination that comprise Chicana/o, Latina/o experiences" (Yosso, 2005, p. 72). LatCrit scholars call attention to issues of immigration, language rights, bilingual schooling, internal colonialism, sanctuary for Latin American refugees, and census categories for Hispanics. (Delgado and Stefanic (2012, p. 90)
- *MassTransfer:* According to the Massachusetts Department of Education, the purpose of MassTransfer is to provide community college students who complete associate degrees and enroll in linked MassTransfer programs with the full transfer of credit, guaranteed admission, and a tuition discount based on final GPA (2008, p. C-1).
- *PACE:* A TRiO Student Support Services program at the 4-year state university researched in this study; Pathways to Academic & Career Excellence (PACE).
- *Validation Theory*: Laura I. Rendón's Validation Theory "poses that college faculty, counselors, and administrative staff take a proactive role in reaching out to students to affirm them as being capable of doing academic work and to support them in their academic endeavors and social adjustment" (Rendón, 2002, p. 645). Validation

theory also highlights the importance of a student's experiences both in and out of the classroom.

Significance of the Study

The majority of Latina/Latino students enrolling into higher education are doing so through community colleges. Latina/Latino students are not transferring at comparable rates to their peers. The Massachusetts Board of Higher Education (2008) has placed an emphasis on the MassTransfer program. MassTransfer is a state wide initiative between public community colleges and state universities. It was implemented in fall 2009 and replaced all other transfer programs. The majority of Latina/Latino students enrolling into higher education are doing so through community colleges. Understanding the impact of MassTransfer on Latina/Latino students can help to increase their transfer rates into baccalaureate programs. This study also captured the stories of Latina/Latino students who have successfully transferred from an HSI into a non-HSI state university. Their stories will help bridge the transfer process and share what did or did not help these students succeed at the state university. This study also adds to the literature on Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) nationally and in the New England.

Conceptual Framework

This study explored two theories that related to Latina/Latino student success. These theories were Validation Theory and Latina/Latino Critical Race Theory. They provided the lens for analyzing the data from the study. The first theory explored was Laura I. Rendón's Validation Theory. "Validation theory poses that college faculty, counselors, and administrative staff take a proactive role in reaching out to students to affirm them as being capable of doing academic work and to support them in their academic endeavors and social adjustment" (Rendón, 2002, p. 645). Validation theory also highlights the importance of a student's experiences both in and out of the classroom. These "experiences are especially important with

nontraditional student populations such as returning adults, low-income students, first-generation students, and many women and minority students from working class backgrounds" (Rendón, 2002, p. 644). Validation theory allowed the researcher to explore the impact of the MassTransfer Program on Latina/Latino students though the relationships built between students and staff or faculty.

The other lens used to analyze the experiences of the students surveyed will be Latina/Latino Critical Race Theory. According to Tara J. Yosso, Critical Race Theory (CRT) "in education is a theoretical and analytical framework that challenges the ways race and racism impact educational structures, practices, and discourses" (2005, p. 74). Yosso further explains that "Latina/Latino Critical Race (LatCrit) Theory extends critical race discussions to address the layers of racialized subordination that comprise Chicana/o, Latina/o experiences" (2005, p. 72). Patricia A. Pérez and Miguel Ceja (2010) summarize CRT in education as "include[ing] the following: Intersectionality of race/racism with other forms of oppression, challenge to dominant ideology, commitment to social justice, centrality of experiential knowledge, and an interdisciplinary perspective" (p. 11). LatCrit Theory provided a lens to explore whether the holistic needs of Latina/Latino at an HSI who desired transfer were being considered and or met through the MassTransfer programs.

Research Design

This study was conducted using qualitative research situated in an interpretive paradigm. Creswell (2009) defines qualitative research as "a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem" (p. 4). A qualitative approach to this study provided an opportunity for the participants to share their experiences. According to Creswell (2007), "qualitative researchers tend to collect data in the field at the site

where participants experience the issue or problem under study" (p. 37). Multiple case study methodology was used to collect data. Yin (2009) defines a case study as "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (p. 18). The impact of the MassTransfer program specifically on Latina/Latino students has not been evaluated. A multiple case study approached allowed for the exploration of commonalities and differences of experiences with the MassTransfer program at the selected sites.

For the purpose of this research two sites were selected: one community college and one state university. When the MassTransfer program began it required that all participating colleges and universities be a public/state school. The sites selected have existing agreements under MassTransfer. The first site was a community college designated as an HSI. The second site was a public state university that has MassTransfer programs with the first site. Pseudonyms for the community college and 4-year state university will be used in order to maintain the confidentiality of the participating sites. For the purpose of this study, the community college with the HSI designation will be referred to as Antonia Pantoja Community College (APCC). Dr. Antonia Pantoja was a Puerto Rican educator and founder of ASPIRA and Boricua College in New York. In 1996, she was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom. The 4-year state university will be referred to as Commonwealth State University (CSU). Focus groups of students and staff were administered a pilot test of survey questions. The results were used to make suggestions on the appropriateness of research interview questions. The focus group participants were not eligible to participate in the actual study.

Data Collection Methods

Three primary data sources were used for the study: interviews, surveys, and document review. Semi structured interviews were conducted with at least 1 staff member and 6 students from each site. A total of 15 participants were interviewed for the study. Data and program information was also collected from the host sites. Field notes, including notations of observations and reflections were completed after each interview. In order to capture the full transfer experience both a community college and a 4-year university was selected for the study. The researcher began by contacting one of the four HSIs in Massachusetts which where all community colleges.

- An email was sent to the HSI (Appendix B) soliciting their formal participation.
- Once approved, the HSI designated a staff person to be interviewed and to assist with the recruitment of student participants.
- Recruitment of qualified student participants began with an initial email (Appendix D) that was sent by the HSI.
- The researcher was than able to communicate directly with potential student participants.
- To qualify for the study student participants had to self-identify as Latina/Latino.
- All students and staff participants had to be over the age of 18.
- Gender identity of participants was not a selection criterion for this research.
- Staff and students were asked to complete an informed consent form before the interviews began. They were also required to complete a demographic survey.

The designated staff person at the HSI was able to provide recommendations on which state college/university should be selected as the second site. To qualify, the second site was

required to have articulated MassTransfer programs with the HSI. They also had to have a high number of Latina/Latino transfer students from the HSI. Transfer rates of Latina/Latino students from the HSI into state colleges/universities mirrored the recommendation of staff. For the purpose of this study the University of Massachusetts (UMASS) system was not studied. There have been several studies conducted on the UMASS system and the researcher wanted to focus on the other state colleges and universities. Once the second site was approved the same process was followed for the recruitment of participants.

Organization of Dissertation

This dissertation is organized into five chapters. Chapter one introduces the research study within the background and context of the issue. It also covers the purpose of the study and guiding questions, significance of the study, conceptual framework, and research design and data collection. Chapter two discusses the literature review and provides a historical background of community colleges in general and in Massachusetts, and on the MassTransfer program. Information is also provided on Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs), Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs), and federal classifications and funding. The chapter also outlines the conceptual framework of Laura Rendón's Validation Theory as well as Latina/Latino Critical Race Theory. Chapter three describes the study's methodology. It focuses on the research process and research design, site selection, participant selection, data collection and analysis, the researcher as an instrument of data collection, trustworthiness and validity, research ethics and this study's limitations. Chapter four provides the reader with the findings and data analysis. Chapter five will conclude the dissertation with recommendations for future research pertaining to this topic.

Chapter Summary

Chapter one introduced the purpose of the research study. The background and context of the issues were discussed along with a brief history of Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs). The purposes of this research and the study's guiding questions were discussed. The significance of this study is that it provides insight to the needs and experiences of Latina/Latino community college students as they prepare to transfer out of an HSI into a 4-year university.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The purpose of this research was to explore the impact of the MassTransfer program on the transfer success of Latina/Latino students at a suburban HSI community college into a four year state university in Massachusetts. This chapter provides a brief history on community colleges in general and then specifically for Massachusetts. Chapter two reviews the MassTransfer program, relevant literature on Minority-Serving Institutions and Hispanic-Serving Institutions. Literature on Validation Theory and Latina/Latino Critical Race theory was also be reviewed in this chapter.

History of Community Colleges

Social factors in the early twentieth century lead to the creation of community colleges. These factors included "the need for workers trained to operate the nation's expanding industries; the lengthened period of adolescence, which mandated custodial care for the young for a longer time, and the drive for social equality" (Cohen & Brawer, 2003, p. 1). In 1862 the Morrill Act, also known as the Land Grant Act was passed. This Act granted land to institutions of higher education with an "emphasis on agriculture and mechanical arts. [This] expanded access to public higher education, teaching both courses and students previously excluded from higher education" (American Association of Community Colleges, 2015c). The second Morrill Act was passed in 1890 which allowed funds to be withheld from any state "that refused admission to the land grant colleges based on race unless the states provided separate institutions for minorities" (American Association of Community Colleges, 2015c).

The first public community college was Joliet Junior College (JJC) in Illinois which was founded in 1901. J. Stanley Brown, superintendent of Joliet Township High School, and William Rainey Harper, president of the University of Chicago began JJC as an experimental

postgraduate high school program which mirrored the first two years of a four year college (Joliet Junior College, 2015). One of the original goals of JJC was to provide post-secondary educational opportunities for students who wanted to remain in the community. In 1902 the experimental program was approved by the Board of Trustees and the courses were offered at no cost to students. Joliet Junior College received its official name in 1916 and was accredited in 1917 by the "North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, and the State Examining Board approved selected courses for teacher certification" (Joliet Junior College, 2015). According to Cohen & Brawer, community college curriculum has always included "academic transfer preparation, vocational-technical education, continuing education, developmental education, and community service" (2003, p. 20). Cohen & Brawer note that the role of preparing community college students for transfer has allowed universities to maintain selective admissions (2003, p. 21). Vocational-technical education is more commonly known now as Career-Technical Education (CTE).

The American Association of Junior Colleges (AAJC) was formed in 1921 as a result of the desire to "provide a national focus and national leadership for the nation's community, junior, and technical colleges" (American Association of Community Colleges, 2015c). In 1947, President Truman's Commission on Higher Education published a report (The Truman Commission Report) which sought:

> The establishment of a network of public community colleges that would charge little or no tuition, serve as cultural centers, be comprehensive in their program offerings with emphasis on civic responsibilities, and would serve the area in which they were located. The commission popularized the phrase community college, causing hundreds of existing

> and new public two-year colleges to include community in their names. (American Association of Community Colleges, 2015c).

In 1992 the then named American Association of Community and Junior Colleges (AACJC) voted to drop "Junior" from their title. Today they are known as the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC). (American Association of Community Colleges, 2015c).

One contributing factor to the expansion of community colleges in every state has been the uptake of military veterans using their educational benefits. "Since 1944, when the first GI Bill began, more than 21.3 million veterans, service members and family members have received $72.8 billion in GI Bill benefits for education and training" (Department of Veterans Affairs, n.d., p. 32). It is important to note that these numbers do not reflect the number of service members who have used the most current version on the GI Bill. In 1944 the Servicemen's Readjustment Act, also known as the GI Bill was passed. This original version of the GI Bill provided financial benefits for World War II Veterans who wanted to continue their education. The educational benefits of the GI Bill included $500 a year for four years of education or training plus a monthly subsistence allowance (Department of Veterans Affairs, n.d.). The Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act of 1952 also known as the Korean GI Bill reduced educational benefits. The next version of the bill was passed during the Vietnam War in 1966 and was called the Veterans' Readjustment Benefits Act. The Vietnam GI Bill restored educational benefits to Veterans who "had been on active duty for more than 180 consecutive days" (Department of Veterans Affairs, n.d., p. 18).

The GI Bill faced another change in 1984 through the Veterans' Educational Assistance Act also known as The Montgomery GI Bill. This bill reduced the amount of monetary assistance provided to veterans and shortened the length of benefits. Under The Montgomery GI

Bill "the service member agreed to have monthly pay reduced $100 a month for the first 12 months of enlistment. The money was nonrefundable" (Department of Veterans Affairs, n.d., p. 24). The Bill now extended educational benefits to military reservist who had not served on activity duty for 180 consecutive days as previously required. "Reservists also could qualify for a maximum of 36 months of educational assistance by agreeing to serve in the Selected Reserve for six or more years" (Department of Veterans Affairs, n.d., p. 24). In 2008 we saw the pasting of the Post 9/11 GI Bill (Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2008). This version of the GI Bill includes educational benefits to veterans and service members who "serve on active duty after September 10, 2001. The Post 9/11 GI Bill has the "largest numbers of participants and the highest total obligations compared to the other GI Bills. Participants may be eligible for payments to cover tuition and fees, housing, books and supplies, tutorial and relocation assistance, and testing and certification fees" (Dortch, 2014, p.2). The Post-9/11 GI Bill provides up to 36 months of education benefits, generally payable for 15 years after release from active duty. This version on the GI Bill requires that the service member served 90 consecutive days on active duty after September 10, 2001. (United States Department of Veteran Affairs. (n.d.). The most recent version of the GI Bill is the Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Improvements Act of 2010.

In addition to military veterans, who are community college students? The American Association of Community Colleges reports that 46 percent of all undergraduate students attend a community college (2015a). Of these students attending a community college, 41 percent are first time freshmen, 53percent are first generation college students, 56percent are single parents, 48percent are military veterans and 51 percent are students with disabilities (American Association of Community Colleges, 2015a). For the fall 2013 semester, 50 percent of

community college students self-identified as White. The next largest ethnic group of community college students self-identify as Hispanic at 21 percent followed by Black students at 14 percent and Asian/Pacific Islanders at 6 percent. (American Association of Community Colleges, 2015b).

Career and Technical Education

Since its inception, Career and Technical Education (CTE) has held several names in community colleges. Other terms for CTE have included "terminal, vocational, technical, semiprofessional, occupational, and career" (Cohen & Brawer, 2003, p. 222). These courses were originally designed for students who would bypass a 4-year college education and head right into the workforce. The federal Vocational Act of 1963 provided community colleges additional funds to provide vocational training (Cohen & Brawer, 2003, p. 219). Additional funding has continued through the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act which was first passed in 1984. The latest reauthorization was in 2006 which changed the name to the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act. "The new Act will provide an increased focus on the academic achievement of career and technical education students, strengthen the connections between secondary and postsecondary education, and improve state and local accountability" (U.S. Dept. of Education, 2007). CTE courses allow community colleges to offer students an array of certificate programs that are designed to help improve their skills in the workforce.

Transfer Mission

Preparing students to transfer into 4-year institutions has been an integral part of the community college mission. Transfer has been and continues to be a popular goal for a large proportion of incoming community college students. Surveys conducted by the College Board

indicate that at least 50 percent and perhaps as many as 80 percent of all incoming community college students seek to transfer and earn a bachelor's degree. Students often increase their educational aspirations after starting at a community college (College Board, 2011, p. 6). Many states have adopted articulation agreements between 2-year and 4-year institutions. They often have "articulation committees with detailed procedures for gaining course approvals. Course equivalency guides are maintained and common course numbering systems pursued" (Cohen & Brawer, 2003, p. 328-329). An example of a state wide initiative promoting transfer and articulation agreements is Illinois:

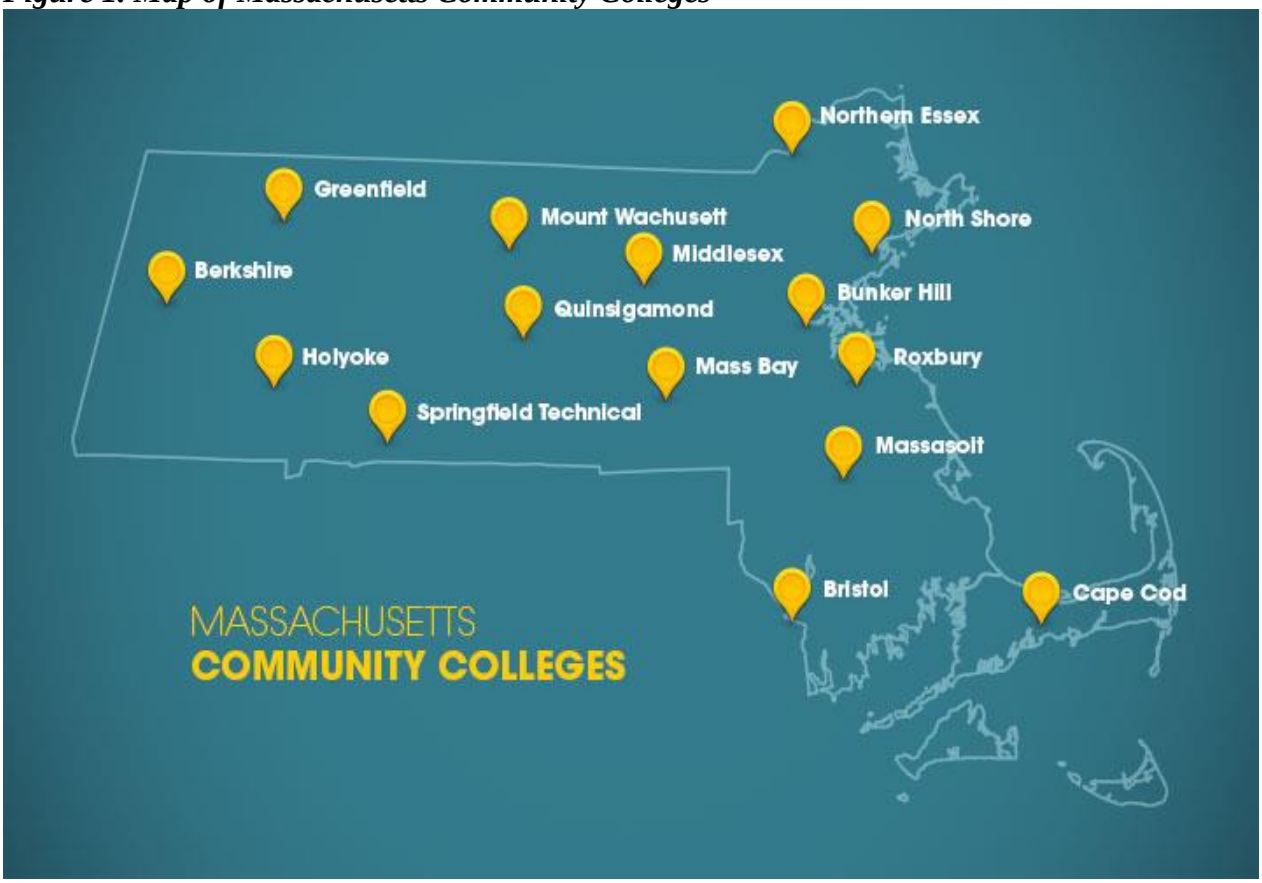
> The Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE), the Illinois Community College Board, and the transfer coordinators of Illinois colleges and universities jointly launched the Illinois Articulation Initiative (IAI) to help ease the transfer of students among Illinois public and independent, associate and bachelor's degree-granting institutions. The IAI fosters seamless transfer among more than 100 participating institutions through the development of a general education core curriculum and establishment of faculty panels to articulate courses that prepare students for work in specific majors. (Illinois Board of Higher Education, n.d.).

Massachusetts Community Colleges

The Massachusetts Department of Higher Education is responsible for the governance of state community colleges. There are fifteen public community colleges across the state which can be seen in Figure 1. The establishments of community colleges began under the leadership of then Governor Foster Furcolo. The Governor put together a commission to audit the needs of the state. One recommendation from the 1958 audit was the recommendation of the "establishment of a community college system in Massachusetts to address the need for more diversity and

access to higher education in the Commonwealth" (Massachusetts Community Colleges, 2015c). The recommendation to create a community college system in Massachusetts was adopted on August 1, 1958 which leads to the creation of the Board of Regional Community Colleges. Shortly thereafter the Board "established nine of the fifteen community colleges within a five-year period, beginning with Berkshire Community College in 1960" (Massachusetts Community Colleges, 2015c).

Figure 1. Map of Massachusetts Community Colleges



From "Massachusetts Community Colleges," n.d., Retrieved January 6, 2015, from http://www.masscc.org/ourcampuses. Copyright 2013 by the Massachusetts Community College Executive Office.

According to the Massachusetts Community Colleges Executive Office (MCCEO), state community colleges enroll more than 55 percent of undergraduate credit enrollment. They serve approximately 196,000 students with "137,731 students in credit courses and 58,934 students in

non-credit courses" (Massachusetts Community Colleges, 2015d). These numbers represent "47 percent of the students in the Massachusetts public higher education system" (Massachusetts Community Colleges, 2015d). The mission of the fifteen state community colleges is to:

> Offer open access to high quality, affordable academic programs, including associate degree and certificate programs. They are committed to excellence in teaching and learning and provide academic preparation for transfer to four-year institutions, career preparation for entry into high demand occupational fields, developmental coursework, and lifelong learning opportunities. (Massachusetts Department of Higher Education, n.d.).

In 2007 the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education formed the Commonwealth Transfer Advisory Group (CTAG). CTAG was charged with evaluating the transfer trends and transfer programs through Massachusetts public community colleges and universities/state colleges. Prior to the formation of CTAG several transfer programs were in place and they were: Joint Admissions; Tuition Advantage Program; Early Childhood Education Transfer Compact and the Elementary Education Transfer Compact; and Articulation Agreements (Massachusetts Board of Higher Education, 2008, p. 15).

- *Joint Admissions* agreements are individual program-to-program agreements for students who complete an associate degree at a community college. Students who are enrolled in an approved joint admissions program and have earned at least a 2.5 grade point average will automatically be admitted into the state college or University campus with which there is an agreement. There are more than 2,300 joint admissions agreements between the community colleges and the University of Massachusetts campuses and the state colleges.

- *Tuition Advantage Program*, established in 1997 and last revised in 2002, Joint Admissions students who earn a 3.0 grade point average are entitled to a tuition waiver equal to 33 percent of the resident tuition rate at the University campus or state college for two years.
- *Early Childhood Education Transfer Compact and the Elementary Education Transfer Compact* took effect in 2004 and are the Commonwealth's first efforts at establishing statewide transfer agreements for specific majors. Students who complete the associate degree with the required coursework, earn a 2.75 grade point average, and achieve a passing score on the Communication and Literacy Skills Test of the Massachusetts Test for Education Licensure are guaranteed admission with all credits applied to the baccalaureate degree.
- *Articulation Agreements* are program-to-program agreements between a community college and a state college or University of Massachusetts campus that specify the courses needed to be completed at the community college and a required grade point average. Students who successfully complete the requirements are typically guaranteed admission with full transfer of credit. (Massachusetts Board of Higher Education, 2008, p. 15)

In 2008, the Commonwealth Transfer Advisory Group recommended the implementation of a new transfer program which they called MassTransfer. MassTransfer replaced "the Commonwealth Transfer Compact, Joint Admissions, and the Tuition Advantage Program with a single transfer policy to simplify the transfer process and transfer advising" (Massachusetts Board of Higher Education, 2008, p. 19). CTAG recommended that MassTransfer be implemented by Fall 2009.

MassTransfer is a single, streamlined policy to simplify the transfer process clearing the way for greater student access and success. MassTransfer provides community college graduates who complete designated associate degrees with the benefits of the full transfer and applicability of credit, guaranteed admission, and a tuition discount (with each benefit based on the student's final grade point average) to linked baccalaureate programs. MassTransfer also provides any student in the Massachusetts public higher education system the intermediate goal of completing a general education transfer block which will satisfy the general education requirements across institutions. (Massachusetts Board of Higher Education, 2008, p. ii)

Current literature on community college transfer programs do not specifically address the impact of guaranteed admissions programs such as MassTransfer on Latina/Latino students. However, research is available on effective transfer programs between community colleges and universities. According to College Board, "community colleges enroll more than seven million students, nearly 44 percent of all undergraduates in the United States" (2011, p. 6). College Board also reported that "among all 18-to-24-year-olds in the United States, one student in ten was attending a community college" (2011, p. 6).

In 2005 the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education created a Task Force on Retention and Completion Rates at the Community Colleges. The purpose of this task force was "to better understand [retention and completion rates], as well as the limitations of existing measures, in order to ultimately increase the success and educational goal attainment for all community college students" (2007, p.1). The task force found that:

> More than 60 percent of first-time, full-time, degree-seeking students enrolling in community colleges are not college ready and require developmental coursework. These

> students have lower graduation rates than college ready students. (Massachusetts Board of Higher Education, 2007, p. 10)
>
> The Massachusetts community college student retention rate is comparable to the national average. (Massachusetts Board of Higher Education, 2007, p. 14)
>
> There is incomplete data on and assessment of the effectiveness of existing programs and services available to help students succeed. (Massachusetts Board of Higher Education, 2007, p. 14)

In Fall 2009, the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education implemented the MassTransfer program. The MassTransfer is a guaranteed admission program for qualified community college students. It was designed as a way to streamline the transfer process between community colleges and universities. The intent was to also increase transfer rates into baccalaureate programs within public universities in Massachusetts. To be eligible for the MassTransfer program the community college student must have earned a 2.5 grade point average or higher. According to the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education (2008):

> Students who graduate from a Massachusetts community college with a 3.0 final grade point average or higher tend to have higher graduation rates from the state college and University of Massachusetts campuses to which they transfer as compared to community college graduates who earned less than a 3.0. Students who graduate with an associate degree from a Massachusetts community college with a 3.0 or higher grade point average have higher final grade point averages (than those students with less than a 3.0 GPA) at the state college or University of Massachusetts campus from which they graduate. (p. 13-14)

At the start of this research process the MassTransfer program applied only to community colleges and public 4-year institutions. There are now two private universities that have signed on to the MassTransfer articulation agreement. It was announced in 2014 that Suffolk University adopted the MassTransfer program. Suffolk University is a private 4-year institution located in Boston. "Although Suffolk has numerous program articulations with several campuses, the University wanted to systematically make transfer for our community college graduates to their institution a seamless process" (Massachusetts Community Colleges, 2015e). Dean College became the second private university to adopt the MassTransfer program. (Massachusetts Community Colleges, 2015f). Dean College is located in Franklin, Massachusetts.

Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs)

As part of the Institute for Higher Education Policy, Noël Harmon, Ph.D. (2012) conducted a study funded through the Lumina Foundation on Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs). Through this research Harmon concluded that "because low-income and underrepresented minorities are increasingly entering two-year institutions, it is important that the retention and graduation rates at these institutions follow suit to increase the graduation rates among these groups" (2012, p. 8). Harmon found that "retention and degree attainment at two-year institutions are well below those of four-year institutions, making strong articulation agreements between two- and four-year institutions vital to ensuring that students who enter two-year institutions complete their degrees in a timely manner" (2012, p. 7). According to Harmon, MSIs "should be considered experts in the successful education of low-in-come, first-generation, and underrepresented students" (2012, p. 8).

In 2012, Noël Harmon conducted a study on Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs) which included eight different states but did not include any in the New England area. According to Harmon (2012), "MSIs include Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs), Tribal College and Universities (TCUs), and most recently Asian American Native American Pacific Islander- Serving Institutions (AANAPISIs)" (p.1). The number of MSIs is in Harmon's study is listed in Table 1.

Table 1. Breakdown of Minority Serving Institutions

Minority-Serving Institutions	Total Number of Each Institution Type
Historically Black Colleges and Universities	105
Tribal Colleges and Universities	36
Hispanic-Serving Institutions	275
Asian American Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions	15

Note. Adapted from "The role of minority-serving institutions*,"* by N. Harmon, 2012, p. 2.

Harmon also reports that MSIs are "rooted in a history of desire to serve low-income, first-generation, and under-represented students. Thanks to their unique understanding of the students they serve, they are positioned to move the college completion agenda forward in distinct and innovative ways" (2012, p. 1-2). According to Harmon, Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) are:

> Defined as accredited degree-granting colleges and universities with Hispanic students accounting for 25 percent or more of the undergraduate enrollment, hence with only a few exceptions, they are not institutions formed for the specific purpose of educating Hispanic students. HSIs are one of the fastest growing MSI designations. Today, HSIs represent almost 4 percent of all post-secondary institutions. They enroll approximately 42 percent of all Hispanic college students. HSIs grant more associates and bachelor's degrees to Hispanic students than all other American colleges and universities combined,

> and the majority of HSIs are community colleges (53 percent) located in California, Florida, New Mexico, and Texas. (2012, p. 5)

In addition to the HSI definition provided above by Harmon, the Higher Education Act, 20 USCA Section 1101a also adds that the institution must also "provide assurances that not less than 50 percent of the institution's Hispanic students are low-income individuals.

Harmon's study was funded through the Lumina Foundation and as such discussed the Lumina MSI Models of Success**:**

1. To improve the capacity of MSIs to collect, analyze, and use data to inform decisions that will promote student success;
2. To create a collective voice for policy advocacy on behalf of MSIs;
3. To strengthen policy and practice to improve developmental education;
4. To increase MSIs' commitment to transparency and effectiveness in improving student learning outcomes; and
5. To increase the postsecondary completion of traditionally underserved students, especially men of color. (2012, p. 3)

His study partnered with more than 25 MSIs and other organizations to improve and document increased postsecondary attainment. "The program began in fall 2009 and [concluded] in fall 2012. Seeking to dramatically increase college completion, especially among first-generation students, low-income students, and students of color" (Harmon, 2012, 3).

Harmon reports that "MSIs often provide the best fit for students of color, thus improving their chances of graduating" (2012, p. 4). The reasons that MSIs serve a model are because:

1. MSIs celebrate diversity. Contrary to the belief that MSIs promote homogeneity, they are leaders in providing meaningful interactions between people of different racial

and ethnic backgrounds, often leading to open conversations that foster greater exploration and understanding of our collective similarities and differences. Additionally, many MSIs have an institutional commitment to hiring faculty and staff of color, creating potential for mentoring relationships with students, a practice that significantly affects the likelihood of student success. (Harmon, 2012, p. 4)

2. MSIs are committed to a holistic comprehensive approach to educating students by creating and fostering cultural traditions within communities. They challenge and support their students through culturally sensitive and relevant curricula, and programs that address both students' cognitive and psychosocial development. (Harmon, 2012, p. 4-5)
3. MSIs encourage students to explore and develop their identities, key to a sense of self-worth. (Harmon, 2012, p.5)
4. MSIs invest significantly in students with need. Students at MSIs are more likely than those attending Predominantly White Institutions [PWIs] to have lower levels of academic preparation for college. Almost half of all MSI students are the first in their families to attend college, compared with only 35 percent of students at PWIs. MSIs also enroll a disproportionate number of low-income students. (Harmon, 2012, p.5)

Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs)

Federal Classification and Funding

The United States Department of Education defines a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) as "(A) an eligible institution; and (B) has an enrollment of undergraduate full-time equivalent students that is at least 25 percent Hispanic students at the end of the award year immediately preceding the date of application" (United States Department of Education, n.d.). "While the

label “Hispanic-Serving” makes these institutions appear as the Hispanic Equivalent of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) or women’s colleges, they are not a vestige of *de jure* segregation” (Contreras, Malcolm, & Bensimon, 2008, p. 72). The designation as an HSI allows institutions to receive additional funding from the United States Department of Education by means of a Title V Grant: Developing Hispanic-Serving Institutions Program. Institutions must apply for a Title V grant and HSI designation. This is a competitive grant using discretionary funds which are usually awarded for a period of five years. Institutions can continue to apply for new grants so long as they remain eligible. Title V grants include “five-year individual development grants, five-year cooperative arrangement development grants, and one-year planning grants may be awarded” (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.). According to the U.S. Department of Education:

> The Developing Hispanic-Serving Institutions (DHSI) Program provides grants to assist HSIs to expand educational opportunities for, and improve the attainment of, Hispanic students. These grants also enable HSIs to expand and enhance their academic offerings, program quality, and institutional stability. Funds may be used for activities such as: scientific or laboratory equipment for teaching; construction or renovation of instructional facilities; faculty development; purchase of educational materials; academic tutoring or counseling programs; funds and administrative management; joint use of facilities; endowment funds; distance learning academic instruction; teacher education; and student support services. (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.)

Title V grantees are required to submit an Annual Performance Report (APR) at the end of each fiscal year. The APR measures the performance of the grant based on the objectives that were submitted in the original grant application. The yearly APRs can determine if the grantee

will receive the next year of funding or if the amount will be decreased. At the end of the grant the institution must submit a Final APR. (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.) For fiscal year 2013 the U.S. Department of Education set aside $95,178,637 (after sequestration) for the Title V program. (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.). Of that amount, $87,326,384 was used to make 139 non-competing continuation awards and $424,981 was obligated to make a supplemental award to a grantee that had not received its full funding in the previous year. The remaining balance of $7,426,918 was used to fund 11 FY 2013 new development grants: seven individual grants and four cooperative grants. Due to the limited funding available in FY 2013 to make new awards, it was decided to fund down the FY 2012 slate in lieu of having a competition. (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.)

Previous Literature

As the Latina/Latino population in the U.S. continues to increase so will their enrollment into community colleges. HSIs enroll nearly half (46 percent) of the entire Hispanic college student population while HBCUs enroll 14 percent of African American undergraduates (Núñez et al., 2011, p 19). The majority of HSIs are community colleges. Contreras, Malcolm, & Bensimon argue that because Latinas/Latinos are overrepresented in the community colleges, "it makes sense that these institutions would be the most likely to meet the criteria to acquire the HSI designation and become eligible for Title V funding" (2008, p. 73). Most research on Latina/Latino students and HSIs has focused on California and Texas. As illustrated in Table 2, Excelencia in Education recently reported that "there are 435 HSIs across 19 different states which represent "13 percent of all institutions of higher education" (2016b, p. 4). They also reported that "these HSIs enroll the majority of Latina/Latino students with "almost two-thirds of Latino undergraduates (62 percent). The number of HSIs is growing. Over the last 21 years

(1994-95 to 2014-15), the number of HSIs grew from 189 to 435 (130 percent)" (Excelencia in Education, 2016b, p. 4).

Table 2: Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs): 2014-2015

State / Location	# HSIs	State / Location	# HSIs
Arizona	13	New Jersey	14
California	152	New Mexico	23
Colorado	8	New York	21
*Connecticut	3	Ohio	1
Florida	24	Oregon	2
Illinois	17	Pennsylvania	1
Indiana	1	Puerto Rico	62
Kansas	4	Texas	78
*Massachusetts	4	Washington	5
Nevada	2		
Total States / Locations = 19 Total HSIs = 435			

Note: *Indicates HSIs in the New England area. Adapted from "Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs): 2014-2015," by Excelencia in Education, 2016a, p. 1.

In their research on Hispanic-Serving Institutions, Contreras, Malcolm, & Bensimon concluded that the invisibility of HSIs was perhaps due to the fact that:

> Institutions are transformed into Hispanic-Serving purely on the basis of changing demographics. Their conversion seems to be accidental and evolutionary rather than strategically planned, which may explain the silence about being Hispanic-Serving. It is possible that the Hispanic identity is so new that for most institutions there has not been enough time to reconsider their mission in light of their newly acquired identity. (2008, p. 85).

According to Núñez et al., "there are some indicators that Hispanic students attending HSIs have more positive experiences and outcomes than those attending non-HSI institutions" (2011, p. 20-21). Their study revealed that in California Latina/Latino students at 2-year HSIs transferred to 4-year colleges/universities at higher rates than Latinas/Latinos at Non-HSIs. These HSIs also had a higher number of Latina/Latino faculty members who were able to relate to the students

and serve as mentors (Núñez et al., 2011, p. 21). Excelencia in Education (2014) published a list of the Top 10 HSIs awarding Associate degrees to Latinas/Latinos (Table 3). As expected, these community colleges are in states with a high Latina/Latino population.

Table 3. Top 10 HSIs Awarding Associate Degrees to Latinos (2012-2013)

Institution	State	All	Hispanic	% Hispanic
Miami Dade College	FL	10,425	7,074	68
El Paso Community College	TX	3,404	2,876	84
South Texas College	TX	2,231	2,052	92
Valencia College	FL	7,117	2,017	28
Broward College	FL	6,084	1,935	32
Central New Mexico Community College	NM	3,368	1,445	43
Houston Community College	TX	4,410	1,228	28
Lone Star College System	TX	4,373	1,157	26
East Los Angeles College	CA	1,615	1,141	71
San Antonio College	TX	2,034	1,051	52
Total for Top 10		**45,061**	**21,976**	**49**

Note. Adapted from "2012-13: Top 10 Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) Awarding Associate Degrees to Latinos," by Excelencia in Education, 2014a, p.1.

Laden, Hagedorn, & Perrakis argue that community colleges HSIs play a crucial role for Latina/Latino educational completion. Without the community college HSIs creating a direct pipeline to four year universities there would be an even lower number of Latinas/Latinos completing degrees. (Laden et al., 2008, p. 130). When comparing Latina/Latino associate degree completion, Laden et al. also found that "community college HSIs produce approximately 40 percent of all Latino associate degrees graduates compared to less than 10 percent in non-HSIs" (2008, p. 130). Núñez, Crisp, & Elizondo (2012) found that "Hispanic students who enroll at HSI community colleges are more likely than their counterparts at non-HSI community

colleges to express that they intend to transfer to a 4-year institution" (p.3). In addition, they reported that "Hispanics at HSI community colleges are more likely than their counterparts at non-HSI community colleges to experience additional challenges" (Núñez et al., 2012, p. 5).

Núñez, Sparks, & Hernández (2011) also reported that Latina/Latino students attending an HSI community colleges tend to face additional life challenges.

> The portrait of 2-year HSIs that emerges is a sector, that compared with its non-HSI counterparts, is disproportionately serving Hispanic students who face additional challenges to competing postsecondary education and who do not fit the profile of a traditional college student on a wide range of dimensions-male, first-generation college-going, working, supporting a family, attending part-time, delaying higher education, and never having completed a diploma. (p. 34)

Laden et al., provides compelling facts that cannot be ignored when studying community college HSIs. They present the argument that:

> The comfort of having an overrepresentation of Hispanics at community college HSIs does not prepare student for the reality of being a "minority" at a typical four-year college. The majority of Hispanic students at HSI community college has lived in predominantly Hispanic neighborhood and has attended majority Hispanic K-12 schools. While attendance at a HSI community college may have been well within the students' initial comfort zone, the next move, most likely to a four-year PWI may cause distress. (Laden et al., 2008, p. 138)

As noted earlier, there is very little research on HSIs in the New England area (Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont). At the start of this research (2012) there was only one designated HSI in Massachusetts which is the site

highlighted in this study. In 2015, Excelencia in Education reported that there were three HSIs in the state and all were community colleges (2016a, p. 7). Two of the HSIs were public community colleges. The third was an independent two year college that is chartered by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Massachusetts now has four HSIs (Table 4) adding a private not for profit 4-year college (Excelencia in Education, 2016a, p. 7).

Table 4: Massachusetts Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs): 2014-2015

Institution	Sector	Total	Hispanic	% Hispanic
Cambridge College	3	602	153	25.4
Antonia Pantoja Community College	2	3,864	1,420	36.8
Springfield Technical Community College	2	4,273	1,169	27.4
Urban College of Boston	4	341	198	58.2

Note: Sector 1 = Public, 4-year or above; Sector 2 = Public, 2-year; Sector 3 = Private not-for-profit, 4-year or above; Sector 4 = Private not-for-profit, 2-year. Adapted from "Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs): 2014-2015," by Excelencia in Education, 2016a, p. 7.

In 2013-2014 there were 30 states with emerging HSIs with a total of 296 locations (Excelencia in Education, 2015b, p. 1). Most recently, it has been reported that there are 34 states with emerging HSIs with a total of 310 sites as seen in Table 5 (Excelencia in Education, 2016c, p. 1). In 2014 Massachusetts had fifteen emerging HSIs which were a mixture of public two year colleges and four year private, not-for-profit intuitions. There were no public four year universities on this list (Excelencia in Education, 2015b, p6). Excelencia in Education's 2015 report (Table 6) lists thirteen emerging HSIs in Massachusetts (2016c, p. 6). Cambridge College was upgraded to an HSI in 2015 while one public community college and one 4-year private not-for-profit college are no longer listed as emerging. Excelencia in Education (2016c) used data from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System to create their list of Emerging HSIs.

Table 5: Emerging Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs): 2014-2015

State / Location	# Emerging HSIs	State / Location	# Emerging HSIs
Arizona	14	Nebraska	4
Arkansas	2	Nevada	5
California	59	New Jersey	13
Colorado	13	New Mexico	2
*Connecticut	11	New York	31
District of Columbia	1	North Carolina	1
Florida	25	Oklahoma	3
Georgia	2	Oregon	4
Hawaii	2	Pennsylvania	5
Idaho	4	*Rhode Island	1
Illinois	23	Tennessee	2
Indiana	2	Texas	53
Kansas	3	Utah	1
Louisiana	2	Virginia	3
Maryland	1	Washington	2
*Massachusetts	13	Wisconsin	1
Missouri	1	Wyoming	1
Total States / Location	**34**	**Total Emerging HSIs**	**310**

Note: *Indicates Emerging HSIs in the New England area. Adapted from "Emerging Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs): 2014-2015," by Excelencia in Education, 2016c, p. 1.

Table 6: Massachusetts Emerging Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs): 2014-2015

Institution	Sector	Total	Hispanic	% Hispanic
Bay Path College	3	1,406	228	16.2
Benjamin Franklin Institute of Technology	3	460	96	20.8
Bunker Hill Community College	2	7,807	1,781	22.8
Holyoke Community College	2	4,221	960	22.7
Marian Court College	3	197	44	22.2
Massachusetts Institute of Technology	3	4,490	718	16.0
Middlesex Community College	2	5,440	965	17.7
North Shore Community College	2	4,199	921	21.9
Northpoint Bible College	3	276	49	17.7
Pine Manor College	3	401	65	16.3
Quinsigamond Community College	2	5,054	835	16.5
Roxbury Community College	2	1,306	224	17.1
Springfield College-School of Human Services	3	978	177	18.1
MA Total (13)		**36,236**	**7,062**	**19.5**

Note: Sector 1 = Public, 4-year or above; Sector 2 = Public, 2-year; Sector 3 = Private not-for-profit, 4-year or above; Sector 4 = Private not-for-profit, 2-year. Adapted from "Emerging Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs): 2014-2015," by Excelencia in Education, 2016c, p. 6.

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

Validation Theory

This study will center on Laura I. Rendón's validation theory. Validation Theory advocates "that college faculty, counselors, and administrative staff take a proactive role in reaching out to students to affirm them as being capable of doing academic work and to support them in their academic endeavors and social adjustment" (Rendón, 2002, p. 645). Validation Theory also highlights the importance of a student's experiences both in and out of the classroom. According to Rendón (2002), these "experiences are especially important with nontraditional student populations such as returning adults, low-income students, first-generation students, and many women and minority students from working class backgrounds" (p. 644). Rendón (2002) argues that nontraditional students need and want guidance as they begin to their journey but fear being belittled. "They do not succeed well in an invalidating, sterile, fiercely competitive context for learning that is still present in many college classrooms today" (Rendón, 2002, p. 644). Other arguments supporting the usage of Validation Theory include:

- Although getting involved in the social and academic life of the college is important for persistence and academic growth, students from low-income backgrounds and who are the first in their family to attend college usually find it difficult to get involved on their own. These students want to get involved but often do not know what questions to ask and may be reluctant to ask questions that make them appear stupid or lazy. (Rendón, 2002, p. 645)
- When nontraditional students step onto a college campus, they find a brand new world with little that validates their backgrounds and ways of knowing. They rarely see themselves in the curriculum and are unfamiliar with the traditions of college clubs and organizations. On predominantly White campuses, they have few faculty

> and staff role models they can turn to for assistance. When the college world is in stark opposition to the world of the student, it is difficult for students to get involved and take full advantage of all academic and student support services. (Rendón, 2002, p. 647)

Using the lens of validation theory will allow the researcher to explore the impact of the MassTransfer Program on Latina/Latino students. Validation Theory includes the elements listed below:

1. Validation is an enabling, confirming, and supportive process initiated by in and out-of-class agents that fosters academic and interpersonal development.
2. When validation is present, students feel capable of learning; they experience a feeling of self-worth and feel that they and everything that they bring to the college experience is accepted and recognized as valuable. Lacking validation, students feel crippled, silenced, subordinate and/or mistrusted.
3. Like involvement, validation is a prerequisite to student development.
4. Validation can occur both in-and out- of-class. In class validating agents include faculty, classmates, lab instructors and teaching assistants. Out-of-class validating agents can be 1) significant others, such as a spouse, boyfriend of girlfriends, 2) family members, such as parents, siblings, relative and children and 3) friends, such as classmates and friends attending and not attending college 4) college staff including faculty who meet with students out-of-class, counselors/advisors, coaches, tutors, teaching assistants, and resident advisors.
5. Validation suggests a developmental process. It is not an end in itself. The more the student gets validated, the richer the academic and interpersonal experience.

6. Validation is most effective when offered early on in the student's college experience, during the first year of college and during the first weeks of class. However, validation should continue throughout the college years. (Rendón, 1994, p. 237-238)

A key element of Validation Theory towards student success is finding a way to engage students who are not active. These students may not understand the full value of being engaged in and outside of the classroom. They also may "not know how to take full advantage of the system" (Rendón, 1994, p. 238). One way of demonstrating a commitment to all students is by encouraging faculty and staff to validate students at every level. The campus community needs to understand the true diversity of the student body. Faculty and staff should be provided training that builds their knowledge and sensitivity towards validating students.

Latina/Latino Critical Race Theory

The other lens used to analyze the experiences of the students surveyed will be Latina/Latino Critical Race Theory (LatCrit). LatCrit branched from Critical Race Theory and provides a voice to the experiences of Latinas/Latinos.

Critical Race Theory

It's important to understand the history of Critical Race Theory (CRT) in order to understand the origins of LatCrit. Leading authors in the CRT, Richard Delgado and Jean Stefanic (2012), summarize CRT as:

> A collection of activists and scholars interested in studying and transforming the relationship among race, racism, and power. The movement considers many of the same issues that conventional civil rights and ethnic studies discourses take up, but places them in a broader perspective that includes economics, history, context, group- and self-interest, and even feelings and the unconscious. Unlike traditional civil rights, which

> embraces incrementalism and step-by-step progress, critical race theory questions the very foundations of the liberal order, including equality theory, legal reasoning, enlightenment rationalism, and neutral principles of constitutional law. (p. 3)

Delgado and Stefanic pose that an important function of CRT is that it "contains an activist dimension" (2012, p.3). They argue that "it not only tries to understand our social situation, but to change it; it sets out not only to ascertain how society organizes itself along racial lines and hierarchies, but to transform it for the better" (Delgado & Stefanic, 2012, p. 3). According to Tara J. Yosso, CRT "in education is a theoretical and analytical framework that challenges the ways race and racism impact educational structures, practices, and discourses" (2005, p. 74). Patricia A. Pérez and Miguel Ceja (2010) summarize CRT in education as "include[ing] the following: Intersectionality of race/racism with other forms of oppression, challenge to dominant ideology, commitment to social justice, centrality of experiential knowledge, and an interdisciplinary perspective" (p. 11).

CRT began in the 1970s with Derrick Bell, Alan Freeman, and Richard Delgado who were shortly joined by others. They realized "that new theories and strategies were needed to combat the subtler forms of racism that were gaining ground" (Delgado & Stefanic, 2012, p.4). CRT was built on the foundations of Critical Legal Studies and radical feminism (Delgado & Stefanic, 2012). Influence was also drawn from the likes of "Sojourner Truth, Frederick Douglass, W.E.B. Du Bois, César Chávez, Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Black Power and Chicano movements of the sixties and early seventies" (Delgado & Stefanic, 2012, p. 5). The basic principles of Critical Race Theory according to Delgado & Stefanic (2012) include:

1. That racism is ordinary, not aberrational—"normal science," the usual way society does business, the common, everyday experience of most people of color in this country. The

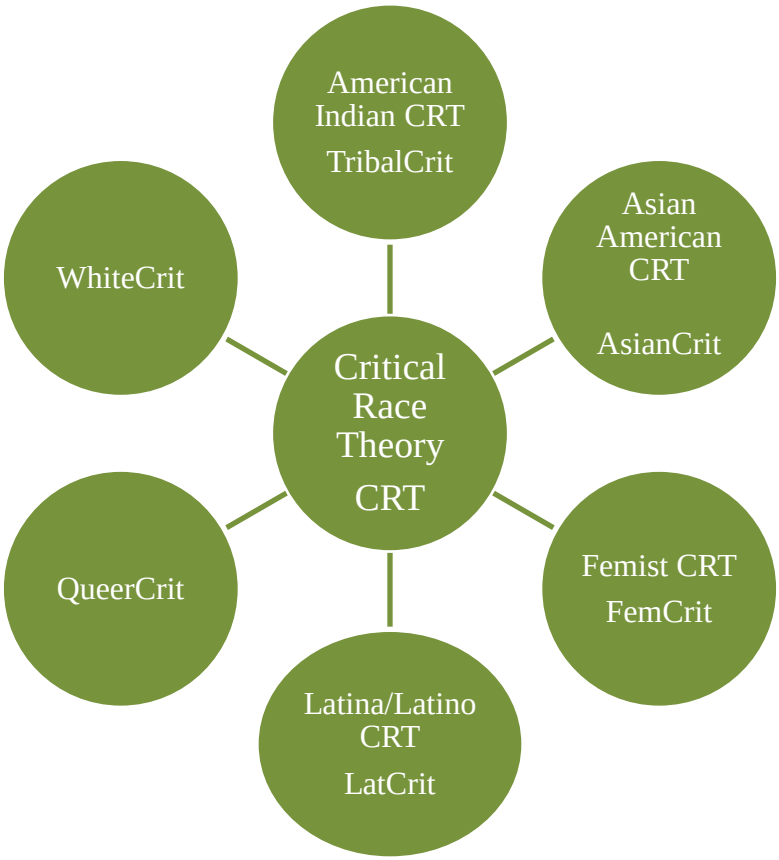
first feature, ordinariness, means that racism is difficult to cure or address. Color-blind, or "formal," conceptions of equality, expressed in rules that insist only on treatment that is the same across the board, can thus remedy only the most blatant forms of discrimination. (pgs. 7-8)

2. That our system of white-over-color ascendancy [interest convergence] serves important purposes, both psychic and material for the dominant group. Because racism advances the interests of both White elites (materially) and working-class Caucasians (psychically), large segments of society have little incentive to eradicate it. (p. 8)
3. The "social construction" thesis holds that race and races are products of social thought and relations. Not objective, inherent, or fixed, they correspond to no biological or genetic reality; rather, races are categories that society invents, manipulates, or retires when convenient. (p. 8)
4. Another, somewhat more recent, development concerns differential racialization and its many consequences. Critical writers in law, as well as social science, have drawn attention to the ways the dominant society racializes different minority groups at different times, in response to shifting needs such as the labor market. (p. 9)
5. The idea that each race has its own origins and ever-evolving history - is the notion of intersectionality and anti-essentialism. No person has a single, easily stated, unitary identity. Everyone has potentially conflicting, overlapping identities, loyalties, and allegiances. (pgs. 9-10)
6. A final element concerns the notion of a unique voice of color. Coexisting in somewhat uneasy tension with anti-essentialism, the voice-of-color thesis holds that because of their different histories and experiences with oppression, Black, Indian, Asian, and Latino/a

> writers and thinkers may be able to communicate to their White counterparts matters that the Whites are unlikely to know. Minority status, in other words, brings with it a presumed competence to speak about race and racism. (p. 10)

Since its inception, CRT has branched into specific areas of research as seen in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Branches of Critical Race Theory



Note. Adapted from "Critical race theory: An introduction" by Delgado & Stefanic, 2012 and from "Whose culture has capital? A critical race theory discussion of community cultural wealth" by Yosso, 2005.

Delgado and Stefanic (2012) describes the branches of Critical Race Theory as:

- American Indian CRT / TribalCrit: American Indian scholars focus on indigenous people's rights, sovereignty, and land claims. (p. 3)

- AsianCrit: Some Asian American writers focus on the "model minority myth," according to which Asians are the perfect minority group—quiet, industrious, with intact families and high educational aspiration and achievement. (pgs. 91-92)
- Critical Race Feminism / FemCrit: A number of scholars of color have been examining issues at the intersection of feminism, sexual orientation, and critical race theory. It also examines relations the impact of changes in welfare, family policies, and child support laws. (pgs. 93-94)
- LatCrit: Among several other issues, LatCrit scholars call attention to issues of immigration, language rights, bilingual schooling, internal colonialism, sanctuary for Latin American refugees, and census categories for Hispanics. (p. 90)
- QueerCrit: Queer-crit theorists examine the interplay between sexual norms and attitudes, and race. (p. 94)
- WhiteCrit: Scholars have been putting whiteness under the lens and examining the construction of the White race. They exam "White privilege" and the myriad of social advantages, benefits, and courtesies that come with being a member of the dominant race. (pgs. 83, 87)

Latina/Latino Critical Race Theory

According to Yosso, LatCrit drives "discussions to address the layers of racialized subordination that comprise Chicana/o, Latina/o experiences. LatCrit scholars assert that racism, sexism and classism are experienced amidst other layers of subordination based on immigration status, sexuality, culture, language, phenotype, accent and surname" (2005, p. 72). Dolores Delgado Bernal (2002) emphasizes that LatCrit is not meant to compete against CRT. Rather, "LatCrit is a theory that elucidates Latinas/Latinos' multidimensional identities and can address

the intersectionality of racism, sexism, classism, and other forms of oppression" (Delgado Bernal 2002, p. 108).

CRT and LatCrit framed within education "emphasize the need to view practices, policies and policymaking within an appropriate cultural and historical context, helping us to better understand their intersections to race/ethnicity and racism" (Davila & Aviles, 2010, p. 42). LatCrit applied to education provides "a framework that can be used to theorize and examine the ways in which race and racism explicitly and implicitly impact on the educational structures, processes and discourses that effect People of Color generally and Latinas/os specifically" (Solórzano & Yosso, 2001, p. 479). Octavio Villalpando (2004) argues that through the lens of LatCrit "analyses suggest that student services practitioners interested in creating truly holistic and more meaningful programs or services for Latinos begin by consciously acknowledging that these students might experience varying degrees and forms of racial discrimination at their university" (p, 43). Villalpando also proposes that LatCrit:

> Challenge[s] the traditional claims of universities to objectivity, meritocracy, color blindness, race neutrality, and equal opportunity. For example, higher education operates under the illusion that Latinos have an opportunity to succeed that is equal to that of majority white students. CRT and LatCrit challenge this ideology by exposing how, for example, notions of meritocracy and race neutrality in the college admission process benefit majority white students while harming Latinos. For instance, the recent attacks on race-sensitive admissions argue that it is unmeritorious and discriminatory against whites to consider a person's race in determining college admissions. Yet there is an explicit refusal to explain why it is meritorious to continue the allegedly race-neutral practice of factoring in alumni legacy status during the admissions process. The empirical data on

> college graduation rates show that whites far outnumber Latinos as college alumni; thus the legacy factor in college admissions clearly favors whites over Latinos and other groups of color. However, higher education institutions appear to insist that this is a meritocratic and race-neutral admissions practice. (2004, p. 44)

Another component of both CRT and LatCrit is counterstorytelling. "Some of the critical storytellers believe that stories also have a valid destructive function. Society constructs the social world through a series of tacit agreements mediated by images, pictures, tales, and scripts" (Delgado & Stefanic, 2012, p. 48). Through the lens of LatCrit, the stories and experiences of Latina/Latino students can be used to "challenge, displace, or mock these pernicious narratives and beliefs. (Delgado & Stefanic, 2012, p. 49).

> Cure for Silencing: Stories also serve a powerful psychic function for minority communities. Many victims of racial discrimination suffer in silence, or blame themselves for their predicament. Stories can give them voice and reveal that others have similar experiences. Stories can name a type of discrimination; once named, it can be combated. If race is not real or objective, but constructed, racism and prejudice should be capable of deconstruction; the pernicious beliefs and categories are, after all, our own. Powerfully written stories and narratives may begin a process of correction in our system of beliefs and categories by calling attention to neglected evidence and reminding readers of our common humanity. (Delgado & Stefanic, 2012, pgs. 50-51).

Important to Latina/Latino Critical Race Theory is also the concept of self-identification. According to Edward Retta and Cynthia Brink, Cross-Cultural Communication Consultants (2007):

> In the U.S., these two terms [Hispanic and Latino] tend to be used differently by region. The demographics of local Latino populations differ in regions of the USA. There are many more Cubans in Florida and more Mexicans in Texas and California. New York and New Jersey have many Puerto Ricans. According to Murguia, "Generally speaking, the pan-ethnic term used in New York and California is *Latino* while the pan-ethnic term used more often in Texas and Arizona is *Hispanic*. (p. 2)

According to the Merriam Webster Dictionary, Latina is the feminine of Latino and refers to a woman of Hispanic heritage. Latinas refers to more than one woman of Hispanic heritage. Latino is masculine and refers to a man of Hispanic heritage. Latino is also used as a general term to define both men and women. Latinos when used as a masculine term refers to more than one man of Hispanic heritage. Latinos is also used as a general term to define a group of both men and women. For the purpose of this study, the researcher will intentionally use the terms Latina/Latino and not just Hispanic or Latino (when not directly quoting the works of others). According to Dr. Myrna Garcia, scholars are "mov[ing] away from the usage of the Latino because the "o" subsumes the experiences of Latinas. Instead scholars use Latina/o or Latina/Latino to be attentive to particular gendered experiences of Latinas" (M. Garcia, personal communication, November 28, 2013).

Combined Validation Theory and Latina/Latino Critical Race Theory provide a voice and validity to the experiences of the students interviewed. They provide a narrative that could be used to improve the experiences and retention of Latina/Latino students who begin at a community college and then transfer to a 4-year university.

Chapter Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to provide a brief overview on the history of community colleges with an emphasis on Massachusetts Community Colleges. The chapter explored the evolution of transfer programs in Massachusetts detailing the creation of the MassTransfer program. It also provides an in-depth look at Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs) and focused mainly on Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs). This section focused on what it meant to be an HSI and how the designation is earned. It also included a brief summary on previous HSI literature. Additionally the chapter introduced the conceptual framework which provides the lens through which data will be organized. Laura I. Rendón's Validation Theory was explored as well as the history of Critical Race Theory and how it's furthered by Latina/Latino Critical Race Theory to analyze the experiences of the students interviewed.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

This study's methodology includes an overview of the processes and methods used to conduct the research. The chapter outlines the study's design, the manner in which the research was conducted, the selection criteria for participants, and the procedures for data collection, data organization and data analysis. The research is a qualitative case study through an interpretive lens undertaken to comprehend the impact of the MassTransfer program on Latina/Latino transfer students.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the impact of the MassTransfer program on the transfer success of Latina/Latino students at a suburban HSI community college into a 4 year state university in Massachusetts. The researcher explored the experiences of students preparing to graduate and transfer from the HSI community college. The study also explored the experiences of students from the HSI that have successfully transferred into a four year university.

Guiding Questions

The following guiding questions were used in this study in order to explore the impact of the MassTransfer program on community college HSI students transferring into a Non-HSI 4-year university (Appendix A).

1. What are the driving factors that impact a Latina/Latino student's decision to attend a community colleges or a university?
2. What factors contribute to Latina/Latino student success in college?
3. How has the MassTransfer program impacted transfer of Latina/Latino students?

4. What role do college faculty and staff play in the transfer success of Latina/Latino students?

Research Design

According to Denzin & Lincoln, "qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of meanings people bring to them" (2005, p. 3). This study was conducted using a qualitative research paradigm. Creswell (2009) defines qualitative research as "a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem" (p. 4). A multiple case study approached allowed for the exploration of commonalities and differences of experiences with the MassTransfer program at the selected sites.

Qualitative Research Method

This study will be conducted using a qualitative research paradigm. According to Denzin & Lincoln, "qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of meanings people bring to them" (2005, p. 3). John W. Creswell (2009) defines qualitative research as "a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem" (p. 4). A qualitative approach to this study will allow the participants stories to be told. A goal of conducting a qualitative study is that the participants will feel as comfortable and at ease in their own environment. According to Creswell (2007), "qualitative researchers tend to collect data in the field at the site where participants experience the issue or problem under study" (p. 37). Creswell (2007) also identifies the most popular characteristics of qualitative research which include:

- *Natural setting* – "in a natural setting, the researchers have face to face interactions over time" (p. 37).
- *Multiple data sources* – "qualitative researchers typically gather multiple forms of data, such as interviews, observations, and documents, rather than rely on a single data source" (p. 38).
- *Inductive data analysis* – the researchers work "back and forth between the themes in the database until they establish a comprehensive set of themes" (p. 39).
- *Participants' meanings* – "in the entire qualitative research process, the researchers keep the focus on learning the meaning that the participants hold about the problem or issue, not the meaning that the researcher brings to the research or writers from the literature" (p. 39).
- *Theoretical lens* – "qualitative researchers often use a lens to view their studies" (p. 39). For the purpose of this study the theoretical lens will be Latina/Latino critical race theory in education and validation theory.
- *Holistic account* – "qualitative researchers try to develop a complex picture of the problem or issue under study. This involves reporting multiple perspectives, identifying the many factors involved in the situation, and generally sketching the larger picture that emerges" (p. 39).

A holistic view of this study was developed through the process of interviewing multiple participants and gathering information regarding their perspectives and experiences. This provided an overall larger picture of how the MassTransfer program impacts the transfer of Latina/Latino students.

Creswell (2007) explores the five most common approaches in the social sciences to qualitative studies which are narrative research, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, and case study (p. 9-10). Narrative research "is best for capturing the detailed stories or life experiences of a single life or the lives of a small number of individuals" (Creswell, 2007, p. 55). "As a method, it begins with the experiences as expressed in lived and told stories of individuals" (Creswell, 2007, p. 54). Creswell provides the following definition "narrative is understood as a spoken or written text giving an account of an event/action or series of events/actions, chronologically connected" (as cited in Czarniawska, 2004, p. 17). Phenomenological research as defined by Creswell "describes the meaning for several individuals of the lived experiences of a concept or a phenomenon" (2007, p. 57). He also states that:

> Phenomenologist focus on describing what all participants have in common as they experience a phenomenon (e.g., grief is universally experienced). The basic purpose of phenomenology is to reduce individual experiences with a phenomenon to a description of the universal essence. (Creswell, 2007, p. 57-58).

According to Creswell (2007), "the intent of grounded theory study is to move beyond description and to generate or discover a theory, an abstract analytical schema of a process" (p. 62-63). Ethnographic research studies a cultural group rather than an individual (Creswell, 2007). Creswell defines ethnography as "a qualitative design in which the researcher describes and interprets the shared and learned patterns of values, behaviors, beliefs, and language of a culture-sharing group as well as the final, written product of that research" (2007, p. 68). As previously stated, this study will be conducted using a case study approach.

Case Study Methodology

This research was conducted using multiple case study methodology. Creswell defines a case study as "the study of an issue explored through one or more cases within a bounded system" (2007, p. 73).

> Case study research is a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information, and reports a case description and case-based themes. (Creswell, 2007, p. 73).

There are two ways of describing case studies based on how the data collected is be used which are descriptive case study and interpretive case study (Willis, 2007). In a descriptive case study the purpose "is to provide a rich, detailed description of the case. There is no effort to begin with a theory or to develop theory as the case progresses" (Willis, 2007, p. 243). With an interpretive case study "the focus is on understanding the intricacies of a particular situation, setting, organizations, culture, or individual, but that local understanding may be related to prevailing theories or models" (Willis, 2007, p. 243). Yin (2009) defines a case study as "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (p. 18). The impact of the MassTransfer program specifically on Latina/Latino students has not been evaluated. According to Yin (2009) case study inquiries also:

- Copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points, and as one resolves
- Relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulation fashion, and as another result

- Benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions the guide data collection and analysis. (p. 18).

Case studies allow the researcher to understand why and how the participants were impacted by the MassTransfer program. According to Yin (2009), the use of natural settings does not require the control of any environment as with an experiment. The use of multiple case study methodology allows triangulation of data collected in order to "draw a single set of cross case conclusions" (Yin, 2009, p. 20). Multiple case studies also allow the exploration of the commonalities and differences between two different sets of community colleges and universities that have partnered under MassTransfer.

Site Selection

For the purpose of this research two sites were selected: one community college and one state university. There are four HSIs in Massachusetts and they are each community colleges. MassTransfer also required that all participating colleges and universities be a public/state school. The sites selected have existing agreements under MassTransfer. The first site selected was a community college designated as an HSI. The second site was a public state university that has MassTransfer programs with the first site.

Antonia Pantoja Community College (APCC). Antonia Pantoja Community College is the designated Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) in this study. The U.S. Department of Education assigns the title of a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) to "eligible institutions of higher education that have an enrollment of undergraduate full-time equivalent students that is at least 25 percent Hispanic students" (Hispanic-Serving Institutions, n.d.) There are currently four community college in Massachusetts that have been designated a Hispanic-Serving Institution.

Commonwealth State University (CSU). Commonwealth State University is the designated 4-year state university in this study. Interviewing students that have successfully transferred through a MassTransfer program will allow for actual transfer data collection. This data will help form the complete transfer picture. At the time, MassTransfer required that all participating colleges and universities be a public/state school. CSU is a public state university that has MassTransfer agreements with APCC.

Participant Selection

For this study, 14 participants were interviewed in total from the two sites. Six students and at least 1 staff member were interviewed from each site. The researcher worked with community college and university staff members to identify and solicit the target population. All student participants must have self-identified as being of Latina/Latino descent in order to participate. All participants were either college students or staff members. All students and staff participants were over the age of 18. The gender identity of participants is not a selection criterion for this research.

Community College Participants. Antonia Pantoja Community College (APCC) is the designated HSI where 3 students were selected who planned to transfer through a MassTransfer program. An additional 3 students were selected who did not plan to utilize the MassTransfer program. One transfer advisor and the director of the Title V HSI program at APCC were also interviewed. The total number of participants interviewed at APCC was 8 (6 students and 2 staff members).

Community College Student Participant Criteria:

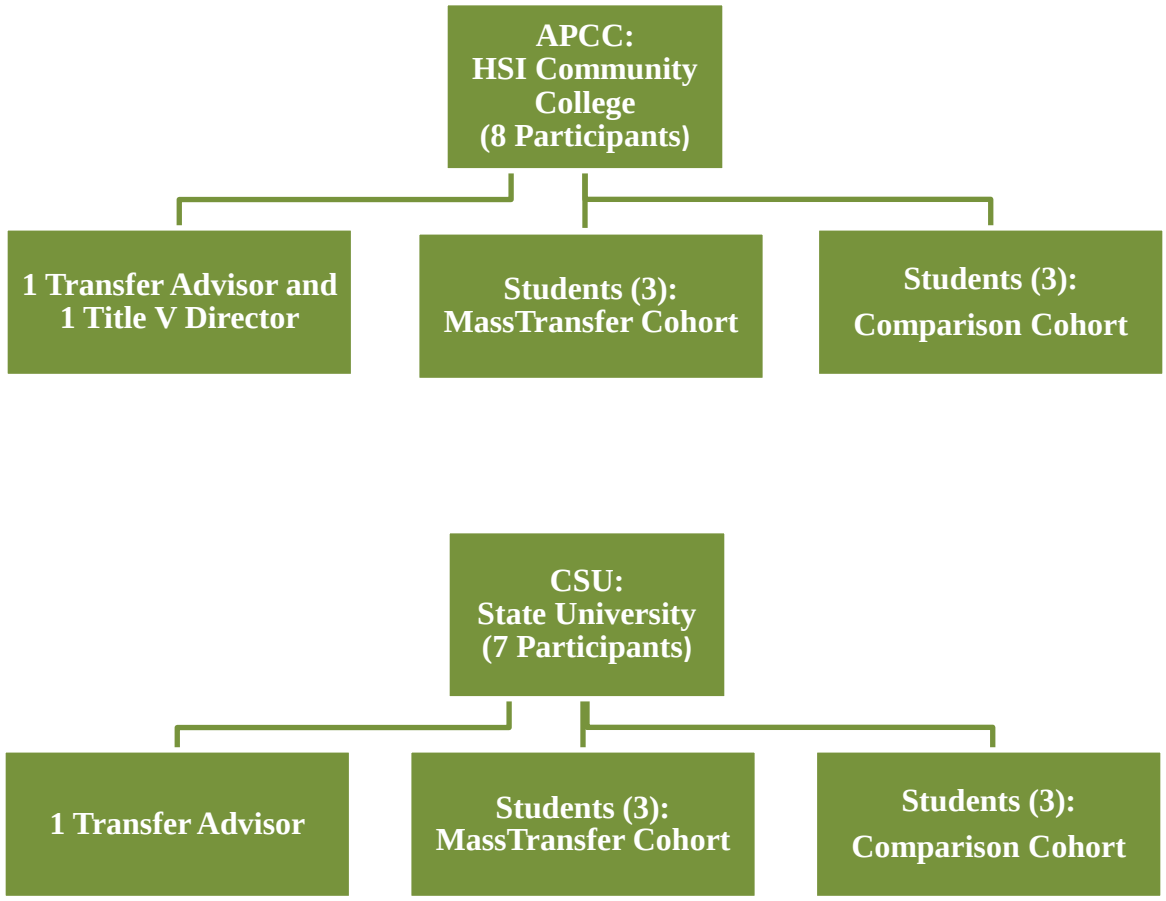
- All students must identify as Latina/Latino.
- All students must be on track to complete their associate's degree at the end of the summer 2015 term.
- Must currently have a 2.5 grade point average or higher. Students are required to have at least a GPA of 2.5 or higher in order to use the MassTransfer program.

State University Participants. MassTransfer requires that all participating colleges and universities be a public/state school. Commonwealth State University was selected for this study based on its MassTransfer agreements with APCC. Interviewing students that transferred and have completed their third year will help inform the success of the MassTransfer programs. At CSU, 3 students were selected who transferred from APCC in the university through a MassTransfer program. An additional 3 students were selected that also transferred from APCC but did use the MassTransfer program. CSU also identified a staff member who worked with transfer students to be interviewed for this study. The total number of participants interviewed at CSU is 7 (6 students and 1 staff member). Participant criteria included:

MassTransfer State University Cohort:

- All students must be identified as Latina/Latino.
- All students must have transferred from a APCC.
- Must have earned a least a 2.5 transfer grade point average or higher.

Figure 3. Participant Selection



Data Collection Procedure

Three primary data sources were used for the study: interviews and documents. Conducting semi structured in person interviews at the participants' choice of location allows for a natural setting where they will feel free to engage in dialogue. The point of the interviews was to collect the stories and experiences of the participants. To accomplish this task the participants need to feel comfortable and as if they can trust the researcher. The ease of the participants cannot be guaranteed if the interviews are conducted in unfamiliar settings. Creswell (2009) states that "qualitative research occurs in natural settings, where human behavior and events

occur" (p. 195). Documents and program information were collected from host sites. Field notes, including notations of observations and reflections were completed after each interview. Information gathered from the observations will describe the "behavior and activities of the [participant] at the research site" (Creswell, 2009, p. 181). A focus group of students, not eligible for the study, were used to review and make suggestions on the appropriateness of the interview questions.

Document Review

For the study, document review included enrollment and data reports for the community college and state university. These documents were available on line at each of the sites respective webpages. The research also reviewed information online about the Massachusetts Public Higher Education System. Reports about the MassTransfer program were also available online and reviewed.

Research Limitations

The researcher did experience limitations to this study. The original intent of study was to conduct a cross case analysis. The researcher had received approval from the Institutional Review Boards (IRB) of two community colleges and two state universities. The goal was to group an HSI community college and state university in the Eastern Massachusetts and an Emerging HSI and a state university in Western Massachusetts. The study would have examined the transfer program and rates of Latina/Latino students from an HSI when compared to the Emerging HSI. The IRB approval of the state university in Western Massachusetts included several restrictions which made it difficult to find participants for the study. After several failed attempts to conduct student interviews a decision was made to change the plan on this study.

The researcher submitted a request to her Institutional Research Review Board (IRRB) which approved her request to change the number of sites from four to two.

Data Analysis Procedures

According to Creswell (2009) "the process of data analysis involves making sense out of text and image data" (p. 183). The collection of multiple data sources allow for the development of themes to emerge. The cross examination of the interviews and additional documents that were collected helped the researcher form a complete picture of the phenomena. Data analysis also included a review by the participants to help ensure that the participant's meanings were accurately reflected.

Validity and Trustworthiness of Research

The validity of a study occurs when the trustworthiness of data is "creditable, transferable, dependable, and confirmable (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). One method of achieving the trustworthiness of a study is through the triangulation of the data collected. According to Willis, "triangulation can also be done across sources of information (e.g., interviews with three different types of respondents), across settings (e.g., observations in the home, at school, and in the neighborhood), across theories, across researchers, and across studies" (2007, p. 219). For this study, the researcher was able to triangulate the data collected by interviewing staff and students from two sites. Themes emerged that were consistent across both sites adding to the validity of the data collected. Triangulation continued with the use of a demographic survey, and review of document and artifacts.

The researcher also utilized the assistance of peer reviewers who were scholars in the fields of Latina/Latino studies and critical race theory. Peers can be involved "regularly in the process as the research proceeds" (Willis, 2007, p. 221). All interviews were captured using an

audio recorder and the researcher's iPhone as a backup using the voice memo option. The interviews were transcribed and sent to the participants for verification.

Researcher as the Tool/Instrument

In qualitative research it is important to be transparent about the roles of the researcher in collecting and analyzing the data. "Researchers must "explicitly identify reflexively their biases, values, and personal background, such as gender, history, culture, and socioeconomic status that shape their interpretations formed during a study" (Creswell, 2014, p. 187).

The researcher is a Latina of Puerto Rican heritage and first generation born on the mainland of the US. She is also a first-generation college graduate and attended a Predominately White Institution (PWI) as an undergraduate student. As such, she was motivated to research and provide a narrative to other Latina/Latino students. The researcher has worked at public community colleges and public state universities. She is originally from Illinois and was new to Massachusetts when the research began. She earned a bachelor's degree in Sociology and Rhetoric while attending the PWI. Her master's degree is in public administration with a concentration in government from a private university in Chicago, IL. She worked full time while pursuing her master's degree. The researcher is also an Army Veteran who served 6 years in the Reserves including a deployment while in graduate school. She did utilize the Montgomery GI Bill while working on her master's degree. She is also currently using the Post 9/11 GI bill while completing her doctorate.

Her career in education includes two Illinois community colleges; one that was an HSI and the other was an emerging HSI. She also worked at PWI public 4-year university in Illinois. She has since then worked at two public universities in Massachusetts. The researcher has directed two TRiO Upward Bound programs and was therefore knowledge on TRiO programs

going into the study. She did not intentionally seek out TRiO students for this study. Her current position is working in the field of Diversity/Inclusion and Student Activities at a Massachusetts PWI. The researcher has been mindful to remain unbiased during the interviews and while interpreting the data.

Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed why a qualitative case study methodology was used to explore the impact of the MassTransfer program on Latina/Latino HSI community college students. The site and participant selection process were discussed as well as the research's data collection methods. Data collection methods included demographic surveys, semi-structured interviews, and document review pertaining to site enrollment and transfer trends. Data collection methods, ethics, trustworthiness and validity and research limitations were also discussed in this chapter. The role of the researcher was also clarified in order to maintain the transparency of the study as well as the researcher's role in the study.

Chapter 4: Data Findings and Analysis

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore the impact of the MassTransfer program on the transfer success of Latina/Latino students at a suburban HSI community college into a 4 year state university in Massachusetts. This chapter provides a detailed description of the findings collected from demographic surveys, participant interviews, and document review. This study was conducted using qualitative research situated in an interpretive paradigm. Creswell (2009) defines qualitative research as "a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem" (p. 4). For the purpose of this research two sites were selected: one community college (Antonia Pantoja Community College) and one state university (Commonwealth State University).

Data Findings

Antonia Pantoja Community College (APCC)

APCC Document Review. The demographic data listed in this section the result of a review of documents. These documents were from APCC's Fall 2013 Enrollment Update and APCC's Spring 2014 Enrollment Update which were available online. The community college highlighted in this study is one of the four HSIs in Massachusetts. Antonia Pantoja Community College has a full time Latina/Latino student population of over 36 percent (Table 7). APCC has two main locations; one suburban and the other being in a predominantly Latina/Latino urban community. APCC received its HSI designation in 2002 with a five year grant totaling approximately 2.2 million dollars. This grant allowed APCC to hire additional Latina/Latino faculty and professional staff, and create a fully staffed Career Planning and Advising Center (CPAC) at the urban location. According to APCC's website, the goal of this grant was to

"improve academic performance, retention, and graduation rate of Hispanic students," (APCC, Title V). Prior to the grant, the urban location of APCC did not offer students regular enrollment services. Students had to travel back and forth from to the main suburban location for enrollment assistance. The grant allowed bilingual staff to be hired that could assist students and their families in both English and Spanish.

***Table 7*. Antonia Pantoja Community College Student Enrollment**

	Fall 2013	Spring 2014
Student Population	7,352	6,522
Full Time Students	33.2% (2,438)	33.2% (2,166)
Part Time Students	66.8% (4,914)	66.8% (4,356)
Female Students	61.7% (4,535)	62.0% (4,045)
Male Students	38.3% (2,817)	38.0% (2,477)
African American Students	4.1% (300)	3.7% (241)
Asian American Students	1.4% (105)	1.7% (114)
Hawaiian / Pacific Islander Students	0.5% (34)	0.5% (35)
Hispanic / Latina/Latino Students	35.4% (2,603)	36.5% (2,381)
Multiracial Students	1.2% (89)	1.3% (87)
Native American Students	0.1% (11)	0.1% (8)
Non-US Citizen Students	0.7% (52)	0.6% (40)
White Students	53.7% (3,946)	52.0% (3,392)
Unknown Students	2.9% (212)	3.4% (224)

Note. Adapted from APCC's Fall 2013 Enrollment Update and APCC's Spring 2014 Enrollment Update.

Antonia Pantoja Community College Staff Demographic Survey. Two staff members were interviewed from APCC a year apart from each other. Interviewee 1 was an academic and transfer counselor interviewed in 2014. Interviewee 1 was no longer working at APCC when the researcher returned in 2015 to conclude data collection. APCC directed then directed the researcher towards Interviewee 2 in order to collect additional information on out their HSI

grant. Interviewee 2 was the director of APCC's Title V (HSI) grant program. Information collected from both interviewees (Table 8) was self-reported.

Table 8. **APCC Staff Demographic Survey Questions and Responses**

Question	Interviewee 1 Responses	Interviewee 2 Responses
What is your job title?	Academic and Transfer Counselor	Title V Grant Director
How long have you been in your current position?	2 years and 8 months	4 years
What is your ethnicity (please check all that apply)?	Latina: Dominican	Latina: Puerto Rican
What is your gender (please select one)?	Female	Female
Is English your primary language?	No	No
If no, please specify first language	Spanish	Spanish
Do you speak Spanish?	Yes	Yes
Were you a first generation college student?	Yes	NA
Did you transfer as a student between a community college and a four year university?	No	NA

Antonia Pantoja Community College Staff Profile.

Interviewee 1 Profile: Is Latina born in the United States and of Dominican ancestry and works as an academic and transfer advisor. Her first language is Spanish and she is fully bilingual with English. She was born and raised in the area of APCC but she did not attend college their as a student. She completed both her bachelor's and master's in Massachusetts. At the time of the interview she had been an academic and transfer counselor for over two and a half years. Her job responsibilities included advising both current and perspective students. She also advised students interested in transferring to a 4-year university. Her work included assisting students to develop career goals, educational, and transfer goals.

Interviewee 2 Profile: Is Latina and originally from Puerto Rico. She is the director of the Title V HSI grant program and holds a bachelor's degree in social work and a master's in public administration. Prior to working at APCC she worked as a civilian for the federal government (Pentagon and Department of Army). She began working with the program in 2003 which was one year after the site was awarded a federal HSI designation.

Table 9. **APCC Staff Interview Questions and Responses: Interviewee 1**

Question	Response
Question 1. Are most of the Latina/Latino students full-time or part-time?	Most of the students attend part-time. Most of our students work and have families and kids.
Question 2. Where do the majority of your students transfer? Where do the majority of Latina/Latino students transfer?	Most of our students transfer to the University of Massachusetts since it's nearby. They also transfer to Massachusetts State University and schools in southern part of New Hampshire.
Question 3. What percentage of students declare transfer as their primary academic goal? What percentage of Latina/Latino students declare transfer as their primary goal?	Can't provide percentages but would say most of the students don't think about transfer. They are mostly career focused. They focus on the "right now." We have to give them pep talks about transferring to continue their education.

Table 9. **Continued**

Question	Response
Question 4. Do you track the services you provide students? If so, how?	We use Degree Works. It's a degree audit tool where we can develop plans for the students. We talk to them about where they want to transfer and then enter that into Degree Works. We enter this system in because we have some articulation agreements with the school even if it's not a part of MassTransfer. We can than provide the students with a plan. Some students will want to transfer to a school where we don't have any articulation agreements. So we tailor their education plan to that school. Sometimes developing a plan can be hard because at the beginning stage students don't know where they want to transfer. We don't have a caseload here at APCC unless a student has been suspended. If a student comes into we track their name and why they are here with a Google Docs like form. We track everyone that comes in and why they are coming in. We ask if they are here for financial aid, they want to switch their major, or want to talk to me specifically about transfer. I don't make appointments during peak registration unless it's urgent.

Table 9. **Continued**

Question	Response
Question 5. Is there any type of student orientation prior to the semester beginning?	Yes, we have orientation during the summer and in January before spring semester; advisors are not involved. We are trying to get involved. Student engagement is involved and run orientation with the assistance of financial aid but advisors do not take part; believe it or not. We are trying to work it; advisors are involved at other community colleges. We tell new students orientation is mandatory but it's not really required. Nothing happens if they don't attend; they're just usually lost for the first couple of weeks.
Question 6. How many transfer advisors are at your institution? How many students do they advise on a daily basis?	Urban location: Officially, I am the only transfer advisor but we all do a little bit of transfer. If students have questions about a MassTransfer program that's linked then it's easy and all the advisors can answer. If it's more detailed or there is not an articulation agreement or MassTransfer link then they will get directed to me. Suburban location: Has the same set up. 5 advisors total and one transfer advisor. It's a big range on how many students we see a day because we ae a walk in center. During peak registration I can see 40 students in one day. During spring break I only saw 7 students a day.

Table 9. Continued

Question	Response
Question 7. How often is a student required to see an advisor? Is it mandatory or optional?	All students see an academic advisor before their first time registering for class. Then full time students are assigned a faculty advisor. During non-peek registration (April –June) periods students can see whoever they choose. Programs that are criteria based (health programs) they have to see academic advisors until they are accepted into the program. Only suspended students are required to see advisors. Part time students they have to see them until they have 12 credit hours. Then they can register on their own.
Question 8. During an advising session are students required to have an educational plan?	Not required to set up an education plan but we try to set them up. Because we are so busy we tend to develop the plans during down times and have them ready during registration.
Question 9. How did you market the MassTransfer program when it first began? How do you advertise / promote MassTransfer now to students? Is it advertised in multiple languages?	Was not at APCC when MassTransfer began. We just moved to this new building and we are trying to get posters and we send emails but students don't normally check email. We keep pamphlets in the center. We go into College Success Seminar (freshmen seminars) and tell them about MassTransfer from the beginning. Not advertised in multiple languages; at least not at APCC. Not event in Spanish but we have a lot of ESL students.
Question 10. What are the demographics of students utilizing MassTransfer?	No idea.

Table 9. Continued

Question	Response
Question 11. What are the Transfer Center's goals?	There isn't dedicated transfer center. We have the Career Planning and Advising Center (CPAC) and all the advisors can help a little with transfer. They goal is to help students graduate and transfer.
Question 12. Where does the college place transfer as a priority? How closely do you believe they align with the mission of the MassTransfer Program?	Transfer is important but it's not a priority. Retention of students is priority at this point at APCC. The goal is to get students to graduate.
Question 13. Briefly, how are different Student Services programs and services involved in supporting and promoting transfer? Which of these programs and services are most important to supporting and promoting transfer? Are there programs which work particularly well for underrepresented or other student populations?	Financial Aid is very helpful with having conversations with students about transfer planning. PACE is a TRiO SSS program has a dedicated transfer advisor for their students. They take their students on college tours.
Question 14. If you had to identify one program or service, which one is most important to supporting and promoting transfer?	PACE is awesome and they help us promote transfer but they only work with a certain amount of students. I would like to see the APCC Transfer event to grow and get faculty involved. People think I am crazy but I would also like to have an evening program too. Right now the transfer program takes place during the day (10-1pm). We also only do this once and I would like to see it held twice a year and also have online options. Getting faculty involved can really help. They can talk about transfer in the classroom and bring them to the event.

Table 9. Continued

Question	Response
Question 15. What factors do you believe prevent Latina/Latino students from transferring at higher rates?	Money and for our students the commute. Most of our students will attend UMass not because it's so close and don't consider other options. They can take public transportation to the UMASS campus. A lot of our students don't have family support and most of them are single parents. UMASS does not have daycare.
Question 16. Is there any additional information that you would like to address or add?	There seems to be a disconnect between faculty and students at APCC. Students feel comfortable talk to advisors but not faculty. They should try to Latinos to staff and faculty especially we are in a Hispanic community. Only 1 full time male Hispanic professor and a couple of female and then the rest are adjuncts.

Table 10. **APCC Staff Interview Question and Responses: Interviewee 2**

Question	Response
Question 1. How long has the college been an HSI? And is this promoted to the college campus and community at large?	APCC has been an HSI since 2002. The college is in its second grant award.
Question 2. What are the Title V grant objectives? How are the objectives evaluated?	First grant had the goal to create CPAC in the urban location. Also to hire bilingual staff to assist students and their families. The idea was to have role models for the students in the center. The also provided professional development and diversity training. Second grant created the student success center and summer bridge program. Bridge is a 2 week program for newly accepted Latina/Latino students. The attend APCC during the summer for math and English skills, and study skills. Objectives are evaluated each year for the Department of Education Annual Performance Report (APR).
Question 3. How is the grant staffed?	Varies for each grant contract. The grant funds the student success center staff and CPAC staff members.
Question 4. How do students learn about Title V programming?	Word of mouth; participating in activities and fairs on campus. Students quickly found the CPAC center.
Question 5. How is the Title V program involved in supporting and promoting transfer and the MassTransfer program?	Second grant allowed the student success center which provides support that CPAC could not since they did not have caseloads. CPAC staff was too busy to provide year round support in other areas. Our focus is retention and to provide case management and support. The staff will also talk about transfer with the students. The grant also staffs a financial aid counselor and advisor at the CPAC center to help focus on transfer.

Table 10. Continued

Question	Response
Question 6. Are most of the Latina/Latino students full-time or part-time? Percentage?	NA
Question 7. Where do the majority of Latina/Latino students transfer?	NA
Question 8. What percentages of students declare transfer as their primary academic goal? What percentage of Latina/Latino students declare transfer as their primary goal?	NA
Question 9. What factors do you believe prevent Latina/Latino students from transferring at higher rates?	Money. Especially for students who transfer out of cycle when money has already been distributed.
Question 10. Is there any additional information that you would like to address or add?	NA

Antonia Pantoja Community College Student Demographic Survey. Six students were interviewed between 2014 and 2015. Three of the six students were planning to transfer using the MassTransfer program. The remaining three students were also planning to transfer but were not using the MassTransfer program. Information collected from the student participants (Table 11) is self-reported.

Table 11. **APCC Student Demographic Survey Questions and Responses**

Question	Student 1 Response	Student 2 Response	Student 3 Response	Student 4 Response	Student 5 Response	Student 6 Response
Question 1. What is your major?	Computer Information Science	Mechanical Engineering	Criminal Justice	Liberal Arts	Business Accounting	Liberal Arts
Question 2. What is your current GPA?	2.99	3.91	3.01	3.62	3.5	3.83
Question 3. What is your ethnicity (check all that apply)?	Dominican	Dominican	Puerto Rican	Dominican	Dominican	Dominican
Question 4. What is your gender?	Female	Male	Female	Female	Female	Female
Question 5. Is English your primary language?	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Question 6. Is English the primary language in the home?	No	No	Mostly	No	No	No
Question 7. Have either of your parents completed an associate's degree or higher?	No	No	No	No	No	No
Question 8. Was obtaining a bachelor's degree always your goal?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Antonia Pantoja Community College Student Profiles.

Student 1 Profile: Transitioned between English and Spanish during her interview. Family is from the Dominican Republic. She is the first generation in her family to graduate from college. English is not the primary language spoken in her home. At the time of the interview she was expecting her first child. She is a part of the PACE program (TRiO SSS) and

is studying computer information sciences and has a GPA of 2.99 and plans to transfer to a private school in New Hampshire; therefore not using the MassTransfer program.

Student 2 Profile: Originally from the Dominican Republic and English is not his first language. He came to the United States after completing high school and began in the English as a Second Language (ESL) Program at the HSI. He was a part of the PACE (TRiO SSS) program and is studying mechanical engineering and has a GPA of 3.91. He plans to take advantage of the MassTransfer program into the University of Massachusetts system.

Student 3 Profile: Is originally from Puerto Rico and came to the United States when she was five years old. English is not her first language; she had her daughter when she was 18 years old. She is a part of the PACE program (TRiO SSS) and is studying criminal justice and has GPA of 3.01. She plans to transfer without taking advantage of the MassTransfer program.

Student 4 Profile: Originally from the Dominican Republic and has been in the United States for 4 years. English is not her first language and completed her first two years of high school in the Dominican Republic. She is the first person in her family to attend college. She lives in the USA with her grandmother, mother and siblings. Her father is still in the Dominican Republican trying to come over. She was a part of the PACE program (TRiO SSS) and is studying liberal arts and has a GPA of 3.62. She plans to take advantage of the MassTransfer program.

Student 5 Profile: Originally from the Dominican Republic and has been in the United States for 5 years. English is not her first language and completed her first two years of high school in the Dominican Republic. Her father has an associate degree and is about to complete his bachelor's degree. She was a part of the Bridge program in the Student Success Center and

also the PACE program (TRiO SSS). She is studying business and has a GPA of 3.5. She plans to take advantage of the MassTransfer program.

Student 6 Profile: Originally from the Dominican Republic and came to the United States when she was 12 years old. English is not her first language. She attended private school in the Dominican Republic and had a culture shock attending a public school. She had to learn English very quickly since no one in her family spoke the language. She is the first person in her family to attend college. She decided to attend APCC because she did not receive enough financial aid to attend a four-year university. She was a part of the PACE program (TRiO SSS) and is studying liberal arts and has a GPA of 3.83. She plans to transfer but will not be using the MassTransfer program.

Antonia Pantoja Community College Student Interview Questions and Responses

Question 1. After high school why did you decide to continue your education?

Student 1. I didn't start college right away; I went to beauty school first. My family wasn't happy.

Student 2. I completed high school back in the Dominican Republic. My father gave me the opportunity to come here for college.

Student 3. It wasn't an option; it was something that needed to happen. I had a daughter when I was 18 and I didn't want to let that deter me from completing goals that I had set up for myself. It was a huge bump in the road for me but I always knew I wanted to go to college.

Student 4. I always knew that I wanted to go to college. My family always encouraged me to get an education.

Student 5. I also saw myself in a professional job and I knew that college would help me. I wanted to be financially stable.

Student 6. I always wanted to go to college. My parents didn't go to college and they are doing ok but I know I can do better and succeed if I go to college.

Question 2. What factors led you to choose this community college? What was your original goal when you enrolled at your community college?

Student 1. It's really the fact that APCC was close to my house and the transportation was easy. There was no guidance when I was in high school.

Student 2. I was fresh out of the Dominican Republic when I came here. This was one of the only schools that accepted me since and it was close. Plus my English was not good so I had to start here.

Student 3. I've been here 3 years. I left for 2 semesters and went to Southern New Hampshire University and then I came back. The school [SNHU] wasn't what I thought it would be and I didn't get as much money as I thought I would. So I decided to come back, finish and then transfer.

Student 4. I didn't plan to attend APCC. I graduated high school at 16 and was unsure of what I wanted to do. My mother did not want me living off campus so young and they could not afford the tuition. APCC was my only choice because it's close to home and it's affordable. Financial aid covers all my costs.

Student 5. My father was afraid that since I was 17 that if I went too far from home I would start doing crazy stuff. He wanted me to go to a community college that is close. We couldn't afford a four year university. APCC is close to home.

Student 6. I was taking dual credit courses at APCC while I was in high school and I really liked the campus and wanted to attend. I originally wanted to attend a 4 year college but couldn't afford it and financial aid wasn't enough.

Question 3. Who would you consider to be the most helpful in influencing your career/academic goals (family, friends, counselors, teachers, etc.)? Why?

Student 1. I was on my own and I was determined to get this done. When I started at APCC, my work study boss really encouraged me. She was one of the few Latinos in the department and she really guided me.

Student 2. My mother really encouraged me to attend college. I began taking mechanical engineering courses at APCC and saw how it was and I went for it. All the staff has helped especially in the PACE program and tutoring center.

Student 3. The people I work with have been very helpful. I'm a criminal justice major and have already gone through the police academy. I was an auxiliary officer for the police department and I'm interning right now at the women's jail in Framingham. I think the people that I work with that are already out in the field are where I get my influence.

Student 4. My advisor here in high school really helped me. My parents didn't really understand the college application process since they weren't born here. My high school guidance counselor would tell me that I could do it and finish college.

Student 5. My family always had high standards which motivated me to go to college. I saw the careers people could get after college and I wanted to do that too.

Student 6. My parents influenced me to just keep on going, never give up, and use all opportunities that people provide.

Question 4. Are/were you involved in any extra-curricular activities?

Student 1. I am in the PACE program and finished the APCC Leadership Program. I'm an Ambassador, a Student Senator for SGA, the Gay Straight Alliance, and a Christian Club.

Student 2. The PACE program, PTK Honors Society, and I'm a chemistry, math, and physics tutor.

Student 3. I don't really have time to get involved on campus since I'm a single working mom. I am in the PACE program.

Student 4. I was in the summer Bridge program and then the PACE program. I'm the Vice President of SGA. I was really shy when I started at APCC but I forced myself to get out of my shell. I was also a part of the student leadership development program which is required before you can join SGA. I was involved with track and field too.

Student 5. I'm in PACE program and was in the summer bridge program. As a work study student I'm a student outreach worker. I get involved on and off campus like at the YMCA. I'm also in the Business Honor Society.

Student 6. Yes, I am in the PACE program. I wish I could have been more involved on campus but I can't because I'm taking so many classes and work part-time.

Question 5. Did you already know what you wanted to study/major in before you started at the community college or did you decide after enrolling? If so, what was your intended major? Is this still your major?

Student 1. Yes, I knew I wanted to do something with computers and then I also added communications. I plan to finish my BA in Information Technology

Student 2. No, I didn't know what I wanted to study. The advisors at APCC helped me. I plan to continue studying Mechanical Engineering and Math when I transfer.

Student 3. Yes, I wanted to study criminal justice. I'm at a cross roads because my co-workers tell me not to study criminal justice because I'll learn what I need to know in the field. So, I'm still trying to decide what to pursue when I transfer; perhaps international relations.

Student 4. No, I had no idea because I'm interested in so many different things. I'm studying liberal arts and am still unsure what I want to focus on when I transfers. I'm leaning towards psychology. But I don't know what I want to do with psychology. I really enjoy communication but I'm worried about my accent and improving my English.

Student 5. Yes, I attended a technical high school for 2 years in the Dominican Republic and knew that I wanted to continue studying business.

Student 6. No, it was really stressful to decide. I'm studying liberal arts and want to continue in elementary education.

Question 6. How did you learn about the MassTransfer program? How did you learn about transferring to a four year university?

Student 1. I can't use the MassTransfer Program; it doesn't work with my major. I want to study student engagement and MassTransfer doesn't connect with that program. Plus, I want to transfer to Southern New Hampshire University because of its small classrooms. It just feels right there and they focus on students. I've been to UMASS and it doesn't feel student centered.

Student 2. I know a little bit about the MassTransfer program from the advisors. They gave me a plan with all the classes I needed to transfer which was very helpful.

Student 3. The PACE program gave me information about transferring and the MassTransfer program.

Student 4. I learned about MassTransfer from the PACE program. I also visited UMASS and they told me about the program.

Student 5. The PACE program provided information and talked about transfer and financial aid.

Student 6. The PACE program told me about the MassTransfer program. I'm on top of my stuff and I researched everything on my own. I used the MassTransfer link online to see what would work for me.

Question 7. Did the MassTransfer program influence your decision to transfer? And if so please explain how. How did you learn about the university transfer requirements?

Student 1. MassTransfer doesn't work for me. I have visited several universities and I want to transfer to a school focuses on students. I found that Southern New Hampshire; it felt like home. I also don't want to change my major just to use the MassTransfer program; it doesn't include IT.

Student 2. Yes, I only applied to one school using MassTransfer because the location is close to home. My tuition will be covered using MassTransfer because my GPA is over 3.5.

Student 3. No, I can't use the MassTransfer program. Some of the courses I've completed do not fall under the new MassTransfer program. I was grandfathered into using older graduation requirements. The PACE program provided several transfer workshops.

Student 4. Yes, I plan to use the MassTransfer program to help with my tuition.

Student 5. Yes, I am hoping to transfer to the UMASS because of the MassTransfer program; plus it's close to home.

Student 6. I will not be using the MassTransfer program. I plan to attend a private Catholic university for Education. I can't use MassTransfer because I want to go into education and right now I'm studying Liberal Arts. I would need to stay at APCC longer to take more courses to be able to use the MassTransfer program. If I started off in education at APCC then it would have been easy to use the MassTransfer program; I wanted to use it. The college I'm transferring to gave me better financial aid.

Question 8. As a Latina/Latino student, did you feel welcomed by your community college? Is it important to you that the people working at your college "look like you", share your culture and / or have a similar background?

Student 1. It's hard to answer the first questions. I was a fish out of water and trying to get by and make friends. I knew some students here already and that helped. I started at APCC 5 years ago and struggled and didn't know where to get help even though it was repeated to me several times. I was afraid to ask questions and didn't feel people had time for me. I also didn't know who to go to for help. I had to put on a mask and say I knew what I was doing but I really didn't. Yes, it's important to have Latina/Latino faculty.

Student 2. Yes, I felt very welcomed. Mainly because most of the people at APCC are Latino and I struggled with speaking English when I first started. The faculty here was able to help me in Spanish which helped. I was able to connect with them better and didn't feel like an outcast because we spoke the same language.

Student 3. Yes, everything was smooth and I never felt like an outcast by teachers. No, it's not necessary to have similar people working at the campus.

Student 4. I feel APCC is welcoming. I knew people from my high school who came to APCC. Getting involved on campus helped me build a family. The students here are mostly Latino which gave me comfort. The suburban campus is mostly White and it was a little scary at first. But then I learned different cultures can provide new perspectives. It is certainly important to have staff that looks like you. They inspire students and you know that if they did it you can do it too. You can also identify yourself with them too. 35 percent of the staff here come from different Latin American countries; not the faculty.

Student 5. Yes, attending APCC was one of the best decisions I've ever made. The people here always provide help (tutoring, registering, financial aid, and personal life). Yes, having a lot of Latino staff here helped me feel more comfortable and like I could approach them for help. The Student Success Center staff can relate to students.

Student 6. I feel very welcomed here. They always have something going on. There isn't a focus on Latino students but there is always Spanish music playing and Spanish food available. The teachers here help you when they see you struggling; especially if it's because of a language barrier. I would feel less welcomed here if there weren't as many Latinos. I think I would feel inferior. I would feel like just one in the crowd. I appreciate that teachers

have the same background but it's also important that they have different backgrounds so I can learn different perspectives. You can learn new things and about new cultures.

Question 9. Will you be the first person in your family to graduate from a community college or university? Does your family support your education either emotionally and/or financially? Do you feel your family understands what is required of you to transfer between a community college and four year university?

Student 1. Yes, I'm the first person in my family to go to college. I was raised by my grandmother and she is very encouraging. My mother also supports my decision but no one in my family understands the pressure of school or transferring.

Student 2. Yes, I'll be the first to graduate. My family is supportive but they can't help financially. Right now I live on my own and work part time. My father has been here [US] longer so he might understand the demands of college and transferring.

Student 3. Yes, I'll be the first to graduate. My family is extremely supportive. I have a really big support system. My mom takes care of my daughter while I'm in class and at work.

Student 4. Yes, I'll be the first to graduate from college. My older sister is here at APCC with me so she understands the pressure of college. But the rest of my family doesn't understand since they never went to college. The problem is that my mom doesn't speak English and sends me on errands all the time to help the family since I do speak English. My family doesn't fully support my college decisions. I want to study communication but my mom insists that I study something else so I can take care of myself financially. My mom doesn't ask me about college; she just expects me to get all A's. My family has no clue what it takes to transfer; not even her sister.

Student 5. Yes, I'll be the first to graduate from college. My father started off helping and supporting me but that changed after a year. As I became more independent I had less support. He would no longer help me with homework and he just doesn't have time to help.

Student 6. Yes, I'll be the first to finish college. Emotionally my family supports me; they encourage me to do well in school. They don't really understand what it takes to transfer and to graduate. I'm going to keep commuting from home when I transfer to my new college. But my family gives me my space at home.

Q 10. What is the biggest obstacle to transfer? Do you believe that there are unique transfer barriers for Latina/Latino students? If so, please share.

Student 1. The PACE program really helped me learn about transfer programs. It was hard trying to get higher grades and sometimes it's hard to focus on school living at home with my family.

Student 2. It's hard moving to a new country and being away from my family. It's going to be tough not seeing my father as much once I transfer.

Student 3. An obstacle was choosing what I want to study. I knew what I wanted to do when as a teenager but now I have cold feet. It's also hard working and taking care of my daughter. Latinos might have an issue attending a small, tight knit community college and then transferring to a big city school.

Student 4. Most Latinos support their families and have to choose between work and school. Working a lot of hours means they can't focus on school and won't get good grades or scholarships.

Student 5. I've had many obstacles. The PACE program helped but not enough. You are on your own once you transfer. A barrier of Latina/Latinos is getting out of our comfort zone. At APCC we are surrounded by our community but that isn't the case when we transfer. We need to adapt to diversity and other cultures.

Student 6. The transfer process and applying to schools has been easy. The advisors answered all my questions. I haven't really haven't had any obstacles. Latino students might be afraid to take out loans which can be a hurdle.

Q 11. Have you encountered any obstacles in pursuing your transfer goal? If yes, what are they?

Student 1. I recently found out I'm pregnant and had to plan my transfer around the baby being born. Southern New Hampshire suggested I start in the spring instead of the fall. I plan to commute to campus since its 45 minutes from my home.

Student 2. Language is a big barrier which gives me anxiety when I have to participate in class. Financial need is a barrier and having to rely on scholarships and also working part time.

Student 3. I actually transferred to Southern New Hampshire after my first year at APCC. Things did not go well at Sothern New Hampshire and I had to return to APCC. The students at SNU were young and right out of high school and I didn't like the environment.

Student 4. My mom did not want me to go away for college. As a Latina it's hard because of our accents so I didn't want to speak in class. I eventually got over that as I improved my English. It's also been hard because I didn't know what I want to study when I transfer. I've applied to different majors. Funding has been an obstacle. I also come from a poor family where no one understands what it's like to be in college. I worry knowing that financial aid won't always cover my education.

Student 5. Financial aid is an obstacle; they don't give clear answers. Students need more help and guidance once they transfer at the new schools. Not all schools have the same system. The new college should not assume that I know how to navigate through their systems. One problem I'm having with transferring is that the Day Program at the new school is not flexible for my work schedule. I have to work to support myself.

Student 6. Financial aid won't cover everything. I thought I would have earned scholarships since my grades are good. I haven't received any scholarships yet. Another obstacle is that I will need to stay at home and keep working part time while finishing my degree.

Q 12. In your own words, please describes what would be a welcoming environment?

Student 1. Colleges should be student centered and not all about faculty. There needs to be a family environment and better promote student activities and the fun things to do on campus.

Student 2. Professors that help and having lots of Latinos on campus is welcoming.

Student 3. A welcoming staff and a welcome center are the first impressions of a college. There shouldn't be any miserable staff on the front lines. Their needs to be welcoming staff that goes out of their wat to help students.

Student 4. Nice and welcoming staff. Campus activities also help students feel welcomed; celebrating different cultures. Having a lot of activities even if it's a community college.

Student 5. The bridge programs works. Programs that introduce students to the campus, to different resources, introduction to the different majors.

Student 6. Having lots of activities and trips. Seeing teachers interacting with students at the activities.

Commonwealth State University (CSU)

CSU Document Review. The demographic data listed in this section are the result of a review of documents. These documents included the CSU Fact Book Enrollment 2011-2015 which was available online. The Massachusetts public higher education system consists of 15 community colleges, nine state universities, and five University of Massachusetts campuses (Massachusetts Department of Higher Education, 2016). The second site selected for this study is Commonwealth State University (CSU) which is one of the nine state universities. CSU has over 7,000 degree seeking undergraduate students (Table 12).

***Table 12*. CSU Student Enrollment: Degree Seeking Undergraduate Students**

	Fall 2013	**Fall 2014**
Undergraduate Student Population	7,134	7,180
Undergraduate Full Time Students	5,752	5,843
Undergraduate Part Time Students	1,382	1,337
Undergraduate Female Students	61% (3,485)	60% (3,535)
Undergraduate Male Students	39% (2,267)	40% (2,308)
African American Students	408	436
Asian American Students	173	196
Hawaiian / Pacific Islander Students	5	1
Hispanic / Latina/Latino Students	621	682
Multiracial Students	143	143
Native American Students	17	12
Non-US Citizen Students	206	218
White Students	4,099	4,066
Unknown Students	80	89

Note. Does not include non-degree undergraduate student and graduate student enrollment. Adapted from CSU Fact Book Enrollment 2011-2015.

CSU has over 700 undergraduate transfer students enroll in the fall of 2013 and fall 2014 (Table 13). The majority of transfer students identify has female. The largest underrepresented ethnic group of transfer students is Latina/Latino students which are far behind the majority group of White students.

***Table 13*. CSU Transfer Student Undergraduate Enrollment**

	Fall 2013	**Fall 2014**
Transfer Students	782	740
Transfer Female Students	58.4% (457)	57.4% (425)
Transfer Male Students	41.6% (325)	42.6% (315)
African American Students	69	79
Asian American Students	26	24
Hawaiian / Pacific Islander Students	0	0
Hispanic / Latina/Latino Students	85	88
Multiracial Students	17	9
Native American Students	3	0
Non-US Citizen Students	45	40
White Students	510	478
Unknown Students	27	22

Note. Does not include graduate student admissions. Adapted from CSU Fact Book Admissions 2011-2015.

The top five feeder schools for transfer into CSU include four community colleges (Table 14). Antonia Pantoja Community College was ranked as the fifth largest feeder school for transfer into CSU. The higher ranked feeder community colleges were not Hispanic-Serving Institutes therefore making them ineligible for this study.

***Table 14*. CSU Transfer Enrollment: Top Feeder Colleges and Universities**

	Fall 2013	Fall 2014
First Feeder College: Community College Non-HSI	245	236
Second Feeder College: Community College Non-HSI	44	61
Third Feeder College: Community College Non-HSI	46	40
Fourth Feeder College: Private 4 Year University	10	8
Fifth Feeder College: Antonia Pantoja Community College	40	47

Note. Does not include graduate student admissions. Adapted from Site B: Fact Book Admissions 2011-2015.

Commonwealth State University Staff Demographic Survey. CSU designated one staff member to be interviewed for this study. The staff member interviewed worked for CSU's TRiO Student Support Services program. This interview was conducted over the summer of 2014. Information collected from the interviewee (Table 15) was self-reported.

***Table 15*. CSU Staff Demographic Survey Questions and Responses**

Question	Interviewee Responses
What is your job title?	Coordinator of Student Development for TRiO / SSS
How long have you been in your current position?	10 years
What is your ethnicity (please check all that apply)?	Latino: Dominican
What is your gender (please select one)?	Male
Is English your primary language?	No
If no, please specify first language	English
Do you speak Spanish?	Yes
Were you a first generation college student?	Yes
Did you transfer as a student between a community college and a four year university?	No

Commonwealth State University Staff Profile.

CSU Staff Interviewee Profile: Is Latino born in the United States and of Dominican ancestry and works as the coordinator for student development in the TRiO Student Support Services department. His first language is Spanish and he is fully bilingual with English. His job responsibilities include advising students and overseeing student development in TRiO. The TRiO program covers staff salaries for 10 months and the CSU covers the remaining summer months. This allows TRiO staff to also assist with advising over the summer. This staff member has been in his position for 10 years.

Commonwealth State University Staff Interview Questions and Responses.

Table 16. **CSU Staff Interview Questions and Responses**

Question	Response
Question 1. Are most of the Latina/Latino students full-time or part-time?	NA; does not have this information. To be eligible for the TRiO program students must be first-generation and/or low-income and/or have a disability. CSU's TRiO grant services 325 students.
Question 2. Where do the majority of your students transfer? Where do the majority of Latina/Latino students transfer?	Interviewee identified *First Feeder College: Community College Non-HSI* from Table 14 as their top feeder school for transfer. I would suspect that Antonia Pantoja Community College is our next largest feeder school.
Question 3. What percentage of students declare transfer as their primary academic goal? What percentage of Latina/Latino students declare transfer as their primary goal?	NA

Table 16. Continued

Question	Response
Question 4. Do you track the services you provide students? If so, how?	Grant logs and institutional logs that track the student and services offered which all remains confidential. We also track academic support services for math, writing, and sciences. For institutional logging we use MAP Works (Making Achievement Possible) which is used to track the progress of students. MAP Works is used across the campus which can then capture a better picture of student progress. This is a new program and has been used on campus for 2 years. This program was funded through a Title 3 Grant as an Early Alert System.
Question 5. Is there any type of student orientation prior to the semester beginning?	Yes, it's called Transfer Orientation Day and is held twice a year. This is CSU program and is based primarily out of academic advising which is the driving force. It's held before the fall and spring semesters begin. The goal is to make sure students transferring in have the classes that they need. Advisors look at the student transcripts and make sure their credits are properly assessed. Students are exposed to other services on campus. TRiO is a part of academic advising and assist with Transfer Orientation Day. We are informed of transfer students who may qualify for the TRiO program and then we outreach to them and provide information. Summer Bridge Academy is the main feeder for TRiO program (not transfer students). Alternative admissions program for students who didn't qualify for regular admissions.

Table 16. Continued

Question	Response
Question 6. How many transfer advisors are at your institution? How many students do they advise on a daily basis?	CSU has 5 academic advisors and 2 TRiO advisors (student development counselors). This does not include faculty advisors. Each advisor has a case load of students divided by last names. TRiO advisors also split students by last name. Freshman students have mandatory weekly appointment. Sophomores and Juniors have to check in for registration to get their advising codes.
Question 7. How often is a student required to see an advisor? Is it mandatory or optional?	TRiO: Freshman students have mandatory weekly appointment. Sophomores and Juniors have to check in for registration to get their advising codes. CSU: Students don't have mandatory advising. They are required to see their advisor before registering.
Question 8. During an advising session are students required to have an educational plan?	NA
Question 9. How did you market the MassTransfer program when it first began? How do you advertise / promote MassTransfer now to students? Is it advertised in multiple languages?	[Interviewee did not know the difference between MassTransfer and MassBlock. The researcher had to explain the difference and also how MassTransfer replaced the Dual Admissions Program. Interviewee assumed CSU has MassTransfer since they were selected them for this research project.] Not familiar with how CSU recruits transfer students.
Question 10. What are the demographics of students utilizing MassTransfer?	NA
Question 11. What are the Transfer Center's goals?	NA
Question 12. Where does the college place transfer as a priority? How closely do you believe they align with the mission of the MassTransfer Program?	It is a priority; most of our students have transferred. More than 50 percent are transfer students; CSU depends on their enrollment. There is a shift now to try and focus on homegrown students.

Table 16. Continued

Question	Response
Question 13. Briefly, how are different Student Services programs and services involved in supporting and promoting transfer? Which of these programs and services are most important to supporting and promoting transfer? Are there programs which work particularly well for underrepresented or other student populations?	The TRiO program is great for underrepresented students. The Summer Bridge program also provides access to students who were initially not accepted. Most of these students are from the greater Boston area; mostly the city.
Question 14. If you had to identify one program or service, which one is most important to supporting and promoting transfer?	Academic advising. Most students are worried about whether their courses will transfer over and academic advisors can assist in this area.
Question 15. What factors do you believe prevent Latina/Latino students from transferring at higher rates?	Economic reasons, lack of funds, and lack of resources. Not understanding how to access funds. Parents and students don't understand the process of financial aid.
Question 16. Is there any additional information that you would like to address or add?	Transfer students are not the forte for the TRiO program.

CSU Student Demographic Survey. Six students were interviewed between 2014 and 2015. All of the students transferred in Commonwealth State University form Antonia Pantoja Community College; a perquisite for this study. Three of the students used the MassTransfer program while the remaining three did not use the program. Information collected from the student participants (Table 17) is self-reported.

Table 17. **CSU Student Demographic Survey Questions and Responses**

Question	Student 1 Response	Student 2 Response	Student 3 Response	Student 4 Response	Student 5 Response	Student 6 Response
Question 1. What is your major?	Psychology	Criminal Justice	Criminal Justice	Nursing	Sport and Movement Science	Biology
Question 2. What is your current GPA?	3.6	3.1	2.9	3.7	3.2	3.5
Question 3. What is your ethnicity (check all that apply)?	Puerto Rican	Dominican	Puerto Rican	Puerto Rican	Dominican and Puerto Rican	Dominican
Question 4. What is your gender?	Female	Male	Male	Female	Male	Female
Question 5. Is English your primary language?	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Question 6. Is English the primary language in the home?	No	Yes	No	No	Mostly	No
Question 7. Have either of your parents completed an associate's degree or higher?	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
Question 8. Was obtaining a bachelor's degree always your goal?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Commonwealth State University Student Profiles.

Student 1 Profile: Is Puerto Rican and was born on the mainland of the United States. English is her primary language while Spanish is used at home. She will be the first in her family to graduate from college. She is a junior at CSU and is part of the TRiO SSS program and is studying psychology. She transferred from APCC using the MassTransfer program and currently has a GPA of 3.6.

Student 2 Profile: Is of Dominican heritage and was born in the United States. English is his primary language and is also used at home. His older siblings have graduated from college but his parents have not completed a bachelor's degree. He is senior at CSU and studying criminal justice. He transferred from APCC using the MassTransfer program and currently has a GPA of 3.10.

Student 3 Profile: Was born in Puerto Rico and came to the mainland of the United States when he was 10 years old. He will be the first in his family to graduate from college. He is a junior at CSU and is part of the TRiO SSS program. Spanish is his primary language and he is bilingual with English. He transferred from APCC using the MassTransfer program and currently has a GPA of 2.99.

Student 4 Profile: Was born in Puerto Rico and has been in the United States for 6 years. She was a teen mom and moved to Massachusetts with her mom for a fresh start. Spanish is her primary language which is also spoken in the home. She will be the first in her family to graduate from college. She is a junior, studying nursing, and is also a part of the TRiO SSS program. She transferred from APCC but did not use the MassTransfer program since her desired major was not available. She currently has a GPA of 3.7.

Student 5 Profile: Was born on the mainland of the United States and is Puerto Rican and Dominican. English is his primary language which is also used in the home. He is a senior, studying Sport and Movement Science, and is in the TRiO SSS program. He transferred from APCC but did not use the MassTransfer program since his desired major was not available. He works a full time job and is also a full time student with a GPA of 3.2.

Student 6 Profile: Is originally from the Dominican Republic and has been in the United States for 12 years. English is her primary language but she uses Spanish in the home. She will

be the first in her family to graduate from college. She is a junior, studying biology, and is also a part of the TRiO SSS program. She transferred from APCC but did not use the MassTransfer program since her desired major was not available. She currently has a GPA of 3.5.

Commonwealth State University Student Interview Questions and Responses.

Question 1. After high school why did you decide to continue your education?

Student 1. I always wanted to go to college and be able to help other people.

Student 2. I knew I wanted to study criminal justice. I wanted to create a better future for myself.

Student 3. I joined the Army Reserves first and they helped pay for my education.

Student 4. I did most of high school in Puerto Rico and knew I wanted to go to college in the United States.

Student 5. This was always the plan. I was raised by a single mom and she was determined to get me and my sister into college.

Student 6. I wanted to make something out of my life. I wanted to become a doctor.

Question 2. What factors led you to choose this community college? What was your original goal when you enrolled at your community college?

Student 1. APCC was close to my house and I needed to build my GPA up so I could transfer to a good school.

Student 2. My siblings also attended APCC so I decided to go there too. It's also closer to home and cheaper and was beneficial before transferring.

Student 3. I wasn't sure what I wanted to study and APCC was close to my home. I wasn't thinking about transfer right away.

Student 4. I was new to the United States and APCC was close to my home. My family didn't think I would make it but I was determined to do good for me and my daughter.

Student 5. I wasn't prepared financially or academically to start at a 4-year school. My goal was to build up my skills and transfer to finish my degree.

Student 6. Money was a big reason. My family couldn't afford to send me to a university so I started at APCC so save money.

Question 3. Who would you consider to be the most helpful in influencing your career/academic goals (family, friends, counselors, teachers, etc.)? Why?

Student 1. I was in an Upward Bound program and the people there really encouraged me to fulfil my dreams. They always supported the students and prepared us for college life.

Student 2. My mother really encouraged me. She always told me to better myself through education.

Student 3. The advisors at the student success center really helped me find my path and encouraged me along the way and to pursue my bachelors.

Student 4. The Latino advisors at APCC really took me under their wings and helped me find my way. I would have been so lost without their help.

Student 5. My mother sacrificed a lot to give us the opportunities she didn't have growing up. I always knew I wanted to go to college.

Student 6. My family really wanted me to succeed and to finish college and be successful. They always supported me emotionally and financially.

Question 4. Are/were you involved in any extra-curricular activities?

Student 1. I participate in the TRiO SSS program.

Student 2. No, between school and part time work I'm pretty booked up. I commute from home. Yes, I am in the TRiO program.

Student 3. I'm in TRiO and am pretty involved with LASO which is the Latin American Student Organization.

Student 4. No, I'm too busy with school, work, and my daughter. Yes, in the TRiO program too.

Student 5. No. I work full time and go to school full time. Yes, I am in the TRiO program.

Student 6. I'm in TRiO and LASO as a general member.

Question 5. Did you already know what you wanted to study/major in before you started at the community college or did you decide after enrolling? If so, what was your intended major? Is this still your major?

Student 1. No, I didn't really know what I wanted to study when I first started at APCC. I took a psychology course and feel in love with the major.

Student 2. Yes, I always wanted to study criminal justice and it's my current major.

Student 3. No, I really liked my criminal justice courses and that fit with my military background so I decided to stick with that major.

Student 4. I wanted to study nursing or be a physician assistant. Now I want to be a doctor.

Student 5. No, I thought I wanted to study pharmaceuti-cals but that didn't really work out so I switched. So I switched to General Studies and Sports Education program which was a new department at APCC.

Student 6. I knew I wanted to be doctor but I didn't know how to get there and what to study. I finally decided to study biology.

Question 6. Will you be the first person in your family to graduate from a community college or university? Does your family support your education either emotionally and/or financially? Do you feel your family understands what is required of you to transfer between a community college and four year university?

Student 1. I will be the first person in my family to graduate from college. My family is very supportive and assists me financially. My younger sister is also in college so my parents understand a little more about college life from both of us being in school.

Student 2. No, my siblings finished their associate degrees at APCC. Neither of my parents finished college. My mom is very supportive especially since my brother and sister already went to college.

Student 3. Yes, my mother didn't go to college in Puerto Rico. The Army helps to pay for college. My mother knows that it takes hard work to transfer and graduate and she supports me.

Student 4. I will be the first in my family to graduate. My family doubted me since I was a teen mom but my mom didn't give up on me. She doesn't understand what it's like to be in college but she encourages me.

Student 5. No, my mother aunt, and uncles all have college degrees. My mom has an associates and bachelor's degree. My brother is in college in Miami too. My family is very supportive since they know what it takes to finish a degree.

Student 6. Yes, I'll be the first person to graduate. My family moved here from the Dominican Republic so we could have a better life. We don't have much money but they help me whenever they can and give me support. I don't think they understand completely what it takes to transfer.

Question 7. What is the biggest obstacle to transfer? Do you believe that there are unique transfer barriers for Latina/Latino students? If so, please share.

Student 1. Not being able to afford college is an obstacle. My family was very worried about taking out loans.

Student 2. Paying for college is hard; that's why I live at home. My family gives me space but I don't get to do much on campus.

Student 3. Being at APCC for more than two years was hard but there were classes I needed to take before I could transfer. I think a lot of Latino students give up because it takes them more than two years at a community college.

Student 4. I had to take several ESL classes at APCC to improve my English. This can be a challenge for people coming from Puerto Rico but I didn't give up.

Student 5. Adjusting to a new school. I think most Latinos have a hard time paying for college at least in this area. Lack of motivation and a support system is also an obstacle.

Student 6. I live at home so it was easier for me to decide where to transfer since it needed to be close. A lot of my friends live at home and go to school because they can't afford to live on campus and don't want to take out loans and go in debt.

Question 8. Have you encountered any obstacles in pursuing your transfer goal? If yes, what are they?

Student 1. I had to take extra classes to build up my GPA so I could transfer. I didn't do very well my first year in college.

Student 2. No, not really.

Student 3. It took me 3 years to finish at APCC because I had to take extra math classes.

Student 4. I had to pick a college that was close to home so I can get my daughter to school and day care.

Student 5. I moved around a lot and attended 2 different community colleges but I finally got it together.

Student 6. No real obstacles.

Question 9. In your own words, please describes what would be a welcoming environment?

Student 1. Student centered with friendly staff.

Student 2. Professors that understand the demands of students that have to work while taking classes.

Student 3. A college that has a lot of fun things for students to do so they can relieve stress.

Student 4. Professors who help students and doesn't see their accent as a disability.

Student 5. Faculty and staff that mingle with students outside of the classroom. This will also create a better environment in the classroom. More branding and marketing is needed to create interactions with students.

Student 6. There should be more activities for students who commute to campus.

Question 10. Who at your community college talked to you or counseled you about transfer? When did they talk to you? Did you meet regularly with a transfer advisor?

Student 1. I reached out a lot to the Upward Bound staff that helped me when I was in high school. They pointed me in the right direction at the community college.

Student 2. The advisors at APCC told me about the MassTransfer program and how to transfer my credits. I only meet with them when I needed help. I also emailed them a lot too.

Student 3. The PACE program talked to us a lot about transferring.

Student 4. The advisors in the student success program would talk to me about transfer and so did the other advisors. I was always in the student success center in between classes.

Student 5. My academic advisor in the Athletics department.

Student 6. The advisors helped me plan my transfer and what courses I needed to finish.

Question 11. Did the MassTransfer program influence your decision to transfer? And if so please explain how. How did you learn about the university transfer requirements?

Student 1. Yes, it made it more affordable for me to finish my degree. The college advisor told me about MassTransfer and what I needed to get into CSU.

Student 2. I always wanted to transfer and this just made it easier. The advisors told me what I needed to transfer.

Student 3. Yes, I didn't know what I wanted to study at first and MassTransfer made it easy for me to have a plan. The advisors told me about MassTransfer.

Student 4. I'm not using the MassTransfer program since they didn't have one for nursing.

Student 5. No, my major is not covered in the MassTransfer program which wasn't really fair. But I was determined to get a degree in Sport Management.

Student 6. I couldn't use MassTransfer for my major at CSU.

Question 12. As a Latina/Latino student, did you feel welcomed by your community college? Is it important to you that the people working at your college "look like you", share your culture and / or have a similar background?

Student 1. Yes, I really liked APCC and felt welcomed. I think it is important to have Latino professors and staff working at a college with Latino Students. It gives us role models to look up to.

Student 2. Yes, they have classes to fit my work schedule. I don't think it's really important to have Latino professors.

Student 3. Yes, the student success center really helped me out. The advisors there were like me and didn't judge me; they encouraged me.

Student 4. Sometimes I felt isolated because of the language barrier. One time we had to work in groups and a student said he didn't want to work with me and my friend because we speak Spanish. The joke was on him because I had an A in that course and knew the material but he judged me because of my accent which wasn't right. Yes, it's very important to have people we can relate to at colleges. It balances the negativity we get from some people.

Student 5. Yes, APCC had a lot of Latinos that cared and helped students. That made it feel like another home and fun place to be.

Student 6. Yes, I live in a Latino community and it felt nice to also see that at APCC. It made me feel at home and less scared to ask questions.

Question 13. How did you learn about the resources at your university? How often do you use these resources? What resources are available to you at your university? Did you receive any support from an advisor / counselor once you transferred?

Student 1. The TRiO staff are friendly and point me in the right direction when I need help. I use the tutoring services on campus.

Student 2. I attended the transfer orientation and met with an advisor to make sure I was all set.

Student 3. I looked for information and asked questions. I started using the tutoring services.

Student 4. The orientation helped a little and then I got involved with TRiO and they helped me more.

Student 5. I met with an advisor in my department to make sure I was on track and knew what classes I had to take.

Student 6. The TRiO advisors helped me a lot and told me about the campus.

Question 14. As a Latina/Latino student, did you feel welcomed by your university? Is it important to you that the people working at your college "look like you", share your culture and / or have a similar background?

Student 1. Yes, I already knew people at CSU. There are a lot of Latinos on campus here too which is nice.

Student 2. Yes, but I don't get to do much on campus since I also work.

Student 3. Yes, I found LASO and got involved with other students on campus.

Student 4. It's ok, I learned what it was like to be in college but I don't get to hang after classes. Talking to people who are like me helped to ease my anxiety about being at a new school.

Student 5. I don't spend much time at CSU since I work full time.

Student 6. Yes, there are a lot of Latinos students here too.

Question 15. Have you experienced any obstacles once you started at your university? Has anybody at your university helped you work toward overcoming this obstacle? If yes, what kind of help have you received?

Student 1. No real obstacles.

Student 2. No, I was able to find my way on campus.

Student 3. Starting over at a new school was a challenge but I adjusted.

Student 4. I'm still working on my English skills but I've gotten better. No other real obstacles.

Student 5. No, I was finally focused on getting done.

Student 6. Getting involved with the TRiO program helped me meet other students and feel like a part of CSU.

Findings

Guiding Questions: Antonia Pantoja Community College Student Interviews

Table 18. Relationship of APCC Interview Questions to Study's Guiding Questions

Guiding Question	Interview Question
Guiding question 1	Interview questions 1,2, 5
Guiding question 2	Interview questions 3, 4, 9
Guiding question 3	Interview questions 6, 7, 10, 11
Guiding question 4	Interview questions 8, 12

Guiding Question 1: What are the driving factors that impact a Latina/Latino student's decision to attend a community colleges or a university?

Most of the students cited their family as a motivating factor to continue their education after high school. One student shared the example of leaving his family behind in the Dominican Republic as reasons he plan continue his college education. He noted in his interview that "my father gave me the opportunity to come here for college." The remaining students cited their desires to have a professional job and to be financially stable as motivators. Many of the students made the decision to enroll in APCC due to its proximity to their homes. Reliable public transportation was an important part of their decisions. During the interviews one student stressed that "APCC was close to my house and the transportation was easy." These students also made the decision to attend APCC based on its affordability when compared to beginning at a 4-year institution. A student noted that "I originally wanted to attend a 4 year college but

couldn't afford it and financial aid wasn't enough." One student noted a language barrier as the reason he began at APCC. This student recently immigrated to the US and disclosed that his "English was not good so [he] had to start here." Half of the students knew what they wanted to study before they began at APCC. These students are completing an associate's degree in the discipline they originally intended to study. The other half of students interviewed did not know what they wanted to purse. One student stated that she wanted to study communications "communication but I'm worried about my accent and improving my English."

In summary, driving factors to attend a community college for Latina/Latino students include family encouragement and support, proximity and easy transportation, and affordability. Status as an English Language Learners seems to also have been a factor when deciding to attend a community college.

Guiding Question 2: What factors contribute to Latina/Latino student success in college?

Half of the students credit their family members for contributing to their college success. One student stated that "my parents influenced me to just keep on going, never give up, and use all opportunities that people provide. Two students were encouraged to success by a high school or college staff members. The remaining student credit her college success to her fellow co-workers which are not associated to the college. She believes "I think the people that I work with that are already out in the field are where I get my influence." All of the students reported being a part of the PACE program. Pathways to Academic & Career Excellence (PACE) is a TRiO Student Support Services program. Most of the students reported that there were active in extra-curricular activities including the Student Government Association. The remaining students were not active on campus outside of the PACE program. One student reported that "I don't really have time to get involved on campus since I'm a single working mom." While the

other wishes she "could have been more involved on campus but I can't because I'm taking so many classes and work part-time."

Each program participant self-reported as being the first person in their family that will graduate from college. Half of the students felt they had family support. The other half did not feel they had the full support of their families. One student was often asked to serve as an interpreter for her family. "The problem is that my mom doesn't speak English and sends me on errands all the time to help the family since I do speak English. My family doesn't fully support my college decisions." Most of the interviewees do not believe that their families truly understood that it would take to successfully transfer to 4-year university. A common sentiment was can be seen in one student's response: "My mother supports my decision but no one in my family understands the pressure of school or transferring."

In summary, the support and encouragement from family, school advisors, and colleagues contributed to the success of these students in college. Each of these first-generation college students were involved in the PACE program which provided additional support on campus.

Guiding Question 3: How has the MassTransfer program impacted transfer of Latina/Latino students?

Four of the six students interviewed learned about the MassTransfer program through the PACE program. "The PACE program provided information and talked about transfer and financial aid." One student reported learning about the MassTransfer from an advisor. "I know a little bit about the MassTransfer program from the advisors. They gave me a plan with all the classes I needed to transfer which was very helpful." The remaining student did not discuss how they learned about the MassTransfer program. Rather, they discussed why they weren't using the program. "I can't use the MassTransfer Program; it doesn't work with my major."

Half of the students do not intend to utilize the MassTransfer program. "I can't use MassTransfer because I want to go into education and right now I'm studying Liberal Arts. I would need to stay at APCC longer to take more courses to be able to use the MassTransfer program. The remaining half of students plan to use the MassTransfer program. "Yes, I plan to use the MassTransfer program to help with my tuition."

Obstacles to transfer included the difficulty of trying to focus on school to improve grades while living at home. Another student struggled with adjusting to being in a new country. "It's hard moving to a new country and being away from my family." As for unique obstacles, one student reported that "a barrier for Latinas/Latinos is getting out of our comfort zone. At APCC we are surrounded by our community but that isn't the case when we transfer. We need to adapt to diversity and other cultures. Several of the students reported a lack of finances as a personal obstacle in pursuing transfer. One of those students worked hard on maintaining a high GPA in hopes of securing funds for college. However, she reported that "I thought I would have earned scholarships since my grades are good. I haven't received any scholarships yet." Language was also reported to be an obstacle for several of the students. Both of these student experienced anxiety when having to speak English in front of their classes. "As a Latina it's hard because of our accents so I didn't want to speak in class."

In summary, the PACE program seems to be succeeding in providing transfer information and support to their students. The MassTransfer program was not a fit for all the study participants. As expected, the majority of students do not have financial security and worry about covering the continued costs of tuition.

Guiding Question 4: What role do college faculty and staff play in the transfer success of Latina/Latino students? According to most of the students interviewed, APCC

provided a welcoming environment for students. One student noted a high comfort level because "most of the people at APCC are Latino and I struggled with speaking English when I first started. The faculty here was able to help me in Spanish which helped. I was able to connect with them better and didn't feel like an outcast because we spoke the same language." Another of these students indicated that "getting involved on campus helped me build a family. The students here are mostly Latino which gave me comfort." Another student disclosed that she "would feel less welcomed here if there weren't as many Latinos. I think I would feel inferior. I would feel like just one in the crowd." Of the six students, one had a hard time answering whether APCC provided a welcoming environment. She reported that she "I knew some students here already and that helped. I started at APCC 5 years ago and struggled and didn't know where to get help even though it was repeated to me several times. I was afraid to ask questions and didn't feel people had time for me. I also didn't know who to go to for help. I had to put on a mask and say I knew what I was doing but I really didn't."

Again, most of the students believed it was important to have Latina/Latino faculty and staff at the community college. One student explained that "it is certainly important to have staff that looks like you. They inspire students and you know that if they did it you can do it too. You can also identify yourself with them too." Two of the students did not think it was important to have Latina/Latino faculty. One student emphasize the need for diversity in faculty and staff. "I appreciate that teachers have the same background but it's also important that they have different backgrounds so I can learn different perspectives. You can learn new things and about new cultures."

Half of the students reported that a welcoming environment needed to include welcoming staff. "A welcoming staff and a welcome center are the first impressions of a college. There

shouldn't be any miserable staff on the front lines. Their needs to be welcoming staff that goes out of their wat to help students." Another student desired a student centered college that was "not all about faculty." Half of the students also reported that a welcoming environment needed to include more student activities. Campus activities also help students feel welcomed; celebrating different cultures. Having a lot of activities even if it's a community college.

In summary, a majority of the students felt welcomed at APCC. Being able to communicate with faculty and staff in English and Spanish provide an extra level of comfort for the students. A majority of the students agreed that Latina/Latino faculty and staff also provided a sense of comfort and ease on the campus. A welcoming staff that positively interacts with students helps to foster an inclusive and welcoming environment.

Guiding Questions: Commonwealth State University Student Interviews

Table 19. Relationship of CSU Interview Questions to Study's Guiding Questions

Guiding Question	Interview Question
Guiding question 1	Interview questions 1,2, 5
Guiding question 2	Interview questions 3, 4, 6
Guiding question 3	Interview questions 7, 8, 10, 11
Guiding question 4	Interview questions 9, 12, 13, 14, 15

Guiding question 1. What are the driving factors that impact a Latina/Latino student's decision to attend a community colleges or a university?

More than half of the students reported that they always wanted to attend college. One student shared that "this was always the plan. I was raised by a single mom and she was determined to get me and my sister into college." The remaining students knew they wanted to

attend college because they "wanted to make something out of my life" and wanted to create a better future for myself."

Most of the students began their journey at a community college because it was close to their homes. Half of the students reported financial reasons were the reason they started at a community college. Two students began at a community college in order to build their GPA and decide what they wanted to study. One student shared that they "[weren't] sure what I wanted to study and APCC was close to my home. I wasn't thinking about transfer right away."

Half of the students did not know what they wanted to study when they began at a community college. One student was uncertain but able to select a major after taking classes. "No, I really liked my criminal justice courses and that fit with my military background so I decided to stick with that major." The other half of the students knew what they wanted to study. "I wanted to study nursing or be a physician assistant. Now I want to be a doctor."

In summary, more than half of the students always knew they wanted to attend college. The majority of the student s began at a community college because it was close to home and also financially a better option. The students were split down the middle when they reported whether they knew their intended major when they began.

Guiding Question 2: What factors contribute to Latina/Latino student success in college?

Half of the students credit their family members as influencing their academic goals. The sentiment of family support is best displayed as one student stated that "my mother sacrificed a lot to give us the opportunities she didn't have growing up." Another student replied by sharing that his mother "always told me to better myself through education."

The remaining half of students credited high school and college advisors as being the most helpful. One student highlighted APCC staff as being the most influential "the Latino advisors at

APCC really took me under their wings and helped me find my way. I would have been so lost without their help."

Half of the students reported that they work and therefore do not have time to be involved in extra-curricular activities. Most of the students interviewed reported that they are involved in the TRiO Student Support Services program. Two students reported also being involved in the Latin American Student Organization (LASO). Several students believed that their families have some understanding of what it takes to transfer.

Four of the six students will be the first in their family to graduate from college. "Yes, I'll be the first person to graduate. My family moved here from the Dominican Republic so we could have a better life." When reporting about their families; all of the students believe that they have support at home. However, several of the students reported that their families do not understand what is required for transfer. "She doesn't understand what it's like to be in college but she encourages me."

In summary, family support was a dominate theme contributing to Latina/Latino student success in college. The encouragement of High school and college advisors to succeed in college was also contributing factor**.**

Guiding question 3. How has the MassTransfer program impacted transfer of Latina/Latino students?

Lack of financial support was reported as a transfer obstacle for many of the students. One student pointed out that "Not being able to afford college is an obstacle." An obstacle for several of the students was the added classes they needed to take before they could transfer. One student had to take several ESL courses before they could mainstream into regular courses. The other student reported that "being at APCC for more than two years was hard but there were

classes I needed to take before I could transfer. I think a lot of Latino students give up because it takes them more than two years at a community college."

Once again under this question several of the students reported that needing to take extra classes was a transfer obstacle. It is important to note that these are not the exact same students who reported this in question 7. "I had to take extra classes to build up my GPA so I could transfer. I didn't do very well my first year in college." Many of the students reported that they did not encounter any obstacles trying to transfer. One student reported that it was difficult selecting where to transfer because she "had to pick a college that was close to home so I can get my daughter to school and day care."

All of the students reported that they met with advisors at APCC and credit them with providing transfer information. One student reported that "the advisors at APCC told me about the MassTransfer program and how to transfer my credits. I only meet with them when I needed help. I also emailed them a lot too." Another student identified his academic advisor as the person who provided transfer information.

Half of the students agreed that the MassTransfer program did influence their transfer decision. Reasons provided included that MassTransfer "made it more affordable for me to finish my degree." Another student stated that they "didn't know what I wanted to study at first and MassTransfer made it easy for me to have a plan. The advisors told me about MassTransfer. The other half of the students did not use the MassTransfer program. Each of these students reported that their intended transfer program was not covered under the MassTransfer program. One student captured the sentiment of the group when he stated that his "major is not covered in the MassTransfer program which wasn't really fair."

In summary, the MassTransfer benefited half of the students interviewed. The other half of students could not take advantage of MassTransfer due to limited program offerings. Academic and faculty advisors were instrumental in informing all of the students in this study about MassTransfer program. The program has proven effective for the students who were able to use MassTransfer. It provided financial relief in the form of lower or waived tuition. MassTransfer also provided clear transfer guidelines within limited programs to the students.

Guiding question 4. What role do college faculty and staff play in the transfer success of Latina/Latino students?

There was not a general consensus on what would be a welcoming environment. One student reported that the college should be "student centered with friendly staff." Two students desired a campus that had more activities for students especially for those "who commute to campus."

Most of the students reported that they felt welcomed while they were at APCC. One student reported that they "really liked APCC and felt welcomed. I think it is important to have Latino professors and staff working at a college with Latino Students. It gives us role models to look up to." Similarly, another student reported that they "live in a Latino community and it felt nice to also see that at APCC. It made me feel at home and less scared to ask questions. One student did report that their experiences at APCC where not welcoming. This student stated that "Sometimes I felt isolated because of the language barrier. One time we had to work in groups and a student said he didn't want to work with me and my friend because we speak Spanish. The joke was on him because I had an A in that course and knew the material but he judged me because of my accent which wasn't right."

Half of the students learned about their university resources from the TRiO program advisors. A student emphasized that "The TRiO staff are friendly and point me in the right direction when I need help. I use the tutoring services on campus." Another student met with their faculty department for assistance. The transfer student orientation was also cited as a great resource to learn about the university.

Many of the students reported that they felt welcomed by CSU. One student reported that they "already knew people at CSU. There are a lot of Latinos on campus here too which is nice." One student reported that they "I don't spend much time at CSU since I work full time." The remaining student reported that "it's ok, I learned what it was like to be in college but I don't get to hang after classes. Talking to people who are like me helped to ease my anxiety about being at a new school."

Half of the students reported no obstacles once they began at CSU. Similar to the students that reported no obstacles, one student stated that "getting involved with the TRiO program helped me meet other students and feel like a part of CSU. The two remaining students reported initial issues but no real obstacles. One of these students reported that they are "still working on my English skills but I've gotten better. No other real obstacles." While the other student stated that, "starting over at a new school was a challenge but I adjusted."

In summary, the most of the students felt supported by their advisors. They also reported that the presence of Latina/Latino faculty, staff, and students greatly assisted in feeling welcomed at APCC and CSU. Latina/Latino faculty, staff, and students on campus contributed to a sense of belonging and allowed students to feel comfortable on campus.

Analysis

Laura Rendón's Validation Theory and Community College Student Responses

Validation Theory emphasizes "that college faculty, counselors, and administrative staff take a proactive role in reaching out to students to affirm them as being capable of doing academic work and to support them in their academic endeavors and social adjustment" (Rendón, 2002, p. 645). According to Rendón (2002), these "experiences are especially important with nontraditional student populations such as returning adults, low-income students, first-generation students, and many women and minority students from working class backgrounds" (p. 644). Rendón (2002) argues that nontraditional students need and want guidance as they begin to their journey but fear being belittled. "They do not succeed well in an invalidating, sterile, fiercely competitive context for learning that is still present in many college classrooms today" (Rendón, 2002, p. 64).

For the purpose of this study the researcher will analyze the data through the lens of Laura Rendón's Validation Theory using 3 of its 6 elements.

1. Validation is an enabling, confirming, and supportive process initiated by in and out-of-class agents that fosters academic and interpersonal development.
2. When validation is present, students feel capable of learning; they experience a feeling of self-worth and feel that they and everything that they bring to the college experience is accepted and recognized as valuable. Lacking validation, students feel crippled, silenced, subordinate and/or mistrusted.
3. Validation can occur both in-and out- of-class. In class validating agents include faculty, classmates, lab instructors and teaching assistants. Out-of-class validating agents can be 1) significant others, such as a spouse, boyfriend of girlfriends, 2)

> family members, such as parents, siblings, relative and children and 3) friends, such as classmates and friends attending and not attending college 4) college staff including faculty who meet with students out-of-class, counselors/advisors, coaches, tutors, teaching assistants, and resident advisors. (Rendón, 1994, p. 237-238)

Latina/Latino Critical Race Theory and Community College Student Responses

The second theory used for analysis in this study is Latina/Latino Critical Race Theory (LatCrit). LatCrit applied to education provides "a framework that can be used to theorize and examine the ways in which race and racism explicitly and implicitly impact on the educational structures, processes and discourses that effect People of Color generally and Latinas/os specifically" (Solórzano & Yosso, 2001, p. 479).

For the purpose of this study the researcher will focus on the component of Counterstorytelling. "Some of the critical storytellers believe that stories also have a valid destructive function. Society constructs the social world through a series of tacit agreements mediated by images, pictures, tales, and scripts" (Delgado & Stefanic, 2012, p. 48). Through the lens of LatCrit, the stories and experiences of Latina/Latino students can be used to "challenge, displace, or mock these pernicious narratives and beliefs. (Delgado & Stefanic, 2012, p. 49). As noted earlier in this study; through Counterstorytelling:

> "Stories can name a type of discrimination; once named, it can be combated. If race is not real or objective, but constructed, racism and prejudice should be capable of deconstruction; the pernicious beliefs and categories are, after all, our own. Powerfully written stories and narratives may begin a process of correction in our system of beliefs and categories by calling attention to neglected evidence and reminding readers of our common humanity." (Delgado & Stefanic, 2012, pgs. 50-51)

Guiding Question 1: What are the driving factors that impact a Latina/Latino student's decision to attend a community colleges or a university?

Student responses to Question 1. Most of the students cited their family as a motivating factor to continue their education after high school. The remaining students cited their desires to have a professional job and to be financially stable as motivators. Many of the students made the decision to enroll in APCC due to its proximity to their homes. Reliable public transportation was an important part of their decisions. Again, most of the students also made the decision to attend APCC based on its affordability when compared to beginning at a 4-year institution. Half of the students knew what they wanted to study before they began at APCC. These students are completing an associate's degree in the discipline they originally intended to study. The other half of students interviewed did not know what they wanted to pursue.

Validation Theory as it relates to Question 1. There appears to be a strong relationship between validation from family members and participant enrollment in college. Validation Theory includes the experiences of students both in and out of the classroom. The first element of Rendón's theory tells us that "validation is an enabling, confirming, and supportive process initiated by in and out-of-class agents that fosters academic and interpersonal development" (1994, p. 237). Most of the students reported that family members encouraged them to enroll in college. The fourth element of Validation Theory states that out-of-class validating agents can be 1) significant others, such as a spouse, boyfriend of girlfriends, 2) family members, such as parents, siblings, relative and children and 3) friends, such as classmates and friends attending and not attending college (Rendón, 1994, p. 238). Validation theory in practice is demonstrated as one APCC student stated that he "always knew that [he] wanted to go to college. My family always encouraged me to get an education." Rendón's theory also list children as validating

agents. This study included a single mother at APCC who referred to her daughter as a motivating factor to complete a college degree. This student reported that attending college "wasn't an option; it was something that needed to happen. I had a daughter when I was 18 and I didn't want to let that deter me from completing goals that I had set up for myself. It was a huge bump in the road for me but I always knew I wanted to go to college."

Latina/Latino Critical Race Theory as it relates to Question 1. There does not seem to be much of a relationship between why the students choose to attend APCC and Latina/Latino Critical Race Theory. In this instance, the experiences of the students surveyed can explain some of the unique challenges faced by students who immigrate to the US from another country. Sharing their stories provides an insight that can assist community colleges to better mentor and guide immigrant students. Here we learned that one student worked extremely hard in school because he left most of his family behind in the Dominican Republic. He felt obligated to do well since his "father gave me the opportunity to come here for college." Another student shared that she was insecure about her accent and needing to improve her English. Her insecurity kept her from pursing a degree in Communications which she enjoyed because she was "worried about my accent and improving my English."

Guiding Question 2. What factors contribute to Latina/Latino student success in college?

Student responses to Question 2. Half of the students credit their family members for contributing to their college success. Two students were encouraged to succeed by high school or college staff members. The remaining student credited her college success to co-workers from outside of the college. All of the students reported be a part of the PACE program. Most of the students reported that they were active in extra-curricular activities including the Student Government Association. The remaining students were not active on campus outside of the

PACE program. Each program participant self-reported as being the first person in their family that will graduate from college. Half of the students felt they had family support. The other half did not feel they had the full support of their families. Many of the interviewees did not believe that their families truly understood what it would take to successfully transfer to 4-year university.

Validation Theory as it relates to Question 2. There appears to be a strong relationship between external classroom encouragements to factors contributing to Latina/Latino student success in college. As noted earlier, Rendón's Validation Theory includes the support that students receive in and out of the classroom as validating factors leading to student success. The students where asked to list the people they considered to be the most helpful in influencing their career/academic goals. One student stated that "my parents influenced me to just keep on going, never give up, and use all opportunities that people provide. Other students listed their high school and college advisors as being the most influential. Another student received support from her co-workers who were already in the positions she desired to attain. She noted that "the people that I work with that are already out in the field are where I get my influence."

Latina/Latino Critical Race Theory as it relates to Question 2. There appears to be a relationship between family influences and student success in college. LatCrit applied to education provides "a framework that can be used to theorize and examine the ways in which race and racism explicitly and implicitly impact on the educational structures, processes and discourses that effect People of Color generally and Latinas/os specifically" (Solórzano & Yosso, 2001, p. 479). Through the lens of LatCrit, the stories and experiences of Latina/Latino students can be used to "challenge, displace, or mock these pernicious narratives and beliefs. (Delgado & Stefanic, 2012, p. 49).

It is important to note that each program participant self-reported that they will be the first generation in their families to graduate from college. Only half of the students reported having family support. Using LatCrit and Counterstorytelling will provide crucial insight as to why these students are not supported by their families. This study included students who had recently immigrated to the US. One student shared that she was often asked to serve as an interpreter for her family. "The problem is that my mom doesn't speak English and sends me on errands all the time to help the family since I do speak English. My family doesn't fully support my college decisions." Understanding the external demands that impact a student's ability to focus on their education helps to break the stereotype that they are not capable or willing to put in effort towards their academics. Having to serve as a family interpreter is not an experience that the average faculty, staff, or student at a PWI will have to encounter.

Guiding Question 3. How has the MassTransfer program impacted transfer of Latina/Latino students?

Student responses to Question 3. For this study, participant selection included 3 students who intended to use the MassTransfer program and 3 students who were not using MassTransfer. The PACE program at APCC proved effective in providing students information about MassTransfer. The students who elected not to use MassTransfer did so because the program did not work for their majors. The other half of students who were using MassTransfer did so because it fit their major and for the tuition benefits associated with the program. Obstacles to transfer included the difficulty of trying to focus on school in order to improve grades while living at home. Another student struggled with adjusting to being in a new country. A couple of students reported language skills as a transfer obstacle.

Validation Theory as it relates to Question 3. There does seem to be a slight relationship between the MassTransfer program and validation theory. The MassTransfer program was originally created to help increase transfer rates for all students between a community college and four-year university. The intent was to streamline the transfer process therefore improving the experiences of students. One student reported that using the MassTransfer program they had "a plan with all the classes I needed to transfer which was very helpful." The students who elected to use the MassTransfer program did so because of the added financial benefit. "Yes, I plan to use the MassTransfer program to help with my tuition." The MassTransfer program provided the eligible students tuition assistance which was a welcomed incentive for transfer.

Latina/Latino Critical Race Theory as it relates to Question 3. There does not seem to be a relationship between the MassTransfer program and LatCrit. All of the students would like to have benefited from the smooth transition and tuition benefits offered from MassTransfer. However, half of the students in this study were in majors that were not eligible to use the program. Financial hardship was reported by many of the students as obstacle in pursuing transfer. One student reported that they could not use MassTransfer "because I want to go into education and right now I'm studying Liberal Arts. I would need to stay at APCC longer to take more courses to be able to use the MassTransfer program." It would appear that the limited majors in the MassTransfer proved to be a disadvantage to students across the board.

Guiding Question 4. What role do college faculty and staff play in the transfer success of Latina/Latino students?

Student responses to Question 4. Many of the students believed that APCC provided a welcoming environment. Being at a college with a large number of Latinas/Latinos was viewed at a positive factor. The students who struggled with the English Language benefited from the bilingual faculty and staff members. Most of the students believed it was important to have Latina/Latino faculty and staff at the community college. Half of the students reported that a welcoming environment needed to include welcoming staff. Half of the students also reported that a welcoming environment needed to include more student activities.

Validation Theory as it relates to Question 4. There appears to be a strong relationship between the roles that college faculty and staff play in the transfer success of Latina/Latino students. The students reported that APCC provided a welcoming environment. Validation Theory encourages faculty and staff members to take a "proactive role in reaching out to students to affirm them as being capable of doing academic work and to support them in their academic endeavors and social adjustment" (Rendón, 2002, p. 645). According to Rendón, students are able to succeed when they feel validated. One student interviewed reported that "the Student Success Center staff can relate to students." The Student Success Center at APCC was created as a Title V (HSI) Grant initiative. APCC recognized the gap in providing direct services for their Latina/Latino students. In turn, the Student Success Center was created and staff by bilingual Latina/Latino staff. The purpose of the center is to assist students succeed at APCC and meet their transfer goals. Another student reported that "It is certainly important to have staff that looks like you. They inspire students and you know that if they did it you can do it too. You can also identify yourself with them too." One student reported that "Yes, having a lot of Latino

staff here helped me feel more comfortable and like I could approach them for help." The students are seeing themselves reflected on campus which provides validation that they are welcomed and can succeed with the graduation and transfer goals.

Latina/Latino Critical Race Theory as it relates to Question 4. There appears to be a relationship between LatCrit and the role that college faculty and staff play in the transfer success of Latina/Latino students. "Among several other issues, LatCrit scholars call attention to issues of immigration, language rights, bilingual schooling, internal colonialism, sanctuary for Latin American refugees, and census categories for Hispanics (Delgado & Stefanic, 2012, p. 90). According to Davila & Aviles, LatCrit framed within education "emphasize the need to view practices, policies and policymaking within an appropriate cultural and historical context, helping us to better understand their intersections to race/ethnicity and racism" (2010, p. 42).

Students reported that the "faculty here was able to help me in Spanish which helped. I was able to connect with them better and didn't feel like an outcast because we spoke the same language." Another student reported that "the teachers here help you when they see you struggling; especially if it's because of a language barrier." As an HSI, APCC took intentional steps to address the needs of their growing Latina/Latino student population. They intentionally hired additional Latina/Latino staff through their grant that was bilingual in order to provide additional support and resources for the students and their families. Addressing the language barriers and addressing the intersectionality that some Latina/Latino students experienced increased their success at APCC and transfer goals.

Laura Rendón's Validation Theory and University Student Responses

The researcher will analysis the data collected from the CSU students using the same elements of Validation Theory as applied to the APCC students. The following three elements of Laura Rendón's Validation Theory will be used for the data collected.

1. Validation is an enabling, confirming, and supportive process initiated by in and out-of-class agents that fosters academic and interpersonal development.
2. When validation is present, students feel capable of learning; they experience a feeling of self-worth and feel that they and everything that they bring to the college experience is accepted and recognized as valuable. Lacking validation, students feel crippled, silenced, subordinate and/or mistrusted.
3. Validation can occur both in-and out- of-class. In class validating agents include faculty, classmates, lab instructors and teaching assistants. Out-of-class validating agents can be 1) significant others, such as a spouse, boyfriend of girlfriends, 2) family members, such as parents, siblings, relative and children and 3) friends, such as classmates and friends attending and not attending college 4) college staff including faculty who meet with students out-of-class, counselors/advisors, coaches, tutors, teaching assistants, and resident advisors. (Rendón, 1994, p. 237-238)

Latina/Latino Critical Race Theory and University Student Responses

The researcher will continue to use Latina/Latino Critical Race Theory (LatCrit) as the second lens for data analysis. As stated earlier, the researcher will focus on the component of Counterstorytelling of LatCrit. Through the lens of LatCrit, the stories and experiences of

Latina/Latino students can be used to "challenge, displace, or mock these pernicious narratives and beliefs. (Delgado & Stefanic, 2012, p. 49).

Guiding Question 1. What are the driving factors that impact a Latina/Latino student's decision to attend a community colleges or a university?

Student responses to Question 1. More than half of the students reported that they always wanted to attend college. Most of the students elected to begin at a community college since it was close to their home which was important. Financial hardship was also a reason that the majority of students began at a community college. Students also reported the need to build their academic skills as a reason they began at APCC. Half of the students did not know what they wanted to study when they began at a community college.

Validation Theory as it relates to Question 1. There appears to be a relationship between validation from family members and participant enrollment in college. As stated earlier, Validation Theory includes the experiences of students in and out the classroom. The majority of students reported that a driving factor to being APCC was the ability to save money while living at home. These students had the support and encouragement from their families to continue focusing on their education. Another student reported that they began at APCC instead of a 4-year university because "Money was a big reason. My family couldn't afford to send me to a university so I started at APCC so save money. In these examples, the family members served as validating agents for the students. The fourth element of Validation Theory states that out-of-class validating agents can be 1) significant others, such as a spouse, boyfriend of girlfriends, 2) family members, such as parents, siblings, relative and children and 3) friends, such as classmates and friends attending and not attending college (Rendón, 1994, p. 238).

Latina/Latino Critical Race Theory as it relates to Question 1. There does not seem to be much of a relationship between why the students choose to begin at a community college or university and LatCrit Theory. All of these students transferred into CSU from APCC. The majority of the students began at APCC for financial reasons or to improve their grades. None of the students reported anything that would imply a relationship or unique issues within Latina/Latino Critical Race Theory.

Guiding Question 2. What factors contribute to Latina/Latino student success in college?

Student responses to Question 2. Almost all of the students will be the first in their family to graduate from college. All of the students interviewed reported having family support to pursue their education. Half of the students credit their family members as influencing their academic goals. The remaining half of students credited high school and college advisors as being the most helpful. Half of the students reported that they work and therefore do not have time to be involved in extra-curricular activities. Most of the students reported being involved in the TRiO Student Support Services program. Two students reported also being involved in the Latin American Student Organization (LASO).

Validation Theory as it relates to Question 2. There seems to be a strong relationship between Validation Theory and contributing factors to the success in college of the Latina/Latino students interviewed. All of the students reported having family supports. The family members are serving as validating influences for the students. The students reported:

- My mother really encouraged me. She always told me to better myself through education.
- My mother sacrificed a lot to give us the opportunities she didn't have growing up. I always knew I wanted to go to college.

- My family really wanted me to succeed and to finish college and be successful. They always supported me emotionally and financially.
- My family moved here from the Dominican Republic so we could have a better life. We don't have much money but they help me whenever they can and give me support.

Latina/Latino Critical Race Theory as it relates to Question 2. There appears to be a relationship between LatCrit and contributing factors to the success in college of the Latina/Latino students interviewed. One student reported that while at APCC the advisors "took me under their wings and helped me find my way. I would have been so lost without their help." This student was born and raised in Puerto Rico and had only been on the mainland of the US for 6 years. She struggled with her English and was also a single mom. She was able to communicate with people at APCC in both Spanish and English which was crucial for her learning process. Knowing her Counterstory provides insight into the struggles of recent migrants and immigrants who struggle with English as a Second Language.

Guiding Question 3. How has the MassTransfer program impacted transfer of Latina/Latino students?

Student responses to Question 3. Lack of financial support was reported as a transfer obstacle for many of the students. For two of the students an obstacle was the added classes they needed to take before they could transfer. One student had to take several ESL courses before they could mainstream into regular courses. All of the students reported that they met with advisors at APCC and credit them with providing transfer information. Half of the students agreed that the MassTransfer program did influence their transfer decision. The other half of students were unable to utilize the MassTransfer because their intended major was not covered under the program.

Validation Theory as it relates to Question 3. There does seem to be a slight relationship between the MassTransfer program and Validation Theory. According to Rendón "Validation is an enabling, confirming, and supportive process initiated by in and out-of-class agents that fosters academic and interpersonal development" (1994, p. 237). As stated earlier; the MassTransfer program was originally created to help increase transfer rates for all students between a community college and four-year university. The MassTransfer program did support the transfer goals of half of the students interviewed. These students reported the information below when asked if the MassTransfer influenced their decisions:

- Yes, it made it more affordable for me to finish my degree.
- I always wanted to transfer and this just made it easier.
- Yes, I didn't know what I wanted to study at first and MassTransfer made it easy for me to have a plan.

Latina/Latino Critical Race Theory as it relates to Question 3. There does not seem to be a relationship between the MassTransfer program and LatCrit Theory. The MassTransfer program was intended to increase transfer between the community colleges and state universities. However, only certain majors are a part of MassTransfer. Half of the students in this study were in majors that were not eligible to use the program. The students not using MassTransfer reported that:

- I'm not using the MassTransfer program since they didn't have one for nursing.
- No, my major is not covered in the MassTransfer program which wasn't really fair.
- I couldn't use MassTransfer for my major at CSU.

It would appear that the limited majors in the MassTransfer proved to be a disadvantage to students across the board.

Guiding Question 4. What role do college faculty and staff play in the transfer success of Latina/Latino students?

Student responses to Question 4. There was not a general consensus on what would be a welcoming environment. The majority of students reported that they felt welcomed while they were at APCC. The majority of students reported that they felt welcomed by CSU. Half of the students learned about their university resources from the TRiO program advisors. Another student met with their faculty department for assistance. The transfer student orientation was also cited as a great resource to learn about the university. Half of the students reported no obstacles once they began at CSU.

Validation Theory as it relates to Question 4. There appears to be a strong relationship between the roles that college faculty and staff play in the transfer success of Latina/Latino students. According to Rendón,

> When validation is present, students feel capable of learning; they experience a feeling of self-worth and feel that they and everything that they bring to the college experience is accepted and recognized as valuable. Lacking validation, students feel crippled, silenced, subordinate and/or mistrusted. (1994, p. 237)

The students reported that both APCC and CSU provided a welcoming environment. The students were asked to share their experiences at APCC before they transferred to CSU. One student reported that while at APCC they felt welcomed and that "it is important to have Latino professors and staff working at a college with Latino Students. It gives us role models to look up to." Another student reported that the "student success center really helped me out. The advisors there were like me and didn't judge me; they encouraged me."

The students were also asked to talk about their experiences at CSU. One student reported that "there are a lot of Latinos on campus here too which is nice." Another student cited LASO (Latin American Student Organization) as inviting and a way they connected with other students. The students benefited from welcoming faculty and staff at APCC and CSU. They were able to relate and connect to others which contributed to their sense of belonging.

Latina/Latino Critical Race Theory as it relates to Question 4. There appears to be a slight relationship between LatCrit and the role that college faculty and staff play in the transfer success of Latina/Latino students. "Among several other issues, LatCrit scholars call attention to issues of immigration, language rights, bilingual schooling, internal colonialism, sanctuary for Latin American refugees, and census categories for Hispanics (Delgado & Stefanic, 2012, p. 90). According to Davila & Aviles, LatCrit framed within education "emphasize the need to view practices, policies and policymaking within an appropriate cultural and historical context, helping us to better understand their intersections to race/ethnicity and racism" (2010, p. 42).

One student reported that her experiences at CSU were not welcoming. She reported feeling "isolated because of the language barrier." This student was discriminated against in class by another student. She reported that 'we had to work in groups and a student said he didn't want to work with me and my friend because we speak Spanish." She did not report the situation; instead she internalized the comment. This student reported that an obstacle for her at CSU has been her English language abilities. "I'm still working on my English skills but I've gotten better." Her story is case of student not feeling welcomed on her campus because she is an English Language Learner.

Emerging Themes

While reviewing the data collected from the interviews and demographic surveys two emerging themes became apparent. One theme that emerged was the fact that everyone interviewed was either Dominican and / or Puerto Rican. Secondly, an overwhelming majority of both the APCC and CSU students were TRiO Students.

The first emerging theme revealed that all of the students and staff interviewed were Dominican, Puerto Rican, or biracial with Dominican and Puerto Rican. This is important to note because the researcher did not seek to interview only Dominicans or Puerto Rican. The students only had to self-identify as Latina/Latino to be eligible for this study. This is also significant because most of the studies on HSIs have focused on Mexican and Mexican-American students. The majority of research on HSIs is from the Southwest, and West regions of the U.S. The Latinas/Latinos in the Southwest and West regions of the US are Mexican, and Mexican-American descent. As noted earlier, there has been very little research conducted on HSIs in the New England area of the US which is where this study was based. The Latina/Latino population in the New England area is predominately Dominican and Puerto Rican. It is also important to note that the researcher is originally from Chicago, IL and was not fully aware of the Latina/Latino demographics of Massachusetts.

The second emerging theme that unfolded was the fact that all of the APCC and majority of CSU students were involved in TRiO Student Support Services (SSS). The TRiO SSS program at APCC was the PACE program. During the APCC interviews, 100 percent of the students reported being involved in the PACE program. At CSU, 83.33 percent of the students also reported being involved in the TRiO program. The researcher did not solicit TRiO students. At APCC, PACE staff members were not interviewed for the study. A general request was sent out to Latina/Latino students by APCC and the majority of respondents were PACE students.

The researcher did interview the TRiO SSS staff at CSU and they did help recruit students for the study. However, CSU had designated a TRiO Advisor to be interviewed for the study. To be eligible for a TRiO SSS programs students have to be first-generation college bound, and/or low-income, and/or have a disability. The fact that the majority of students in this study belonged to a TRiO program speaks to the effectiveness of TRiO.

Chapter Summary

Chapter four contained the data findings and analysis of this study. The findings for Antonia Pantoja Community College were presented first followed by those for Commonwealth State University. The findings for both institutions included charts and summaries on student enrollment, staff demographic surveys, staff profiles, staff interviews, student demographic surveys, student profiles, and student interviews. Laura Rendón's Validation Theory and Latina/Latino Critical Race Theory were used as theoretical frameworks to analyze the data. The theories were applied to the guiding questions to determine any relationship. The following emerging themes were identified: everyone interviewed was Dominican or Puerto Rican; and the majority of students were in a TRiO Student Support Services program.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusion, Implications, and Recommendations

This study explored the impact of the MassTransfer program on the transfer success of Latina/Latino students at an HSI community college into a 4-year state university in Massachusetts. The researcher explored the experiences of students preparing to graduate and transfer from the HSI community college. The study also explored the experiences of students from the HSI that have successfully transferred into a four year state university. A qualitative research approach was utilized through demographic surveys, face-to-face-interviews, and document review which allowed for triangulation of findings from various data sources.

The guiding questions that drove this research were:

1. What are the driving factors that impact a Latina/Latino student's decision to attend a community colleges or a university?
2. What factors contribute to Latina/Latino student success in college?
3. How has the MassTransfer program impacted transfer of Latina/Latino students?
4. What role do college faculty and staff play in the transfer success of Latina/Latino students?

This chapter will address the conclusions, implications, and recommendations of the research based on the guiding questions.

Discussion

Latina/Latino college enrollment is on the rise and as such it is important to focus on the needs of these students so that they better succeed in higher education. The majority of these students are beginning their journey into higher education through community colleges. Unlike, HBCUS, HSIs are not originally tailored to meet the needs of Latina/Latino students. Colleges and universities can apply for HSI status once their Latina/Latino Full Time Enrollment numbers

are 25 percent or higher. Title V HSI grants provide institutions additional funding to design retention and support programs that will provide additional assistance to Latina/Latino students.

Most students enroll at a community college with the goal of transferring to a 4 year university. Some Latina/Latino students face obstacles that their White and sometimes African-American counterparts will never encounter. Although PWIs aspire to be welcoming to all students; they often overlook the unique cultural needs of students. Most institutions strive to be diverse and inclusive in their student body and programming but that needs to be elevated a step further. Increasing the diversity of the student body without institutional changes designed to better meet their needs often leads to lower retention rates. Understanding the validating factors that support Latina/Latino transfer and the unique obstacles these students encounter can assist colleges and universities to build targeted retention programs.

Community College Conclusions Implications and Recommendations

Guiding Question 1: What are the driving factors that impact a Latina/Latino student's decision to attend a community colleges or a university?

Conclusion. The students from APCC reported that they were motivated to attend a community college due to proximity and easy transportation, and affordability. They also included family encouragement and support as driving factors towards attending a community college. The students who had most recently immigrated to the US reported their desire to learn and / or improve the English language skills as a factor to attend a community college. It can be concluded that students rely on family support while they attend a community college which is an outside classroom validation as seen in Rendón's Validation Theory.

Implications. Latina/Latino students are likely to begin at a community college due to close proximity, easy transportation, and affordability. English Language Learners are also more likely to begin at a community college as they work to improve their English language skills.

Recommendations. Community colleges should continue to expect an increase in Latina/Latino student enrollment. They can also create a more inclusive campus for English Language Learners by increasing the number of bilingual faculty and staff on campus.

Guiding Question 2: What factors contribute to Latina/Latino student success in college?

Conclusion. The students cited support and encouragement from family, school advisors, and colleagues as contributing to their success in college. Each of these first-generation college students were involved in the PACE program which also provided additional support on campus. The encouragement that the students receive from their family members and advisors in the PACE program are validating factors as seen in Rendón's Validation Theory. Understanding the external demands that impact a student's ability to focus on their education helps to break the stereotype that they are not capable or willing to put in effort towards their academics. Using the lens of Latina/Latino Critical Race Theory and Counterstorytelling allows us to understand that being the only English language person in a family can negatively impact a student's academic performance.

Implications. Using the lens of Latina/Latino Critical Race Theory and Counterstorytelling allows us to understand that being the only English language person in a family can negatively impact a student's academic performance.

Recommendations. Community Colleges can become more inclusive to Latina/Latino students through recognizing the support of their families. Community colleges could implement:

- Latina/Latino Family Night: A program that is fully bilingual in English and Spanish; introduces the families to the college application process including financial aid, support services, a tour of the campus, creating a panel of faculty, staff, and students that can speak to the expectations of the college.
- Intentional advertisement of ESL/ELL courses for the family members of students in ESL/ELL courses.

Guiding Question 3: How has the MassTransfer program impacted transfer of Latina/Latino students?

Conclusion. The MassTransfer program was not a fit for all the study participants. The PACE program seems to be succeeding in providing transfer information and support to their students. As expected, the majorities of students do not have financial security and worry about covering the continued costs of tuition.

Implications. The MassTransfer program provided the eligible students tuition assistance which was a welcomed incentive for transfer.

Recommendations. The MassTransfer program was originally intended encourage higher transfer rates through linked programs and tuition discounts. Community colleges and universities could benefit from extending the MassTransfer program to a larger amount of programs.

Guiding Question 4: What role do college faculty and staff play in the transfer success of Latina/Latino students?

Conclusion. A majority of the students interviewed felt welcomed at APCC. Being able to communicate with faculty and staff in English and Spanish provided an extra level of comfort for the students. A majority of the students agreed that Latina/Latino faculty and staff also

provided a sense of comfort and ease on the campus. It can be concluded that faculty and staff that validate the experiences of Latina/Latino students assist in their transfer goals. Addressing the language barriers and addressing the intersectionality that some Latina/Latino students experienced increased their success at APCC and transfer goals.

Implications. Latina/Latino students feel welcomed when they can see their ethnicity and culture reflected on campus. The students reported that staff who are welcoming and positively interact with students helps to foster an inclusive and welcoming environment.

Recommendations. Community colleges can validate the experiences, identity, and intersectionality of Latina/Latino students by diversifying their faculty and staff. This should be an intentional diversification to add faculty and staff members that are bilingual and / or can relate to the life experiences of the students. Hiring Latina/Latino staff that cannot relate to the students does not necessarily benefit the students or the campus.

University Conclusions Implications and Recommendations

Guiding Question 1: What are the driving factors that impact a Latina/Latino student's decision to attend a community colleges or a university?

Conclusion. More than half of the students always knew they wanted to attend college. The majority of the students began at a community college because it was close to home and also financially a better option. The students opted to enroll at CSU because of its proximity to their homes; all the students interviewed were commuters. The students were split down the middle when they reported whether they knew their intended major when they began. Similar to the students interviewed at APCC, the students at CSU rely on family support while they attend a community college which is an outside classroom validation as seen in Rendón's Validation Theory.

Implications. In this study, the Latina/Latino students all began at a community college and transferred to a university that was relatively close to their homes.

Recommendations. Four year colleges and universities should continue to prepare for an increase in students who commute to campus. They could also benefit from partnering with local community colleges and high schools as satellite locations to offer their courses. These satellite courses would still be led by faulty from the 4 year university. Entire degrees can be taught off campus making them more accessible to students.

Guiding Question 2: What factors contribute to Latina/Latino student success in college?

Conclusion. Family support was a dominate theme contributing to Latina/Latino student success in college. The encouragement of high school and college advisors to succeed in college was also contributing factor**.**

Implications. Family members provide a validating support to the students outside of the classroom. A majority of Latina/Latino students rely on the encouragement of family members despite the fact that they will be the first to graduate with a bachelor's degree.

Recommendations. Four year colleges and universities can recognize the much and relied about support that family members provide to Latina/Latino students. They could host a Latina/Latino Family Recognition program that is fully bilingual in English and Spanish. This would provide the families an opportunity to be welcomed and appreciated by the college/university. This also serves to build stronger ties between the local community and the college/university.

Guiding Question 3: How has the MassTransfer program impacted transfer of Latina/Latino students?

Conclusion. The MassTransfer program only benefited half of the students. The other half of students could not take advantage of MassTransfer due to limited program offerings. The program has proven effective for the students who were able to use MassTransfer. It provided financial relief in the form of lower or waived tuition.

Implications. The MassTransfer program provided clear transfer guidelines within limited programs to the students.

Recommendations. The MassTransfer program was originally intended encourage higher transfer rates through linked programs and tuition discounts. Community colleges and universities could benefit from extending the MassTransfer program to a larger amount of programs.

Guiding Question 4: What role do college faculty and staff play in the transfer success of Latina/Latino students?

Conclusion. The majority of students felt supported by their advisors. They also reported that the presence of Latina/Latino faculty, staff, and students greatly assisted in feeling welcomed at APCC and CSU. It can be concluded that Latina/Latino faculty and staff add to the validating experiences of Latina/Latino students.

Implications. Latina/Latino students continue to feel a sense of belonging on campus when they see Latina/Latino faculty, staff, and other students on campus.

Recommendations. Colleges and universities can validate the experiences, identity, and intersectionality of Latina/Latino students by diversifying their faculty and staff. This should be an intentional diversification to add faculty and staff members that are bilingual and / or can

relate to the life experiences of the students. Hiring Latina/Latino staff that cannot relate to the students does not necessarily benefit the students or the campus.

Recommendations for Further Research

The researcher used a small sample of Latina/Latino students for data collection. The researcher also originally intended to conduct a cross case analysis and compare the transfer programs and rates of an HSI community college to that of an Emerging HSI community college.

- It is recommended that a larger sample of Latina/Latino students attending HSIs in the New England area be included in further research.
- It is recommended that the original intent of the study, a cross case analysis of an HSI and Emerging HSI, be conducted in the future. There are now more HSIs in the State of Massachusetts than when this study began which could lend itself to easier site selection and data collection.
- It is also recommended that further research exam what if any programs and policies are implemented by Emerging HSIs in Massachusetts and the rest of the New England area.

Recommendations for Dissemination of Findings

The research findings and analysis of this study could be of interest to Massachusetts community colleges and four year state universities. There will also be interest for anyone studying Hispanic-Serving Institutions especially in the New England area. Faculty and staff members who work with retention programs for Latina/Latino will also have an interest in this research. The study's findings can be disseminated at conferences, seminars, and be published in journals. It is the hope that these findings positively impact retention program and efforts for Latina/Latino community college and transfer students.

Lizette Rivera Model for Latina/Latino Student Transfer Success

The Lizette Rivera Model for Latina/Latino Student Transfer Success is inspired by Laura Rendon's Validation Theory. It was also inspired by the research conducted in this study. Most colleges and universities aim to increase the diversity of their student body. However, they do not always plan ahead and make strategic changes on their campus to foster a more diverse and inclusive campus. The Lizette Rivera Model for Latina/Latino Student Transfer Success is premised on a college or university taking early steps to improve the cultural climate of the campus to create a more welcoming environment. This theory requires that these steps be taken ahead of time or simultaneously while seeking to diversify the student body.

Lizette Rivera Model for Latina/Latino Student Transfer Success:

- Create a Welcoming and Safe Environment for Students to Grow Intellectually, Socially, and Professionally
- Recruitment and Admissions Material Should be Available in English and Spanish
- Mandatory Orientation for All Students. Provide an online option for orientation however; in-person orientation is preferred.
- Increase Latina/Latino Administration, Faculty, and Staff
- Increase Bilingual (English and Spanish) Administration, Faculty, and Staff
- Promote Diverse and Inclusive Classroom Management, Curriculum, and Teaching Methods
- Transfer Material: Available Online, Easy to Find and Use
- Mandatory Transfer Orientation for all Students. Provide an online option for orientation however; in-person orientation is preferred.

Figure 4. Lizette Rivera Model for Latina/Latino Student Transfer Success

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Appendix A:

Informed Consent Form

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study that will take place February 2014 to June 2015. This form outlines the purpose of the study and provides a description of your involvement and rights as a participant.

I consent to participate in a research project conducted by Lizette V. Rivera, a doctoral student at National Louis University located in Chicago, Illinois.

I understand that this study is entitled "Community College Transfer Programs: A look at Latina/Latino Student Transfer Success at a Two Year Hispanic-Serving Institution into a Four Year Non-Hispanic-Serving University." The purpose of this study is to explore the impact of the MassTransfer program on the transfer success of Latina/Latino students at a suburban HSI community college into a 4 year state university in Massachusetts.

I understand that my participation will consist of a recorded interview lasting approximately 60 – 90 minutes in length. If necessary, a follow up interview may be requested for clarification or for additional information. I understand that I will receive a copy of my transcribed interview at which time I may clarify information. I understand that my participation is voluntary and can be discontinued at any time without prejudice until the completion of the dissertation.

I understand that only the researcher, Lizette V. Rivera, will have access to a secured file cabinet in which will be kept all transcripts, taped recordings, and field notes from the interview in which I participated.

I understand that the results of this study may be published or otherwise reported to scientific bodies, but my identity will in no way be revealed. I understand there are no anticipated risks or benefits to me, no greater than that encountered in daily life. Further, the information garnered from the study will be of benefit to new community college presidents, internal stakeholders and the larger community college constituency.

I understand that in the event I have questions or require additional information I may contact the researcher: Lizette V. Rivera at lrivera11@my.nl.edu

If you have any concerns or questions before or during participation that you feel have not been addressed by me, you may contact my Primary Advisor and Dissertation Chair: Dr. Dennis Haynes, National Louis University, 122 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois, 60603, 312-261-3728; email address: dennis.haynes@nl.edu

Participant's Signature _____ Date_____

Researcher's Signature _____ Date_____

Appendix B:

Community College Staff Member Affiliated with Transfer Programs Solicitation Email/Letter

Dear _____

My name is Lizette V. Rivera and I am a doctoral student in the Community College Leadership Program at National Louis University in Chicago, Illinois. My research is entitled "Community College Transfer Programs: A look at Latina/Latino Student Transfer Success at a Two Year Hispanic-Serving Institution into a Four Year Non-Hispanic-Serving University." The purpose of this study is to explore the impact of the MassTransfer program on the transfer success of Latina/Latino students at a suburban HSI community college into a 4 year state university in Massachusetts. I would like to formally ask that your institution consider participating in my research.

For the purpose of this research two sites will be selected: one community college and one state university. Each site selected will have existing agreements under MassTransfer. Site A will be a community college that is a designated Hispanic-Serving Institution. Site criteria was developed using the Carnegie Foundation definitions. There is one community college in Massachusetts that has been designated a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI). Site B will be a public state university that has MassTransfer programs with the selected community college. Interviewing students that have successfully transferred through a MassTransfer program will allow for actual transfer data collection. This data will help form the complete transfer picture.

Your institution has been selected because it meets one of the follow criteria:

- Site A: It is the only community college in Massachusetts with an HSI designation

Latina/Latino students are not transferring at comparable rates to their peers. The Massachusetts Board of Higher Education (2008) has placed an emphasis on the MassTransfer program. Understanding the impact of MassTransfer on Latina/Latino students can help to increase their transfer rates into baccalaureate programs. This study will also capture the stories of Latina/Latino students who have successfully transferred from the Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) and into a state university. Their stories will help bridge the transfer process and share what did or did not help these students succeed at the state university.

If you have any questions or concerns you can contact me directly; my information is listed below. If you have any concerns or questions before or during participation that you feel have not been addressed by me, you may contact my Primary Advisor and Dissertation Chair: Dr. Dennis Haynes, National Louis University, 122 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois, 60603, 312-261-3728; email address: dennis.haynes@nl.edu

I look forward to your response and the possibility of working with your institution.

Sincerely,

Lizette V. Rivera
Doctoral Candidate
National Louis University
lrivera11@my.nl.edu

Appendix C:

University Staff Member Affiliated with Transfer Programs Solicitation Email/Letter

Dear _____

My name is Lizette V. Rivera and I am a doctoral student in the Community College Leadership Program at National Louis University in Chicago, Illinois. My research is entitled "Community College Transfer Programs: A look at Latina/Latino Student Transfer Success at a Two Year Hispanic-Serving Institution into a Four Year Non-Hispanic-Serving University." The purpose of this study is to explore the impact of the MassTransfer program on the transfer success of Latina/Latino students at a suburban HSI community college into a 4 year state university in Massachusetts. I would like to formally ask that your institution consider participating in my research. Your institution has been selected because students from the partnered community colleges transfer to your university at higher numbers.

For the purpose of this research two sites will be selected: one community college and one state university. Each site selected will have existing agreements under MassTransfer. Site A will be a community college that is a designated Hispanic-Serving Institution. Site criteria was developed using the Carnegie Foundation definitions. There is one community college in Massachusetts that has been designated a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI). Site B will be a public state university that has MassTransfer programs with the selected community college. Interviewing students that have successfully transferred through a MassTransfer program will allow for actual transfer data collection. This data will help form the complete transfer picture.

Latina/Latino students are not transferring at comparable rates to their peers. The Massachusetts Board of Higher Education (2008) has placed an emphasis on the MassTransfer program. Understanding the impact of MassTransfer on Latina/Latino students can help to increase their transfer rates into baccalaureate programs. This study will also capture the stories of Latina/Latino students who have successfully transferred from the Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) and non-HSI community colleges into state universities. Their stories will help bridge the transfer process and share what did or did not help these students succeed at the state university.

If you have any questions or concerns you can contact me directly; my information is listed below. If you have any concerns or questions before or during participation that you feel have not been addressed by me, you may contact my Primary Advisor and Dissertation Chair: Dr. Dennis Haynes, National Louis University, 122 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois, 60603, 312-261-3728; email address: dennis.haynes@nl.edu

I look forward to your response and the possibility of working with your institution.

Sincerely,

Lizette V. Rivera
Doctoral Candidate
National Louis University
lrivera11@my.nl.edu

Appendix D:
Student Solicitation Email/Letter

Dear Student,

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Lizette V. Rivera, a doctoral student of the Community College Leadership Program at National Louis University, Chicago, Illinois. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you meet the study's criteria. The study is entitled "Community College Transfer Programs: A look at Latina/Latino Student Transfer Success at a Two Year Hispanic-Serving Institution into a Four Year Non-Hispanic-Serving University."

The purpose of this study is to explore the impact of the MassTransfer program on the transfer success of Latina/Latino students at a suburban HSI community college into a 4 year state university in Massachusetts. The majority of Latina/Latino students enrolling into higher education are doing so through community colleges. Latina/Latino students are not transferring at comparable rates to their peers. The Massachusetts Board of Higher Education (2008) has placed an emphasis on the MassTransfer program. Understanding the impact of MassTransfer on Latina/Latino students can help to increase their transfer rates into baccalaureate programs. This study will also capture the stories of Latina/Latino students who have successfully transferred from the Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) into a state university. Their stories will help bridge the transfer process and share what did or did not help these students succeed at the state university.

All student participants must be 18 years of age or older at the time of consent in order to participate in this study. If you volunteer to participate in this study, the researcher will ask you to do the following:

- Participate in one 60-90 minute semi-structured interview. The interview questions will focus on your participation as it relates to your experience transfer experiences. If necessary, a follow up interview may be requested for clarification or for additional information.
- Allow me to record your interview responses.
- Review interview transcripts and check for accuracy and make any necessary changes if need be.
- Complete an online student questionnaire after your initial interview has taken place.
- Allow the researcher to evaluate your academic transcripts for patterns and themes

Participants will have the opportunity to share their knowledge about their transfer experiences at their respective colleges. Your participation is voluntary and can be discontinued at any time without prejudice until the completion of the dissertation. There is no payment for your participation in this study. Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can identify you will remain confidential. It will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of using pseudonyms for all participants, participants' college, and any college personnel mentioned in meetings or in interviews.

You are not waiving any of your legal rights if you choose to be in this research study. You may refuse to answer any questions that you do not want to answer and still remain in the study. In the event of a research related injury, please immediately contact one of the researchers listed below.

If you have any questions or concerns you can contact me directly; my information is listed below. If you have any concerns or questions before or during participation that you feel have not been addressed by me, you may contact my Primary Advisor and Dissertation Chair: Dr. Dennis Haynes, National Louis University, 122 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois, 60603, 312-261-3728; email address: dennis.haynes@nl.edu

I look forward to your response and if you would like to proceed with participation in this study please email me directly and I will set-up a time to meet that is convenient with your schedule.

Thank you,

Lizette V. Rivera
Doctoral Candidate
National Louis University
lrivera11@my.nl.edu

Appendix E: Student Participant Demographic Survey

1. **College (please fill in): _____**
2. **What is your major? _____**
3. **What is your current grade point average? _____**
4. **Ethnicity (please check all that apply)**

   ☐ Cuban

   ☐ Dominican

   ☐ Puerto Rican

   ☐ Mexican

   ☐ Other (please specify): _____

5. **Gender (please select one):**

   ☐ Female ☐ Male ☐ Transgender

6. **Is English your primary language?**

   ☐ Yes ☐ No

7. **Is English the primary language used in your home?**

   ☐ Yes ☐ No

8. **Have either of your parents completed an associate's degree or higher?**

   ☐ Yes ☐ No

   If yes please state which parent(s) and their degree: _____

9. **When you began college, was your goal always to obtain at least a bachelor's degree?**

   ☐ Yes ☐ No

Contact Information

Name: _____

Phone Number: ( ) _____ - _____

Email Address: _____

Please return electronically to lrivera11@my.nl.edu

Appendix F: Staff Participant Demographic Survey

1. **College (please fill in): _____**
2. **Job Title: _____**
3. **Job Responsibilities: _____**

   _____

   _____

4. **How long have you been in your current position? _____**
5. **Please list any relevant work positions that you currently held: _____**

   _____

6. **Ethnicity (please check all that apply)**

   ☐ African American

   ☐ Asian

   ☐ Caucasian

   ☐ Latina/Latino

   ☐ Cuban ☐ Dominican ☐ Puerto Rican ☐ Mexican ☐ Other

   ☐ Other (please specify): _____

7. **Gender (please select one):**

   ☐ Female ☐ Male ☐ Transgender

8. **Is English your primary language?**

   ☐ Yes ☐ No

9. **Do you speak Spanish?**

   ☐ Yes ☐ No

10. Were you a first generation college student?

☐ Yes ☐ No

11. Did you transfer as a student between a community college and four year university?

Contact Information

Name: _____

Phone Number: ( ) _____ - _____

Email Address: _____

Please return electronically to lrivera11@my.nl.edu

Appendix G:

Student Interview Questions: Currently Enrolled Community College Students

a. After high school why did you decide to continue your education?

b. What factors led you to choose this community college? What was your original goal when you enrolled at your community college?

c. Who would you consider to be the most helpful in influencing your career/academic goals (family, friends, counselors, teachers, etc.)? Why?

d. Are/were you involved in any extra-curricular activities?

e. Did you already know what you wanted to study/major in before you started at the community college or did you decide after enrolling? If so, what was your intended major? Is this still your major?

f. How did you learn about the MassTransfer program? How did you learn about transferring to a four year university?

g. Did the MassTransfer program influence your decision to transfer? And if so please explain how. How did you learn about the university transfer requirements?

h. As a Latina/Latino student, did you feel welcomed by your community college? Is it important to you that the people working at your college "look like you", share your culture and / or have a similar background?

i. Will you be the first person in your family to graduate from a community college or university? Does your family support your education either emotionally and/or financially? Do you feel your family understands what is required of you to transfer between a community college and four year university?

j. What is the biggest obstacle to transfer? Do you believe that there are unique transfer barriers for Latina/Latino students? If so, please share.

k. Have you encountered any obstacles in pursuing your transfer goal? If yes, what are they?

l. In your own words, please describes what would be a welcoming environment?

Appendix H:
Student Interview Questions:
Currently enrolled university students that transferred from a community college

1. After high school why did you decide to continue your education?
2. What factors led you to choose the community college you attended? What was your original goal when you enrolled at your community college?
3. Who would you consider to be the most helpful in influencing your career/academic goals (family, friends, counselors, teachers, etc.)? Why?
4. Are/were you involved in any extra-curricular activities?
5. Did you already know what you wanted to study/major in before you started at the community college or did you decide after enrolling? If so, what was your intended major? Is this still your major?
6. Will you be the first person in your family to graduate from a community college or university? Does your family support your education either emotionally and/or financially? Do you feel your family understands what is required of you to transfer between a community college and four year university?
7. What is the biggest obstacle to transfer? Do you believe that there are unique transfer barriers for Latina/Latino students? If so, please share.
8. Have you encountered any obstacles in pursuing your transfer goal? If yes, what are they?
9. In your own words, please describes what would be a welcoming environment?

The following questions are about your <u>community college</u> experiences:

10. Who at your community college talked to you or counseled you about transfer? When did they talk to you? Did you meet regularly with a transfer advisor?

11. Did the MassTransfer program influence your decision to transfer? And if so please explain how. How did you learn about the university transfer requirements?
12. As a Latina/Latino student, did you feel welcomed by your community college? Is it important to you that the people working at your college "look like you", share your culture and / or have a similar background?

The following questions are about your <u>university</u> experiences:

13. How did you learn about the resources at your university? How often do you use these resources? What resources are available to you at your university? Did you receive any support from an advisor / counselor once you transferred?
14. As a Latina/Latino student, did you feel welcomed by your university? Is it important to you that the people working at your college "look like you", share your culture and / or have a similar background?
15. Have you experienced any obstacles once you started at your university? Has anybody at your university helped you work toward overcoming this obstacle? If yes, what kind of help have you received?

Appendix I:

Staff Interview Questions

1. Are most of the Latina/Latino students full-time or part-time? Percentage?
2. Where do the majority of your students transfer? Where do the majority of Latina/Latino students transfer?
3. What percentage of students declare transfer as their primary academic goal? What percentage of Latina/Latino students declare transfer as their primary goal?
4. Do you track the services your provide students? If so, how?
5. Is there any type of student orientation prior to the semester beginning?
6. How many transfer advisors are at your institution? How many students do they advise on a daily basis?
7. How often is a student required to see an advisor? Is it mandatory or optional?
8. During an advising session are students required to have an educational plan?
9. How did you market the MassTransfer program when it first began? How do you advertise / promote MassTransfer now to students? Is it advertised in multiple languages?
10. What are the demographics of students utilizing MassTransfer?
11. What are the Transfer Center's goals?
12. Where does the college place transfer as a priority? How closely do you believe they align with the mission of the MassTransfer Program?
13. Briefly, how are different Student Services programs and services involved in supporting and promoting transfer? Which of these programs and services are most important to supporting and promoting transfer? Are there programs which work particularly well for underrepresented or other student populations?

14. If you had to identify one program or service, which one is most important to supporting and promoting transfer?
15. What factors do you believe prevent Latina/Latino students from transferring at higher rates?
16. Is there any additional information that you would like to address or add?

Appendix J:

Title V (HSI) Grant Staff Interview Questions

1. How long has the college been an HSI? And is this promoted to the college campus and community at large?
2. What are the Title V grant objectives? How are the objectives evaluated?
3. How is the grant staffed?
4. How do students learn about Title V programming?
5. How is the Title V program involved in supporting and promoting transfer and the MassTransfer program?
6. Are most of the Latina/Latino students full-time or part-time? Percentage?
7. Where do the majority of Latina/Latino students transfer?
8. What percentages of students declare transfer as their primary academic goal? What percentage of Latina/Latino students declare transfer as their primary goal?
9. What factors do you believe prevent Latina/Latino students from transferring at higher rates?
10. Is there any additional information that you would like to address or add?