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Upward Bound Graduates Transition From High School to College

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Dr. Carole Pearce, Committee Member, Education Faculty
Dr. Marilyn Robb, University Reviewer, Education Faculty

The Office of the Provost

Walden University
2019

Abstract

Upward Bound Graduates Transition From High School to College

by

LaVasa Tiny'a Parks

MA, Troy University, 2009

BS, Fort Valley State University, 2003

Project Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Walden University

August 2019

Abstract

Some first-generation and low-income students enrolled in an Upward Bound (UB) program in a university in the southeastern United States are not prepared to transition from high school to college; therefore, they may need additional guidance, support, resources, and tools to help them with the process. For this reason, precollege programs such as the UB program were designed to prepare first-generation, low-income students for transitioning from high school to college. The purpose of this bounded qualitative case study was to describe first-generation, low-income students' perspectives of the UB program. The conceptual framework for this case study was Tinto's student integration model. Purposeful sampling was used to select 7 UB graduates who were enrolled in the program for at least 2 years. Opened-ended interview questions were used to gather data for open coding and axial coding data analysis process. The results of this study were used to develop an UB Report which described UB gradates' perspectives of the program. Included in the report are the findings, which revealed that UB graduates identified benefits (motivation, social exposure, and student experiences) and resources (services and guest speakers) as major components of the program that contributed to their transition from high school to college. Reporting the perspectives of UB graduates will help UB directors and secondary and postsecondary administrators better understand how the UB program positively affects first-generation, low-income students' successful transition from high school to college.

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Dedication

To my mother, the late Mrs. Louvenia Parks (Venia), I dedicated this project study to you. You have been, and always will, be my source of strength and motivation in all of my endeavors. You have instilled in me the wisdom, knowledge, courage, and faith to surpass any obstacles I have to face alone on this journey called life. You were indeed a strong woman: one who loved beyond measures and faults; cried behind closed doors and fought battles that anyone knew existed. To my son, Armard Davis Jr., who is the source of my happiness? This project study is dedicated to you. All the hard work that I have endured was not only for me, but also to make a better life for you. I love you immensely. I would also like to dedicate this project study to my father, John Parks, who has always unconditionally provided me with the love and support that I needed regardless of the circumstances. Thank you, mama and daddy, for your support, this is more of an accomplishment for you than it is for me. Mary Howard, one of the four strongest women I have ever known; thank you for teaching me how to work hard, be independent, and cooking for me. Erica Lawson and Tomaiko Scott thank for your continued support and motivating me in all of my endeavors. Love you ladies!!!! I would also like to dedicate this project study to my grandmother, the late Lilla Mae Scott. My grandmother taught me how to have faith and she taught me how to pray. Most importantly, she taught me to always depend on Jesus Christ. Finally, I would like to thank the late Mrs. Arenetta Hall for introducing me to the world of TRiO. You taught me everything that needed to know about my position in addition to life lessons.

Acknowledgments

I would like to take this opportunity to first give honor and praise to my Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord gave me strength, endurance, grace, and mercy to pursue and achieve one of my long-term goals. I am forever grateful for my family for their unwavering support throughout my life.

I would like to thank my committee chair Dr. Sydney Parent, for your continued support throughout this process. You continued to motivate me even when all odd was against me. Your encouragement motivated me to keep on keeping on. Thank you. To Dr. Carole Pearce and Dr. Marilyn Robb, thank you for serving as committee members and providing me with a wealth of knowledge assisting with my development as a researcher. I will always remember each one of you, for all of you have been instrumental in helping draw to a close my doctoral journey. Finally, I would like to thank all the students, staff, and administrators at the designated research institution for providing the information, resources, and time required to accomplish my doctoral study.

Table of Contents

iv

List of Tables

Section 1: The Problem

The Local Problem

The transition from high school to college can be challenging for some first-generation, low-income high school students. First-generation, low-income students who are not prepared for college may fail courses, withdraw from college, or be placed on academic suspension. According to Covarrubias and Fryberg (2015), first-generation, low-income students are faced with challenges when enrolling in postsecondary institutions and they do not persist in college at the same rates as their peers. This could be for a variety of reasons. Heller and Cassady (2017) found that the lack of academic preparation for college may influence college enrollment, and some low-income, first-generation students are less academically prepared going into college (Pratt, Harwood, Cavazos, & Ditzfeld, 2019). Another reason could be an economic hardship. Shumaker and Wood (2016) found that first-generation, low-income students enrolled in college experience more socioeconomic challenges than their peers. First-generation, low-income students and their parents may need additional resources, tools, and support to persist at the college level.

To prepare first-generation, low-income students for college, many institutions of higher learning are targeting precollege programs, such as the Upward Bound (UB) program, to increase enrollment. Precollege programs are designed to enrich students' academic success while in high school and to prepare them for success in college, which ultimately decreases their attrition rate (Bangser, 2008). These programs provide students and their parents with the tools and resources they need to persist at postsecondary

institutions. Even though there are some research studies on precollege programs, there is limited research on the influence of the UB program on students enrolled in their first semester in college. University administrators, educators, and policymakers need to understand how precollege programs can help increase enrollment. The gap in practice is the missing understanding about the influence of the UB program on first generation, low income students enrolled in their first college term. By exploring UB's graduates' perspectives of the program it may be possible to inform secondary and postsecondary administrators of the benefits and resources of the UB program that are used to prepare students to transition from high school to college.

Background

In 1964, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Economic Opportunity Act. The Economic Opportunity Act. initiated a program that was designed to help students from disadvantaged backgrounds complete high school and enroll in a postsecondary institution (McElroy & Armesto, 1998; Kotamraju & Blackman, 2011). Developed as part of the 1965 Higher Education Act were UB, Talent Search, and Student Support Services (Swail & Perna, 2002). UB, Talent Search, and Student Support Services are known as TRIO, and they assist students with educational barriers, like low socioeconomic backgrounds, graduate from a secondary school and enroll in a higher education institution (Kotamraju & Blackman, 2011). Osborne, Parlier, and Adams (2019) found that academic intervention programs such as advising, tutoring, and counseling help students overcome precollege barriers.

Some first-generation and low-income students are not academically, financially, or socially prepared to attend college. Dennis, Phinney, and Chuateco (2005) stated that fear of failure, being away from home and family, the lack of financial resources are reasons students are not successful in college. To address these concerns, the Department of Education created precollege programs such as UB. The UB program is used to provide academic and social support for first-generation, low-income students to prepare them for college (Grimard & Maddaus, 2004). Despite all the resources and intervention programs developed to optimize successful college transition, some students are entering college unprepared for college-level work, particularly first-generation and low-income students (Udombon, 2006). The program provides academic instruction in literature, mathematics, laboratory science, composition, and foreign languages while enrolled in high school. UB programs also provide tutoring, cultural enrichment, counseling services, work study, mentoring, and financial literacy to students enrolled in the program.

Rationale

Evidence of the Problem at the Local Level

Transitioning from high school to college is challenging for first-generation, low-income students at the local study site. According to a high school counselor in 2011 at the study site, the communities and the local school system do not have the resources to prepare first-generation, low-income students to enroll and persist in college. To prepare first-generation, low-income students for the transition from high school to college, the U.S. Department of Education implemented the UB program. However, a former UB assistant director asserted that providing students with the resources and support needed

to complete high school and enroll in college will increase their chances of enrolling and persisting at postsecondary institutions. To confirm the program's goals and objectives at the local site, I described first-generation, low-income students' perspectives of the UB program.

Evidence of the Problem from the Professional Literature

Some first-generation, low-income students are not successfully transitioning from high school to college. First-generation, low-income students are the least likely to earn college degrees (Choy, Horn, Nunez, & Chen, 2000) and have an increased gap in degree attainment (Stephens, Townsend, & Dittmann, 2019). Castleman and Long (2016) found that low-income, first-generation students experience the highest dropout rates in postsecondary institutions. The need for precollege support services is critical regarding preparing first-generation, low-income students for college enrollment.

Definition of Terms

Attrition: A reduction in the number of students enrolled in an institution (Sitzmann & Johnson, 2012).

First-generation student: Student whose natural parents did not complete or received a baccalaureate degree (Mangan, 2015).

High-risk student: A student who has a grade point average (GPA) of less than a 2.5; a student who has not passed the state assessment in Reading or Language Arts; a student who has not passed the state assessment in Mathematics (Heppen et al., 2018).

Low-income student: A student whose family's taxable income does not exceed 150% of the poverty level established by the Bureau of Census (Wilson, 2016).

Matriculate: Students who have been accepted into college, have enrolled, and intend to graduate (Castleman, Arnold, & Wartman, 2012).

Upward Bound Participant: An individual who is eligible to participate in the program by meeting the program's eligibility requirements (Vega, Moore, & Miranda, 2015).

Significance of the Study

Low-income, first-generation students are less likely to transition from high school to college. According to Schademan and Thompson (2016), first-generation, low-income students are likely to enter college, but are at risk of dropping out within the first 2 years. Ishitani (2016) further stated that although college enrollment has increased, college persistence has declined for first-generation, low-income students. The goals and objectives of the UB program were designed to address potential reasons for the decline in college enrollment and persistence rates for first-generation, low-income college students (Flores, Li, & May, 2017). Through this study, I provided insight into a local problem of low-income, first-generation students experiencing difficulties upon leaving high school and entering college by exploring the perspectives and experiences of former UB student who completed the program and experienced success.

The significance of the study is its provision of first-hand information. Gaining an understanding of participants' perspectives of the program's strengths and weaknesses contributes to the knowledge base of how former UB participants perceived the program contributed to their college success. During their transition from high school to college, UB programs to positively influence first-generation, low-income students' college

persistence (Kelly, Randle, & Barlow, 2016). Data from the study could provide insight as to what areas of the program need to be strengthened, modified, or eliminated to ensure effective resource allocation. Because the study involves an exploration of the problem at the local level, potential solutions may exist. Results of this study could be used to assist UB graduates' transition from high school to college at the study site. This research study may add to the body of research emphasizing the importance and necessity of the UB program for low-income, first-generation students. The results of this study might provide current UB students with reference information to help them during their transition from high school to college. The educators likely to be interested in this research are UB faculty and staff, district and college administrators. The study contributes to the social change efforts by making stakeholders (secondary and postsecondary administrators) aware of past UB students' perceptions of perceived barriers and methods for overcoming.

Research Question

At the local study site, some first-generation, low-income students are not prepared for college. First-generation, low-income students have expectations of going to college; however, they may not understand the enrollment requirements and academic requirements (Covarrubias & Fryberg, 2015; Gibbons & Woodside, 2014). The services offered by the UB program were designed to prepare first-generation, low-income students for college. The purpose of this study was to describe UB graduates' perspectives of the program. The following research question was used to guide this project study:

What are first-generation, low-income students' perspectives of the UB program?

Review of the Literature

In this section, I present a discussion of the current, peer-reviewed literature on the UB program, No Child Left Behind, and Race to The Top, Georgia's standardized tests, and factors that contribute to college retention and persistence. My literature review strategy consisted of searches on peer-reviewed articles in Walden's Library educational databases. The educational research databases included: ProQuest publications, ERIC, SAGE, EBSCO Host, Educational Research Complete, and Academic Search Premier. The following terms were used interchangeably in the database: *retention, persistence, student attrition, student matriculation, UB program, student employment, college expectations, social support, first-generation students, low-income students, college boredom, Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT),* and *American College Test (ACT).* The search was limited to sources over the past 5 years.

Conceptual Framework

The guiding conceptual framework for this case study is Tinto's (1975) student integration model. The central idea of Tinto's student integration model is that students will graduate if they participate in social organizations while enrolled in college (Alberto, Amaury, & Maria, 1993). According to Tinto, "students' persistence is predicted by their academic integration and social integration in college" (p. 16). Stewart, Lim, and Kim (2015) further stated that persistence is a process that develops over the years as a function of students' social and academic interactions. Tinto further stated that students enter postsecondary institutions with many attributes, educational experiences, family

and community background values, and skills orientations. Students must learn how to integrate their personal beliefs and experiences into their college environment. The concept of Tinto's integration model, as applied by Allen (1994), framed this case study by guiding the data collection and analyses.

There are many reasons why students do not persist at postsecondary institutions. Engle and Tinto (2008) found that first-generation, low-income students are more likely to leave college, less likely to persist, and less likely to earn a college degree. Alberto et al. (1993) used Tinto's student integration theory to explain the process that students experience before leaving college. Tinto's student integration model is useful when examining external factors that may influence college persistence (Alberto et al., 1993). Tinto (1975) believed that students drop out of college because of the lack of integration into various aspects of college life. According to Tinto (1993), the most critical systems at college are the social and academic aspects. Tinto concluded that students drop out of college when there is a lack of integration in one or both areas. Tinto also noted that when students are committed to their institution, they are more likely to persist and graduate from college. Other characteristics that Tinto deemed important in influencing individual college success are precollege experiences, family background, sex, race, academic ability, and grade-point average. Social support and academic ability levels are good predictors of a student's success in college.

It is essential to understand the reasons why first-generation, low-income students do not persist in college to improve retention. Student retention affects the students and the institutions (Barefoot, 2004). College retention may be affected by family and other

social issues. McGivney (2004) suggested that student retention is a complex issue that is influenced by life choices, such as if they choose to work while in college, start a family, and other social problems. Tinto (1993) suggested that attrition is a result of student interaction and their educational environment. Tinto further stated that "social integration and academic integration produced a stronger more committed student, and increased persistence" (p. 61). Students leave postsecondary institutions due to a lack of preparation, incorrect choice of course or institution, to achieve other personal goals, financial reasons, and a lack of integration into the institution they attend (Alarcon & Edwards, 2013). Other factors that may influence attrition and retention are academic boredom, unrealistic expectations of college, employment, and social support (Ellis, 2015). I addressed former and current policy on education, discussed the ongoing educational assessments, and discussed factors that may contribute to retention of first-generation, low-income college students.

No Child Left Behind and Race to the Top

Legislators and educators developed No Child Left Behind (NCLB) to close the achievement gaps, to encourage students to take more rigorous courses, and to ensure that all students are on track to graduate from college and are career-ready (Kotamraju & Blackman, 2011). Another purpose of the NCLB Act was to increase K-12 academic standards and accountability through measurable goals (Davidson, Reback, Rockoff, & Schwartz, 2015). NCLB measures students' growth and critical thinking around a well-rounded curriculum. The NCLB initiative focused on the academic achievement of

minority students (Jahng, 2011), like the UB program that focuses on preparing students academically and socially for their transition to college.

With each President of the United States comes a new educational initiative. President Obama's Race to the Top initiative was created to raise academic standards for students just as NCLB. The Race to the Top program is a grant that supports different approaches to improving low-achieving schools. Race to the Top focuses on improving teacher quality to accelerate students' progress and closing achievement gaps (Hershberg & Kraft, 2010). In Race to the Top, certain aspects of NCLB were retained, such as closing achievement gaps by race, accountability, and standards (McGuinn, 2016). With the implementation of this new reform, all students in the Middle Georgia area were required to take more rigorous course offerings in high school to prepare them for college.

According to Hershberg and Kraft (2010), Race to the Top emphasized improving teacher quality to accelerate student progress and closing achievement gaps. Highly effective teachers should be placed in low-performing schools to reduce or eliminate the achievement gap (Hershberg & Kraft, 2010). The Common Core State Standards were designed to provide a rigorous learning platform that increased students' performance in the classrooms and helped them to succeed in college (Fagan, Holland, & Firmin, 2012). Currently, 45 states have adopted the CCSS. The college-and-career-readiness standards are incorporated into the CCSS and included college and work expectations, academic content, and application to build upon strengths of the current standards, informed by top-performing countries, and evidence and research-based education CCSS. These standards

intended to prepare students for college academically and ensure that they are career ready. By implementing CCSS, low-achieving schools are required to improve their standards, which leads to first-generation, low-income students being more prepared for their transition to college.

Georgia Milestone End-of-Course

The Georgia Milestone End-of-Course Test (EOCT) is the new state's assessment that replaced the Georgia High School Graduation Test (GHSGT). The GHSGT was an exit examination that measured what students learn over the course of their 4 years in high school, whereas the EOCT assesses learned concepts in a single core course and replaced the final examination (Prater et al., 2009). The EOCT accounts for 20% of students' final grades in courses. The EOCT was a part of Georgia's accountability plan required by NCLB (Prater et al., 2009). The EOCT is used to measure students' performance in core academic areas such as English, mathematics, and science throughout the state. Students in Georgia took the EOCT in eight core subject areas: Math I, Math II, United States History, Economics, Biology, Physical Science, ninth Grade Literature, and Composition. Students enrolled in a core course or receiving credit for a core course were required to take the EOCT (Ellis, 2015).

According to the 2014-2015 state report card, students were not passing the EOCT at high rates (Clark, Scafidi, & Swinton, 2012). Students passing the EOCT is important because they must pass the state's assessment to graduate from high school. When students do not pass they risk failing the course and their GPA may decrease. For this reason, precollege programs such as UB programs are needed to assist first-

generation, low-income students increase their standardized test scores and high school GPA. For this reason, precollege programs such as UB programs are needed to assist first-generation, low-income students increase their standardized test scores and high school GPAs.

Scholastic Aptitude Test and American College Test

The Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) and the American College Test (ACT) are used for university and college admissions and placements. Higher education institutions have traditionally relied on admissions tests such as the ACT and the SAT as selection criteria for admissions (Cimetta, D'Agostino, & Levin, 2010). According to Bastedo, Bowman, Glasener, and Kelly (2018) the goal of higher education institutions is to recruit, retain, and graduate students who meet the institution's requirement on the SAT and ACT. Westrick, Le, Robbins, Radunzel, and Schmidt (2015) reported that high school GPA and SAT and ACT composite scores are valid predictors of first-year college performance.

SAT and ACT scores may affect first-generation, low-income students in the following areas: GPA, social and economic status, and college integration. Fleming (2002) suggested that SAT and ACT scores also are related to social and economic status. Stephens, Townsend, Hamedani, Destin, and Manzo (2015) suggested that ACT and SAT scores are associated with student college integration. The SAT and ACT developers gathered input from high school teachers and educators to cover the content areas presented as part of the high school rigorous curriculum (Addison, 2015). The SAT and ACT tests measure knowledge and skills that are considered essential by both high school

teachers, faculty in higher education institutions, and the Common Core State Standards (Addison, 2015).

The SAT and ACT are valid predictors of college persistence and graduation. First-generation, low-income students' SAT, and ACT scores influence their college enrollment. According to Astin and Oseguera, (2004), first-generation, low-income students have lower scores on the SAT and ACT. These standardized tests make college enrollment processes more challenging for first-generation, low-income students. Students who do not have the minimum SAT and ACT scores are required to enroll in remedial courses in college. Students enrolled in remedial courses do not receive college credits; therefore, they are enrolled in college longer, which may affect college graduation.

Low-Income and First-Generation Students

More first-generation and low-income students are enrolling in postsecondary institutions. Low-income, first-generation college students are one of the emerging populations in higher education institutions (Engle & Tinto, 2008; Ishitani, 2016; Maxwell, Rotz, & Garcia, 2016; Wilkins, 2014). According to Engle and Tinto (2008), low-income, first-generation students experience less success than their non first-generation, low-income peers; they are less likely than their peers to complete college (Engle & Tinto, 2008). "The Pell Institute's report indicated that among the Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study student cohort, only 11% of low-income, first-generation students had earned bachelor's degrees within 6 years, compared to 55% of their peers" (Mamiseishvili, 2010, p. 65). This study revealed that first-generation,

low-income college students did not stay in school as long as their peers. Nunez and Cuccaro-Alamin (1998) examined the experiences and outcomes for low-income, first-generation students against their peers. The study revealed the following:

1. First-generation students had a negative reflection on student persistence.

2. First-generation students and their peers were equal when it came to take remedial classes.

3. First-generation students reported that be affluent was not important to them.

4. First-generation students were more likely than nontraditional students and had families than their peers.

5. First-generation students were more likely to enroll at postsecondary institutions part-time than their peers.

Engle and Tinto (2008) suggested that low-income, first-generation students were more likely to leave college right after their first year of college. First-generation low-income students face issues that may affect their college persistence and retention. First-generation, low-income students need additional services to help them successfully transition into college.

Academic Boredom

Academic boredom develops when students have not established clear and concise education and career goals. Institutions should focus on helping students explore majors and careers that interest them. Students who are uncertain about their future goals are less likely to put forward efforts when it comes to the learning environment. They are

more inclined to question the worth of test taking, curricula, and courses when they have no career goals to relate them to (Markle, Yeatts, Seward, & Spencer, 2016).

Boredom can negatively influence student's academic performance (Pekrun, Hall, Goetz, & Perry, 2014). Often, academic boredom occurs when students lose focus on their academic goal and explore other things other than their coursework. LaVerghetta (2015) suggested that first-generation, low-income college students who are prone to boredom are at a higher risk of dropping out of college. Bridgeland (2010) indicated that becoming bored with the institution is caused by students experiencing disengagement.

Boredom may also occur because of a disconnection between classroom learning, students' career goals, and their personal lives. Sulea, van Beek, Sarbescu, Virga, and Schaufeli (2015) noted that becoming bored with the institution and uninteresting classes are principal reasons for students' lack of persistence and dropout rates. Pradeeo and Thomas (2015) found that students become bored with taking a class that does not benefit them, which causes them to have a lack of motivation to stay enrolled in college. Students who identified themselves as being bored in school had lower grades and test scores than those students who reported not being bored (Mann & Robinson, 2009). Bartsch and Cobern (2003) found that students' grades reflected unstimulating teaching methods, which may cause boredom. First-generation, low-income students are not equipped with the resources that are needed to overcome barriers such as boredom. There must be active engagement in their learning process to eliminate boredom (Kanevsky & Keighley, 2003). Precollege programs such as UB make first-generation, low-income students aware of barriers such as academic boredom.

Employment

  Financial obligations may affect first-generation, low-income students' retention and graduation. When compared to their peers, first-generation, low-income students have more financial obligations (Martinez & Rury, 2012). They must work to provide for their personal and educational needs (Baum, 2010). Approximately 57% of students worked while enrolled in college (Miller, Danner, & Staten, 2008). Students who worked while in college developed time management skills and other skills necessary to benefit their careers after graduation (Miller et al., 2008). Burlison (2015) stated that retention suffers if a student works a full-time job off campus. Miller et al. (2008) further stated that when students work an excessive number of hours, it can negatively affect the students' academic progress.

  First-generation, low-income students who work and have family obligations, may not be able to enroll in school as a full-time student. According to Lee, Youm, Kim, and Suh (2016), employment reduces the amount of time students devote to their studies, which may lead to poor academic performance. Ziskin, Fischer, Torres, Pellicciotti, and Player-Sanders (2014) found that first-generation, low-income students work extended hours and have less time to devote to their studies. Hawkins, Hawkins, Smith, and Grant (2005) reported that 88% of students who worked believed that work interfered with their studies. Miller et al. (2008) further stated that students who work extended hours are less likely to interact with faculty and more likely to have lower GPAs. Full-time employment while enrolled in college decreases the likelihood of college persistence and graduation

(Phillippe, & Gonzalez Sullivan, 2005). It is critical that faculty and administrators accommodate those first-generation, low-income students who work and attend college.

Social Support

Social support is essential to first-generation, low-income students' success in college. Social support from family and friends helps first-generation, low-income students have a smooth college transition and help them to be more productive academically (Mitchall & Jaeger, 2018; Padgett, Johnson, & Pascarella, 2012; Stephens, Fryberg, Markus, Johnson, & Covarrubias, 2012). Social support is a beneficial resource received from family and friends (Wintre & Yaffe, 2000). According to Tinto (1993), social support allows college students to be more involved academically which increased persistence and reduced stressed. Family support is one of the most significant barriers first-generation, low-income students face. Wang (2014) noted that parental and family support makes college transition better for students and increase the probability of success in college. Social support from family and friends may help alleviate potential stressors for first-generation, low-income students (Adams, Meyers, & Beidas, 2016; Covarrubias, Gallimore, & Okagaki, 2018; Roksa & Kinsley, 2018; Sax & Weintraub, 2014; Stephens, Brannon, Markus, & Nelson, 2015). Social support may sometimes cause students to struggle with balancing family and friends and college life.

Precollege programs, such as UB, offer social support for first-generation and low-income students when transitioning from high school to college. The UB program provides services that include personal counseling, mentoring, academic advising, tutorial services, financial support, and cultural awareness. The services that students receive

while participating in the UB program in high school prepares them to enroll in college. Students also receive assistance with college entrance exams, career exploration, financial aid applications, and selecting a postsecondary institution (Page & Scott-Clayton, 2016; Kotamraju & Blackman, 2011; Wilkins, 2014). UB's students are at an advantage when it comes to pursuing a college degree because of the extra support system from the UB program. First-generation, low-income students are more likely to be successful in college when they have a support system from family and friends.

Implications

At the high school that served as the local study site, first-generation, low-income students have the opportunity to participate in the UB program to help prepare them for college. However, some first-generation, low-income students who enroll in the UB program do not graduate from the program; but these students are tracked up to 6 years after they graduate from high school (UB assistant director, personal communication, November 1, 2013). The assistant director found that students who did not graduate from the program did not enroll in college at the same rate as the UB graduates (UB assistant director, personal communication, November 1, 2013). According to the literature review, researchers have indicated that the UB program has a positive influence on the transitions from high school to college (Kelly et al., 2016). Research of a local UB program at FRU identified services that may contribute to the positive outcomes for first-generation, low-income students transitioning from high school to college.

Summary

Precollege programs, such as the UB program, prepares first-generation, low-income students for college. Researchers have determined the UB program has a positive influence on first-generation, low-income students during the first semester of college (Reid & Moore, 2008). While enrolled in the UB program, students are provided services such as academic tutoring, social support, financial literacy, and cultural awareness to students enrolled in the program. Furthermore, colleges and universities may use precollege programs as a resource to help first-generation, low-income students make a smooth transition to college.

Section 1 outlined the problem and significance of first-generation, low-income students are not transitioning from high school to college. The purpose of this study was to describe UB graduates' perspectives of the program to confirm the programs' goals and objectives. The conceptual framework outlined how students enter college with different educational experiences and attributes. The literature review provided additional information on the educational policy, standardized test scores, low-income and first-generation students, and barriers to students' persistence. This section concludes with the project implications.

Section 2 addresses the methodology used for this case study. A case study was used to describe the perspectives of students who participated in the UB program. Also included in Section 2 are the participants, local research site, and data collection, and analysis.

Section 2: The Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative bounded case study was to describe the UB graduates' perspectives of the UB program. A qualitative methodology was selected because I wanted to describe first-generation, low-income students' perspectives of the UB program and how it contributed to their college transition. Qualitative research is used to provide the structure to study people, places, and events as they naturally occur (Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtle, 2010). Qualitative research involves inductive reasoning that includes concrete statements from participants to a more general understanding of all participants in the study's boundaries (Lodico et al., 2010; Stake, 1995). The inductive process offered a broader generalized understanding of the study's boundaries (Lodico et al., 2010).

The research approach for this qualitative study was a case study. According to Yin (2015), a case study is an empirical method that "involves a contemporary phenomenon (the "case") in depth and within its real-world context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident" (p. 15). A single case study was used to gain an understanding of first-generation, low-income students' perspectives of the UB program. Participants enrolled in their first semester of college at different postsecondary institutions.

In Section 2, I presented the research methodology and qualitative design. I justified the design selected and described the participants included in the study. Lastly, I described how the data were collected and analyzed.

Research Design and Approach

Qualitative Methodology

In this study, I described UB graduates' perspectives of the program using a qualitative case study. Qualitative case studies are designed to obtain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of an organization, which contributes to the knowledge of the group, social context, and related phenomena (Yin, 2018). Several qualitative designs were considered and rejected. Creswell and Creswell (2017) identified five approaches to qualitative research that can be used to answer the research question(s) in a study: (a) narrative research, (b) phenomenology, (c) grounded theory, (d) ethnography, and (e) case study. A narrative inquiry would not have been appropriate since the research questions were not exploring the participants' life events or testimonials (Chase, 2005).

The phenomenological approach is based on understanding or the essence of the experience (Langdridge, 2008). A grounded theory approach was not applicable because of its primary goal, which, focuses on building theory (Corbin & Strauss, 2007). An ethnographic approach was not appropriate for this project study, because the goal was not to explore the culture, beliefs, and traditions of the students who participated in the UB program (Merriam & Tisdell, 2009). Case study research focuses on developing an in-depth description and analysis of a case or multiple case (Creswell, 2013). A case study was the most reasonable qualitative approach to focus on participants in the real-world settings (Yin, 2018).

Case Study

I applied a case study design to described first-generation, low-income students' perspectives of the UB program. Case studies have two significant elements: the case and the boundedness (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Creswell & Creswell, 2017; Lodico et al., 2010; Stake, 1995). This case study included former UB students who graduated from high school and enrolled in a postsecondary institution. The boundedness is specific to only those students who graduated from FRU's (pseudonym) UB program in the 2013 cohort. More specifically, selecting a case study design was appropriate since the study's purpose was to describe first-generation, low-income students' perspectives of the UB program (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Stake, 1995). The data gathered were obtained during the 2014 spring semester using the telephone and face-to-face interview sessions.

<div align="center">

Participants

</div>

In this section, the sample population, the sampling methods and procedures, access to participants, and protection of participants' rights are all identified. I used purposeful sampling to identify which students in the UB program would participate in the face-to-face and telephone interviews. Purposeful sampling allows a researcher to internally select potential participants who have experienced the phenomenon (Creswell, 2012; Stake, 2005). In this study, there were three criteria that participants were required to meet. The criteria were as follows: (a) the student had to be a member of the 2013 UB cohort, (b) the student participated in the program for at least 2 years, and (c) the participant completed the first semester of college. These criteria ensured that participants

were enrolled in the program long enough to receive all the required services. Participants who met the criteria received informed consent forms via e-mail.

In this project study, I conducted one-on-one narrative interviews with students who graduated in UB's 2013 cohort to describe their perspectives of the program. According to Muylaert, Sarubbi, Gallo, Neto, and Reis (2014), a qualitative interview is an unstructured tool used to reveal life experiences and compare them to situational context. Purposeful sampling was used to select students to participate in this study. According to Patton (2015), purposeful sampling is used for selecting participants who have knowledge about the phenomenon of the study. Lodico et al. (2010) further stated that purposeful sampling is often used in qualitative research. Qualitative research usually requires a smaller sample of participants (Yin, 2015). A small sample of participants should allow the researcher to obtain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon (Yin, 2015). There was a total of 14 students in the 2013 cohort. I interviewed seven of the 14 students in the 2013 cohort. Four out of the 14 students did not enroll in college, and three students did not respond to the e-mail or telephone call.

Gaining Access to Participants

After receiving permission from Walden University's Institutional Review Board (IRB; Approval Number 12-16-13-0180664), I contacted the chair of the Human Subjects Committee via e-mail to obtain permission to conduct my study at FRU (pseudonym). The Human Subjects chair e-mailed me an application to complete and submit (via e-mail). I presented my proposal for the research study to a panel of 10 Human Subjects Committee members at the local study site. I received approval via e-mail from the

Human Subjects Committee Chair. Two days later, I contacted the UB director (via telephone and e-mail) to gather information about the program and the participants for the study. I obtained the participants' phone numbers and e-mail addresses from the UB director. After I identified the most recent graduates, I called each participant and explained the study, the purpose of the study, confidentiality, and the interview process. I also e-mailed the participants a copy of the informed consent form to participate in the study. All participants were required to respond to the e-mail within 1 week of receiving it. Upon receipt of the e-mail consent response, I contacted the participants to set up an interview date and time. A total of seven students completed the process and became participants. Three students did not participate in the study because they would not respond to my e-mail or return my phone calls (three attempted calls per student). In addition to the three students who did not respond to the e-mail and telephone call, four students had graduated from the UB program, but did not qualify because they did not enroll in college.

Participants Selection

In this study, I conducted interviews with UB graduates to describe their perspectives of the program. According to Muylaert et al. (2014), a qualitative interview is an unstructured tool used to gather information regarding real life experiences. Purposeful sampling was used to select students to participate in this study. According to Patton (2015), purposeful sampling is useful for selecting participants who know the phenomenon of the study. Qualitative research usually requires a smaller sample of participants (Yin, 2015), allowing the researcher to obtain an in-depth understanding of

the phenomenon. There were 14 students in the 2013 cohort. I interviewed seven of the

14 students in the 2013 cohort. Four out of the 14 students did not enroll in college, and

three students did not respond to the e-mail or telephone call.

Researcher-Participant Relationship

As the researcher, I must separate my role as the resercher and my role at the local

study site by remaining objective when gathering data from the research particpants. I

established a researcher-participant relationship by explaining the purpose of the

interviews and establishing the boundaries for the interviews. The purpose of the

interviews was to describe the UB program from the perspectives of UB graduates. The

boundaries established before the interviews were as follows: the participants were told

that their identity would be protected, the participants were told that they could withdraw

from the study at any time without fear of retaliation or any type of penalty, and the

participants were told that there was little to no risk of harm for participating in this

study. I ensured that the UB graduates understood that their participation was voluntary

in nature and their responses would remain confidential (Creswell, 2012). Pseudonyms

were used for the student participants to protect their identity. In the initial phase of the

research, I also informed the participants, over the phone and via e-mail, of all the steps

in the interview process. These methods of communication were used to help establish a

researcher-participant relationship.

To gain the participants' trust, I was transparent regarding the purpose of my

project study and what was required of them. Establishing trust and rapport requires

calculated steps to be taken to ensure the safety and confidentiality regarding data

collection (Hancock & Algozzine, 2011). During each telephone call, I provided the participants with an overview of the study, and what was required of them. I e-mailed the participants a consent form to participate in the study which outlined the purpose of the study, confidentiality, and privacy agreements. I gave the participants my contact information so that they could contact me with any questions or concerns they had during the process. I made sure the participants understood that the purpose of the interviews was to obtain a deeper understanding of their perspectives while participating in the UB program.

Ethical Protection of Participants

The researcher is responsible for protecting participants from any potential harm while participating in a study. Once I applied for and received IRB approval, I followed the procedures as outlined in the IRB application regarding the protection and confidentiality of participants at the local study site. I obtained the participants' written consent to participate in the study before I began to collect any data. Pseudonyms were assigned to protect the participant's identity. As outlined in the consent form, I reminded the participants that their participation was voluntary, and they could withdraw at any time.

I informed the participants that data were stored on a password-protected computer, and documents were stored in a locked file cabinet in my home. I am the only person who had access to the computer. All documents and data were deleted and shredded 5 years after the completion of this study for the protection and privacy of the

participants. The participants were provided no other protective measures or compensation to participate in this study.

Data Collection

To describe first-generation, low-income students' perspectives of the UB program, I collected qualitative data from open-ended and closed-ended interview questions. The primary data collection instrument for this project study was the interview protocol (Appendix B). According to Merriam (2009), interviews are the most the commonly used strategy when collecting data for qualitative research. This subsection includes the data source, the data collection procedures, and my role as a researcher.

Interviews

I used interviews to gain a better understanding of first-generation, low-income students' perspectives of the UB program. Merriam (2009) further stated, "Interviewing is necessary when we cannot observe behavior, feelings, or how people interpret the world around them" (p. 88).

The use of opened-ended and closed-ended interview questions were used to answer the research question for this study. According to Creswell (2012), open-and closed-ended questions allow interviewees to verbalize their positions or opinions. The instrument used in the data collection process is a self-developed interview protocol (Appendix B) that includes open-ended and closed-ended interview questions that align with the research question, conceptual framework, and related literature review. An interview protocol is an instrument used to gather interview data (Patton, 2015)

specifically related to the study. I developed an interview protocol that contained 16

interview questions to obtain data from the UB graduates.

Data Collection Procedures

Before the participants were interviewed, they were e-mailed a consent form that

explained the voluntary nature of the study and their rights as a participant. The

participants consented to the study via e-mail by responding I agree to the e-mail

requesting their participation in the study. At the beginning of the interviews, I read the

consent statement to the participants and asked if they wished to continue their

participation in this study. Before the interview, I informed the participants of the

following:

- Pseudonyms would be assigned to protect their identity.

- The participants were told that their participation was voluntary, and they could withdraw at any time.

- The participants were informed that interviews would be recorded.

- The data will be stored on a password-protected computer, and documents will be stored in a locked file cabinet in my home.

- I am the only person who has access to the computer.

- All documents and data will be deleted and shredded 5 years after the completion of this study for the protection and privacy of the participants.

The interviews took place over a four-week period during the 2014 spring

semester. Bogdan and Biklen (2007) found that the location of interviews influences the

interview responses. With the exception of one interview, all of the interviews took place

via telephone call. The one face-to-face interview was completed in the UB office where there were no interruptions.

To ensure detailed and accurate records, I recorded the interviews on a digital recorder. According to Bogdan and Biklen (2007), audio recordings are recognized as one of the most effective methods used when collecting data. I used my cell phone as a back-up in case there were any technical difficulties. Handwritten journal notes were also used as a backup for the audio recordings. Once interviews were completed, I transcribed all the interviews within 2 to 3 days post interview on a Microsoft Word document (Hatch, 2002). Merriam (2009) stated, "Transcribing your own interviews is [a] means of generating insights and hunches about what is going on in your data" (p. 174). I e-mailed the transcripts to the participants and asked them to respond to the e-mail if they reviewed the transcript to ensure that their interview was documented accurately. None of the participants responded to the e-mail regarding any inaccuracies within their transcripts. After the interviews were transcribed, I placed all recordings, consent forms, and notes in a locked case in my personal office. I uploaded the digital recordings on my personal password protected computer.

Role of the Researcher

At the time of the study, I was the assistant director of the UB program at the site where the research project was conducted. As the assistant director, I was responsible for making sure the goals and objectives of the program were met and I made sure UB students received all the required academic and career related services.

During the data collection process, I did not oversee any of the participants in the study. Before the data were collected, I knew the students a little over 1 year; therefore, I developed personal relationships with the students. My role as the assistant director may have had the potential to affect the data collection process; therefore, I took extra precautions to avoid any effects of researcher bias.

I used transcript reviews to mitigate any personal biases that may have resulted from my professional role. I avoided personal biases while reviewing and analyzing the interview data. I used a research journal to reflect upon how my previous role as the assistant director and the likelihood of my previous relationship could influence the study. Finally, I took extra precautions to avoid personal bias that may have evolved by reporting all data, regardless of whether it supported or refuted my perspectives, acknowledging the limitation of the study and keeping a journal with notes of my data collection and analysis procedures.

Data Analysis

In this study, the data analysis procedures included data preparation and organization, data coding, building themes, and reporting and interpreting the findings. Data analysis is a logical search for meaning (Hatch, 2002) to process qualitative data and to communicate the research findings to others. The data analysis process began immediately after the first data were collected as recommended by Merriam (2009). The initial data analysis was completed by hand and then transferred to a Microsoft Word document. Creswell (2012) found that researchers should analyze data by hand to get a

closer look at the details. After analyzing the interview data, I wrote notes in my reflective journal.

Interview Data Analysis

Open Coding of Data

Exploring the general sense of the data is an essential step in the process when analyzing interview data (Creswell, 2012). Transcripts were used as the primary source for the data analysis process. Transcription makes interpreting data a more simple process in qualitative research by allowing the interviewers to read, analyze, and interpret information. After collecting the data, I used my personal computer to transcribe the interviews in a Microsoft Excel file and transferred it to a Microsoft Word document. Listed below is a detailed description of how the data were analyzed.

I transcribed each interview immediately following the interview. According to Rubin and Rubin (2005), it is essential to transcribe each interview within 24 hours to maintain the accuracy of the data. Glaser (1978) recommended adhering to the participant's meanings as honestly as possible to prevent overlaying any personal perspective on the interviewees' thoughts. Typing every word while listening to a digital recording allowed me to examine the data and identify emerging patterns. I edited the transcripts by removing personal identifiers and deleting text that was not relevant to the study. I divided the remaining text into five sections to identify key ideas or concepts.

I reviewed the interview transcripts to obtain a general understanding of the participant's responses that were related to the research question. While reviewing the

transcripts, I made notes in my reflective journal to record my thoughts regarding various codes and concepts to explore further.

After reviewing the transcripts, I edited the transcripts and documented the segments into a Microsoft Word document to begin the process of coding the data. Two days after the interviews were transcribed, I applied open coding. I assigned codes to the sections of the text that were related to the research question. Continually reviewing the transcripts allowed me to analyze the data and the codes.

During the initial stages of coding transferring the data line by line from a Microsoft Word document to an Excel file allowed me to engage with the interview data actively. The next step involved assigning shorthand codes. The purpose of the initial coding was to assign the text into categories (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Transcribing and coding the data without using any coding software allowed me to develop an intimate relationship with each interviewee's responses. Coding my own data forced me to examine the data continuously.

Finally, I completed the open coding. I sorted each segment with their codes into groups based on their relevance to the research question. All of the segments related to UB services were put into one group, and the benefits of the UB program were put into another group.

Axial Coding

Axial coding consists of clustering related open codes to develop axial codes (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). During this step, open codes were reexamined to identify connections and relationships among the open codes. Those codes were clustered into

five related categories. The five categories were guest speakers, service motivation, social

exposure, and student experiences. According to Corbin and Strauss (2007), axial coding

is framed by words such as why, where, when, who, and with what. Sorting the two

themes (resources and benefits of UB) and five categories on an Excel Spreadsheet and

transferring them to a Microsoft Word document allowed me to facilitate the reassembly

process. This made it easy to manipulate the data in the Microsoft document.

Themes

The axial codes were arranged and rearranged into different categories until they

emerged in the themes that were most suitable. After the initial axial coding, two general

themes were identified: resources and benefits. The two main themes were initially

divided into five categories: guest speakers, services, motivation, social exposure, and

student experiences.

Evidence of Quality

The interview data were validated through a two-step process. First, the

interviews were recorded with a digital recorder to capture the participants' responses to

the interview questions accurately. The second process consisted of using member

checks. I used member checks to validate the accuracy of the data collected. The

preliminary findings were sent to the participants for them to review and share their

feedback. According to Merriam (2009), member checking is when the researcher asks

one or more participants in the study to check the accuracy of the account. This process

will eliminate any biases that may have occurred based on the researcher's knowledge of

the UB program, as well as the relationship that was established between the researcher

and the participants while they were enrolled in the program. I made it known to the participants that my role as the UB assistant director was not related to this research study and their participation. Finally, I did not find any discrepant case in my interviews with the UB graduates. All of the graduates stated that the UB program resources and benefits had an influence on their successful transition from high school to college.

Data Analysis Results

The data analysis process consisted of transcribing the data, coding the data, the development of themes, and writing up the findings. Analyzing data involves organizing the data, coding, synthesizing the codes into themes, and identifying patterns (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). I transcribed all interviews with my personal computer into a Microsoft Excel file and transferred the Excel file to a Microsoft Word document. I reviewed the interview transcripts to obtain a general understanding of the participant's responses that were related to the research question.

There was one research question that guided this study to describe UB graduates' perspectives of the UB program. The research question was, what are first-generation, low-income students' perspectives of the UB program? The research question and the findings are the foundation of this study. Seven former UB graduates were interviewed for this study. This study will help secondary school administrators and postsecondary education administrators better understand how the UB program positively affects first-generation, low-income students' transition from high school to college.

Findings Related to the Problem and Research Question

The UB graduates were provided free supplemental instruction and tutoring services in their core courses while enrolled in the UB program. The participants reported that the tutoring and supplemental instruction they received while enrolled in the UB program helped increase their high-school GPA. Tutoring and supplemental instruction also helped increase their standardized test scores in reading and mathematics. Additionally, half of the participants stated that the cultural and social activities they participated in while enrolled in the UB program helped them with transitioning from high school to college. College visits, living on campus during the summer, and cultural dinners and activities were aspects of the program that positively influenced the graduates' perspectives on college life. They enjoyed meeting new people and interacting with other groups on campus. Finally, the students stated the social aspect of the program was critical to their high school to college transition.

There are many benefits of the UB program. Motivation is a benefit that continued to surface throughout the data analysis process. The students stated that their UB teachers helped them improve their grades, overall GPA, and encouraged them to enroll in college. Also, they reported that their UB teachers prepared them academically for college. The participants in this project study revealed that their motivation to enroll in college came from the UB program, parents, family members, teachers, or counselors through words of encouragement and advice. The participants believed that various components of the UB program helped them graduate from high school and motivated them to go to college. According to the participants, they were motivated by the UB

director, staff, teachers, and guest speakers. The participants stated that motivation is a key component of the UB program, which aligns with the findings in this study. This project study validates the positive influence of the services provided by the UB program, and the project can be used for professional development workshops for high school and college counselors and administrators. There were not any discrepant cases identified in this study. All of the data aligned with a theme or category.

Emerging Themes

I addressed a local problem of first-generation, low-income students who needed additional educational resources to successfully transition from high school to college. I designed this study to describe first-generation, low-income students' perspectives of the UB program. The interview data yielded detailed descriptions of the UB graduates' perspectives of the program. Two major themes emerged from this study and they are as follows: resources (guest speakers and services) and benefits (motivation, social exposure, and student experiences). Both themes were important when answering the research question of what were first-generation, low-income students' perspectives of the UB program. Based on the data collected, the benefits and resources of the UB program are used to prepare students to transition from high school to college.

Theme 1: Resources

The first theme that emerged was resources. Tutorial services and guest speakers were the two reoccurring resources that surfaced in the data. Several of the UB graduates indicated that the tutorial services and guest speakers were services that they enjoyed while enrolled in the UB program. The participants reported that services and guest

speakers were beneficial and needed. Some of the participants identified the

Toastmaster's representative, the Career Services presenter, and the guest speaker who

presented on adapting to college life as the guest speakers who captivated them the most.

Tutorial services were identified as the most beneficial services they participated in while

enrolled in the UB program. The participants stated that the tutoring they received while

in the program helped to increase their GPA and standardized test scores.

Tutorial services. Academic tutoring is a service that emerged during the data

analysis process. The UB graduates were provided free supplemental instruction and

tutoring services in their core courses while enrolled in the UB program. The participants

reported that the tutoring and supplemental instruction they received while enrolled in the

UB program helped increase their high-school GPA. Tutoring and supplemental

instruction also helped increase their standardized test scores in reading and mathematics.

According to Rothman and Henderson (2011), academic tutorial services play a

significant role in improving retention and academic achievement. Several of the

participants stated that they benefited from the academic tutorial services provided by the

UB program. The participants stated that attending the Academic Saturday sessions

(tutoring and supplemental instruction) helped them improve their grades in high school.

Table 1 displays the participants' comments concerning academic tutorial services.

Table 1

Participants' Comments Concerning Academic Tutorial Services

Participant	Comments
Kim	The tutoring I received in the UB program helped my grades to increase. I was an honor graduate when I graduated.
Mark	The part of the UB program that appealed to me the most was the assignments. UB helped me out a lot with grades. UB gave me a jump start with writing papers and my speech. It also helped me to become social. Toastmasters really helped me in the program. UB also helped me with my SAT and ACT tests; it also helped me with completing my college application.
Dee Dee	The summer program helped me a lot. It gave me the college going experience and the tutoring helped me with my class work and grades.
Kara	The tutoring appealed to me the most in the UB program. My math class motivated me in the program because I needed the extra help.

Two of the seven participants stated the academic tutoring they received from the program helped them to improve their grades and standardized test scores. The students reported that the tutorial services provided by the UB program helped them with their classwork and assignments in high school. The UB program provides academic tutoring year-round (Domina, 2009). The goal of tutoring is to help students improve academically (Hartman, 1990; Sutter & Paulson, 2017). Overall, the students indicated that the tutorial services they received during the academic year and the summer helped them improve on their class assignments, grades, and standardized test scores in high school. The participants credited the UB program and staff for increasing their GPAs in

school. Two participants (Kara and Kim) reported that the UB director and counselor made telephone calls and face-to-face contact mandating tutoring when they did not maintain a grade of 75 or above.

Kim stated,

The UB director motivated me to study, and she helped me with my math class. UB staff went the extra mile to make sure we got work done. They were always there to help. My UB math tutor helped me to improve my math and science grades.

Kara stated,

UB office manager call me weekly to set up my tutoring with the program. AJ stated, My UB math teacher was a great tutor. She helped me pass my math class. The participants stated that the tutoring they received from the UB program motivated them to improve their grades in high school.

Guest speakers. The UB program at FRU offers a developmental session on Saturdays during the academic year. During the developmental session, professional guest speakers present on topics such as careers, life experiences, the college admissions process, financial literacy, financial aid, and time management. Dalakas (2016) stated that guest speakers are critical when it comes to students' educational experiences. Guest speakers share their real-life experiences which allow students to see things from a different perspective. According to Sung, Chang, and Liu (2016), a benefit of guest speakers is that the students get the opportunity to compare what they have learned in the textbooks with the guest speaker's perspectives on a given subject or topic. Kim stated, "I

enjoyed the different speakers what would come in to talk to us." Mark stated, "The part

of the UB program that appealed to me the most was those people who came on

Saturdays to speak to us (guest speakers)." Overall, the UB graduates at FRU identified

guest speakers as a critical component of the UB program. Table 2 lists the participants'

comments concerning guest speakers.

Table 2

Participants' Comments Concerning Guest Speakers

Participant	Comments
Donna	One of the speakers we had on Saturday at UB supported me and influenced me to persist.
AJ	The people who came on Saturdays to speak to us had a positive influence on me. One of the speakers named Ms. Simmons really motivated me.
Mark	Interacting with the students, guest speakers, and assignments were the things that appealed to me most about the UB program. The guest speakers and UB staff and all the people with experience helped me to develop new relationships with peers. A member from the Toastmasters organization came to talk with us. They taught me how to be more social.
Casie	The part of the UB program that appealed to me the most was the different speakers would come in to talk to the group. Guest speakers were awesome, and they contributed my college persistence.

Theme 2: Benefits

The second theme that emerged was Benefits of the UB program. Although there are many benefits of participating in the UB program, there were two reoccurring categories that surfaced in the data: student experiences and motivation. The participants viewed the UB program as an instrumental contributing factor in their transition from high school to college. Benefits of the UB program are measured by the students' success in high school and in college (UB program director, personal communication, May 9, 2014). Within the theme of benefits of UB, two sub-themes emerged: student experiences and motivation.

Student experiences. The students reported that the UB program exposed them to activities that influenced how they dealt with issues at their postsecondary institutions. For instance, the participants reported that living in the dormitories during the summer program provided them with the simulated college dorm living experience. The students stated that they were exposed to other individuals' customs of living by living in the dorms with their peers and interacting with other students in other summer camps. According to the students, the simulated dorm living experience exposed them to conflict resolution and helped them develop social skills. Five of the seven students stated that they would not be in college if they had not been exposed to the college life experience through the UB program. All the participants stated that the program exposure prepared them for their first year of college by introducing them to college living, utilizing resources, developing study skills, and exposing them to peer support and other academic services. Angela stated, "I was ready for college when I graduated from high school. The

UB program helped me with my college application process, financial aid, scholarships, and we went on college visits."

According to this qualitative analysis, 100% of the research participants stated that their experiences while participating in the UB program contributed to their persistence and retention while enrolled in high school and college. The research participants stated that their experiences were positive, and they felt academically challenged by participating in the program. All of the participants stated that they felt the UB program social activities made them more sociable and prepared them for living on campus and away from home.

UB graduates felt that the program helped prepare them for college. The students indicated that the program provided them with the academic support they needed to enroll in a postsecondary institution. All seven of the participants stated that the program was the reason they graduated from high school and enrolled in college.

Annie stated,

The UB program staff kept me on track with my classwork in high school. I got all of my extra tutoring from the program. It really helped me pull up my grades. I also enjoyed the trips. They made me see myself as a college student.

Kara stated,

The UB program helped me with time management. I do not wait until the last minute to do my work. The UB staff made me feel like they cared; that motivated me to do better. Also, UB's Office Manager always called me to see why I was not present when I missed a Saturday session.

Dee Dee stated,

UB staff made sure I met all of my college deadlines. They provided workshops

on what to expect in college. We were told about the reasons why students drop

out of college and the dos and don'ts. UB staff invited college students to come

and talk with us about their personal experiences.

Overall, all the students interviewed stated that the participating in the UB

program prepared them for college through the services that were provided. The services

that were provided have been instrumental in their college persistence. The students

indicated that the extra help they received was the key to their academic success in high

school, which led to their college enrollment. Donna stated, "The student worker

motivated me. She was a good role model as an UB staff member and a college student."

AJ stated, "My UB mathematics teacher had a big influence on me. She helped me with

my math school work and motivated me to go to college."

Mark stated,

The UB staff informed me about the cost of attending a school out of state. I wish

I had listened because [the out-of-state fee was far too much]. The UB staff was

there to help me with college issues even though I was no longer in the program. I

learned a lot about what to expect in college.

Kim stated,

The UB program made me believe in myself because the staff believed in me. The

director was there for me whenever I needed assistance or had questions. I had

some really good teachers who talked with us about college and what college

teachers are like and what they accept and don't accept from students. The summer program gave me a good example of what living on campus was going to be like. This was the best part of the program ever. The speakers always shared personal, educational, and career experiences with us. This made me realize that I had to go to college.

Motivation. Motivation is a benefit that continued to surface throughout the data analysis process. The students stated that their UB teachers helped them improve their grades, overall GPA, and encouraged them to enroll in college. They reported that their UB teachers prepared them academically for college. The participants in this project study revealed that their motivation to enroll in college came from the UB program, parents, family members, teachers, or counselors through words of encouragement and advice.

The students stated that not only did the program provide mentors to those students who needed it; it also had workshops wherein the guest speakers motivated the students to go to college. Celina stated, "My teacher was my mentor. She was always there for me. She gave me a lot of good advice, and she helped me to pass my classes and ACT test." AJ stated, "The speakers were like my mentors. They shared stories, answered questions, and gave us advice."

Dee Dee stated,

One of the guest speakers we had at UB influenced me to keep going to school. The students stated that their teachers always motivated them and encouraged them to do their best and talked with them about colleges and careers.

The participants stated that the guest speakers and UB's teachers and staff helped them understand the importance of enrolling in college which motivated them to enroll in college. Table 3 lists the participants' comments concerning motivation.

Table 3

Participants' Comments Concerning Motivation

Participant	Comments
AJ	My math teacher motivated me in the UB program. Some of the guest speakers also motivated me to go to college and also taught me about time management.
Dee Dee	The UB student worker motivated me. She was a good role model as a college student. One of the guest speakers we had at UB influenced me to keep going to school. She talked about her life story.
Kara	UB staff motivated me.
Kim	The UB staff always influenced me to continue on to college and do my best in school. The learning experience that had a positive influence on me was the different speakers. UB taught me about balancing time. They also told us about their background stories.
Annie	UB staff helped me to understand the importance of college.

There are many factors that may interfere with first-generation, low-income students' successful transitioning from high school to college. The purpose of this project study was to describe first-generation, low-income students' perspectives of the UB program by answering the following research question: What are first-generation, low-income students' perspectives of the UB program?

The participants stated that motivation is a key component of the UB program, which aligns with the findings in this study. This project study validates the positive influence of the services provided by the UB program, and it can be used for professional development workshops for high school and college counselors and administrators. There

were not any discrepant cases identified in this study. All of the data aligned with a theme or category.

The students who participated in this case study were given an opportunity to share their perspectives of the UB program and the services that they received while enrolled in the program. Based on the data collected, the benefits and resources of the UB program are used to prepare students to transition from high school to college. This study confirms the known intent of UB programs which is to prepare first-generation, low-income students.

Evidence of Quality

Shenton (2004) provided five criteria that researchers should abide by when addressing the trustworthiness of their study: thick descriptions, credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. I used rich, thick description and verbatim quotes to ensure confirmability. Similar to a thick description, confirmability is the degree in which other researchers can corroborate the results. Thick descriptions involve explaining each step of the research process so that other researchers may replicate the study in other settings (Glesne, 2011). Transferability is the degree in which the results may be transferred to other contexts (Glesne, 2011). To meet this criterion, I made sure that my research met IRB standards. Dependability involves analyzing the findings and recommendations of the study (Merriam, 2009). The participants were e-mailed a copy of the findings to evaluate. Credibility is the confidence that can be placed in the research findings (Merriam, 2009). Merriam (2009) recommended credibility, consistency, and transferability to increase reliability. Glesne (2011) discussed credibility

and trustworthiness as characteristics that some researchers attempt to demonstrate. To meet this criterion, prior to the interviewing the participants, I told them that I role as the assistant director and my role as the researcher was different. During the interview, I reviewed the privacy and confidentiality statement included in the Appendix B.

Summary

To describe how the UB programs help first-generation, low-income students with transitioning from high school to college, I summarized UB graduates' perspectives of the UB program. Four of the UB graduates stated the academic tutoring they received from the program helped them to improve their grades. Additionally, the graduates stated that the guest speakers that spoke during the developmental sessions share their real-life experiences which allow students to see things from a different perspective. 6 of the UB graduates stated that they were motivated by a UB staff member, guest speaker, or some other aspect of the program. The goal of UB programs is to assist first-generation, low-income students with graduating from high school and enrolling in college. Therefore, based on the results of this study, I concluded that UB programs influence first-generation, low-income students' transition from high school to college. Furthermore, this study confirms the known intent of UB programs which is to prepare first-generation, low-income students.

Project Deliverable as an Outcome of the Results

This project, a 22-page UB Report, was designed to help secondary administrators and postsecondary administrators better understand how the UB program positively affects first-generation, low-income students' transition from high school to college. The

purpose of the UB Report is to describe first-generation, low-income students' perspectives of the UB program. The report identified themes that emerged during the data analysis process and from the literature review. An UB Report was the most logical project for this study because it confirms the existing goals and objectives of UB based on graduates' perspectives of the program.

The study participants indicated that services were one of the most beneficial components of the program. They identified the following services as being critical to their transition from high school to college: tutoring, guest speakers, and social activities. The benefits of the program which contributed to students' successful transition were experiences and motivation. The identified themes, *resources* and *benefits,* confirm the attainment of goals and objectives of the UB program which are: improve students' GPA and standardized test scores through tutoring and supplemental instruction; increase secondary school retention, graduation, and college enrollment.

Overall, the findings revealed that the UB program helps first-generation, low-income students transition from high school to college through the benefits and resources that it offers. Therefore, the outcome of this study is the confirmation that the UB program attains existing goals and objectives by influencing first-generation and low-income students' goals and aspirations of attending college and providing education support mechanisms for first-generation, low-income students.

Conclusion

Section 2 was an explanation of the design, methodology, rationale, research question, and discussion of my role as the researcher in this project study. Also, I

explained the data collection process that was used to conduct individual interviews with

UB graduates as well as the data analysis procedures used in the study. Finally, I

presented the findings and explained how they aligned with the study's research question.

Information will be stored for 5 years, upon which all stored data will be destroyed.

Section 3 is an explanation of the project.

Section 3: The Project

Introduction

Following the completion of researching the UB program, I developed a project,

an UB Report (Appendix A), to address the research findings. Included in this section are

the project description and a literature review regarding UB program services and plans

for implementing the project. The basis for this project was derived from the research

findings and the professional literature regarding UB programs.

Description and Goals

The project, an UB Report (Appendix A), was developed to help secondary

school administrators, and postsecondary education administrators better understand how

the UB program positively affects first-generation, low-income students transition from

high school to college. The purpose of the UB Report is to describe UB graduates'

perspectives of the UB program. As the assistant director of an UB program, my goal was

to determine UB students' perspectives of the UB program. The UB Report, which was

derived from the study findings, has two goals. The first goal was to describe UB

graduates' perspectives of the UB program. The UB Report will identify the benefits and

resources the UB graduates stated contributed to their successful transition from high

school to college. The following subsection explains the rationale for choosing an UB

Report to present UB graduates' perspectives of the UB program.

Rationale

An UB Report is the most suitable genre for this project study was to describe

first-generation, low-income students' perspectives of the UB program at the local study

site. The findings revealed that UB graduates identified benefits (motivation, social exposure, and student experiences) and resources (services and guest speakers) as major components of the program that contributed to their transition from high school to college; therefore, this study confirmed what worked for a group of UB graduates. In addition to the study findings, the current literature indicated that academic services such as tutoring, mentoring, guest speakers, and workshops are essential to improving first-generation, low-income students' academic achievement and retention (Fike & Fike, 2008; Kimbark, Peters, & Richardson, 2017; Pratt et al., 2019; Tinto, 2006; Wibrowski, Matthews, & Kitsantas, 2017). The literature indicated that students were motivated academically while enrolled in the UB program (Alhaddab & Aquino, 2017; Anderson, 2017; Glennie, Dalton, & Knapp, 2015; Hrabowski, 2018; Perna, 2015).

The UB Report describes the graduates' perspectives of the UB program. Additionally, it includes benefits and resources that participants identified as helpful to their transition from high school to college. The UB Report may be used to help secondary school and postsecondary education administrators better understand how the UB program positively affects first-generation, low-income students' successful transition from high school to college.

Before developing the project, an UB Report, I reviewed scholarly literature that addressed ways to help first-generation, low-income students transition from high school to college. The following literature review focuses on the project (UB Report) and services and resources for college students.

Review of the Literature

The literature review in this section focused on the project's genre, the project (UB Report), and postsecondary academic support services and resources. To explore potential solutions to assist first-generation, low-income students transition from high school to college, I search Pro Quest Central, Google Scholar, Sage Journal, Education Source, Psyc INFO, ERIC, and Psyc ARTICLES. The following phrases were used in the search: *academic tutorial services, mentoring, social exposure,* and reports. The literature supported the need for an UB Report to describe UB graduates' perspectives of the program. Professional works provided evidence to confirm what works for first-generation, low-income students when they enroll in college. This literature may be used to inform secondary and postsecondary administrators on serviced that may assist first-generation, low-income students with their transition from high school to college.

Project Genre

The purpose of the UB Report is to present a research problem, present current related literature regarding the problem, present ways to address the problem, and to report the results of the study based on the research findings. Reports are a suitable method to disseminate the research findings and the project's implementation (Brownson, Colditz, & Proctor, 2018). O'Sullivan, Berner, Taliaferro and Rassel (2016) developed a guideline for reports that includes an executive summary, a methodology, a literature review, and the findings. The UB Report identified the benefits and resources UB graduates stated were instrumental to their successful transition from high school to college. McIntosh and Ginther (2014) found that reports present characteristics of theses

and dissertations. McIntosh and Ginther noted that reports might include recommendations to address the research problem. The goal of the UB Report is to describe UB graduates' perspectives of the program, and to identity how the UB program's benefits and resources that contributes to UB graduates successfully transition from high school to college. The project study's findings will inform secondary and postsecondary educators on how to prepare first-generation, low-income students for college. Included in the UB Report are the following: the problem and purpose of the study, the background, a review of related literature based on the findings, and results of the study.

UB Report

The study findings revealed that UB graduates identified resources and benefits as major components of the UB program that contributed to their transition from high school to college. I confirmed what worked for a group of UB graduates. Based on the findings and the related literature, I developed a project, an UB Report, to describe UB graduates' perspectives of the UB program (Appendix A). The UB Report also includes the following: the problem, the significance of the study, related literature, the research method, and limitations of the study. The UB Report concludes with the findings, conclusion, and recommendations.

Academic Tutorial Services

Tutoring is critical to students' success in high school and college. Tinto (2006) indicated that educators should understand the importance of tutoring programs and its relationship students' success in high school and college. Walvoord and Pleitz (2016)

found that tutoring programs increased student's critical thinking skills, study habits, academics, and college enrollment. Students who work with academic tutors are more likely to increase their GPA and continue from one year to the next (Huang, Roche, Kennedy, & Brocato, 2017). At the same time, academic tutorial programs assist students with the resources they need to connect with the institution thus ultimately has a role in maintaining their interest with continuing in postsecondary education (Braun & Zolfagharian, 2016). Academic tutorial services can affect students' academic performance and affect retention.

Student retention may be influenced by tutoring programs equipped with knowledgeable faculty and staff. Vaysberg and Fagan (2015) suggested that a retention strategy such as academic tutoring is necessary when focusing on students' success in high school and college. Academic tutoring and advising are linked to student engagement with faculty for one-on-one interactions and mentoring (Bloom, 2016). Reynolds and Weigand (2010) stated that faculty who have frequent contact with students might have a positive influence on their growth and experiences. Faculty who are knowledgeable of the student's needs is one of the most compelling practices to impact enrollment and persistence retention at secondary and postsecondary institutions (Gandhi-Lee, Skaza, Marti, Schrader, & Orgill, 2017; Knaggs, Sondergeld, & Schardt, 2015; & Tovar, 2015). Finally, student enrollment and persistence efforts must focus on components of the institution that will build strong connections between programs that aligns with student academic needs (Allen-Ramdial & Campbell, 2014; Flynn, 2014; Gordon & Steele, 2015; Wilson et al., 2015). Academic tutorial services influence student

enrollment and retention; it is vital that secondary and postsecondary institutions offer
tutorial services.

Secondary and postsecondary institutions have established tutoring programs to
assist students with social integration (Strayhorn, 2015). Some institutions may combine
services such as tutoring, advising, and career services to ensure that all of the student's
needs are met. Collaborations are critical when it comes to tutoring services and
academic advising services because it improves students' educational outcomes. Bloom
(2016) argued that academic tutoring and advising allows students to engage with faculty
for one-on-one interactions and mentoring, increase their GPA, and improve their
standardized test scores (Davis, 2015). The tutoring services and programs are
instrumental to student's success in high school and college.

Mentoring

Mentors offer guidance to students assists with their college transition, thus
making the process a much smoother transition. More recently, Hastings, Griesen,
Hoover, Creswell, and Dlugosh (2015) found that mentorship is critical when it comes to
providing students with the support that they need for college-level success. Colby et al.
(2016) further stated that mentors offer information and guidance that students need to be
successful college. More secondary and postsecondary institutions are implementing
mentoring programs to help students succeed in college (Blackwell & Pinder, 2014;
Campbell & Campbell, 1997). Sharma (2015) asserted that college mentoring programs'
objective is to increase student retention in high school and college for at-risk and first-
generation students. The UB program uses educators as mentors to promote college

access and student success (Harper & Schmidt, 2016; Palmer & Maramba, 2015; Perna, 2015). Haskins and Rouse (2013) found that mentoring programs provide students with the support they need to help them feel more involved on campus.

Mentors can have a lifelong impact on their students, particularly first-generation, low-income students (Brown & Sheerin, 2018; Monk et al., 2014; Wibrowski et al., 2017; Woods & Preciado, 2016). Mentoring gives students, the opportunity to evaluate their situations and focus on their expected outcome (Hastings et al., 2015). Irby (2012) stated that mentoring has a positive influence in promoting college enrollment and persistence. Mentoring produces a positive outcome for student retention and persistence at postsecondary institutions (Bayer, Grossman, & DuBois, 2015; Castleman & Page, 2015; Weiler et al., 2013). Notably, mentoring facilitates positive social and academic integration that impacts students' academic success (DeFreitas & Bravo, 2012). Mentors have the potential to affect a student's college access and their academic and social success.

Social Exposure

The literature revealed that UB graduates stated that the cultural and social component of the UB program exposed them to the college life and other cultural experiences that they would not have participated in if they did not join the program. Zhao, Gu, Yu, and Gao (2016) found that culture at colleges and universities are influenced by the staff, faculty, and students' experience. Similarly, Maxwell et al. (2016) found that institutional cultural produces outcomes based on the organization's characteristics. UB students stated that living on campus for 6 weeks allowed them to

understand what it was like to live away from home with a stranger over an extended period of time, and it helped with their social development. Notably, people within organizations influence culture (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2015; Billings & Terkla, 2014; Bolman & Deal, 2017; Mahbouba, 2014).

Some students stated they were homesick at first, but quickly adjusted to being away from home. This was identified as being one of the most critical to social and cultural exposures and was listed as an essential aspect of precollege and college social integration.

Project Description

This project, a 22-page UB Report, was developed to help secondary administrators and postsecondary administrators better understand how the UB program positively affects first-generation, low-income students' transition from high school to college. The purpose of the UB Report is to describe first-generation, low-income students' perspectives of the UB program. The UB Report describes the graduates' perspectives of the UB program. The UB Report will be implemented during the 2019-2020 Academic Year. Additionally, it includes benefits and resources that participants identified as helpful to their transition from high school to college. This section includes a description of the needed resources and existing supports, potential barriers and solutions to barriers, proposal implementation plan and timetable, and roles and responsibility of the student. Also included in this section is the type of evaluation used for this project.

Needed Resources and Existing Supports

I will schedule a meeting with all secondary and postsecondary administrators in July 2020 to present my UB Report. A copy of the PowerPoint presentation, Executive Summary, and UB Report will be given to all of the administrators who attend my UB presentation meeting. The presentation for the UB Report will require equipment and materials for distributing and presenting the findings in the report. The following equipment will be used: computer or laptop, printer, ink, projector, wireless pointer, whiteboard, classroom, and conference room. Materials will include paper, ink, binders, labels, staples, promotional items, and whiteboard markers. The equipment and supplies listed above will be used to prepare and present the UB Report. Funds are needed for travel and mileage reimbursements for the assistant director to travel to the local high schools and colleges and universities. Existing supports include the administrators at the local target high schools and administrators at the host postsecondary institution. Secondary administrators will continue to provide meeting space to present the UB Report. The administrators will ensure that the meeting space has adequate technology to present a PowerPoint presentation.

Potential Barriers and Solutions to Barriers

Although the secondary and postsecondary administrators are familiar with the UB program and its goals and objectives, I believe that there may be some potential barriers. One barrier may be obtaining meeting space to present the UB Report. Getting people to attend the meeting could be another potential barrier to the development of this project. Finally, the lack of obtaining feedback from the secondary and postsecondary

administrators could be a potential barrier. A solution to these barriers is to organize a

meeting with the secondary and postsecondary administrators prior to the presentation to

provide an overview of the UB Report. During this meeting we will discuss who will be

present at the meeting and the space needed to accommodate the number of attendees.

Also, we will discuss technology available for presentation.

Implementation Plan and Timetable

The UB Report will be presented at a meeting at the target high schools. Before

distributing the UB Report, I will complete a 20-minute PowerPoint presentation

(Appendix A) about the report. Upon completion of the presentation, I will have a brief

question and answer session. The meeting attendees will receive a two-page executive

summary of the report. The local stakeholders that will be invited to the meeting are as

follows: community partners, county elected official, secondary and postsecondary

administrators, and other educators, as well as parents and other individuals within the

community. The report will be implemented during the 2019-2020 Academic Year. The

UB Report will be distributed electronically via e-mail on a Microsoft Word Document to

all stakeholders (June, 2020). Once all stakeholders have reviewed the report, it will be

made available on a hard copy to all stakeholders for their next monthly meeting (July,

2020). I will schedule a meeting with the stakeholders to answer any questions and

address any issues or concerns they may have with the UB Report (August, 2020).

Roles and Responsibilities of Student

The role of the student is to develop a PowerPoint presentation and ensure that the

UB Report and the Executive Summary are prepared before the meeting. As the

presenter, I will have the stakeholders' meeting advertised in the local newspaper, on the Parent Portal School Announcements, and Marketing and Communications at the local university. The presenter will end the presentation with a question and answer session. Finally, two weeks after the presentation, the presenter will meet with the secondary and postsecondary administration to answer additional questions and receive recommendations.

Project Evaluation Plan

I chose to conduct a formative evaluation for this UB Report. The goal of formative evaluation is to gather meaningful feedback and make revisions based on the feedback (Black & Wiliam, 2009). Tessmer (2013) further stated that formative evaluations examine how interventions or services were implemented and the outcomes. Overall, the evaluation procedure incorporates measures to ascertain the value or relevance of the recommendations (Nieveen & Folmer, 2013). The formative evaluation will be used to make revisions to the project for improvements.

The overall goal of the project is to describe UB graduates' perspectives of the UB program and identify the benefits and resources that the UB graduates stated contributed to their successful transition from high school to college. The project will decribe UB gradutes' perspecitves of the UB program. The overall goal of the project evaluation is to determine if the UB Report was beneficial in helping the key stakeholders (secondary and postsecondary school administrators) better understand how the UB program positively affects first-generation, low-income students' transition from high school to college. The key stakeholders at the secondary school include; the Principal,

Assistant Principals, Counselors, and Graduation Coaches. The key stakeholders at the

postsecondary institution include; Vice Provost for Student Affairs, University College

Dean, and the Director of the Admissions Office. The feedback received from the

secondary administrators will be shared with university administration to support the

effectiveness of the UB Report, and it could be used as a guide or resource for their

current first generation, low-income students. Finally, the university's External Affairs

auditor will provide feedback and recommendations regarding the report.

Project Implications Including Social Change

Local Community

This project will promote social change at the local level because it will be used

as a guide to help secondary administrators and postsecondary administrators prepare

first-generation, low-income students for college. The goal of this project is to help first-

generation, low-income students successfully transition from high school to college. Not

only will secondary and postsecondary administrators be informed of how to prepare

first-generation, low-income students for college, but administrators with the local board

of education will also be informed of the students' perspectives and the outcome of the

UB Report for this study. Following the approval of this project study, a copy of the

executive summary and the UB Report will be sent to secondary and postsecondary

administrators for review. The UB Report describes UB graduates' perspectives on what

first-generation, low-income students face when transitioning from high school to college

at the local study site.

Further Context

   This study was designed for an UB program at a university in the southeastern United States; however, it could potentially be used to inform other UB program directors throughout the United States. This project study has the potential to benefit other UB programs as well as other postsecondary institutions that have a large population of first-generation, low-income students. Exploring the perspectives of UB graduates revealed benefits and resources that first-generation, low-income students stated influenced their transition from high school to college. Educators should consider these benefits and resources when assisting first-generation, low-income students with their transition from high school to college. Additionally, this project will help UB directors and secondary and postsecondary administrators better understand how the UB program positively affects students' successful transition from high school to college.

<div align="center">Conclusion</div>

   The findings included in this project study of UB graduates transitioning from high school to college provided evidence that supports that first-generation, low-income students need additional academic resources when transitioning from high school to college. In this section, I identified and described the project, an UB Report (Appendix A). This project was developed to describe first-generation, low-income students' perspectives of the UB program. The UB Report will help secondary and postsecondary administrators better understand how the UB program positively affects first-generation, low-income students' successful transition from high school to college.

Section 4 includes a reflection and conclusion of this study. Furthermore, the project's strengths and weakness, implications, and direction for future research are described. I included a self-reflection of my personal growth gained because of this study.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

Project Strengths and Limitations

The problem of the study is that transition from high school to college can be challenging for some first-generation, low-income high school students (UB director, personal communication, November 1, 2013). Secondary and postsecondary administrators have not addressed the barriers first-generation, low-income students face when transitioning to college. I created this project, an UB Report to describe UB graduates' perspectives of the UB program. Kallison and Stader (2012) found that precollege programs, such as the UB program, provide interventions that help the first-generation, low-income students prepare and enroll in college.

Project Strengths

This project has several strengths. It addresses the ways that UB programs meet the needs first-generation, low-income students have when transitioning from high school to college. I used the data gathered from the interview responses to create this report, which will be used by secondary and postsecondary administrators. Using a qualitative method, I gathered data from UB graduates regarding their perspectives of the UB program. By using a qualitative methodology, I described UB graduates' perspectives of the UB program. Using a case study design allowed me to report the participants' perspectives or experiences of a phenomenon, to create new knowledge regarding a study (Stake, 2005). These data allowed me to create a project that may be used as a guide to help secondary administrators and postsecondary administrators prepare first-generation, low-income students for college.

Another strength of the project is that the local UB program was shown to be successful and valued by the students at the study site. The project presents positive aspects of the UB program that are of interest to the local stakeholders and practitioners in the field. Finally, the UB Report stores data collected regarding the UB program in one place that is readily accessible.

Project Limitations

Just as with any new project, this project will have potential limitations which need to be addressed. First, the small amount of first-generation, low-income students from each target high school that participated in this study was a limitation. The second limitation is that the participants used to develop the project were from one cohort of the UB program. If more students from other cohorts were included the data would be a more accurate representation of the school district's population. The third limitation is that the project was developed based on only one UB program located in the Southeastern United States. The project's findings are limited to the institution studied. The data collected were retrieved from a small group of participants. Another limitation is that I was the key instrument when collecting, analyzing, and interpreting the data used to develop the project; therefore, this may have an effect on my subjectivity when creating the project (Merriam, 2009). The final limitation is that no new advantages or disadvantages regarding the UB program were discovered.

<div align="center">

Recommendations for Alternative Approaches

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The problem described in Section 1 of this study focused on the barriers first-generation, low-income students face when enrolling in postsecondary institutions.

However, the problem description did not include an explanation as to why first-generation, low-income students encounter barriers when enrolling in college. A future researcher might address the causes of those barriers. An alternate method that could be used to address the local problem would be to do an evaluation of the UB program and use the results to create an evaluation report as the final project. Additionally, I would complete the process for obtaining parental consent for current UB juniors and seniors to participate in the study. I would interview the students to gain an understanding of what they believe their barriers are. After the interview, the students would be given a survey to evaluate the UB program. This alternate method would identify the current barriers first-generation, low-income students face when transitioning from high school to college.

Scholarship, Project Development, and Leadership and Change

Scholarship

Throughout the process of this project study, I learned a lot about scholarship in regard to research. According to Oliver (2010), scholarship is defined as a search for truth used to improve human conditions by gaining knowledge and understanding of ourselves and the world. This doctoral project study process taught me that scholarship involves learning that is most supported by research. Scholarship is considered one of the most important aspects of research. I learned a lot about scholarship beyond the challenge, depth, and advancement of knowledge. Scholarship involves taking pride in sharing knowledge and providing leadership in a field of research. Throughout this process, I

have shared knowledge that I gained with students, school leaders, teachers, and colleagues at my institution and the target high school associated with the UB program.

Project Development

I learned that developing a project is very time consuming and requires a lot of research. During the process of developing my project, I learned a lot about myself and why I chose to become a scholar. I chose my project study topic UB graduates' transition from high school to college because I am passionate when it comes to helping first-generation, low-income students excel academically. My project study is based on Tinto's (1975) student integration model, which bases students' persistence on their academic and social integration. In developing my project, I interviewed UB graduates who graduated from the UB program at the local study site. Interviewing these students helped me develop a UB Report to help secondary administrators and postsecondary administrators better understand how the UB program positively affects first-generation, low-income students' transition from high school to college.

The literature review and the findings helped me to develop a solid UB Report for secondary and postsecondary administrators who educate students who participate in the UB program at the local study site. Hopefully, my UB Report can be used as a guild to help first-generation, low-income students successfully transition from high school to college. The UB Report may be used at other high schools and universities to bridge the gap for other first-generation, low-income students. The UB Report will be presented to secondary and postsecondary administrators. Before presenting the UB Report, I will

present a 20-minute PowerPoint presentation regarding the report. Following the

presentation, there will be a question and answer session.

Leadership and Change

This project allowed me to evaluate myself as a leader, particularly the leader for

an UB program. Two years after I began working on my project study, I was promoted

from the assistant director to the director of the UB program. I found myself reflecting on

the type of leader I wanted to be for my students, staff, and the community. I became

consumed with the thought of wondering how I could have a positive influence on my

students and staff.

This project has the potential to have an influence on social change at the local

study site and with education practitioners. My research results identified and confirmed

the benefits and resources that worked for a small group of first-generation, low-income

UB students. Scholars in the education field may use the results of this study as a

foundation to prepare first-generation, low-income students for transitioning from high

school to college. Ultimately, learning outcomes may improve, college enrollment rates

may increase, and graduation rates may increase at colleges and universities throughout

the United States.

Analysis of Self as a Scholar

Scholarship involves taking pride in sharing knowledge and providing leadership

in a field of research. Throughout the process of this project study, I learned that

scholarship is the process of a growing movement in learning. I learned how to write in

scholarly tone by using high-quality references and citations. Coming from the human

services field and transitioning to the education field was both similar and different. However, both careers share one common goal, and that is providing services to promote social change. Throughout this process, I have learned a great deal of knowledge that I hope will inform and influence my students and staff, school leaders, educators, and administrators at my institution on how the UB program is valuable to first-generation, low-income students transitioning from high school to college.

Analysis of Self as a Practitioner

Although I am not an educator, as the assistant director of an UB program I educate my students, peers, and staff. Throughout this process, I have developed critical thinking and research skills that I can implement into the UB program that I manage. These research skills (collecting data, interviewing, and analyzing data) will be used to help my current UB students successfully transition from high school to college. I have learned the importance of using current literature to support research. Including current literature in the project will help better understand the research from different perspectives. During my doctoral journey, I have gained the knowledge and strength to become an expert when it comes to helping first-generation, low-income students transition from high school to college.

Analysis of Self as a Project Developer

Project development involves creating artifacts of deliverables based on the findings from the research. I have developed a new interest in project development as a result of conducting this project study. Throughout this process of developing the project, I have learned that developing a project is not as complicated as I thought it would be. I

discovered that I possess the skills that are required for project developer. I chose to write

an UB Report to address the local problem of first-generation, low-income students not

being prepared for college. I learned that project development requires choosing the most

appropriate designs for the project and its evaluation plan. I am passionate when it comes

to preparing students for college, especially for first-generation, low-income students in

the local area. The project, UB Report, was developed to help secondary administrators

and postsecondary administrators better understand how the UB program positively

affects first-generation, low-income students' transition from high school to college.

Reflection on the Importance of the Work

Many institutions have begun to focus on enrollment and retention strategies to

improve their graduation rates. This study may be used to assist secondary and

postsecondary administrators better understand how the UB program positively affects

first-generation, low-income students' successful transition from high school to college.

Ultimately, the goal of this project study was to describe UB graduates' perspectives of

the UB program and to identify the benefits and resources the UB graduates stated

contributed to their successful transition from high school to college. I learned from this

process that researchers have to get to the root of problems while offering logical

solutions. I learned that helping first-generation low-income students understand

opportunities that lead to their academic success and ultimately college graduation is a

process. I began as an individual who was not a scholarly writer but learned how to

become one throughout this process. Using what I have learned from this process has

expanded my cognitive thinking skills regarding other projects that are of interest to me.

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

The findings from this study contributed to the way that the UB programs meets the needs first-generation, low-income students face when graduating from high school and enrolling in college. The study findings and the project could significantly improve the educational experiences of first-generation, low-income students during their transition from high school to college. The report was developed to help secondary and postsecondary administrators better understand how the UB program positively affects first-generation, low-income students' successful transition from high school to college. Moreover, this report could be used to inform and familiarize first-generation, low-income students of the process of transitioning from high school to college by identifying additional guidance, support, resources, and tools to help them with the process.

Although this project study was time-consuming, the potential benefits of the UB Report could prompt similar studies at other institutions. The qualitative exploration of the UB program and students' transition from high school to college yielded rich data highlighting specific needs within the local study setting. The literature contained many resources for helping first-generation, low-income students transition from high school to college. I recommend similar qualitative studies and project development for other secondary and postsecondary administrators at other institutions with unique student populations.

The potential impact for positive social change is that this project can be used as a guide to help secondary administrators and postsecondary administrators prepare first-generation, low-income students for college. The UB Report will help secondary

administrators and postsecondary administrators understand how the UB program has a positive influence on their first-generation, low-income students' secondary and postsecondary academic success. Swail and Perna (2002) found that the primary objectives for college preparation programs such as the UB programs are to strengthen academic skills, increase high school graduation, and provide support for college enrollment and graduation. As a result, first-generation, low-income students' secondary and postsecondary retention rates and graduation rates will increase. The UB Report may also operate as a guide for other school districts with UB programs.

The UB Report could be used in other UB programs and other high education institutions. However, I recommend that secondary and postsecondary administrators consider adapting the UB Report for different student populations other than first-generation, low-income students to determine the barriers they face when enrolling in college. Educators and administrators who oversee unique student populations should gather the perspectives of those students to meet their specific needs.

Conclusion

My UB Report can be used as a guide to help secondary administrators and postsecondary administrators prepare first-generation, low-income students for college. Moreover, it confirms that the UB program positively affects first-generation, low-income students' transition from high school to college. The participants' responses to the research question allowed me to better understand first-generation, low-income students' perspectives of the UB program. Finally, my study revealed the ways that UB programs meet the needs of first-generation, low-income students transitioning from high school to

college. This doctoral process has provided me with the opportunity to complete a lifelong dream and follow my aspirations of being an educator. Both professionally and personally, this process is a victory. I realized that I have a hunger for success and chasing my dreams.

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Appendix A: The Project

This project, a 22-page Upward Bound (UB) Report, was developed to help secondary administrators and postsecondary administrators better understand how the UB program positively affects first-generation, low-income students' transition from high school to college. The primary focus of the UB Report is to describe first-generation, low-income students' perspectives of the UB program. The report identifies themes that emerged during the data analysis process and literature review. The UB Report presents the findings of the research. Additionally, it includes benefits and resources that the participants identified as helpful to their transition from high school to college. The UB Report will be presented at the stakeholder's meetings at the target high schools. Before distributing the UB Report, I will present a 20-minute PowerPoint presentation overview of the report. Upon completion of the presentation, I will have a brief question and answer session. The meeting attendees will receive an executive summary of the report.

Executive Summary

Purpose of Report

Some first-generation, low-income students are unfamiliar with the process of transitioning from high school to college; therefore, they may need additional guidance, support, resources, and tools to help them with the process. For this reason, precollege programs such as the Upward Bound (UB) program were designed to prepare first-generation, low-income students for transitioning from high school to college. The project, an UB Report was developed to help secondary school administrators and postsecondary education administrators better understand how the UB program positively affects first-generation, low-income students to transition from high school to college. The purpose of the UB Report is to describe first-generation, low-income students' perspectives of the UB program. As the assistant director of an UB program, my goal was to determine UB students' perspectives of the UB program. The UB Report, which was derived from the study findings, has two goals. The first goal is to describe UB graduates' perspectives of the UB program. Secondly, the UB Report will identify the benefits and resources the UB graduates stated contributed to their successful transition from high school to college.

An UB Report is the most suitable genre for this project study to describe first-generation, low-income students' perspectives of the UB program. school to college at the local study site. The UB Report describes the graduates' perspectives of the UB program. Additionally, it includes benefits and resources that participants identified as helpful to their transition from high school to college. The findings revealed that UB

graduates identified benefits (motivation, social exposure, and student experiences) and resources (services and guest speakers) as major components of the program that contributed to their transition from high school to college; therefore, this study confirmed what worked for a group of UB graduates.

Research Design and Data Analysis

A qualitative case study was used to describe first-generation, low-income students' perspectives of the UB program and how it contributed to their college transition. Open and closed-ended interview questions were used with seven UB graduates to answer the research question: What are first-generation, low-income students' perspectives of the UB program. The data were analyzed using open coding and emerging themes. The results of this project were used to develop an UB Report which described UB gradates' perspectives of the program.

Findings and Conclusions

The UB Report can be used as a guide to help secondary administrators and postsecondary administrators prepare first-generation, low-income students for college. The participants' responses to the research question allowed me to better understand first-generation, low-income students' perspectives of the UB program. My study addressed the way that UB programs meet the needs of first-generation, low-income students transitioning from high school to college. This report can be used to help secondary administrators and postsecondary administrators better understand how the UB program positively affects first-generation, low-income students' transition from high school to college.

UPWARD BOUND REPORT

Presenter: LaVasa Parks

July 15, 2020

GOALS OF THE PRESENTATION

Inform community stakeholders about the Upward Bound (UB) Program

Share UB graduates' perspectives of the program

Identify the advantages of the UB program

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Transitioning from high school to college can be challenging for some first-generation, low-income high school students.
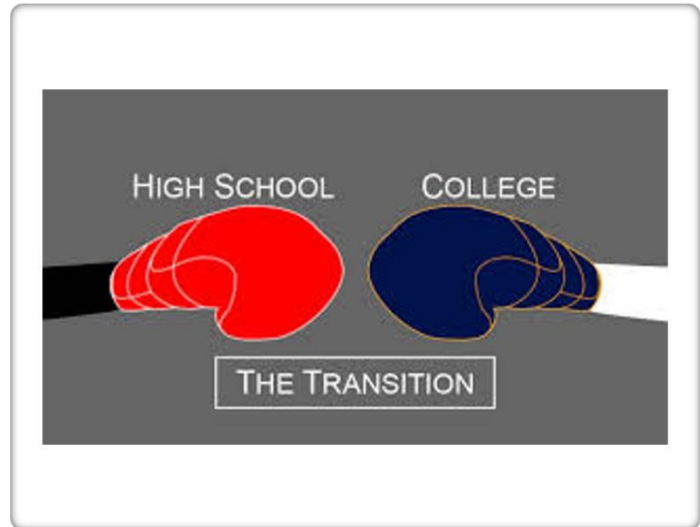

PURPOSE

- Explore first-generation, low-income students' perspectives of the UB program

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

- Low-income, first-generation students are less likely to transition from high school to college.

HIGH SCHOOL   COLLEGE

THE TRANSITION

RESEARCH QUESTION

What are first-generation, low-income students' perspectives of the UB program?

RESEARCH DESIGN & APPROACH

Seven UB graduates were interviewed

Findings

- Resources
- Benefits

FINDINGS

- The study confirms that the UB program attains its existing goals and objectives.

- UB influences first-generation, low-income students to achieve their goals of graduating from high school and enrolling in college.

Upward Bound Report

Upward Bound Graduates Transitioning from High School to College

by

LaVasa Tiny'a Parks

July 2020

Abstract

Some first-generation and low-income students enrolled in an Upward Bound (UB) program in a university in the southeastern United States are not prepared to transition from high school to college; therefore, they may need additional guidance, support, resources, and tools to help them with the process. For this reason, precollege programs such as the UB program were designed to prepare first-generation, low-income students for transitioning from high school to college. The purpose of this bounded qualitative case study was to describe first-generation, low-income students' perspectives of the UB program. The conceptual framework for this case study was Tinto's student integration model. Purposeful sampling was used to select 7 UB graduates who were enrolled in the program for at least 2 years. I used opened-ended interview questions to gather data for open coding and axial coding data analysis process. The results of this study were used to develop an UB Report which described UB gradates' perspectives of the program. Included in the report are the findings, which revealed that UB graduates identified benefits (motivation, social exposure, and student experiences) and resources (services and guest speakers) as major components of the program that contributed to their transition from high school to college. Reporting the perspectives of UB graduates will help UB directors and secondary and postsecondary administrators better understand how the UB program positively affects first-generation, low-income students' successful transition from high school to college.

Table of Contents

Introduction to the Study

Introduction

First-generation and low-income college students endure several challenges as they pursue a degree in a higher education institution. Researchers have theorized that first-generation low-income students do not enroll in college at the same rate as their counterparts (Austin, Vincent, & Kirby, 2018; Olive, 2008). The purpose of this qualitative case study was to describe first-generation, low-income students' perspectives of the UB program. Interviews were used to collect data regarding UB graduates' perspectives of the program. The data collected revealed that the program influenced the participants' transition from high school to college. The findings revealed that UB services and benefits of the program help students transition from high school to college. The participants in this study revealed that they felt that the UB Program was instrumental to their high school graduation and college enrollment.

Statement of the Problem

The transition from high school to college can be challenging for some first-generation, low-income high school students. First-generation, low-income students who are not prepared for college may fail courses, withdraw from college, or be placed on academic suspension. According to Covarrubias and Fryberg (2015), first-generation, low-income students are faced with challenges when enrolling in postsecondary institutions and they do not persist in college at the same rates as their peers. This could be for a variety of reasons. Heller and Cassady (2017) found that the lack of academic preparation for college may influence college enrollment, and some low-income, first-

generation students are less academically prepared going into college (Pratt, Harwood, Cavazos, & Ditzfeld, 2019). Another reason could be an economic hardship. Shumaker and Wood (2016) found that first-generation, low-income students enrolled in college experience more socioeconomic challenges than their peers. Therefore, first-generation, low-income students and their parents may need additional resources, tools, and support to persist at the college level.

<div style="text-align:center;">**Significance of the Study**</div>

Low-income, first-generation students are less likely to transition from high school to college. Furthermore, according to Schademan and Thompson (2016), first-generation, low-income students are more likely than their non-first-generation peers to enter college but are at risk of dropping out within the first 2 years. Ishitani (2016) further stated that although college enrollment has increased, college persistence has declined for first-generation, low-income students. The goals and objectives of the UB program were designed to address potential reasons for the decline in college enrollment and persistence rates for first-generation, low-income college students (Flores, Li, & May, 2017; Martinez, Linkow, Miller, & Parsad, 2018). Through this study, I provided insight into a local problem of low-income, first-generation students experiencing difficulties upon leaving high school and entering college by exploring the perspectives and experiences of former UB students who completed the program and experienced success.

The significance of the study is its provision of first-hand information. Gaining an understanding of participants' perspectives of the program's strengths and weaknesses contributes to the knowledge base of how former UB participants perceived the program

contributed to their college success. During their transition from high school to college, first-generation, low-income students' need the UB program to positively influence college persistence (Kelly, Randle, & Barlow, 2016; Vega, James, & Miranda, 2015). Data from the study could provide insight as to what areas of the program need to be strengthened, modified, or eliminated to ensure effective resource allocation. This study describes UB graduates' perspectives of the UB program, and potential solutions to problems that may exist at the local site. Results of this study could be used to assist UB graduates' transition from high school to college at the study site. The results of this study might provide current UB students with reference information to help them during their transition from high school to college. The educators likely to be interested in this research are UB faculty and staff, as well as district and college administrators. The study contributes to positive social change by making stakeholders (secondary and postsecondary administrators) aware of past UB students' perceptions of perceived barriers and methods for overcoming them.

Review of Related Literature

The transition from high school to college may be challenging for some first-generation, low-come students during their first semester of college. First-generation, low-income students living in the county near Fort Red University (FRU) face challenges when enrolling in postsecondary institutions. According to Covarrubias and Fryberg (2015), first-generation, low-income students do not persist in college at the same rates as their peers. Students who are not prepared for college may fail courses, withdraw from college, or be placed on academic suspension. Heller and Cassady (2017) found that the

lack of academic preparation for college may impact college persistence. Furthermore, Shumaker and Wood (2016) stated that first-generation, low-income students who enroll in college experience more socioeconomic challenges than their peers.

First-generation, low-income students, and their parents may need additional resources, tools, and support because of the lack of knowledge on how to be successful at postsecondary initiations. Many institutions of higher learning are targeting precollege programs, such as UB, to help increase first-generation, low-income students high school graduation rates and enrollment. Precollege programs are designed to enrich students' academic success while in high school to prepare them for success in college, which ultimately decreases their attrition rate in college and impacts their level of participation in precollege programs (Bangser, 2008; Hutchison, 2017). Precollege programs, such as the UB program, may provide students and their parents with the tools and resources they need to persist at postsecondary institutions. Higher education institution administrators are relying on precollege programs such as the UB to help them attract, matriculate, and keep first-generation, low-income students enrolled in college.

UB: Background

The Economic Opportunity Act was signed in August 1964 by President Lyndon B. Johnson. It created Special Programs for disadvantaged students also known as TRIO (Federal TRIO Programs). UB was one of the first TRIO programs established, followed by the Talent Search program. Both programs were created by the Higher Education Act (HEA) of 1965. UB program at the local study site targets student in grades 9-12, who are first-generation and low income. First-generation refers to those students whose parents

do not have a college degree. The objective of the program is to increase the rates in

which its participants graduate from high school and enroll in college. UB provides

fundamental support such as assistance with the college admissions process and

assistance in preparing students for college entrance examinations. Some services that the

program offers include academic, counseling, and tutoring services in addition to a

cultural enrichment component. The program provides academic services to students to

impact their learning outcomes necessary for them to complete high school and

matriculate to and graduate from college within 6 years of graduation from high school.

Over the last few years, very little evidence has been presented that indicates that UB's

postsecondary success is significantly higher than non-participants. Therefore, the U.S.

Department of Education decided to complete an evaluation of UB programs.

UB: Program Outcomes

Many college preparation programs may be successful in assisting students in

achieving the goal of admission to college, however, beyond college access, students

often struggle with factors such as academic and social integration, which impacts

students' persistence and retention as they adjust to the expectations of higher education.

Furthermore, the UB program helps build stronger social and academic skills to help

students persists in college. The UB program aims to encourage its participants to enroll

in college through academic instruction, financial aid workshops, college tours, and

career planning (Zulli & Frierson, 2004).

In an effort to review the program outcomes of UB, Zulli and Frierson (2005)

traced the evolution of the first pilot programs to the background of the UB program from

1965 to 1985. Reports and analyses of the UB Program in addition to two statistical follow-up studies compared the educational patterns of the UB program participants and non-participants.

The reports were used to assess the program's influence on students' demonstrated postsecondary success. The reports offered information on critical areas for future evaluations and summarized the relevant features of a successful program. The scrutiny was also given to the UB's criticisms and defenses. The study presented different responses and criticisms on the implementation and success of UB during the twenty-year reporting period. In conclusion, though several studies presented advantages of the UB program, some may feel that it is still uncertain exactly what the benefits of the UB program include; motivation, study skills, postsecondary assistance.

First-generation, Low-Income Students' Challenges

Attending college may be exciting and rewarding for students graduating from high school. However, some first-generation, low-income students may not feel so enthusiastic about going to college. First-generation low-income students face challenges that may affect their college persistence and retention. First-generation, low-income students need additional services to help them successfully transition into college. Some challenges first-generation, low-income student face are academic boredom, employment, and social support.

Academic boredom. Academic boredom develops when students have not established clear and concise education and career goals. Institutions should focus on helping students explore majors and careers that interest them. Students who are

uncertain about their future goals are less likely to put forward efforts when it comes to the learning environment. They are more inclined to question the worth of test taking, curricula, and courses when they have no career goals to relate them to (Markle, Yeatts, Seward, & Spencer, 2016).

Boredom can negatively influence student's academic performance (Pekrun, Hall, Goetz, & Perry, 2014). Often, academic boredom occurs when students lose focus on their academic goal and explore things other than their coursework. LaVerghetta (2015) suggested that first-generation, low-income college students who are prone to boredom are at a higher risk of dropping out of college. Bridgeland (2010) indicated that becoming bored with the institution is caused by students experiencing disengagement.

Boredom may also occur because of a disconnection between classroom learning, students' career goals, and their personal lives. Sulea, van Beek, Sarbescu, Virga, and Schaufeli (2015) noted that becoming bored with the institution and uninteresting classes are principal reasons for students' lack of persistence and dropout rates. Pradeeo and Thomas (2015) found that students become bored with taking a class that does not benefit them, which causes them to have a lack of motivation to stay enrolled in college. Students who identified themselves as being bored in school had lower grades and test scores than those students who reported not being bored (Mann & Robinson, 2009). Bartsch and Cobern (2003) found that students' grades reflected unstimulating teaching methods, which may cause boredom. First-generation, low-income students are not equipped with the resources that are needed to overcome barriers such as boredom. There must be active engagement in their learning process to eliminate boredom (Kanevsky &

Keighley, 2003). Precollege programs such as UB make first-generation, low-income students aware of barriers such as academic boredom.

Employment. Financial obligations may affect first-generation, low-income students' retention and graduation. When compared to their peers, first-generation, low-income students have more financial obligations (Martinez & Rury, 2012). They must work to provide for their personal and educational needs (Baum, 2010). Approximately 57% of students worked while enrolled in college (Miller, Danner, & Staten, 2008). Students who worked while in college developed time management skills and other skills necessary to benefit their careers after graduation (Miller et al., 2008). Burlison (2015) stated that retention suffers if a student works a full-time job off campus. Miller et al. (2008) further stated that when students work an excessive number of hours, it can negatively affect the students' academic progress.

First-generation, low-income students who work and have family obligations, may not be able to enroll in school as a full-time student. According to Lee, Youm, Kim, and Suh (2016), employment reduces the amount of time students devote to their studies, which may lead to poor academic performance. Ziskin, Fischer, Torres, Pellicciotti, and Player-Sanders (2014) found that first-generation, low-income students work extended hours and have less time to devote to their studies. Hawkins, Hawkins, Smith, and Grant (2005) reported that 88% of students who worked believed that work interfered with their studies. Miller et al. (2008) further stated that students who work extended hours are less likely to interact with faculty and more likely to have lower GPAs. Full-time employment while enrolled in college decreases the likelihood of college persistence and graduation

(Phillippe, Gonzalez Sullivan, 2005). It is critical that faculty and administrators accommodate those first-generation, low-income students who work and attend college.

Social support. Social support is essential to first-generation, low-income students' success in college. Social support from family and friends helps first-generation, low-income students have a smooth college transition and help them to be more productive academically (Mitchall & Jaeger, 2018; Padgett, Johnson, & Pascarella, 2012; Stephens, Fryberg, Markus, Johnson, & Corarrubias, 2012). Social support is a beneficial resource received from family and friends (Gist-Mackey, Wiley, & Erba, 2018; Katrevich & Aruguete, 2017; Wintre & Yaffe, 2000). According to Tinto (1993), social support allowed college students to be more involved academically, which increased persistence and reduced stress. Family support is one of the most significant challenges first-generation, low-income students face. Wang (2014) noted that parental and family support makes college transition better for students and increases the probability of success in college. Social support from family and friends may help alleviate potential stressors for first-generation, low-income students (Adams, Meyers, & Beidas, 2016; Covarrubias, Gallimore, & Okagaki, 2018; Roksa & Kinsley, 2018; Sax & Weintraub, 2014; Stephens, Brannon, Markus, & Nelson, 2015). Social support may sometimes cause students to struggle with balancing family and friends and college life.

Precollege programs such as UB offer social support for first-generation and low-income students when transitioning from high school to college. The UB program provides services that include: personal counseling, mentoring, academic advising, tutorial services, financial support, and cultural awareness. The services that students

receive while participating in the UB program in high school prepare them for the any issues that they may encounter while enrolled in college. Students also receive assistance with college entrance exams, career exploration, financial aid applications, and selecting a postsecondary institution (Wilkins, 2014; Page & Scott-Clayton, 2016; Kotamraju & Blackman, 2011). UB's students are at an advantage when it comes to pursuing a college degree because of the extra support system from the UB program. First-generation, low-income students are more likely to be successful in college when they have a support system from family and friends.

Interrelationship Between Student Persistence and Retention

The interrelationship between student persistence and retention research has shown that more students drop out during their freshman year within the first 6 weeks of entering college (Pervin, Reik, & Dalrymple, 2015). The first few weeks of freshman year tend to be particularly challenging and determine whether the student remains in school (Larmar & Lodge, 2014). The freshmen year is considered the one most critical year for disadvantaged students (Seidel & Kutieleh, 2017; Wilbur & Roscigno, 2016). The goal of college preparation programs is to provide low-income disadvantaged students with the skills they need to succeed in postsecondary education. The personal and academic support along with the mentoring provided students with the skills required to develop personal and academic relationships which aim to increase a student's level of persistence, the rate of retention and graduation for low-income students.

Researchers have found many reasons why students drop out of school. Some of the primary reasons identified were the lack of academic preparation, which results in

students being unable to manage the expectations of college-level assignments. The campus climate or environment becomes a factor for many low-income students who determine that they are unable to adapt and adjust to the campus environment which may lack diversity in areas such as gender, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status (Astin, 1975; Soria, Fransen, & Nackerud, 2014). The lack of educational goals and the commitment of the student or the university to meet these goals can have a significant impact on a student continuing in the university (Laanan, 2000; Tinto, 1993;). Students who have difficulty adjusting to the institution's academic expectations and are unable to engage in meaningful educational experiences with peers may experience some difficulty due to the lack of academic integration. Similarly, students who are unsuccessful in establishing peer relations and becoming involved in social or cultural activities may have problems establishing and maintaining social integration. Finally, for many students, the lack of financial aid and the inability to finance college expenses becomes a significant factor that impacts student's ability to remain in college.

In fact, persistence and retention in higher education of low-income first-generation students continue to be areas of concern. Tinto's model of student integration has been pivotal in the study of retention and persistence (Swail Redd, & Perna, 2003). Even though there is a significant amount of literature on persistence, there is limited clarity or consistency with its definition. Tinto and Pusser (2006), defined "educational persistence as the enrollment of individuals over time that may or may not be continuous and may or may not result in degree completion" (p.1). Universities on the other hand often identify persistence as retention. Students who maintain from year-to-year are

considered in the number of students retained each year. Castleman and Long (2016) identified those students who did not persist as those students who do not remain enrolled at an institution continuously from semester to semester. In conclusion, a student's ability to persist in a college or university ideally leads to the attainment of a degree. The interaction between the institution and the student interrelationship between student persistence and retention affects persistence.

Methods of the Study

Research Design

In this study, I describe UB graduates' perspectives of the program using a qualitative case study. Qualitative case studies are designed to obtain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of an organization, which contributes to the knowledge of the group, social context, and related phenomena (Yin, 2018). Case study research focuses on developing an in-depth description and analysis of a case or multiple case (Creswell, 2013). A case study was the most reasonable qualitative approach to focus on participants in the real-world settings (Yin, 2018).

Case Study

I applied a case study design to describe first-generation, low-income students' perspectives of the UB program. Case studies have two significant elements: the case and the boundedness (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Creswell & Creswell, 2017; Lodico et al., 2010; Stake, 1995). This case study included former UB students who graduated from high school and enrolled in a postsecondary institution. The boundedness is specific to only those students who graduated from FRU's (pseudonym) UB program in the 2013 cohort.

More specifically, selecting a case study design was appropriate since the study's purpose was to describe first-generation, low-income students' perspectives of the UB program (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Stake, 1995). The data gathered were obtained during the 2014 spring semester using the telephone and face-to-face interview sessions.

Source of Data

I used interviews to gain a better understanding of first-generation, low-income students' perspectives of the UB program. The use of open and closed ended interview questions were used to answer the research question for this study. A self-developed interview protocol included open-ended and closed-ended interview questions that aligned with the research question, conceptual framework, and related literature review.

The instrument used in the data collection process was an interview protocol. I developed one interview protocol that contained 16 interview questions to obtain data from the UB graduates. The interview protocol was guided by the conceptual framework and related literature.

Sample Selection

In this study, I conducted interviews with UB graduates to describe their perspectives of the program. According to Muylaert, Sarubbi, Gallo, Neto, and Reis (2014), a qualitative interview is an unstructured tool used to gather information regarding real life experiences. Purposeful sampling was used to select students to participate in this study. According to Patton (2015), purposeful sampling is useful for selecting participants who know the phenomenon of the study. In addition, qualitative research usually requires a smaller sample of participants (Yin, 2015). A smaller sample

size allows the researcher to obtain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon. There were 14 students in the 2013 cohort. I interviewed seven of the 14 students in the 2013 cohort. Four out of the 14 students did not enroll in college, and three students did not respond to the e-mail or telephone call.

Findings Related to the Problem and Research Question

The UB graduates were provided free supplemental instruction and tutoring services in their core courses while enrolled in the UB program. The participants reported that the tutoring and supplemental instruction they received while enrolled in the UB program helped increase their high-school GPA. Tutoring and supplemental instruction also helped increase their standardized test scores in reading and mathematics. Additionally, half of the participants stated that the cultural and social activities they participated in while enrolled in the UB program helped them with transitioning from high school to college. College visits, living on campus during the summer, and cultural dinners and activities were aspects of the program that positively influenced the graduates' perspectives on college life. They enjoyed meeting new people and interacting with other groups on campus. Finally, the students stated the social aspect of the program was critical to their high school to college transition.

There are many benefits of the UB program. Motivation is a benefit that continued to surface throughout the data analysis process. The students stated that their UB teachers helped them improve their grades, overall GPA, and encouraged them to enroll in college. Also, they reported that their UB teachers prepared them academically for college. The participants in this project study revealed that their motivation to enroll

in college came from the UB program, parents, family members, teachers, or counselors through words of encouragement and advice. The participants believed that various components of the UB program helped them graduate from high school and motivated them to go to college. According to the participants, they were motivated by the UB director, staff, teachers, and guest speakers. Additionally, the participants stated that motivation is a key component of the UB program, which aligns with the findings in this study. This project study validates the positive influence of the services provided by the UB program, and the project can be used for professional development workshops for high school and college counselors and administrators. Additionally, there were not any discrepant cases identified in this study. All of the data aligned with a theme or category.

Emerging Themes

This study addressed a local problem of first-generation, low-income students who needed additional educational resources to successfully transition from high school to college. I designed this study to describe first-generation, low-income students' perspectives of the UB program. The interview data yielded detailed descriptions of the UB graduates' perspectives of the program. Two major themes emerged from this study and they are as follows: resources (guest speakers and services) and benefits (motivation, social exposure, and student experiences). Both themes were important when answering the research question of what were first-generation, low-income students' perspectives of the UB program. Based on the data collected, the benefits and resources of the UB program are used to prepare students to transition from high school to college.

Theme 1: Resources

The first theme that emerged was resources. Tutorial services and guest speakers were the two reoccurring resources that surfaced in the data. Several of the UB graduates indicated that the tutorial services and guest speakers were services that they enjoyed while enrolled in the UB program. The participants reported that services and guest speakers were beneficial and needed. Some of the participants identified the Toastmaster's representative, the Career Services presenter, and the guest speaker who presented on adapting to college life as the guest speakers who captivated them the most. Tutorial services were identified as the most beneficial services they participated in while enrolled in the UB program. The participants stated that the tutoring they received while in the program helped to increase their GPA and standardized test scores.

Tutorial services. Academic tutoring is a service that emerged during the data analysis process. The UB graduates were provided free supplemental instruction and tutoring services in their core courses while enrolled in the UB program. The participants reported that the tutoring and supplemental instruction they received while enrolled in the UB program helped increase their high-school GPA. Tutoring and supplemental instruction also helped increase their standardized test scores in reading and mathematics. According to Rothman and Henderson (2011), academic tutorial services play a significant role in improving retention and academic achievement. Several of the participants stated that they benefited from the academic tutorial services provided by the UB program. The participants stated that attending the Academic Saturday sessions (tutoring and supplemental instruction) helped them improve their grades in high school.

Two of the seven participants stated the academic tutoring they received from the program helped them to improve their grades and standardized test scores. The students reported that the tutorial services provided by the UB program helped them with their classwork and assignments in high school. The UB program provides academic tutoring year-round (Domina, 2009; Hrabowski, 2018; Palmer, 2019). The goal of tutoring is to help students improve academically (Hartman, 1990; Sutter & Paulson, 2017). Overall, the students indicated that the tutorial services they received during the academic year and the summer helped them improve on their class assignments, grades, and standardized test scores in high school. The participants credited the UB program and staff for increasing their GPAs in school. Two participants (Kara and Kim) reported that the UB director and counselor made telephone calls and face-to-face contact mandating tutoring when they did not maintain a grade of 75 or above. Kara stated, "UB office manager call me weekly to set up my tutoring with the program." AJ stated, "My UB math teacher was a great tutor. She helped me pass my math class." The participants stated that the tutoring they received from the UB program motivated them to improve their grades in high school."

Kim stated,

The UB director motivated me to study, and she helped me with my math class. UB staff went the extra mile to make sure we got work done. They were always there to help. My UB math tutor helped me to improve my math and science grades.

Guest speakers. The UB program at FRU offers a developmental session on Saturdays during the academic year. During the developmental session, professional guest speakers present on topics such as careers, life experiences, the college admissions process, financial literacy, financial aid, and time management. Dalakas (2016) stated that guest speakers are critical when it comes to students' educational experiences. Guest speakers share their real-life experiences which allow students to see things from a different perspective. According to Li and Guo (2015), a benefit of guest speakers is that the students get the opportunity to compare what they have learned in the textbooks with the guest speaker's perspectives on a given subject or topic. Kim stated, "I enjoyed the different speakers what would come in to talk to us." Mark stated, "The part of the UB program that appealed to me the most was those people who came on Saturdays to speak to us (guest speakers)." Overall, the UB graduates at FRU identified guest speakers as a critical component of the UB program.

Theme 2: Benefits

The second theme that emerged was Benefits of the UB program. Although there are many benefits of participating in the UB program, there were two reoccurring categories that surfaced in the data: student experiences and motivation. The participants viewed the UB program as an instrumental contributing factor in their transition from high school to college. Benefits of the UB program are measured by the students' success in high school and in college (UB program director, personal communication, May 9, 2014). Within the theme of benefits of UB, two sub-themes emerged: student experiences and motivation.

Student experiences. The students reported that the UB program exposed them to activities that influenced how they dealt with issues at their postsecondary institutions. For instance, the participants reported that living in the dormitories during the summer program provided them with the simulated college dorm living experience. The students stated that they were exposed to other individuals' customs of living by living in the dorms with their peers and interacting with other students in other summer camps. According to the students, the simulated dorm living experience exposed them to conflict resolution and helped them develop social skills. Five of the seven students stated that they would not be in college if they had not been exposed to the college life experience through the UB program. All the participants stated that the program exposure prepared them for their first year of college by introducing them to college living, utilizing resources, developing study skills, and exposing them to peer support and other academic services. Angela stated, "I was ready for college when I graduated from high school. The UB program helped me with my college application process, financial aid, scholarships, and we went on college visits."

According to the qualitative analysis, 100% of the research participants stated that their experiences while participating in the UB program contributed to their persistence and retention while enrolled in high school and college. The research participants stated that their experiences were positive, and they felt academically challenged by participating in the program. All of the participants stated that they felt the UB program social activities made them more sociable and prepared them for living on campus and away from home.

UB graduates felt that the program helped prepare them for college. The students indicated that the program provided them with the academic support they needed to enroll in a postsecondary institution. All seven of the participants stated that the program was the reason they graduated from high school and enrolled in college. When asked what part of the UB program appealed to them the most, Annie stated, "The UB program staff kept me on track with my classwork in high school. I got all of my extra tutoring from the program. It really helped me pull up my grades. I also enjoyed the trips. They made me see myself as a college student." AJ stated, "My UB mathematics teacher had a big influence on me. She helped me with my math school work and motivated me to go to college."

Kara stated,

The UB program helped me with time management. I do not wait until the last minute to do my work. The UB staff made me feel like they cared; that motivated me to do better. Also, UB's Office Manager always called me to see why I was not present when I missed a Saturday session.

Dee Dee stated,

UB staff made sure I met all of my college deadlines. They provided workshops on what to expect in college. We were told about the reasons why students drop out of college and the dos and don'ts. UB staff invited college students to come and talk with us about their personal experiences.

Overall, all the students interviewed stated that the participation in the UB program prepared them for college through the services that were provided. The services

that were provided have been instrumental in their college persistence. The students indicated that the extra help they received was the key to their academic success in high school, which led to their college enrollment.

Donna stated,

The student worker motivated me. She was a good role model as an UB staff member and a college student. Mark stated, The UB staff informed me about the cost of attending a school out of state. I wish I had listened because [the out-of-state fee was far too much]. The UB staff was there to help me with college issues even though I was no longer in the program. I learned a lot about what to expect in college.

Kim stated,

The UB program made me believe in myself because the staff believed in me. The director was there for me whenever I needed assistance or had questions. I had some really good teachers who talked with us about college and what college teachers are like and what they accept and don't accept from students. The summer program gave me a good example of what living on campus was going to be like. This was the best part of the program ever. The speakers always shared personal, educational, and career experiences with us. This made me realize that I had to go to college.

Motivation. Motivation is a benefit that continued to surface throughout the data analysis process. The students stated that their UB teachers helped them improve their grades, overall GPA, and encouraged them to enroll in college. Also, they reported that

their UB teachers prepared them academically for college. The participants in this project study revealed that their motivation to enroll in college came from the UB program, parents, family members, teachers, or counselors through words of encouragement and advice.

The students stated that not only did the program provide mentors to those students who needed it; it also had workshops wherein the guest speakers motivated the students to go to college. Celina stated, "My teacher was my mentor. She was always there for me. She gave me a lot of good advice, and she helped me to pass my classes and ACT test." AJ stated, "The speakers were like my mentors. They shared stories, answered questions, and gave us advice."

Dee Dee stated,

One of the guest speakers we had at UB influenced me to keep going to school. The students stated that their teachers always motivated them and encouraged them to do their best and talked with them about colleges and careers.

The participants stated that the guest speakers and UB's teachers and staff helped them understand the importance of enrolling in college which motivated them to enroll in college. The participants stated that motivation is a key component of the UB program, which aligns with the findings in this study.

The students who participated in this case study were given an opportunity to share their perspectives of the UB program and the services that they received while enrolled in the program. Based on the data collected, the benefits and resources of the UB program are used to prepare students to transition from high school to college. This study

confirms the known intent of UB programs which is to prepare first-generation, low-income students.

The Project's Potential Impact on Social Change

The project has the potential to impact positive social change by educating secondary and postsecondary administrators on how to prepare first-generation low-income students to successfully transition from high school to college. The UB Report will help secondary administrators and postsecondary administrators understand how the UB program has a positive influence on their first-generation, low-income students' secondary and postsecondary academic success. Swail and Perna (2002) found that the primary objectives for college preparation programs such as the UB programs are to strengthen academic skills, increase high school graduation, and provide support for college enrollment and graduation. As a result, first-generation, low-income students' secondary and postsecondary retention rates and graduation rates will increase. The UB Report may also operate as a guide for other school districts with UB programs.

Conclusion

My UB Report can be used as a guide to help secondary administrators and postsecondary administrators prepare first-generation, low-income students for college. The participants' responses to the research question: What are first-generation, low-income students' perspectives of the UB program, allowed me to better understand first-generation, low-income students' perspectives of the UB program. My study described UB graduates' perspectives of the UB program. This report can be used to help secondary administrators and postsecondary administrators better understand how the UB program

positively affects first-generation, low-income students' transition from high school to college. This doctoral process has provided me with the opportunity to complete a lifelong dream and follow my aspirations of being an educator. Both professionally and personally, this process is a victory. I realized that I have a hunger for success and chasing my dreams.

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Appendix A: Interview Protocols

You are invited to take part in a research study of the Upward Bound services that have a positive impact on students' transition from high school to college Students who participated in the Upward Bound Program. The researcher is inviting Upward Bound graduates who are currently enrolled at Fort Valley State University to participate in this study. This form is part of a process called "informed consent" to allow you to understand this study before deciding whether to take part.

This study is being conducted by a researcher named LaVasa Parks, who is a doctoral student at Walden University. You may already know the researcher as the director of the Upward Bound program at Fort Valley State University, but this study is separate from that role.

Background Information:
The purpose of this study is to describe UB graduates' perspectives of the program.

Procedures:
If you agree to be in this study, I will arrange for you to participate in an interview via face-to-face, or over the telephone. The data recording procedures will be audiotape telephone and face-to-face interviews. Participants will be interviewed using open-ended questions to gather their perceptions of their experiences in college. The interview will include questions about the services the Upward Bound program provided to you; how the services impacted your decision to continue from one semester to the next (persist); and if service provided by Upward Bound were helpful. The interview will last no longer than 45 minutes. You will also be requested to review my initial interpretations to ensure I accurately reflect what you meant to say.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:
This study is voluntary. Everyone will respect your decision of whether or not you choose to be in the study. No one at Fort Valley State University will treat you differently if you decide not to be in the study. If you decide to join the study now, you can still change your mind later. You may stop at any time.
Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:
There are no foreseeable risks. I do not anticipate any risks to you participating in this study other than those encountered in day-to-day life. There are no benefits to you for participating in this study. Upward Bound offers a variety of services to its participants and I hope to learn more about how the program influences persistence and retention rates of its graduates enrolled in a postsecondary institution.
Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study. There are no direct benefits to subjects. However, it is hoped that your participation will assist researchers in

determining what factors contribute to persistence and retention rates of Upward Bound graduates enrolled in college.

Privacy:

Any information you provide will be kept confidential. The researcher will not use your personal information for any purposes outside of this research project. Also, the researcher will not include your name or anything else that could identify you in the study reports. Data will be kept secure by in a locked file; only the researcher will have access to the records. Briefly describe security measures. Data will be kept for a period of at least 5 years, as required by the university.

Contacts and Questions:

You may ask any questions you have now. Or if you have questions later, you may contact the researcher via 478-235-5509 or lavasa.parks@waldenu.edu. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call Dr. Leilani Endicott. She is the Walden University representative who can discuss this with you. Her phone number is 612-312-1210. Walden University's approval number for this study is **IRB will enter approval number here** and it expires on **IRB will enter expiration date.**
Please keep this consent form for your records.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information and I feel I understand the study well enough to make a decision about my involvement. By replying to this e-mail with the words, "I consent", I understand that I am agreeing to the terms described above.

Interview Questions

1. How did you learn about the UB program?

2. What part of the UB Program most appealed to you?

3. Describe your experience while participating in the UB Program?

4. What learning experience had a positive influence on you as an UB student?

5. What learning experiences had a negative experience on you as a student?

6. Was there anyone in the UB program that had been an influence in your school

    career?

7. What other factors do you think have contributed to your success at Fort Valley

    State University, personal or otherwise?

8. How did participating in the program impact your college performance or encourage you to succeed?

9. What was your motivation or drive while enrolled in the UB Program?

10. How did the UB Program help you in meeting and or developing new relationships with peers?

11. How satisfied were you with your academic experience in the UB program?

12. While in college to what extent do you think the UB program supported you or influenced you to persist?

13. Were there any individuals that influenced your decision to attend this college/university?

14. To what extent do you think the UB programs contribute to your college persistence?

15. What recommendations do you have for the UB program?

16. Do you have any final thoughts about how UB helped you succeed in college?